

Against Oneness

(A Refutation of the 'Jesus Only' Error)

(By Alister Hamilton, Bill Turner And Others)

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All Scriptural quotations (unless otherwise stated) in this study are taken from the King James Version, those quotations in the quoted work from Dr Dalcour are from the New American Standard Bible. The King James Version follows the vast majority of Greek texts in the order of about 1,000 to 10, and it is also confirmed by the ancient manuscripts in other languages, like the Gothic and Peshitta. It is in my opinion still the most accurate translation from the original Scriptures, and is my preferred version, and other translations quoted in this study, are tested against the King James Version. The Hebrew and Greek texts are taken from The Interlinear Bible.

I have stated some points in this study more than once, however, this is only because these points are of prime importance and vital truth for the believer and should be taken note of.

Dedication

I dedicate this book to my dear friend, brother (in Christ) and spiritual father, Bill Turner, who went home to be with the Lord Jesus on Saturday 14th, April 2012. He is so dearly missed by not only myself, but by his family and many other brothers and sisters (in Christ), who also knew him as a wonderful, kind, gracious and loving Christian gentleman, with a tremendous prophetic and teaching ministry, who ministered truth as it should be, in words that are spirit and life! John 6v63

Foreword

After I got saved, on 2nd January 1983, I attended a Oneness Pentecostal church (also known as 'Jesus Only' churches) for almost three years, I got baptised in water and the Holy Spirit within the first year of attending it, however, I never really felt comfortable with their doctrinal statement on the Godhead (and Baptism in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ only) and so, quite early on, I studied my way through both the doctrines of the Trinity and that of the Oneness and came to the conclusion that the Orthodox Christian doctrine of the Trinity was indeed the truth on the nature and makeup of the Godhead. It was during this period of study, when I learnt that it was this very subject on the nature of the Godhead that had caused such great problems in the Pentecostal Church after the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the twentieth century, which caused a great schism, which resulted in the first Oneness Pentecostal church being set up in early 1917 (breaking away from the Assemblies of God Church), and it has remained so until this day. Over the subsequent years I have noticed two things, firstly, that the vast majority of Christians are very ignorant on the truth pertaining to the nature of the Godhead, with a complete inability to explain what they believe from the Scriptures on this subject. Secondly, that ardent Oneness teachers and believers are rarely open to receiving the truth on the Trinity with a strong ability to twist the Scriptures on the nature of the Godhead so as to make the 'Jesus Only' error seem plausible to uninstructed Christians. And so, being prompted by God, the Holy Spirit, I have set about this study to not only set forth the truth on the Trinity, but also to present to view the error of the Oneness doctrine and the effect that it will have upon those who believe it during the last seven years of this Age, and more especially during the last three and a half years, the period which is referred to in the Scriptures as The Great Tribulation and also Jacob's Trouble. Jer 30v7, Dan 9v27, Matt 24v12,15-21, 1John 4v1-6, Rev 7v14.

Of all the books that I have read and studied in doing this work, the one I have found most helpful is entitled, "A Definitive Look At Oneness Theology: In The Light Of Biblical Trinitarianism" by Edward L Dalcour, who has also given me his kind permission to quote from his excellent work. Dr Dalcour's work is substantially quoted in SECTION I of this study, with the exceptions off The Nicene Creed, The Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed, The Apostle's Creed and The Athanasian Creed and accompanying notes on these.

Alister Hamilton, 30th June 2012

Introduction

The Devil, who is the father of lies and in whom there is absolutely no truth at all, is continually seeking ways to package his lies and half truths to make them seem plausible, to both believers and non-believers alike. Over the centuries since the beginning of the Age of Grace (and indeed, since the Pre-Adamic Ages, Gen 1v2, Job 38v4-7,12-15, Isaiah 14v12-21, Jer 4v23-28, Ezek 28v11-19, John 8v44), he has also re-packaged old destructive heresies to make them appear as supposed 'truth,' and even more so as the last seven years of this Age (especially the period known as the Great Tribulation) and the 2nd Coming of our dear Lord Jesus rapidly approaches. Dan 9v27, Matt 13v33, 24v15-21, John 8v44, 2Thess 2v1-12, 1Tim 4v1,2, 2Tim 3v1-5, 4v3,4, 2Pet 2v1-3, Rev 7v14. The main destructive heresies of the first four centuries of Church history all primarily attacked the real humanity and true deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. For instance, the destructive heresy of Docetic Gnosticism, that was beginning to appear in the Church in the 2nd half of the first century AD, having being written against and condemned by the Apostles Paul, John and Peter (amongst others) is alive and well today and believed by many Christians in the guise of Augustine's doctrine of 'Original Sin' (and 'Born In Sin Theories'). Another old destructive heresy that the Devil has managed to darken and poison peoples mind's again with is that of Arianism, which he brought into the Church through his

servant and dupe, Arius of Alexandria in the 4th century AD, which today is believed and held by the Jehovah's Witnesses cult. At the end of the 2nd century and into the 3rd century AD, the Devil almost succeeded in bringing into the church (mainly) through, Theodotus of Byzantine, Noetus of Smyrna, Praxeas and Sabellius of Lybia the Monarchian destructive heresy, which is really a combination of three previous destructive heresies, they being, Cerinthian and Docetic Gnosticism and Arianism. And today this heresy (in one of its two forms, 'Modalistic Monarchianism' (simultaneous)), which was firmly condemned and rejected at every turn by the early Church, is now firmly established as the accepted teaching on the nature of the Godhead by a number of Pentecostal churches as opposed to the Orthodox Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

Section I

The History of Monarchianism

Modern Oneness Pentecostalism, also known as "Jesus Only" churches, with the UPCI (United Pentecostal Church International) being the largest Oneness domination, is a development from early Pentecostalism (early 1900s) emerging out of the Assemblies of God Church in 1914 (which formed after the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit and subsequent revival that occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century). From 1913 to 1916 several Pentecostal leaders including R. E. McAlister, Frank J. Ewart, Glenn Cook and Garfield T. Haywood (Ankerberg and Weldon, 'Encyclopedia of Cults and Religions' 1999: 367) began teaching that the "correct" baptismal formula must be "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" and not "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Beisner, "Jesus Only" Churches 1998: 7). McAlister's baptismal formula message, based on Acts 2v38, greatly influenced a preacher named John Scheppe. **One night, in the midst of intense prayer, Scheppe claimed that he had encountered a type of revelation or mystical experience confirming the power of the name of Jesus. Certain passages of Scripture (e.g., Matt 17v8, John 10v30, Phil 2v9-11, Col 3v17) led Scheppe to adopt a modalistic view of the Godhead that—contrary to Sabellius—made Jesus, not the Father, the one true God (cf. Ankerberg and Weldon, 'Encyclopedia of Cults and Religions' 1999: 367).**

The basic Oneness doctrinal syllogism is as follows:

Premise 1: There is only one God, the Father (e.g., Mal 2v10, 1Cor 8v6, cf. Bernard, 'Oneness of God' 1983: 66, 126).

Premise 2: Jesus is God (e.g., John 8v58, Titus 2v13).

Conclusion: Jesus is the Father (and the Holy Spirit). Jesus has two natures: divine as the Father/Holy Spirit and human as the Son of God.

There were two forms of the Monarchian (from monarchia, meaning, 'single principle') heresy, both of which were launched around the same time, at the end of the second century: modalistic and the less popular form, dynamic. Dynamic Monarchianism, also called (more appropriately) Adoptionism, held to the idea that God merely "adopted" Jesus as Son (at His baptism), after which He worked miracles without becoming divine. Some adoptionists, however, did teach that He became deity (in some sense) at His baptism (e.g., Paul of Samosata). Dynamic Monarchianism never really gained widespread status or acceptance and eventually faded out.

Theodotus, the leather merchant from Byzantine, introduced the heresy of Dynamic Monarchianism, also called (more appropriately) Adoptionism, by bringing this doctrine to Rome around 190 AD. However, the most noted 'Adoptionist' was Paul of Samosata, of whom Eusebius of Caesarea speaks of his excommunication at the Third Council in Antioch in 268 AD. Information regarding the particularities of the Monarchian controversy and its theology is derived primarily from Hippolytus (235 AD) and early church historian Eusebius of Caesarea (260-339 AD). Victor, the bishop of Rome, excommunicated Theodotus for his teaching.

Hippolytus speaks of the beginnings of dynamic Monarchianism and its distinctive theology (The Refutation of All Heresies, VII chap. 23):

The Heresy of Theodotus

"But there was a certain Theodotus, a native of Byzantium, who introduced a novel heresy. He announces tenets concerning the originating cause of the universe, which are partly in keeping with the doctrines of the true Church, in so far as he acknowledges that all things were created by God. Forcibly appropriating, however, (his notions of) Christ from the school of the Gnostics, and of Cerinthus and Ebion, he alleges that (our Lord) appeared in some such manner as I shall now describe. (According to this, Theodotus maintains) that Jesus was a (mere) man, born of a virgin, according to the counsel of the Father, and that after he had lived promiscuously with all men, and had become pre-eminently religious, he subsequently at his baptism in Jordan received Christ, who came from above and descended (upon him) in form of a dove. And this was the reason, (according to Theodotus,) why (miraculous) powers did not operate within him prior to the manifestation in him of that Spirit which descended, (and) which proclaims him to be the Christ. But (among the followers of Theodotus) some are disposed (to think) that never was this man made God,

(even) at the descent of the Spirit; whereas others (maintain that he was made God) after the resurrection from the dead."

There are two forms of Modalistic Monarchianism, successive (or developmental) and simultaneous (or static). Successive Modalism teaches that the modes were successive: starting with the mode of the Father in creation; then, the Son for the task of redemption; and after, the Holy Spirit for regeneration. Whereas simultaneous Modalism teaches that the modes of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit exist simultaneously (using passages such as Matt 3v16-17 as a so-called proof text). Most Oneness (Jesus Only) groups today teach a form of simultaneous Modalism. Modalism earned its name from its distinctive theology. In general, Modalism, (that is, Oneness theology), teaches that God exists as a unitarian, that is, a unipersonal, indivisible monad. Thus, the titles "Father," "Son" and "Holy Spirit" merely represent the different "modes" (or roles or offices) that God temporally manifested for the sake of redemption. Oneness teachers maintain that "Jesus" is the name of this unitarian/unipersonal deity.

The first known generator of Modalism was Noetus of Smyrna in around 190 AD, although there is some evidence of a modalistic idea percolating prior to Noetus. About thirty years before him, Justin Martyr made an interesting statement in his First Apology "For they who affirm that the Son is the Father, are proved neither to have become acquainted with the Father, nor to know that the Father of the universe has a Son; who also, being the first-begotten Word of God, is even God." Nevertheless, the first person historically identified for introducing Modalism was Noetus, hence 'Against Noetus' by Hippolytus (203 AD).

Speaking of Noetus of Smyrna (190 AD), Hippolytus (Against Noetus 2) writes: "They [the modalists] answer in this manner: "If therefore I acknowledge Christ to be God, He is the Father Himself, if He is indeed God; and Christ suffered, being Himself God; and consequently the Father suffered, for He was the Father Himself."

Also, Hippolytus (Against Noetus 7), in response to the use of John 10v30 in the modalistic assertion made by Noetus of Smyrna: "If, again, he [Noetus] alleges His [Christ's] own word when He said, "I and the Father are one," let him attend to the fact, and understand that He did not say, "I and the Father am one, but are one." For the word "are" is not said of one person, but it refers to two persons, and one power."

Hippolytus (Against Noetus 14) commenting on John 1v1 to refute Noetus of Smyrna states: "If, then, the Word was with God, and was also God, what follows? Would one say that he speaks of two Gods? I shall not indeed speak of two Gods, but of one; of two Persons however, and of a third economy (disposition), viz., the grace of the Holy Ghost. For the Father indeed is One, but there are two Persons, because there is also the Son; and then there is the third, the Holy Spirit."

Hippolytus went on to say in his refutation: "The Scriptures speak what is right; but Noetus is of a different mind from them . . . Theodotus employed when he sought to prove that Christ was a mere man. But neither has the one party nor the other understood the matter rightly, as the Scriptures themselves confute their senselessness, and attest the truth. See, brethren, what a rash and audacious dogma they have introduced, when they say without shame, the Father is Himself Christ, Himself the Son, Himself was born, Himself suffered, Himself raised Himself. But it is not so. The Scriptures speak what is right; but Noetus is of a different mind from them (Against Noetus 3).

Hippolytus was adamant in defending against Christological heresy, especially that of Oneness doctrine in Against Noetus: "For us, then, it is sufficient simply to know that there was nothing contemporaneous with God. Beside Him there was nothing; but He, while existing alone, yet existed in plurality" (Against Noetus 10). In this same work, Hippolytus explains: "For the Father indeed is One, but there are two Persons, because there is also the Son; and then there is the third, the Holy Spirit" (Against Noetus 14).

Hippolytus (Against Noetus 10) affirmed in reference to God: 'Monos ὃν πολὺς ἐν', "While existing alone, [He] yet existed in plurality."

Tertullian 'Against Praxeas' (213 AD)

The second leading modalist was Praxeas. The identity of Praxeas is difficult to determine. Some have even speculated that Praxeas was really Callistus the Roman bishop (217-22 AD) since Hippolytus accused him of helping to promote Modalism. All the same, whoever Praxeas was, he and his Modalism were sternly refuted, primarily by Tertullian of Carthage. Tertullian (Against Praxeas 22) grammatically refutes the modalistic mishandling of John 10v29,30: He says, "My Father, which gave them to me, is greater than all," adding immediately, "I and my Father are one." Here, then, they take their stand, too infatuated, nay, too blind, to see in the first place that there is in this passage an intimation of Two Beings—"I and my Father;" then that there is a plural predicate, "are"—inapplicable to one person. . . They argue that this passage teaches that Jesus unquestionably claims to be His own Father.

It is worth mentioning here that Tertullian was the first church father in the West to use the word "Trinity" (Lat. trinitas) in reference to the three Persons of the Godhead against the Modalism of Praxeas: "Unity into a Trinity, placing in their order the three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit three ..." (Against Praxeas 2). Tertullian was a man utterly enthralled with perpetuating and defending the church's rule of faith against the crass Modalism of Praxeas (Against Praxeas 1):

"He [Praxeas] maintains that there is one only Lord, the Almighty Creator of the world, in order that out of this doctrine of the unity he may fabricate a heresy. He says that the Father Himself came down into the Virgin, was Himself born of her, Himself suffered, indeed was Himself Jesus Christ."

It amazes Tertullian that the modalists are so convinced of their misunderstanding that monotheism means unipersonalism. "In the case of this heresy," Tertullian writes, "which supposes itself to possess the pure truth, in thinking that one cannot believe in One Only God in any other way than by saying that the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are the very selfsame Person." (Against Praxeas 2)

Interestingly, Tertullian experienced the same arguments that Oneness teachers assert today, namely that the Trinity is three separate Gods: "They [modalists] are constantly throwing out against us that we are preachers of two gods and three gods, while they take to themselves pre-eminently the credit of being worshippers of the One God" (Against Praxeas 3). In addition, early and present-day Oneness teachers misconstrue John 1v1, asserting that the "Word" was a non-entity, future plan, or "reason" of the Father. Tertullian demonstrates the absurdity that follows this thinking:

"Is that Word of God, then, a void and empty thing, which is called the Son, who Himself is designated God? "The Word was with God, and the Word was God." It is written, "You shall not take God's name in vain." This for certain is He "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." In what form of God? Of course he means in some form, not in none. For who will deny that God is a body, although "God is a Spirit?" (Against Praxeas 7)

Tertullian shows that Modalism, when taken to its logical end, is biblically incoherent:

"Either, then, the Son suffered, being "forsaken" by the Father, and the Father consequently suffered nothing, inasmuch as He forsook the Son; or else, if it was the Father who suffered, then to what God was it that He addressed His cry? ... The Son, then, both dies and rises again, according to the Scriptures. It is the Son, too, who ascends to the heights of heaven, and also descends to the inner parts of the earth. "He sits at the Father's right hand"—not the Father at His own." (Against Praxeas 30)

Throughout his polemic, Tertullian never ceases in underscoring the rule of faith and stressing the inseparability of the Being of God. **Through his writings, we can easily see how the modalists did not absorb the fact that the doctrine of the Trinity does not separate nor does it divide the Being of God:**

"This is the rule of faith, which I profess; by it I testify that the Father and the Son and the Spirit are inseparable from each other, and so will you know in what sense this is said. Now, observe, my assertion is that the Father is one, and the Son one, and the Spirit one, and that They are distinct from Each Other ... God regarded as the Son of God, not as the Father ..." (Against Praxeas 9)

Tertullian (Against Praxeas 26) also writes:

"After His resurrection He promises in a pledge to His disciples that He will send them the promise of His Father; and lastly, He commands them to baptize into the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, not into a unipersonal God. And indeed, it is not once only, but three times, that we are immersed into the Three Persons, at each several mention of Their names."

At the conclusion of Tertullian's polemic, he emphasizes the eternal consequence of embracing a Jesus other than the Jesus revealed in the biblical text as he cites 1 John 5v12: "He that has not the Son, has not life. And that man has not the Son, who believes Him to be any other than the Son." (Against Praxeas 31)

Against Sabellius:

A few decades later, a Libyan priest named Sabellius brought new light and popularity to Modalism. The modalistic arguments of Sabellius were by far more refined and sophisticated than that of his predecessors. He came to Rome toward the end of Zephyrinus's reign (198-217 AD). After enjoying the confidence of the Bishop Callistus, he was attacked fiercely by Hippolytus, and eventually excommunicated by Callistus. Rejecting the concept of the ontological Trinity, Sabellius postulated his own version of an "economic Trinity."

He saw God as one indivisible substance, but with three fundamental activities, or modes, appearing successively as the Father (the creator and lawgiver), as the Son (the redeemer), and as the Holy Spirit (the maker of life and the divine presence within people). Subsequently, the term "Sabellianism" included all sorts of speculative ideas attached to the original ideas of Sabellius and his followers. He travelled to Rome, where he gained many devoted followers on account of his craftiness and cerebral arguments.

It should also be noted here, that early modalists, particularly Sabellius, taught successive or developmental Modalism, in which the modes are successive, starting with the mode of the Father in creation, then the Son for the task of redemption, and after, the Holy Spirit for regeneration. Philip Schaff explains (Schaff, 2006, vol. 2: 11:262):

"Sabellius embraces the Holy Spirit in his speculation, and reaches a trinity, not a simultaneous trinity of essence, however, but only a successive trinity of revelation. The Father reveals himself in the giving of the law or the Old Testament economy (not in the creation also, which in his view precedes the Trinitarian revelation); the Son, in the incarnation; the Holy Ghost, in inspiration ... The revelation of the Son ends with the ascension; the revelation of the Spirit goes on in regeneration and sanctification. "

This view is somewhat dissimilar to that of modern Oneness theology, which teaches simultaneous or static Modalism, in which God can project all of His so-called manifestations or modes simultaneously. For instance, Oneness teachers use the baptism of Jesus (Matt 3v13-17) to prove that Jesus' so-called three modes can simultaneously exist (United Pentecostal Church International (UPCI), the biggest of the different Oneness churches). **Of course, the event of Jesus' baptism plainly and naturally affirms the Trinity—all three Persons are directly and distinctly involved. What obviously proves simultaneous Modalism false are the numerous passages indicating a personal distinction between the three Persons of the Trinity (e.g., Luke 10v21-22, John 1v1b, 6:37-40, 14v23, 2Cor 13v14).** Promoting Modalism throughout Rome, Sabellius aggressively opposed the ontological Trinity. As a result, in 220 AD, Callistus excommunicated him as a heretic. Athanasius traced the doctrine of Sabellius to the Stoic philosophy (Schaff, 2006, vol. 2: 12:582-83). As it had condemned previous heretics, the universal church condemned Sabellius and his ideas.

The error of Sabellianism was no small matter to the Christian church. It attacked the very nature of God. Thus, Oneness theology in all forms was universally condemned. In order to achieve a correct understanding of the attitude of the early church one must realize that the massive amounts of information written against the Modalism of Sabellius show beyond doubt that the early Christians did not see Oneness theology as simply a non-essential matter, it was of the utmost importance.

Dionysius Bishop of Alexandria

Dionysius "the Great" was bishop of Alexandria from 248 AD until his death in 265 AD. He was a student of Origen and a respected leader of the church as well as an esteemed theologian. He passionately proclaimed and defended the Trinity. Dionysius wrote against many major Christological heresies such as the Adoptionism of Paul of Samosata and Sabellianism. He also commented on many controversies of the day such as re-baptism, Easter, and the authorship of the Apocalypse (i.e., Revelation). His writings were abundant. Athanasius and Eusebius preserved most of his work. At least forty years after Callistus excommunicated Sabellius, Dionysius, in his outrage towards the unipersonal theology of Modalism, also excommunicated Sabellius around 260 AD. His strong passion for the Trinity incited him to write many polemics against Sabellius.

Both Dionysius of Alexandria and Dionysius the bishop of Rome championed the doctrine of the Trinity. They were not alone in their open and rigid affirmation and defence of the doctrine of the Trinity and their railing refutation against the Modalism of Sabellius. Because of his over-emphasis on the personal distinctions existing between the Persons of the Trinity, Sabellius accused Dionysius of dividing the Father and Son (in essence) and failing to acknowledge that the Jesus was of the "same substance" (Greek, 'homoousios') with the Father. Of course, Sabellius interpreted 'homoousios' not only as "same substance," but also as "same Person."

They even accused him of stating that the Son was a creature. They also made a formal complaint to the bishop of Rome whose name was also Dionysius. Even so, Athanasius in his 'Defense of Dionysius' (9) says that Dionysius rightly "acted as he learned from the Apostles."

In a response, Dionysius, the bishop of Rome, wrote a short epistle entitled 'Against the Sabellians' around 259 AD, which was not directly addressed to Dionysius, the bishop of Alexandria, but was to censure his "language of separation" on account of his fixated desire to refute Sabellius. Dionysius's epistle also clarified and defined Trinitarian theology. Some of the highlights of the epistle are as follows:

'Next, then, I may properly turn to those who divide and cut apart and destroy the Monarchy, the most sacred proclamation of the Church of God, making of it, as it were, three powers, distinct substances, and three godheads ... He, [Sabellius] in his blasphemy, says that the Son is the Father and vice versa ... For it is the doctrine of the

presumptuous Marcion, to sever and divide the Divine Monarchy into three origins - a devil's teaching, not that of Christ's true disciples and lovers of the Saviour's lessons, For they know well that a Triad is preached by divine Scripture, but that neither Old Testament nor New preaches three Gods.

In the concluding remarks of the epistle, Dionysius stressed his essential key point, which the modalists (and Oneness believers today) clearly misunderstood: the Trinity does not divide God into three parts. God is inseparable and indivisible: "Neither then may we divide into three Godheads ... we must believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Christ Jesus His Son, and in the Holy Ghost, and hold that to the God of the universe the Word is united." After which, Dionysius of Alexandria responded to the bishop to Rome, toning down his emotional anti-Sabellian fury. Undeniably, Dionysius's view on the Trinity was solidly orthodox. However, to clarify and confirm to the bishop of Rome that he did not in any way separate or divide the Persons of the Trinity, Dionysius of Alexandria redefined and disambiguated his position in an Epistle to the Bishop of Rome.

Below are some important excerpts from the epistle:

'The Son alone, always co-existing with the Father, and filled with Him who is, Himself also is, since He is of the Father ... neither the Father, in that He is Father, can be separated from the Son, for that name is the evident ground of coherence and conjunction; nor can the Son be separated from the Father, for this word Father indicates association between them. And there is, moreover, evident a Spirit who can neither be disjoined from Him who sends, nor from Him who brings Him. How, then, should I who use such names think that these are absolutely divided and separated the one from the other? ... Thus, indeed, we expand the indivisible Unity into a Trinity; and again we contract the Trinity, which cannot be diminished, into a Unity ... For on this account after the Unity there is also the most divine Trinity ... And to God the Father, and His Son our Lord Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Additional church fathers against Sabellius:

Novatian (250 AD) in A Treatise of Novatian Concerning the Trinity (12) argues persuasively against the heresy of Sabellius: "The sacrilegious heresy of Sabellius is embodied. Since Christ is believed to be not the Son, but the Father; since by them He is asserted to be in strictness a bare man, in a new manner, by those, again, Christ is proved to be God the Father Almighty. Gregory Thaumaturgus (262 AD), in A Sectional Confession of Faith (7) speaks against the unipersonal God of Sabellius and defends the Trinity:

'But some treat the Holy Trinity in an awful manner, when they confidently assert that there are not three persons, and introduce (the idea of) a person devoid of subsistence. Wherefore we clear ourselves of Sabellius, who says that the Father and the Son are the same [Person] ... we believe that three persons, namely, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are declared to possess the one Godhead: for the one divinity showing itself forth according to nature in the Trinity establishes the oneness of the nature.'

Athanasius, the great defender of the doctrine of the Trinity, who championed the 'homoousion' at the Council of Nicea, speaks very assertively against Sabellius in his Discourses Against the Arians:

'They [the Father and the Son] are one, not as one thing now divided into two, but really constituting only one, nor as one thing twice named, so that the same becomes at one time the Father and at another his own Son. This latter is what Sabellius held, and he was judged a heretic. On the contrary, they are two, because the Father is Father and is not his own Son, and the Son is Son and not his own Father.'

In his teaching on the Holy Spirit, Cyril of Jerusalem (348 AD) in his Catechetical Lectures, after referring to the Trinitarian baptismal formula, explains: "We preach not three Gods; let the Marcionites be silenced; but with the Holy Ghost through One Son, we preach One God ... We neither separate the Holy Trinity, like some; nor do we, as Sabellius, work confusion [into it]".

Aside from these men of great faith, and many others, the Christian church is greatly indebted to the three Cappadocian Fathers: Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Basil's younger brother, Gregory of Nyssa. They persistently affirmed the doctrine of the Trinity in precise language.

In his letter, To the Notables of Neocaesarea, Basil speaks expressively on the Trinity, sharply countering the Sabellian heresy: "Sabellianism is Judaism imported into the preaching of the Gospel under the guise of Christianity ... And I hear that even rasher innovations than those of the foolish Sabellius are now ventured on among you ... For of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost there is the same nature and one Godhead". In the end, Basil sees Sabellianism as denying Jesus Christ:

'Now Sabellius ... saying as he did that the same God, being one in matter, was metamorphosed as the need of the moment required, and spoken of now as Father, now as Son, and now as Holy Ghost. The inventors of this unnamed heresy are renewing the old long extinguished error ... denying the name of the Son of God. They must give over uttering iniquity against God, or they will have to wail with them that deny the Christ.'

Shortly after the Christian church condemned Sabellius as a heretic, Modalism generally died off until the eighteenth century, **when Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) had a "revelation" that Jesus was the one Person behind the masks of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit** (and this is the false teaching put forward by the twentieth century Oneness teachers), whereas early Modalism (Sabellius in particular) taught that the one Person behind the three masks or modes was the Father, not Jesus.

As with all the Christological heresies in the first four centuries, the church did not tolerate blatant denials of Jesus Christ in any form. Even with the sophisticated arguments of Sabellius and the inflated ego of Paul of Samosata, the church universally condemned both dynamic and modalistic Monarchianism. **Because of heresies such as Monarchianism, the early church greatly increased its effort to codify the creeds in precise language, to advance the church's rule of faith, and protect the people of God from the false teachings that were rampant in those first four centuries.** The theory of Sabellius broke the way for the Nicene church doctrine, by its full coordination of the three persons. He differed from the orthodox standard mainly in denying the Trinity of essence and the permanence of the Trinity of manifestation; making Father, Son, and Holy Ghost only temporary phenomena, which fulfil their mission and return into the abstract monad.

The Nicene Creed of 325 AD

"We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible, and invisible.

"And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father the only-begotten, i.e., of the essence of the Father, God of God, and Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made in heaven and on earth; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made man; he suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven; from thence he cometh to judge the quick and the dead.

"And in the Holy Ghost."

"And those who say: there was a time when he was not; and: he was not before he was made; and: he was made out of nothing, or out of another substance or thing, or the Son of God is created, or changeable, or alterable; they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic Church."

(Schaff, 1890, vol. 3: 9:129)

The Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381 AD

"We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible.

"And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds (aeons), Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; he was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried, and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; from thence he cometh again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

"And in the Holy Ghost, who is Lord and Giver of life, who proceeded from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the prophets. In one holy catholic and apostolic church, we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen."

A careful comparison shows that the Constantinopolitan Creed is a considerable improvement on the Nicene, both in its omission of the anathema at the close, and in its addition of the articles concerning the Holy Ghost and concerning the church and the way of salvation. The addition: according to the Scriptures, is also important, as an acknowledgment of this divine and infallible guide to the truth. The whole is more complete and symmetrical than the Nicaenum, and in this respect is more like the Apostles' Creed, which, in like manner, begins with the creation and ends with the resurrection and the life everlasting, and is disturbed by no polemical dissonance; but the Apostles' Creed is much more simple in structure.

The Constantinopolitan Creed maintained itself for a time by the side of the Nicene, and after the council of Chalcedon in 451 AD, where it was for the first time formally adopted, it gradually displaced the other. Since that time it has itself commonly borne the name of the Nicene Creed.

The Latin church adopted the improved Nicene symbol from the Greek, but admitted, in the article on the Holy Ghost, the further addition of the well-known 'filioque', which was first inserted at a council of Toledo in 589 AD, and subsequently gave rise to bitter disputes between the two churches.

(Schaff, 1890, vol. 3: 9:129)

The Apostle's Creed

1. I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
2. I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.
3. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.
4. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
5. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again.
6. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
7. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
8. I believe in the Holy Spirit,
9. The holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints,
10. The forgiveness of sins,
11. The resurrection of the body,
12. and life everlasting. Amen.

(From The Catechism of the Catholic Church)

The title, *Symbolum Apostolicum* (Symbol or Creed of the Apostles), appears for the first time in a letter from a Council in Milan (probably written by Ambrose himself) to Pope Siricius in about 390: "Let them give credit to the Creed of the Apostles, which the Roman Church has always kept and preserved undefiled". But what existed at that time was not what is now known as the Apostles' Creed but a shorter statement of belief that, for instance, did not include the phrase "maker of heaven and earth", a phrase that may have been inserted only in the 7th century.

The earliest appearance of what we know as the Apostles' Creed was in the *De singulis libris canonicis scarapsus* ("Excerpt from Individual Canonical Books") of St. Pirminius (Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 89, 1029 ff.), written between 710 AD and 714 AD.

The Athanasian Creed

1. Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic [true Christian] faith
2. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.
3. But this is the catholic faith: That we worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity;
4. Neither confounding the persons; nor dividing the substance.
5. For there is one person of the Father: another of the Son: another of the Holy Ghost.
6. But the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.
7. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost.
8. The Father is uncreated: the Son is uncreated: the Holy Ghost is uncreated.
9. The Father is immeasurable: the Son is immeasurable: the Holy Ghost is immeasurable.
10. The Father is eternal: the Son eternal: the Holy Ghost eternal.
11. And yet there are not three eternals; but one eternal.
12. As also there are not three uncreated: nor three immeasurable: but one uncreated, and one immeasurable.
13. So likewise the Father is almighty: the Son almighty: and the Holy Ghost almighty,
14. And yet there are not three almighties: but one almighty.
15. So the Father is God: the Son is God: and the Holy Ghost is God.
16. And yet there are not three Gods; but one God.
17. So the Father is Lord: the Son Lord: and the Holy Ghost Lord.
18. And yet not three Lords; but one Lord
19. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord
20. So are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say, there are three Gods, or three Lords.
21. The Father is made of none; neither created; nor begotten.
22. The Son is of the Father alone: not made; nor created; but begotten.
23. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and the Son: not made; neither created; nor begotten; but proceeding.

24. Thus there is one Father, not three Fathers: one Son, not three Sons: one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.
25. And in this Trinity none is before or after another: none is greater or less than another.
26. But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal
27. So that in all things, as aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.
28. He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity.
29. Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation, that we believe also rightly in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
30. Now the right faith is, that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man.
31. God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds: and Man, of the substance of His mother, born in the world.
32. Perfect God: perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.
33. Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead: inferior to the Father as touching His Manhood.
34. And although He be God and Man; yet He is not two, but one Christ.
35. One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh; but by assumption of the Manhood into God.
36. One altogether, not by confusion of substance; but by unity of person.
37. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man; so God and Man is one Christ.
38. Who suffered for our salvation descended into hades: rose again the third day from the dead.
39. He ascended into heaven: He sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father almighty
40. From whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
41. At whose coming all men must rise again with their bodies;
42. And shall give account for their own works.
43. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; but they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.
44. This is the catholic faith; which except a man believe truly and firmly, he cannot be saved.

The origin of this remarkable production is veiled in mysterious darkness. Like the Apostles' Creed, it is not so much the work of any one person, as the production of the spirit of the church. As the Apostles' Creed represents the faith of the ante-Nicene period, and the Nicene Creed the faith of the Nicene, so the Athanasian Creed gives formal expression to the post-Nicene faith in the mystery of the Trinity and the incarnation of God. The old tradition which, since the eighth century, has attributed it to Athanasius as the great champion of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, has been long ago abandoned on all hands; for in the writings of Athanasius and his contemporaries, and even in the acts of the third and fourth ecumenical councils, no trace of it is to be found.

It does not appear at all in the Greek Church till the eleventh or twelfth century; and then it occurs in a few manuscripts which bear the manifest character of translations, vary from one another in several points, and omit or modify the clause on the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son. It implies the entire post-Nicene or Augustinian development of the doctrine of the Trinity, and even the Christological discussions of the fifth century, though it does not contain the anti-Nestorian test-word (Greek) Theotokos, 'mother of God'. It takes several passages verbally from Augustine's work on the Trinity which was not completed till the year 415 AD, and from the Commonitorium of Vincentius of Lerinum (Lerins), 434 AD; works which evidently do not quote the passages from an already existing symbol, but contribute them as stones to the building.

It probably originated about the middle of the fifth century, in the school of Augustine, and in Gaul, where it makes its first appearance, and acquires its first ecclesiastical authority. The Creed consists of two parts, one on the Trinity and one on the Incarnation, which were afterward welded together by a third hand. The second part was found separately as a fragment of a sermon on the Incarnation, at Treves, in a MS. from the middle of the eighth century. But the precise author or compiler cannot be discovered, and the various views of scholars concerning him are mere opinions. From Gaul the authority of this symbol spread over the whole of Latin Christendom, and subsequently made its way into some portions of the Greek Church in Europe. The various Protestant churches have either formally adopted the Athanasian Creed together with the Nicene and the Apostles', or at all events agree, in their symbolical books, with its doctrine of the trinity and the person of Christ.

The 1940 discovery of a lost work by Vincent of Lérins, which bears a striking similarity to much of the language of the Athanasian Creed, have led many to conclude that the creed originated either with Vincent or with his students. For example, in the authoritative modern monograph about the creed, J.N.D. Kelly asserts that Vincent of Lérins was not its author, but that it may have come from the same milieu, namely the area of Lérins in southern Gaul. The oldest surviving manuscripts of the Athanasian Creed date from the late 8th century.

The Athanasian Creed presents, in short, sententious articles, and in bold antitheses, the church doctrine of the Trinity in opposition to Unitarianism and tritheism, and the doctrine of the incarnation and the divine-human person of Christ in opposition to Nestorianism and Eutychianism, and thus clearly and concisely sums up the results of the Trinitarian and Christological controversies of the ancient church. **It teaches the numerical unity of substance and the triad of persons in the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, with the perfect deity and perfect humanity of**

Christ in one indivisible person. In the former case we have one substance or nature in three persons; in the latter, two natures in one divine-human person.

On this faith eternal salvation is made to depend. By the damnatory clauses in its prologue and epilogue the Athanasianum has given offence even to those who agree with its contents. But the original Nicene Creed contained likewise an anathema, which afterwards dropped out of it; the anathema is to be referred to the heresies, and may not be applied to particular persons, whose judge is God alone; and finally, the whole intention is, not that salvation and perdition depend on the acceptance and rejection of any theological formulary or human conception and exhibition of the truth, but that faith in the revealed truth itself, in the living God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and in Jesus Christ the God-Man and the Saviour of the world, is the thing which saves, even where the understanding may be very defective, and that unbelief is the thing which condemns; according to the declaration of the Lord: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16v16). In particular actual cases Christian humility and charity of course require the greatest caution, and leave the judgment to the all-knowing and just God.

The Athanasian Creed closes the succession of ecumenical symbols; symbols which are acknowledged by the entire orthodox Christian world, except that Evangelical Protestantism ascribes to them not an absolute, but only a relative authority, and reserves the right of freely investigating and further developing all church doctrines from the inexhaustible fountain of the infallible word of God.

(Schaff, 1890, vol. 3: 9:132)

Since its inception, the early church universally and unambiguously rejected both modalistic and dynamic forms of Monarchianism, and condemned those who promulgated it (e.g., Theodotus, Noetus, Praxeas, Sabellius, Paul of Samosata, etc.). As well, many important early church fathers sharply spoke out against it (e.g., Hippolytus, Tertullian, Dionysius of Alexandria, Dionysius bishop of Rome). What is more, every important ecclesiastical council (and resulting creed) from Nicea (325 AD) to the Third Council of Constantinople (680 AD) was firmly Trinitarian. **They clearly affirmed and safeguarded the distinctions between the Persons of the Trinity as well as the unipersonality and dual nature of the Son.**

The historical records speak clearly: the early church envisaged a tri-personal God. Hence, they assertively condemned any teaching that controverted or rejected the essential distinctions among the divine Persons of the Trinity. For **"the catholic (universal) Faith is this: that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the Persons; nor dividing the Essence,"** from 'The Athanasian Creed' (see Schaff, 1890: vol. 3: 9:132).

And after Modalism/Oneness theology re-emerged in the twentieth century, it was again rejected by the church. Advocates of Monarchianism, modalistic and dynamic, held to a misunderstood view of monotheism resulting in a unitarian/unipersonal view of God. Oneness theology was reactionary in that Oneness proponents reacted to the Trinitarianism infused in the apostolic tradition, namely, the church's rule of faith. They sacrificed the plain biblical teaching of a tri-personal God, at the expense of a heterodox unipersonal concept of God. Appropriately, the early church resisted this view with immense passion and commitment, contesting it by way of ecumenical councils and detailed theological letters. The early church saw Oneness theology as a radical departure from the biblical teaching regarding the nature of God.

The twentieth century Oneness teachers (e.g., D K Bernard, G Magee, William B Chalfant etc.) (try) to assert that the early church Christian leaders in the days immediately following the apostolic age were Oneness. William B. Chalfant ('Ancient Champions of Oneness' 1979: 116-18) makes the following remarks: "The trinity doctrine exists only on paper....No apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ ever taught such a doctrine....None of the immediate disciples of the apostles (e.g., Clement Ignatius, Hermas, or Polycarp) taught such a doctrine....Who began such a teaching?...Trinities abound in the ancient, false religions." Bernard also makes similar kinds of statements. However, the problem with their statements alleging what particular early church fathers said or what they meant to say is that they do not provide the exact addresses of the citations.

When the masses of early Church documentation is examined, not a single council or creed is found that affirmed Modalism, the early church universally condemned modalistic/Oneness theology and affirmed the doctrine of the Trinity!

Unitarianism and Oneness Standard Unitarian Proof-Texts (Mal 2v10 & 1Cor 8v6)

Bernard (1983: 248, 252) clarifies the Oneness doctrine of God:

"The modalistic doctrine is usually explained simply as the belief that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are only manifestations, modes, of the one God (the monarchia), and not three distinct persons (**hypostases**). . . . In summary, modalistic Monarchianism can be defined as the belief that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are manifestations of the one God with no distinctions of person [sic] being possible. Furthermore, the one God is expressed fully in the person of Jesus Christ."

"The Oneness position is made clear: modalistic Monarchianism, that is, Oneness theology, is unitarian in its doctrine of God, thus categorically rejecting the biblical doctrine of the Trinity. Fundamentally, Oneness theology maintains that God has revealed Himself as three roles, modes, manifestations, etc., and that the entire Godhead consists in one Person...Jesus Christ (cf. Bernard, 1983:57)."

Oneness theological position holds to a unitarian idea of God. It sees "one God" as "one Person," the Father. For that reason, the consequent proposition is that while on earth Jesus had two natures, divine, which is the mode or office of the "Father" and human, the mode or office of the human (not divine) "Son." Accordingly, the Oneness position argues that Jesus was both the "Father" and "Son." Notwithstanding the biblical data, Oneness teachers remove the three distinct Persons of the Trinity and postulate a unipersonal deity:

"There is one God with no essential divisions in His nature. He is not a plurality of persons, but He does have a plurality of manifestations, roles, titles, attributes....Jesus Christ is the Son of God [not God the Son]. He is the incarnation of the fullness of God [the Father] in His deity, Jesus is the Father and the Holy Spirit....Jesus is the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Bernard, 1983: 294-95).

Though there is no biblical passage in the New Testament that explicitly calls Jesus the "Father," Oneness supporters firmly maintain that Jesus is the Father.

Mal 2v10 states: "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?"

Oneness teachers (e.g., Bernard, 1983: 126) see this passage as teaching that there is only one (unipersonal) God: the Father. However, the passage does not say that *only* the Father is God. Secondly, to the Jewish mindset, the plain and normal meaning of "father" in this passage would have meant Creator. Hence, "father" (Heb. āb) was a term that normally signified God as Creator, which is well exemplified in the Old Testament: "...Is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?" (Deut 32v6); "But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand." (Isaiah 64v8)

1Cor 8v6 states: "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."

Along with Oneness Pentecostals, this passage is frequently utilized by unitarian groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses, who say that only Jehovah, the Father, is God Almighty. However, the Oneness position cannot stand for a number of reasons. Firstly, the passage actually distinguishes between "one God, the Father," and "one Lord, Jesus Christ." Secondly, if "one God" means that only the Father (not the Son) is God, then, "one Lord" would mean that only the Son, not the Father, is Lord. There are many passages that specifically call the Father *kurios* (e.g., Luke 10v21) and specifically call the Son *ho theos*, (e.g., John 20v28, Titus 2v13).

In the New Testament, Paul normally refers to the Father as *theos* and the Son as *kurios* particularly when the Father and Jesus appear in the same verse or context. In Paul's mind, in religious contexts both titles *theos* and *kurios* were two equal descriptions of deity. This is especially seen when one considers that the very term used to translate the Tetragrammaton (i.e., the Divine Name, Yahweh, "LORD") in LXX was *kurios*. Reformed theologian B. B. Warfield (1988: 220) comments on the way Paul used the two terms:

"Paul knows no difference between *theos* and *kurios* in point of rank; they are both to him designations of Deity and the discrimination by which the one is applied to the Father and the other to Christ is (so far) merely a convention by which two that are God are supplied with differentiating appellations by means of which they may be intelligibly spoken of severally."

Along with 1 Corinthians 8v6, Oneness teachers (e.g., Bernard, 1983:126) also use Ephesians 4v6 to "prove" the unitarian view that only the Father is God, but the same refutation in the last 2 paragraphs suffices. It is this foundation, then, that gives formulation to Jesus as the one Person behind the disguises or masks of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Conversely, though, Jesus as God was personally distinct from His Father, even before time (e.g., John 1v1,18, 17v5, Phil 2v6).

Oneness Standard Proof-Texts to Show That Jesus Is the Father

The most common proof texts employed by Oneness defenders are Isaiah 9v6, John 5v43, 10v30, 14v9, and Col 2v9. There is also a technical argument concerning the Greek conjunction kai in the salutations of Paul.

Isaiah 9v6: "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." Because of the phrase "Eternal Father," Oneness advocates argue that the passage is teaching that the prophesied Messiah, Jesus Christ, is the "Eternal Father." However, there are several flaws in this kind of modalistic interpretation:

- 1) Oneness teachers commit the fallacy of equivocation by asserting that the term "father" has only one meaning. As discussed above, the term "father" (ab) has various meanings in the Old Testament, depending on the context.
- 2) When the term "father" is applied to God (or Yahweh) in the Old Testament (only eight times), it denotes His parental character to His children, namely, Israel (e.g., Isaiah 63v16). Primarily though, the usage of "father" denoted God as Creator. As a matter of fact, the term "father" is not even a standard recurring title for God in the Old Testament; it is used only eight times.
- 3) The word translated "name" (shem) as in "His name will be called" (shem + qara) was not a formal title for God, but rather it denoted the essence or essential characteristics of who someone is (Young, 1972: 331). This was clearly the Semitic concept of "name." Hence, as to the essence and character of the Messiah, He is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace.
- 4) Along with the primary meaning of "Creator," the term "father" correspondingly carries the idea of "possessor" or "founder," as with His creation. For example, 2 Sam 23v31 speaks of Abialbon, which name means "father (or possessor) of strength," strong one. Exodus 6v24 speaks of a man named "Abiasaph," whose name means "father of gathering," he who gathers. Thus, the Messiah is ab of eternity, that is, possessor of eternity. Richards (1991: 266) further explains: The key word for "father" in the Bible is ab. It occurs 1,191 times in Hebrew and 9 times in Aramaic form. It is a complex word. Although it usually indicates a literal father or grandfather, it may also be used as a title of respect for a governor or prophet or priest....Ab is also used to indicate the founder of a guild. Thus Gen 4v21 identifies Jubal as "father of all who play the harp and flute", i.e., he was the first musician....It is probable that the title "Everlasting Father" ascribed to Messiah by Isaiah (Isaiah 9v6) is better understood as "father of eternity," i.e., founder of the ages.
- 5) Syntactically, the Hebrew term "father" precedes the word translated "eternal" (lit. "father eternal") indicating the eternal nature of the Messiah. The Aramaic Targums reveal this thought well: "For us a child is born, to us a son is given....and his name will be called the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, existing forever [or "He who lives forever"]. The Messiah in whose days peace shall increase upon us (Targum Jonathan; emphasis added)."
- 6) There has never been a Jewish commentator, Rabbi, or Christian scholar or writer that has interpreted Isaiah 9v6 as Oneness teachers do. Beisner (1998: 32) dismantles the Oneness exegesis here simply by pointing out that "I am a father, but I am not my father." Oneness teachers must prove that Jesus is specifically called the Father of the Son of God (i.e., His own Father). Isaiah 9v6 only calls Him "father of eternity."

John 5v43: "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."

In Oneness theology, the name of the unipersonal deity is "Jesus." So, Oneness teachers tell us when Jesus here claims that He comes "in His Father's name," He is actually declaring that the name of the Father (and the Son) is "Jesus." To make sense of the passage, that is, to make it teach Modalism, Bernard has this to say:

The Bible plainly states that there is one Father (Malachi 2v10, Ephesians 4v6). It also clearly teaches that Jesus is the one Father (Isaiah 9v6, John 10v30)....It is important to note that the name of the Father is Jesus, for this name fully reveals and expresses the Father. In John 5v43, Jesus said, "I am [sic] come in my Father's name." In other words, the Son inherited His Father's name....He fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy that stated the Messiah would declare the name of the LORD (Psalm 22v22; Hebrews 2v12). In what name did the Son come? What name did He obtain from His Father by inherence? What name did the Son manifest? The answer is apparent. The only name He used was the name of Jesus, His Father's name. (Bernard, *The Oneness of God*, 126-127)

As seen in other places, context is no friend of Oneness theology. At the outset, when the entire chapter is plainly read one cannot escape the clear distinctions between the Father and the Son. For example, notice in John 5v30-32 the straightforwardness in which the Son differentiates Himself from the Father:

"I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. If I alone testify about Myself, My testimony is not true. There is another [allos estin] who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true" (emphasis added).

"There is another," Jesus said, not one, but ANOTHER (allos). Do Oneness advocates really think that Jesus' audience would have understood Jesus as saying, "Oh yes, there is 'another' witness however what I really mean is the 'other' witness that I keep talking about, well, that is really Me—as the Father." In candidness, to completely abandon the plain reading, "There is another witness," and trade it for Modalism, is beyond a simple read-out interpretation, it is completely eisegetical, reading into the text a meaning that is external to the passage itself. Furthermore, there is even a larger strike against the Oneness rendering of the passage. It is concerning the term "name" again. Simply, the term *onoma* ("name") is found no less than one hundred and fifty-six times in the New Testament. **Note that the normal first century application of the term "name" predominantly was used to signify "authority" or "on behalf of."** This New Testament meaning extends back to such Old Testament passages as the David and Goliath narrative:

"You come to me with a sword, a spear and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD [Yahweh] of host, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted" (1 Sam 17v45; emphasis added).

David had informed the Philistines that he came in the "name" of the Lord, that is, by the authority of the Lord. Hence, Oneness dogma: Jesus is the name of the Father, does not follow, for just as David was not claiming to be the Lord himself, only coming in the authority of the Lord, so also Jesus was not claiming to be the Father, only coming in His authority. We can see this meaning even in modern parlance, as in the phrase, "Stop in the name of (or authority) of the law!" In the same way, then, Jesus here (John 5v43) comes in the authority or in behalf of the Father.

Phil 2v10-11: "At the name of Jesus"

Philippians 2v6-11 is a beautiful high Christological hymn known as the *Carmen Christi* (Hymn to Christ). What is relevant to our discussion of the Oneness claim is the phrase "at the name of Jesus" in verse 10. It is used by Oneness adherents to assert that the name of the unipersonal deity is "Jesus" (cf. Bernard, *The Oneness of God*, 223).

First, it was not the mere name *Iēsous* ("Jesus") that was "above every name," for *Iēsous* was a common name in first century Palestine. Rather, it was the *onoma*, "name" that belonged to Jesus. Grammatically, *Iēsous* here in verse 10 is in the genitive case, namely, a genitive of possession. Therefore, the "highest name" in which every knee will bow and every tongue will confess was the name that Jesus possessed or the name that belonged to Him. For the name that belonged to Him, keeping with Paul's context (i.e., Jesus the Son as the fulfilment of Isaiah 45v23) is revealed in verse 11: *kurios Iēsous Christos* (lit. "Lord Jesus Christ")—thus, Paul identifies Jesus as the Yahweh of Isaiah 45v23 (cf. vv. 21-25). For Yahweh, which is translated *kurios* in the LXX, is the name that the Son possessed. Hence, Paul places *kurios* in the emphatic position emphasizing the Son's exaltation as Yahweh—the name that belonged to Him.

John 10v30: "I and my Father are one."

This text is probably the single most cited passage in all Oneness dialogues. Its significance to this movement is rather straightforward: Jesus said, "I and the Father are one," therefore, Jesus and the Father are the same Person. Moreover, the use of this text is not new to the modern era, for there have been many through the centuries who have sought to maintain the Oneness premise by appealing to this verse. But again, is this what the text is asserting? Is this what Jesus meant? A careful look at the passage in its grammatical structure, actually proves the very opposite of the Oneness assertion. Sabellius himself utilized this passage.

First, Jesus does not say that He "is" the Father, only that He and the Father "are" one. The Greek reads: *egō kai ho patēr hen esmen* (lit. "I and the Father one we are"). Simply, the verb *esmen* ("are") is plural in the Greek, hence, Jesus did not say, "I and the Father am [eimi] one," but rather, "I and the Father are [esmen] one." When Modalism first emerged, Christian theologians brought out this grammatical point in their apologetic refutation. For example, Tertullian (*Against Praxeas* 22) grammatically refutes the John 10v30 assertions made by the modalists of his day:

"He says, 'My Father, which gave them to me, is greater than all,' adding immediately, 'I am and my Father are one.' Here, then, they take their stand, too infatuated, nay, too blind, to see in the first place that there is in this passage an intimation of Two Beings—'I and my Father;' then that there is a plural predicate, 'are,'—inapplicable to one person....They argue that this passage teaches that Jesus unquestionably claims to be His own Father."

In the same way, early church polemicist and defender of Christian Orthodoxy, Hippolytus, corrects the grammatical error of the first known modalist, Noetus of Smyrna:

"If, again, he [Noetus] alleges His [Christ's] own word when He said, "I and the Father are one," let him attend to the fact, and understand that He did not say, "I and the Father am one, but are one." For the word are, is not said of one person, but it refers to two persons, and one power (emphasis added)."

Lastly, there is another grammatical element, which is normally overlooked by Oneness believers. The word translated "one" (hen) is in the neuter gender. In Greek, the neuter hen indicates unity of essence not absolute identity. (cf. Thayer, 1996: 186) If Jesus wanted to communicate that He was Himself the Father, He certainly would have used the masculine heis (cf. Mark 12v29, 1 Tim 2v5). Greek grammarian A. T. Robertson comments on the specific application of the neuter hen in John 10v30: "One (hen). Neuter, not masculine (heis). Not one person (cf. heis in Gal 3v28), but one essence or nature."

Likewise, New Testament scholar Murray Harris observes that

"This dual conception of "distinction of person-community of essence" also comes to expression in John 10v30, egw kai o pathr en esmen, which refers to neither personal identity (which would require eiV esmen) nor simply to agreement to of will and purpose (since John 10v28b, 29b implies at least an equality of power)."

In his competent commentary on the Gospel of John, biblical exegete David J. Ellis notes:

"The neuter gender rules out any thought of meaning 'one Person.' This is not a comment on the nature of the Godhead. Rather, having spoken of the sheep's security in both Himself and the Father, Jesus underlines what He has said by indicating that in action the Father and He can be regarded as a single entity, because their wills are one."

The grammatical certainty of the passage terminates the Oneness presupposition mainly due to the plural verb esmen ("are") and the neuter hen ("one") being utilized rather than the masculine heis. Thus, John 10v30 actually contradicts Oneness theology. As Robertson concludes: **"By the plural sumus ["are"] (separate persons) Sabellius is refuted, by unum ["one in essence"] Arius."** For if that was the message that Jesus wanted to convey why did He not plainly do so? After all, He was a masterful communicator. On the contrary, He taught the opposite of what Oneness preachers are forcing their followers to believe.

John 14v9: "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"

This passage is routinely quoted by the Oneness people, usually in the same breath with John 10v30, as though they were part of the same verse. Removing this verse from the immediate context, Oneness teachers manage to squeeze out a modalistic understanding. To start with, as in John 10v30, Jesus never said in this passage (or anywhere else in the NT) that He Himself was the Father, only that "He who has seen Me has seen the Father." More than that, there are four exegetical features, which provide a lucid refutation to the Oneness handling of the passage.

1) Context: In verse 6 Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." In verse 7, He then explains to the disciples that by knowing Him they "know" and "have seen" the Father (note the parallel: "know," "seen"). Still not understanding, Philip said to Jesus, "show us the Father" (v8). Jesus then reiterated (as a corrective) that by seeing Him they can see, that is, "know" or recognize the invisible Father (v9). The context is apparent: by knowing and seeing Jesus (as the only way to the Father), they could really see (i.e., know/recognize) the invisible and incapable of being seen Father (cf. 1Tim 6v16). For Jesus makes Him known, that is, He explains Him (cf. John 1v18). In John 1v18, Jesus says that "No one has seen God [the Father] at any time, the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." The word translated "explained" is *exēgēsato* (the aorist middle indicative of *echēgeomai*), which means "to lead out . . . to unfold, declare" (Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon, 223). Hence, it is God the Son who is the very image (*eikōn*) of the invisible Father (cf. Col 1v15) who brings out, that is, exegetes the Father. "He [Jesus] has made known or brought news of (the invisible God)" (Bauer, 2000: 349) One cannot have the Father except through the Son, Jesus Christ: "Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also" (1John 2v23; see also John 17v3). Note also that in 14v10, Jesus clearly differentiates Himself from the Father when He declares: "The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own." Rather it is the Father living in Me." To reiterate, the undisputable fact is this: not one time in the New Testament does Jesus (or any other person) state that He Himself is the Father.

2) The Father is spirit: When Jesus said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father," the only thing His disciples literally saw was Jesus' physical body. Both Oneness believers and Trinitarians agree to that the Father is invisible and does not have a physical body. Hence, Jesus could not have meant that by seeing Him they were literally seeing the Father.

3) First and third person personal pronouns: Throughout chapter 14, Jesus clearly differentiates Himself from the Father by using first person personal pronouns ("I," "Me," "Mine") to refer to Himself and third person personal pronouns ("He," "Him," "His") to refer to His Father (e.g., John 14v7,10,16). This case of marked distinction is also evident when Jesus differentiates Himself from God the Holy Spirit: "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another [allon] Helper, that He may be with you forever" (John 14v16; also see 14v7,10,26; emphasis added).

4) Different prepositions: Throughout John chapter 14 (and chaps. 15-16), Jesus distinguishes Himself from His Father by using different prepositions. This use of different prepositions "shows a relationship between them," and clearly denotes essential distinction, e.g., "no one comes to [pros] the Father but through [dia] Me" (John 14v6); "he who believes in [eis] Me....I am going to [pros] the Father" (v12; cf. also John 15v26, 16v28). Paul, too, regularly uses different prepositions to clearly differentiate the Father from the Son. In Ephesians 2v18, Paul teaches that by the agency of the Son, Christians have access to the Father by means of the Spirit: "For through Him [di' autou; the Son] we both have our access in [en] one Spirit to the Father [pros ton patera]."

Only by circumventing these points can Modalism be established from John 14v9. Tragically, we see the external influence of both tradition and the authority of the Oneness church on its adherents, robbing passages like John 14v9 of their true contextual meaning.

Col 2v9: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Oneness teachers presuppose that monotheism equals unipersonalism, hence rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity. A unipersonal (or unitarian) view is not biblically coherent to the graspable fact that the very foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity is unequivocal monotheism: one true God. Scripture reveals that God is an indivisible, inseparable, unquantifiable spirit. He is omnipresent, existing everywhere: "But who is able to build a house for Him, for the heavens and the highest heavens cannot contain Him?" (2Chron 2v6, cf. 6v18, Jer 23v23-24, Heb 4v13). Therefore, in Col 2v9, one would expect that "all the fullness of Deity" dwells in Christ, as it also dwells in the Father and the Holy Spirit—**God cannot be divided into thirds or parts.**

As previously pointed out, the book of Colossians sharply refuted the dualistic ideology (i.e., spirit vs. matter) of Gnosticism. The Gnostics repudiated the idea that the so-called "supreme God" would ever dwell in (or create) "evil matter," and hence they repudiated the concept of Jesus being God in the flesh. For that reason, Paul firmly presented his anti-Gnostic polemic by saying in essence: "Jesus created all things, in fact, all the fullness (plērōma) of the supreme the Deity (theotētos) presently, continuously, and permanently dwells (katoikei) in bodily form (sōmatikōs). Thus, Paul's intention and purpose in his letter to the Colossians was to refute the very heart of the Gnostic idea by arguing that (a) Jesus Christ (the Son; cf. 1v14-15) was absolutely God in flesh (theotētos sōmatikōs; cf. 2v9) and (b) that Christians are reconciled "in His fleshly body through [His physical] death" (1v22, again emphasizing His real flesh).

Therefore, against the Gnostics, in 2v9, Paul stressed in the strongest way that in the Person of the Son, Jesus Christ, constantly dwells all the fullness of God in human flesh. Paul was not teaching here that Jesus was the Father, which would have been completely out-of-flow with his anti-Gnostic polemic (and his entire theology). Nor was Paul simply providing an expressive essay on the doctrine of the Trinity; this was not his aim. Paul's main purpose was to present Jesus Christ as the God-man, Creator of all things (cf. 1v16-17), whose physical death provides redemption (cf. 1v20-22). The Jesus that Paul preached sliced explicitly through the Gnostic flesh-denying system—Jesus was **God in human flesh.**

The Gnostic controversy did not surround the Father, but rather it centered on the notion that "in Him," Jesus Christ, the "fullness" of the supreme God dwells permanently and continuously in human flesh. This was the absolute zenith of Paul's theology and the main thrust of his argument against Gnostics in his letter to the Colossians.

Kai and the Salutations of Paul

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and [kai] the Lord Jesus Christ." The specific benchmark of the Pauline corpus was Paul's salutations. He included them in the opening of every one of his epistles (e.g., Rom 1v7, 1Cor 1v3, 2Cor 1v2, Gal 1v3, Eph 1v2, Phil 1v2, Col 1v2 (partial), 1Thess 1v1 (inverted), 2Thess 1v2, 1Tim 1v2, 2Tim 1v2, Titus 1v4, Philem 1v3).

Paul clearly recognizes that the grace and peace flows equally from God the Father and Jesus Christ. In the salutations, Paul clearly delivers his point: the grace and peace is from (apo) God the Father and the Lord Jesus. Paul does not say that the grace and peace is from God the Father through (dia) the Lord Jesus Christ, as if Jesus were a mere instrument and not a direct source of the grace and peace. Paul's passion surges when he stresses that the grace and peace flows equally from (apo) both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Both Persons are the very objects of Paul's praise.

As already mentioned, Paul comprehends the terms *theos* and *kurios* as equal descriptions of deity. A plain reading of his salutations devoid of a prior theological commitment clearly distinguishes God the Father from the Lord Jesus Christ. In spite of this, Oneness teachers (e.g., Bernard, 1983: 208-9) insert Modalism into the salutations by proposing the idea that the conjunction *kai* should be translated, not as a simple connective "and," but as the ascensive "even." Paul's salutations are not teaching a distinction of Persons, Oneness teachers argue, but rather, they are teaching that Jesus is God the Father. In view of that, the so-called "correct" rendering, as Oneness teachers surmise, would be, "God the Father, *even* the Lord Jesus Christ." To sustain this Oneness grammatical assumption, Bernard (1983: 208-9) attempts to explain that:

"A study of Greek is very interesting in connection with these greeting passages. The word translated 'and' is from the Greek word *kai*. It can be translated as "and" or as "even" (in the sense of "that is" or "which is the same as"). For example, the KJV translates *kai* as "and" in II Corinthians 1v2 but as "even" in verse 3 [Bernard then proceeds to give a few more examples]....So the greetings could read just as easily "from God our Father, *even* the Lord Jesus Christ."

This argument as applied to the Pauline salutations is fundamentally flawed, grammatically and theologically.

Grammatically: The predominant usage of the logical conjunction *kai* in the New Testament is the connective "and," not the ascensive ("even"). There are 9,153 instances of *kai* in the New Testament (Mounce, 1993: 422). Of the total New Testament occurrences of *kai*, 4,829 times it is translated (in virtually every translation) as the simple connective "and," with only 97 times as the ascensive "even" (Kohlenberger et al., 1997: 401). Although passages such as Ephesians 5v3 present a proper use of the ascensive conjunction, the burden of proof unquestionably falls headlong on the one claiming that *kai* should be translated as "even."

In addition, according to Greek grammar (viz., Granville Sharp's rule #5) when there are multiple personal nouns in a clause that are connected by *kai* and the first noun lacks the article, each noun must denote a distinct person (Sharp, 1803: 12-14; Beisner, 1998: 36, 46). We see this in all of the Pauline salutations: *charis humin kai eirēnē apo theou patros hēmōn kai kuriou Iēsou Christou*, literally, "Grace to you and peace from God Father of us and Lord Jesus Christ." However, the salutation in Colossians 1v2 reads: "Grace and peace to you from God our Father" in most modern translations in which the phrase "and the Lord Jesus Christ" is absent, even though most manuscripts, including some important ones (ⲭ A C F G I [P] 075 M it vgcl [syh**] bo; Hier), read *kai kuriou Iēsou Christou* at the end of verse 2, corresponding to the standard wording of the Pauline salutation. There are, however, excellent and early witnesses (B D K L Ψ 33 81 1175 1505 1739 1881 al a m vgst.ww syp sa; Ambst) that exclude this phrase. Since there is no textual reason for the omission as being derived from the longer reading (otherwise, these manuscripts lacking the phrase would certainly have omitted the phrase in the other Pauline salutations), its authenticity is firm (cf. NA27, 1993: 523; Metzger, 1994: 552). Surveying the specific grammatical features that personally distinguish the Father from Jesus Christ in the salutations, New Testament scholar Murray Harris (1992: 266) notes:

"The formula *theos kai kurios* in reference to one person is not found in the NT or LXX and is rare elsewhere... whenever *theos* and *kurios* *Iēsou Christos* are conjoined or occur in close proximity (viz., within the same sentence), two persons are always being referred to (31 instances)."

In point of fact, there is no grammatical or contextual justification offered by Oneness teachers in support of their view. The grammatical conclusion is simply this: *unless the context deems otherwise, in light of the plain normal predominant New Testament usage, the logical conjunction kai, "and," should be translated as the simple connective "and," not the ascensive "even."* In spite of the grammatical analysis regarding the rules of Greek, Oneness teachers must force a predecided theology into the salutations to avoid the obvious: Jesus and His Father are two distinct Persons.

Theologically: Due to their a priori unitarian assumption, Oneness teachers force the most unnatural rendering into the text. On the contrary, Christians do not have to read into passages to support the doctrine Trinity. The end result of the Oneness hermeneutic is the wholesale abandonment of the clear reading of the text. The natural reading is jettisoned, and the most unnatural reading is forced. Otherwise, the passages, as they read, yield unmistakably the truth that Jesus and the Father are two distinct Persons.

The unipersonal deity of Modalism is nonexistent in the salutations, Scripture presents, unambiguously, the Father and the Son as two distinct, self-aware Persons. Paul's audience to which he was writing would have never understood the salutations as teaching that Jesus was both the Father and the Son. The normal bare reading of the entire Pauline corpus clearly denotes a tri-personal God:

"He [God the Father] saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to *His* mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the *Holy Spirit*, whom *He* poured out upon us richly through *Jesus Christ* our Savior (Titus 3v5-6; cf. also Rom 14v17-18, 2Cor 13v14, Eph 2v18, 1Thess 1v3-5).

Additional Considerations

The Old Testament Law was clear: "On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness" (Deut 17v6). In John 8v16-18, Jesus points to the authority of the Old Testament Law to validate His testimony to the unbelieving Jews:

"But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for *I am not alone* in it, but *I and the Father who sent Me*. Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of *two men is true*. I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me"

Jesus says two, which the Jews would have understood to mean simply two. He does not say, as Oneness theology asserts, that His divine nature testifies for His human nature, which would not line up with the Jewish or Christian interpretation of Deut 17v6, which naturally implies that the witnesses are two persons, not two natures. There are also further considerations that militate against the Oneness conclusion that Jesus is the Father:

1) The Oneness unitarian position denies essential historic biblical doctrines. For example:

- i) Oneness theology denies that the Son is the Creator. In Oneness theology Jesus as the Father is viewed as the Creator. Therefore, since only Jesus as the Father pre-existed, Oneness teachers conclude that the "manifestation" of the "Son" had its beginning at Bethlehem. In this sense, Bernard (1983: 104-5) explains that the "Sonship—or the role of the Son—began with the child conceived in the womb of Mary....From all of these verses, it is easy to see that the Son is not eternal, but was begotten by God almost 2000 years ago." Oneness Christology clearly denies the Son as Creator even in the face of Paul's clear presentation of the Son as the very Agent of creation (cf. Col 1v16-17, 1Cor 8v6).
- ii) Oneness theology denies the pre-existence of the Son, maintaining that Jesus as the Father pre-existed (cf. Bernard, 1983: 104-5; Magee, 1988: 25; UPCI, 2008c).
- iii) Oneness theology denies the biblical teaching of the incarnation by asserting that the Father, not the Son, came down and wrapped Himself (not became) flesh. John 1v14 declares, "The Word became flesh." The Greek here (*sarx egeneto*, lit., "flesh became") clearly indicates that the eternal Word (cf. John 1v1a) did not simply "wrap" Himself in flesh as one would put on an outfit or a costume, but rather He actually became (*egeneto*) flesh. Unfortunately, too many pastors and commentators miss the grammatical significance of this passage and declare, "God wrapped Himself in flesh" (a popular epithet among them). As a result, they unknowingly gratify Oneness believers who think that it was God the Father that put on or wrapped Himself in a flesh-body without actually becoming flesh, as if the Father dressed in flesh or put flesh on, as an actor would put on a mask without, of course, becoming the person that he or she is portraying.
- iv) Oneness theology denies Jesus' role as Mediator between God (the Father) and His elect (cf. 1Tim 2v5). By definition, a mediator is someone other than the recipient being mediated.
- v) Oneness theology denies the Son as divine intercessor (cf. Rom 8v34). Jesus cannot intercede before the Father on behalf of the believer if He Himself is the Father. For whom would He intercede?
- vi) Oneness theology denies Jesus as the substitutionary atoning sacrifice that provided satisfaction before the Father (i.e., the *hilasmos*; cf. 1John 2v2). If Jesus is both the Father and the Son, to whom did His sacrifice on the cross provide satisfaction? The mutual operation of the three Persons infallibly accomplishes the work of salvation (viz., the soteriological Trinity).

2) Jesus' use of first person references to refer to Himself and third person references to refer to the Father and Holy Spirit.

Jesus' use of first person personal pronouns and verb references to refer to Himself and third person personal pronouns and verb references to refer to the Father and the Holy Spirit positively dissolves the modalistic claim (e.g., John 14v7,10,16,26, 15v10, 16v13-14, 17v5). For example, in John 14v23, Jesus specifically applies first person plural verbs (*eleusometha*, "We will come," and *poiēsometha*, "We will make") to both Himself and His Father, clearly distinguishing Himself from His Father (cf. Gen 1v26-27, 3v22, 11v7-9, Isaiah 6v8).

3) Speaker-hearer distinctions.

There are many examples of a clear speaker-hearer relationship between the Father and Jesus, thus demonstrating that they are distinct cognizant Persons. This would be extremely inconsistent if Jesus and the Father were the same Person: "After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water....behold, a voice out of the heavens said, 'This is *My* [speaker] beloved *Son*, [hearer] in whom *I* [speaker] am well-pleased'" (Matt 3v16-17, see also Matt

17v5); "I [speaker] glorified *You* [hearer] on earth, having accomplished the work which *You* [hearer] have given *Me* [speaker] to do" (John 17v4, see also Luke 23v34,46). The Father and the Son, Jesus Christ, stand in an "I"- "You" relationship to each other; Jesus refers to the Father as "You" and Himself as "I." The Father likewise refers to Jesus as "You" and Himself as "I." Jesus personally and distinctly relates to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and the reverse is altogether true of the Father and the Holy Spirit relating to each other.

4) The early church universally rejected Modalism.

Since its inception, the early church universally and unambiguously rejected both modalistic and dynamic forms of Monarchianism, and condemned those who promulgated it (e.g., Theodotus, Noetus, Praxeas, Sabellius, Paul of Samosata, etc.). As well, many important early church fathers sharply spoke out against it (e.g., Hippolytus, Tertullian, Dionysius of Alexandria, Dionysius bishop of Rome). What is more, every important ecclesiastical council (and resulting creed) from Nicea (325 AD) to the Third Council of Constantinople (680 AD) was firmly Trinitarian. They clearly affirmed and safeguarded the distinctions between the Persons of the Trinity as well as the unipersonality and dual nature of the Son.

5) Biblical scholarship throughout church history (and subsequently) has rejected the teachings of Modalism.

There have never been any recognized Greek grammarians or recognized biblical scholars/commentators who have endorsed the UPCI or any other Oneness organization or agreed with Oneness Theology.

The Final Analysis: Jesus is not the Father

Nowhere in Scripture do Jesus or His apostles ever claim that Jesus is the Father. The writers of the New Testament always identified Jesus as the "Son" never as the Father: "Over fifty times Jesus and the Father are rendered distinct in the same verse" (Boyd, 1992: 68-69). In a straightforward way, the New Testament presents the Father and Son interacting with each other as two distinct Persons.

In addition, there are specific grammatical features, as already described, which clearly denote an authentic and actual personal distinction between them: 1) the case of the missing articles in the salutations of Paul, 2) repeated and different prepositions, 3) the repetition of the article, and 4) speaker-hearer distinctions between the Father and the Son. The idea that Jesus is both the Father and the Son turns their intimate relationship into a mere simulation. The Father and Son intimately and lovingly relate to one another: "The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand" (John 3v35, cf. 5v20, 10v17), and Jesus really does love the Father: "So that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me..." (John 14v31). This love exchange plainly differentiates between the Person of the Father and the Person of the Son as well as the Person of the Holy Spirit.

The Oneness solution to the many passages that speak of the personal loving interaction between the Father and the Son is the assertion that "The expression of love between Father and Son are explained as communication between the divine and human natures of Christ" (Bernard, 1983: 22). In other words, the "Father" mode loves the "Son" mode, or Jesus' human nature loves His own divine nature, and the reverse. This does not follow. By way of definition and logic, two abstract natures cannot have fellowship and love for each other. Natures cannot intellectually express emotion. Natures can neither give love nor receive love, for they are not *self-aware* nor cognizant. Only conscious persons are capable of giving and receiving love. The Son is the object of the Father's love. In Scripture, all three Persons give as well as receive love (e.g., John 11v5, 14v23, Rom 15v30, 2Cor 13v14, 2Thess 2v16, Jude 1v1).

The Son is not the Father. It is the Son who is presented as God-man, the very image and perfect representation of His Father (cf. John 1v18, Heb 1v3). In the Son's pre-existence (cf. John 1v1-3, Col 1v16-17), He had loving intercourse and glory with the Father (cf. John 1v1, 17v5).

The Son is clearly presented as the divine Priest (cf. Heb 7v1ff.) who revealed His Father to mankind (cf. John 1v18). The Son is the one and only Mediator between the Father and humans (cf. 1Tim 2v5). As a result, it was the Son, Jesus Christ, the *monogenēs theos* (John 1v18), who said: "No one comes *to* [pros] the Father but *through* [dia] Me" (John 14v6). The unipersonalism of Oneness theology nullifies Jesus' own authentication: "If I *alone* testify about Myself, My testimony is not true. There is *another* [allos: other than the one speaking] who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true" (John 5v31-32, cf. 8v17-18).

Jesus and the biblical authors utilized plain uncomplicated language that established a real distinction existing simultaneously between the Persons of the Trinity. The essential distinctions between the Father and the Son (and of the Spirit) were not merely distinctions of illusory modes, or functions, but actual:

"For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so *the Son, also gives life* to whom *He wishes*....For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 5v21, 6v38).

Jesus is not the Holy Spirit

As already stated, in Oneness theology Jesus is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This premise rejects the biblical revelation of Jesus Christ. So far, we have centered on the Oneness Christological assertion that Jesus is the Father, now, we will address the Oneness doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Bernard (1983: 128) briefly explains the Oneness position regarding the Holy Spirit:

"The Holy Spirit is simply God. God is holy (Lev 11v44, 1Peter 1v16). In fact, He alone is holy in Himself. God is also a Spirit (John 4v24), and there is one Spirit of God (1Cor 12v11, Eph 4v4). Therefore, "Holy Spirit" is another term for the one God."

In Oneness doctrine, the "Father" and the "Holy Spirit" are merely names or descriptions of the divine nature of Jesus. Thus, the divine nature of Christ is the Holy Spirit as well as the Father.

This is yet another example of the patent denial of both the unipersonality of Jesus Christ and the unipersonality of the Holy Spirit (cf. UPCI 2008b). Keeping consistent with this Oneness notion, in all passages where the Holy Spirit is said to be the speaker (e.g., Acts 8v29, 13v2, 21v11, Heb 3v7-11), it is merely Jesus switching from the Son or Father mode to the Holy Spirit mode. Yet there no indication or mention to Jesus' audience of this vacillation between modes. In point of fact, Jesus was a masterful communicator; if indeed Jesus was really the Holy Spirit, He would not have been so secret, so utterly evasive or vague as to hide this so-called important truth, for He was absolutely clear pertaining to His deity (e.g., John 5v17ff., 8v58, 10v30) and His humanity (e.g., Matt 26v26,28,38, John 8v40). In contrast, there are many passages where we read that the Holy Spirit was "sent" by the Father and Son. In John 15v26, we read that the Son sent the Holy Spirit *para* ("from") the Father to testify of the Son: "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you *from the Father [para tou patros]*, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds *from the Father [para tou patros]*, He will testify about Me" (cf. John 14v26).

Nevertheless, in spite of the plain reading of many passages, Oneness doctrine maintains that Jesus is the Holy Spirit, rendering any so-called implied distinction (such as 2Cor 1v14) as nothing more than a divine charade, namely, Jesus' divine nature being distinguished from His human nature. It is not biblically justified nor is it a reasonable inference to suggest that Jesus was speaking to His disciples in such a way as to lead them to believe that there were three subjects, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, when in fact there was really only one subject, Jesus.

Oneness standard proof-texts to show that Jesus is the Holy Spirit

Oneness teachers have fewer arguments in presenting Jesus as the Holy Spirit than in presenting Jesus as the Father. As demonstrated, the fundamental premise upon which the entire Oneness position rests is the assumption that God is unipersonal. This conviction provides the governing hermeneutic for Oneness teachers. The most frequently employed passages in which Oneness teachers manoeuvre to teach that Jesus is the Holy Spirit are John 4v24, Rom 8v9-11, 2Cor 3v17, Eph 4v4-6.

Aside from that, Oneness teachers posit the "same attributes" argument in that the works attributed to Jesus are the same works attributed to the Holy Spirit. Said another way, what Jesus does, the Holy Spirit does (e.g., creation, the resurrection of Jesus, salvation, being called the *paraklētos* dwelling with the believer, etc.). External influences enslave the biblical text when exegesis is abandoned.

The Oneness conclusion that Jesus is the Holy Spirit derives from a faulty method of proof-texting: citing a sequence of passages entirely detached from their defining contexts. Generally, the sequence forms around Rom 8v9-11 and Phil 1v19 where the phrase "the Spirit of Christ" appears. Eph 4v4 is then cited: "There is one . . . Spirit" connected with 1Cor 8v6: "one Lord Jesus Christ." Concluding with 2Cor 3v17 (a most used text): "Now the Lord is the Spirit." Therefore, Oneness teachers (cf. Bernard, 1983: 128; UPCI, 2008b) deduce that Jesus must be the Holy Spirit. In terms of John 4v24 ("God is spirit") and Eph 4v4, Oneness teachers assert that the word "spirit" (or "Spirit") is speaking specifically of the Holy Spirit (Bernard, 1983: 128 Magee, 1988: 16; UPCI, 2008b). As attractive as this scheme above may sound to Oneness believers, this kind of biblical hop-scotching only equivocates and confuses the terms "spirit" and "Lord."

John 4v24: "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." The Oneness assumption of unipersonalism dictates how the phrase "God is spirit" is to be taken in that the "spirit" in this passage is a reference to the Holy Spirit (Bernard, 1983: 128). As previously presented, Oneness theology maintains the notion that Jesus as the Father/Holy Spirit is God while the "Son" refers to His non-divine human nature (cf. Paterson, 1966: 22; Bernard, 1983: 99, 103). To assert here that "spirit" is the Holy Spirit is a fallacy of equivocation. It confuses the term translated "spirit" (*pneuma*) as having only one meaning—Holy Spirit. Although some older translations (e.g., KJV,

YLT, ASV) render *pneuma* as a capitalized "Spirit," **no** standard biblical commentary presents a modalistic understanding of the passage.

First, as briefly touched upon, the Greek term *pneuma* appears many times in the New Testament carrying a wide-range of meanings. For instance, *pneuma* is applied to the inward part or simple essence of a human being (e.g., 1Cor 6v20, Heb 4v12). Scripture generalizes the nature of humans as dichotomous, consisting of the *outer* quality (i.e., *soma*, *sarx*, etc.) and the *inner* quality, in which *pneuma* and *psuchē*, synonymously describe this element (cf. Raymond, 1998: 420-24). *Pneuma* is also applied to the unregenerate (e.g., 1 John 4v3); human characteristics (e.g., 2Tim 1 7); Jesus' human spirit (e.g., John 19v30); angels both good (e.g., Heb 1v14) and demonic (e.g., Mark 9v17, Acts 5v16), etc. *Pneuma* is also used symbolically, such as where Paul says: "I am present in spirit" (1Cor 5v3) or when he speaks of the "spirit of gentleness" (1Cor 4v21). Likewise, in 2Thess 2v8, *pneuma* is translated "breath" representatively of the Lord's judgment against the "lawless one": "Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth."

Even though the preponderance of the New Testament occurrences of *pneuma* signifies the third Person of the triune God, the Holy Spirit, it cannot be hastily assumed that at all times *pneuma* signifies the Holy Spirit (esp. at John 4:24). *Pneuma* occurs about 380 times in the New Testament (cf. NA27/UBS4). In the so-called *Textus Receptus*, it occurs 385 times.

Hence, the KJV, for example, translates these occurs of *pneuma* as (Jesus' own) ghost, 2 times; (Jesus' own) spirit, 6 times; (My) Spirit, 3 times; (evil) spirit, 47 times; Holy Ghost, 89 times; Spirit, 111 times; Spirit (of Christ), 2 times; Spirit (of God), 13 times; Spirit (of the Lord), 5 times; Spirit (of truth), 3 times; human spirit, 49 times; miscellaneous, 21 times; spirit, 8 times; and spirit (general), 26 times. The ultimate deciding factor in determining a particular word's function and definition is the context. Therefore, it is simply a gross misreading of any text to assume that a term carries the exact same meaning in every occurrence. Contextually, the dialogue leading up to verse 24 centers on the woman's misconception that worshipping God is limited geographically (i.e., on Mount Gerizim; cf. v. 20), a misconception which Jesus corrects.

Note how the phrase reads: *pneuma ho theos*, literally, "spirit the God" (the verb *estin* is implied). Grammatically speaking, *pneuma* is an anarthrous predicate nominative. The predicate *pneuma* expresses information pertaining to the subject, *theos*. That is, as to God's *quality* of nature or essence He is spirit, not "flesh and bones" (Luke 24v39). When *pneuma* has the article, the Person is usually being thought of; and when *pneuma* is anarthrous, His nature (i.e., what He is) or His activity is usually being thought of (Greenlee, 1986: 24). Semantically, then, *pneuma* is not definite (i.e., "the Spirit"). Nor, is it indefinite (i.e., "a spirit," one of many) as the KJV mistranslates. Rather, *pneuma* is *qualitative* (Wallace, 1996: 270). Hence, the anarthrous predicate emphasizes the character and nature as with *theos* in John 1:1c (Rogers Jr. and Rogers III, 1998: 189).

A similar example is found in John 1v14: *ho logos sarx egeneto*. The Greek syntax of John 1v1 and 4v24 differ only on one minor aspect; in 4v24, the verb is implied, while in John 1v14, the verb (*egeneto*) is stated. The Logos did not become *the flesh* (tagging *sarx*, as definite) or *a flesh* (indefinite, one of many), but rather the eternal Logos became flesh. He partook *qualitatively* of human nature. It is for this reason that most modern translations do not capitalize "spirit" keeping faithful to the qualitative tag of *pneuma*.

So, in contrast to the Oneness interpretation, Jesus taught in John 4v24 that 1) God is omnipresent, hence, He can be worshipped anywhere and 2) His Father as to His *essential quality* or essence was spirit, but not the Holy Spirit (i.e., not as to His identity) which a definite tag would surely denote. In other words, Jesus uses *pneuma* here in John 4v24, to refer to the nature of the Godhead, and not the third Person of the Trinity (cf. Geneva Study Bible, 1995).

Rom 8v9-11: "However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the *Spirit of God* [*pneuma theou*] dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the *Spirit of Christ* [*pneuma Christou*], he does not belong to Him. If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of your sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the *Spirit* [*pneuma*] of Him who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit [*autou pneumatos*] who dwells in you".

In this passage, notice the phrases *pneuma theou*, *pneuma Christou* (v9), *pneuma* (as in, "the Spirit of Him who raised Christ from the dead"), and *autou pneumatos* (v11). Starting with a modalistic premise, Oneness teachers (e.g., Bernard, 1983: 16, 128; Magee, 1988: 16; UPCI, 2008b) deduce that because each of these occurrences of "Spirit" (or "spirit") specifically denote the Holy Spirit, the phrase "Spirit of Christ," therefore, proves that Jesus is the Holy Spirit. In Oneness doctrine, the "Spirit of Christ" is the Holy Spirit, thus merely a mode of Jesus' divine nature (cf. Bernard, 1983: 128; UPCI, 2008b). However, this line of argumentation is defective. First and most importantly, the text does not explicitly state anywhere that Jesus is the Holy Spirit as promptly assumed by Oneness advocates. Second, in pointed contrast to the entire system of Oneness theology, Rom 8v3 clearly differentiates the Father from

the Son: "For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh".

There is no contextual (nor theological) justification for the Oneness assertion that the term *pneuma* used repetitiously identifies Jesus as the Holy Spirit. A careful exegesis of these passages positively controverts the Oneness position. In verse 9, *Christou* (as in *pneuma Christou*) is in the genitive case—namely, a genitive of source or origin in that the Spirit originated from Christ (Sanday and Headlam, 1904: 196; Greenlee, 1986: 25). Jesus promised His disciples: "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you *from the Father* [*para tou patros*], that is, the Spirit of truth who proceeds *from the Father* [*para tou patros*], He will testify about Me" (John 15v26; emphasis added; cf. John 14v26). Thus, the Holy Spirit originates from the Father and from the Son. The same semantic force can be seen in 2Cor 3v3, where Christians are said to be *epistolē Christou*, "a letter *from* Christ" (see also Rom 9v16; and Rev 9v11).

There is absolutely no exegetical or contextual justification to assert that Paul was teaching here that Jesus was the Holy Spirit. In reference to Rom 8v9-11, Calvin (1989: 1.13.18) states:

"The Son is said to be of the Father only; the Spirit of both the Father and the Son. This is done in many passages, but none more clearly than in the eighth chapter of Romans, where the same Spirit is called indiscriminately the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of him who raised up Christ from the dead."

In Phil 1v19 we see the same grammatical significance: "For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ [*tou pneumatos Iēsou Christou*; i.e., the Spirit originating from Jesus Christ]". A usable way of illustrating this point is the phrase "Son of David." This appellation denoting the royal line and kingly office of our Saviour obviously does not mean that Jesus was Himself David. The phrase, in addition to being a kingly title, expresses the relationship that Jesus has with David in that Jesus is the royal descendent from David, and the rightful Messianic heir to the Davidic throne. Therefore, in light of that, the "Spirit of Christ" does not mean that Christ is the Holy Spirit, only that the Spirit proceeds or originates from Jesus Christ. Robertson (1931: 4:373) sees the "Spirit of Christ" and the "Spirit of God" as the same Spirit—the Holy Spirit from both God and Christ:

"The Spirit of Christ (*pneuma Christou*). The same as "the Spirit of God" just before. See also Phil 1v19, 1Peter 1v11. Incidental argument for the Deity of Christ and probably the meaning of 2Cor 3v18 "the Spirit of the Lord." Condition of first class, assumed as true."

Hawthorn and Martin (1993: 407) rightly observe that "The Spirit of Christ (as with the Spirit of God) seem to overlap or even become completely interchangeable....where 'the Spirit of God,' 'the Spirit of Christ' and 'Christ in you' all refer to the same reality." The Holy Spirit bears a relationship to both the Father and Christ, and yet is distinct from both of them as a divine Person. Allowing the context to define the understanding of *pneuma* in Rom 8v9-11 (and v3) actually leads to the very opposite of the Oneness position: the Spirit is intimately connected to the Father and the Son, so that He is identified as belonging to and *proceeding from* both. Yet the Spirit is neither the Father nor Jesus. Therefore, to suggest that the *Father sent Himself* is not only a misreading of the passage, but removes the plain intended meaning of the biblical author.

2Cor 3v17-18: "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." Oneness teachers (e.g., Bernard, 1983: 16, 128; Magee, 1988: 16) see the phrase "The Lord is the Spirit" as a solid so-called proof-text confirming that Jesus, who is "Lord," is the Holy Spirit. However, as with Rom 8v9-11, nowhere do these passages state that Jesus is the Holy Spirit, only that "the Lord is the Spirit."

First of all, the context actually prevents a Oneness interpretation. In verses 1-18, Paul is simply contrasting the Old Testament Law, which "kills" and "fades away" (v7, 11), with the New Testament Spirit of grace, which "gives life" and will "last." In keeping with Paul's theme, the Lord, Christ Jesus, is the Spirit that gives life. Paul had previously stated in reference to Christ: "The last Adam became a life-giving spirit" (1Cor 15v45). The ministry of the Spirit of grace is Jesus Christ (cf. v8). Jesus is that Spirit, but He is not the Holy Spirit. 2Corinthians cannot be taken as so-called evidence that the identity of the Holy Spirit is Jesus Christ. The first occurrence of "Lord" in the passages refers to the wording of Exodus 34v34 (in the LXX). Hawthorn and Martin (1993: 407) observe that:

"When those in this age 'turn to the Lord' (i.e., God) as Moses did at Sinai, a veil of spiritual blindness is lifted from their eyes; only now 'Lord' signifies 'the Spirit' who is the key to knowledge of God. This is Paul's interpretation of the OT passage's meaning, which he applies to his conflict with Jews and Jewish Christians. The next verse must be understood in this context: it is the work of 'the Lord who is the Spirit' to transform believers into the image of Christ, the Last Adam, the pattern of a new humanity (2Cor 3v18).

The expression, "Spirit of Christ" cannot be taken as "an exegetical genitive phrase, meaning 'the Spirit which = Christ'" (Hawthorn and Martin, 1993: 407). Throughout Paul's epistles, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are always personally distinguished. Jesus is portrayed as 1) the Father's Son (cf. Rom 1v3, Gal 4v4), 2) possessing a human nature (cf. Rom 1v3, 8v3, Gal 4v4, Phil 2v7, 1Tim 2v5), 3) dying "for our sins" (1Cor 15v3, Rom 5v8, 2Cor 5v15), and 4) being resurrected physically to life and seated at God's right hand (cf. Col 3v3, Phil 2v9). These are not works said of the Holy Spirit (cf. Hawthorn and Martin, 1993: 407).

To assert that *pneuma* in 2Cor 3v17-18 (and Eph 4v4) is the Holy Spirit ignores Paul's own theology (Paul constantly distinguishes the Holy Spirit from Jesus), the surrounding context, and Paul's pressing connection with the Old Testament concept of the Spirit in Exodus 34. John 4v24, Rom 8v9-11, 2Cor 3v17-18, Phil 1v19 are passages that Oneness teachers mishandle to avoid the biblical truth that Jesus Christ is not the Holy Spirit.

Eph 4v4-6: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." As with other passages that read, "one God" and/or "one Father" (e.g., Mal 2v10, 1Cor 8v6), the Oneness unitarian assumption governs how they are to be interpreted. Here, as with John 4v24, the terms "one" and "Spirit" are equivocated and thus a Oneness meaning is posited: "Spirit" equals "Holy Spirit" and "one" equals unipersonal. Therefore, according to Oneness reasoning (Bernard, 1983: 128), the "one" describes the unipersonal God (Jesus), and the terms "Spirit," "Lord" and "God/Father" are descriptions of Jesus' three modes or manifestations.

At the outset, Eph 4v4 does not specifically indicate that "one Spirit" is the Person of the "Holy Spirit." Since *Pneuma* here is not preceded by the adjective *hagios* (*hen sōma kai hen pneuma*), any intended reference to the Holy Spirit must be demonstrated contextually. This is not to say that only where *hagios* precedes *pneuma* does *pneuma* denote the Holy Spirit. For there are places in Paul's Epistles (and other New Testament books) where Paul specifically refers to the Holy Spirit as *pneuma*, and lacks the adjective *hagios* (e.g., 1Cor 12v13, 1 Tim 4v1, etc.). At these places, however, there is a clear contextual justification to conclude as much. Some see the Holy Spirit here in Eph 4v6, but within a Trinitarian context, for Robertson (1931: 4:535) says: "One God and Father of all. . . . Not a separate God for each nation or religion. One God for all men. See here the Trinity again (Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit)."

Even so, there is no contextual reason to interpret the passages as Oneness teachers do, assuming what they have not proved. However, even if Eph 4v4 were pertaining specifically to the Holy Spirit, which is possible, the passage would actually support the doctrine of Trinity, presenting the essential unity of the three Persons: "There is....one Spirit....one Lord....one God (v 4-6). Either way, the verse is definitely not teaching Modalism.

That God is one Being (one Spirit) and three separate Spirits is consistent with the doctrine of the Trinity. To connect these passages to 2Cor 3v17-18 (as Oneness teachers do; cf. Bernard, 1983: 16, 128; Magee, 1988: 16) ignores the fact that Ephesians 4v4 specifically speaks of "one Spirit," and 2Corinthians ("the Lord is the Spirit") may be, as indicated above, speaking of the fundamental nature or essence of God. Oneness believers may attempt to turn these passages into modalistic proof-texts, but the Oneness dilemma still remains: **there is no place in the New Testament that states explicitly that Jesus *is* the Holy Spirit.**

The Biblical Teaching: Jesus is not the Holy Spirit

Scripture plainly presents the unipersonality of the Holy Spirit and thus the Spirit's personal distinction from Jesus. One cannot accept this premise, however, if one starts with an a priori theological assumption that is adventitious to an exegetical examination of Scripture. Contrary to the faulty hermeneutical method employed by Oneness teachers, to understand correctly the interpretation of any biblical text, one must attain the biblical authors' intention. Bearing that in mind, we shall focus on some biblical key points that exegetically establish the Holy Spirit as a divine Person existing distinct from Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is Distinct

On its own merit, Scripture indicates that the Holy Spirit is personally distinct *from* the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ. In fact, "the Holy Spirit," as Boyd (1992: 117) observes, "is distinctly referred to over two hundred times in the New Testament!" Thus, throughout the New Testament, Scripture speaks of the Holy Spirit and Jesus as distinct Persons over two hundred times. Never once does Scripture call Jesus the "Holy Spirit." In passages such as 2Cor 13v14, the Holy Spirit is grammatically distinguished from the Father and Jesus. The Greek reads: *Hē charis tou kuriou Iēsou Christou kai hē agapē tou theou kai hē koinōnia tou hagiou pneumatos meta pantōn humōn*, literally, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of the God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit with all of you." According to the rules of Greek grammar, when the Greek conjunction (i.e., the copulative *kai*) is inserted between nouns of the same case and each of those nouns are preceded by the article (*ho*) each noun denotes "a different

person, thing, or quality from the preceding noun" (Sharp, 1803: 14-19; cf. Beisner, 1998: 36, 46). Within the particular limitations of the rule, there exist no exceptions.

Therefore, in 2Cor 13:14, "*the* Lord Jesus Christ and....*the* God and....*the* Holy Spirit" are clearly distinguished from each other as distinct Persons. There are many places in the Bible (in the same verse or context) where this grammatical construction is found differentiating either all three Persons in the Trinity or Jesus from the Father (e.g., Matt 28v19, Col 2v2, 1Thess 3v11, 1John 1v3, 2v22-23, Rev 5v13, etc.). To revisit this point of evidence, which clearly demonstrates a personal distinction between Jesus and the Holy Spirit, Jesus uses *first person* personal pronouns and verb references to refer to Himself and *third person* personal pronouns and verb references to refer to the Holy Spirit:

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in *My* [*mou*, first person] name, *He* [*ekeinos*, third person, i.e., indirect reference], will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that *I* [*egō*, first person] have said to you" (John 14v26, cf. also John 14v16, 16v13-14).

The Holy Spirit is a Person

Oneness theology depersonalizes the Holy Spirit. The Oneness idea of the Holy Spirit bears many similarities to the definition offered by Jehovah's Witnesses: an impersonal active force likened to electricity (cf. Watchtower, 1989a: 380-81). Bernard (1983: 128) provides his understanding of the Oneness idea of a non-personal Holy Spirit:

"When we speak of the Holy Spirit, we are reminding ourselves of God's invisible work among men and of His ability to anoint, baptize, fill, and indwell human lives. The term [Holy Spirit] speaks of God *in activity*: "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen 1v2).

Consider the following:

1) Personal pronouns applied to the Holy Spirit.

Antithetical to the modalistic understanding is the way in which Scripture plainly speaks of the Holy Spirit as a personal Self. Indeed, as just presented, Jesus Himself uses personal pronouns to refer to the Holy Spirit, demonstrating very clearly His view of the Spirit as a self-aware Person. In passages such as John 14v26, the masculine demonstrative pronoun *ekeinos* is used in contextual reference to the Holy Spirit who is said to be the *paraklētos*. However, the grammatical referent is not the neuter *pneuma*, but rather the masculine *paraklētos*. Thus, the pronoun is naturally translated as "He."

In Greek, pronouns must match their referents in person and gender (Tsoukalas, 1999: 218). However, note John 16v13-14, where this general rule is not followed. Here Jesus Christ notably emphasizes the Spirit's personhood by the use of the *masculine* personal pronoun *ekeinos* (and the reflexive masculine personal pronoun *heautou*, lit., "He Himself") to denote specifically the *neuter* noun *pneuma*, "Spirit":

"But when *He* [*ekeinos*—masculine], the *Spirit* [*pneuma*—neuter] of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; He will not speak on *His own initiative* [*heautou*, masculine], but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. *He* [*ekeinos*—masculine] will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you".

Notice here that the masculine pronoun *ekeinos*, does not match the neuter noun *pneuma*. To be grammatically correct, the pronoun should have been the neuter *ekeino*, agreeing with the corresponding neuter noun *pneuma*. Clearly, Jesus purposely emphasized the Spirit's personhood by using masculine pronouns, which disagree grammatically with its referent, *pneuma*.

2) The Holy Spirit coherently and intelligently communicates.

Scripture is replete with references to the Holy Spirit communicating, hence, personally interacting with *other persons* (e.g., Acts 8v29, 13v2, 28v25,26, Heb 3v7-11, 10v15-17). Interestingly, the Jehovah's Witnesses (Watchtower, 1973: 27), who also deny the deity and personhood of the Spirit, define "person" as one with the ability to communicate with others. This explains their reason for identifying Satan as a person and not an impersonal entity. Only cognizant persons can exercise intelligent communication. In Acts 10v19-20, not only does the Holy Spirit personally communicate (i.e., issues commands) to Peter, but He even refers to Himself as *egō*: "While Peter was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, the three men are looking for you. But get up, go down stairs and accompany them without misgivings, for *I* [*egō*] have sent them *Myself*". The same is true in Acts 13v2, where the Holy Spirit personally communicates using first person personal references (pronoun/verb) to refer to Himself:

"While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for *Me [moi]* Barnabas, and Saul for the work to which *I have called [prospeklēmai]* them".

3) The Holy Spirit possesses personal attributes.

Along with personal communication, the Holy Spirit possesses emotions and personal attributes, which only self-aware persons or selves can experience:

- a) He can be blasphemed (cf. Mark 3v29,30)
- b) He can be lied to (cf. Acts 5v3)
- c) He intercedes or prays on the behalf of the believer (cf. Rom 8v26)
- d) He issues commands (cf. Acts 6v6, 10v19-20, 13v2)
- e) He is intelligent in that He investigates and searches (cf. 1Cor 2v10-11, Rom 8v27)
- f) He has a will (cf. 1Cor 12v9-11)
- g) He can be grieved (cf. Isaiah 63v10, Eph 4v30)
- h) He testifies (cf. Neh 9v30, John 15v26, Heb 10v15) and teaches (cf. John 14v26)
- i) He loves and has fellowship with believers (cf. Rom 15v30, 2Cor 13v14)

By way of biblical definition, then, the Holy Spirit is a distinct Person from Jesus Christ. He is God, having the same attributes as God. He possesses all the qualities and attributes that self-aware persons inherently have. The biblical presentation of the Holy Spirit is in opposition to the Oneness description. Bernard (cf. 1983: 128) sees the Holy Spirit as merely "God in activity." Passages such as Acts 10v19-20 and 13v2 clearly indicate that the Holy Spirit identifies Himself as an *egō*, a self-aware Person. The theological commitment to unipersonalism prevents the Oneness advocate from envisaging the Holy Spirit as a distinct Person. The Holy Spirit is a relational distinct Person in contrast to the modalistic idea of the Holy Spirit as a unipersonal temporary mode of Jesus. In spite of the biblical substantiation of the personhood of the Holy Spirit, the UPCI (2008c) asks, "Does the Bible call the Holy Ghost a second or third person in the Godhead?" to which they sharply respond: "No. The Holy Ghost is the one Spirit of God, the one God Himself at work in our lives. John 4v24, 1Cor 3v16-17, 6v19, 12v13." Oneness Christology maintains the idea that Jesus is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, differing only in function, not in Person. When reading the Gospels, Oneness believers must determine if Jesus is speaking as the Father, or Son, or as the Holy Spirit. In contrast to this unnatural way of reading the text, Jesus speaks very plainly regarding His personal distinction from the Holy Spirit.

4) The Holy Spirit gives, loves and continually has fellowship with believers.

The Apostle Paul was certainly bold and clear when it came to exhorting the people of God with grand Trinitarian benedictions. Turning again to 2Cor 13v14, notice how Paul comforts the saints in Corinth with these words: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the *fellowship [koinōnia]* of the Holy Spirit be with you all". Again, only self-aware persons can experience and give true fellowship. This same *koinōnia* believers have with the Father and the Son: "We proclaim to you also, so that you too may have *fellowship [koinōnia]* with us; and indeed our *fellowship* is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1John 1v3).

As a distinct emotional Person, the Holy Spirit *gives* love. As a result, the Apostle Paul provides absolute solace with these encouraging words to the Christians in Rome: "Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and *by [dia]* the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me" (Rom 15v30). Observe also here how Paul again grammatically distinguishes the three Persons: "*Our Lord [tou kuriou]* Jesus Christ," and *[kai]* "*the Spirit [tou pneumatou]*", and "God" [*pros ton theon*, lit., "to God"]. First, as already discussed, the repeated article *tou* and the insertion of *kai* between *tou kuriou* and *tou pneumatou* denotes a clear distinction between Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Second, note that the love *comes by/from (dia)* the Holy Spirit. Love is an act accomplished solely by self-aware persons, not natures, offices, modes, or manifestations. True emotion expresses true personhood.

The Final Analysis: Jesus is not the Holy Spirit

The Oneness assertion that Jesus is the Holy Spirit Himself, as to His divine nature, in which no personal differentiation exists, does not take into account the profuse amount of ink that the biblical authors spent distinguishing Jesus from the Holy Spirit *in the same context* (esp. John chaps 14-16). In Luke 10v21-22, Luke records a very intimate and beautiful prayer of Jesus Christ addressed to the Father in which Jesus rejoices in the Holy Spirit:

At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, "I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight. All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him" (Luke 10v21-22).

In the same decidedly Trinitarian context, the Apostle Paul speaks of salvation accomplished by means of the triune God:

"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3v5-7).

This examination has exegetically demonstrated, yet again, the ability of the Scriptures to distinguish clearly between Jesus and the Holy Spirit. When one allows the plain reading of the text to govern the exegesis, one sees clearly the lack of substance in the Oneness claim. **Biblically seen, the Holy Spirit is a divine Person distinct from Jesus Christ in the Trinity.**

The Baptismal Formula: "In Jesus' Name" (Only)

It should be pointed out that, historically speaking, the Oneness belief that baptism should be performed "in Jesus' name" or "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ," rather than with the traditional Trinitarian formula, actually preceded the Oneness doctrine. The "New Issue" (that the Devil used to bring in this old destructive heresy of Modalism) that ultimately resulted in a split between the Trinitarian and non-Trinitarian Pentecostals in the second decade of the twentieth century was originally an issue only over the correct baptismal formula. Indeed, the belief that baptism should be done "in Jesus' name" was the principal factor that ultimately led to the belief that Jesus is himself the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the agent of regeneration, the baptism in water is the outward sign and ordinance of regeneration.

The Oneness Pentecostals & Acts 2v38:

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...."(KJV).

The UPCI uses this passage (among others) to support its view that water baptism must be done "in the name of Jesus" only to be valid. Since the UPCI theology holds to the idea that Jesus is the "Father," "Son," and "Holy Spirit." The UPCI's position is clear: Peter commands new converts to (a) repent, be water baptized and (b) be baptized only by way of the exact formula: "in the name of Jesus." Therefore, as the UPCI asserts, the remission or forgiveness of sins is accomplished only by water baptism "in the name of Jesus," and repentance. However, only by disregarding the historical context and ignoring the grammar can the UPCI hold to such a heterodox view. Furthermore, the doctrine of baptismal regeneration controverts the theology of Luke (e.g., Acts 10v43). Even so, UPCI leader David Bernard remarks on the necessity of water baptism, as he understands Acts 2v38:

"We should remember that water baptism is administered because of our past life of sin; it is for the 'remission of sins' (Acts 2v38). Since the name of Jesus is the only saving name (Acts 4v12), it is logical that the name be used in baptism" (The Oneness of God, 139).

In proper biblical interpretation: grammar dictates theology, theology does not dictate grammar. This is a vital point in exegesis. There are at least four acceptable interpretations of the passage. However, of the interpretations offered by competent Christian theologians none provide for baptismal regeneration. Noted Greek grammarian J. R. Mantey offers one such acceptable interpretation. He argued that the preposition *eis* ("for") could be causal, hence the passage could read: "And Peter said to them, 'Repent, and be baptized—each one of you—at the name of Jesus Christ because of/for/unto the forgiveness of your sins.'"

In other words, the preposition *eis* should be translated "because of," or "in view of" not "in order to" or "for the purpose of" forgiveness of sins. Mantey believed that a salvation by grace would be violated if a causal *eis* were not evident in such passages as Acts 2v38. This way of handling the text is also concurred by one of the world's premium and most quoted New Testament Greek grammarians A. T. Robertson:

"My view is decidedly against the idea that Peter, Paul, or any one in the New Testament taught baptism as essential to the remission of sins or the means of securing such remission. So I understand Peter to be urging baptism on each of them who had already turned (repented) and for it to be done in the name of Jesus Christ on the basis of the forgiveness of sins which they had already received (Word Pictures, 3:35-36)."

There is also another grammatical aspect to be considered. There is a shift from second person plural to third person singular and back to second person plural. Notice below:

- 1) The verb "repent" (metanoēsate) is second person plural and is in the active voice.
- 2) And "be baptized" (baptisthētō) is third person singular and is in the passive voice.
- 3) The Greek pronoun translated "your" (humōn) is in a second person plural.

Therefore, the grammatical connection is: "repent" (active plural) with "your" (active plural) as in "for the remission of your [humōn] sins" and not "be baptized" (passive singular) with "for the remission of your sins." Moreover, the same wording "for the remission of your sins" is used in reference to John's baptism (cf. Luke 3v3, Mark 1v4) and that baptism did not save, it was a preparatory baptism and of the coming Messiah and a call to repentance. An additional view, however, is that baptism represents both the spiritual reality and the ritual which is an acceptable view that works well in the scope of the context.

Notwithstanding the different shades of interpretation, which in fact do not contradict, but only enhance....they are all in accord with good exegesis. Contrary to the UPCI position, which violates not only the theology in Acts (e.g., 10v43) but also the entire theology of the New Testament (e.g., John 6v47, Rom 4v4ff., Gal 2v16).

The Book of Acts and the "Name of Jesus"

Fundamentally, the UPCI believers confuse narrative with didactic or teaching portions of Scripture, which inevitably lead to a distorted exegesis. When we come to the book of Acts it must be remembered that Luke was providing a narrative of the events of the first thirty years or so of the church to a man named Theophilus. Luke tells of what happened (narration) not how it should happen (didactic) in the early church. Therefore, because of this hermeneutical blunder, UPCI churches take and dissect the book of Acts, thoroughly disregarding the context and grammar, and thus deduce that baptism should only be done using the verbal formula, "in the name of Jesus" only.

Oneness folks will often assert: "we are following the apostolic doctrine." However, there are two major flaws in this line of thinking: (a) it neglects the Semitic concept and significance of what the expression, "in the name of" meant to a first century audience and (b) it confuses narrative with didactic portions of Scripture. Even more problematic is the fact there are many verses in Scripture where "baptism" is mentioned without the "Jesus' name" formula (e.g., Rom 6v3-4, Gal 3v27, Col 2v10-12).

Which Formula: "In," "On," or "Into the Name of Jesus"?

That a precise formula must be verbally administered, when one is baptized does prompt the question: which precise formula is correct? There are three in Acts: "on [epi] the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2v38); "into [eis] the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 8v16, 19v5); and "in [en] the name of the Jesus Christ." (Acts 10v48). If the UPCI insists that the "Jesus' name" formula found in Acts is the standard, then, why is it that the apostles doctrines, which the UPCI claim to strictly follow, did not use the same exact formula? Even more confusing, was it in the name of "Jesus Christ" (Acts 2v38, 10v48) or "the Lord Jesus" (Acts 8v16, 19v5)?

Certainly, you would think, that if God required an exact verbal formula for baptism to be valid, the apostles would have not erred on such a critical issue. Because of the three different formulas with different prepositions ("on," "in," "into") and different titles for Jesus ("Jesus Christ," "Lord Jesus"), many Oneness churches are in disagreement as to the "correct" formula. The expression, "in the name of Jesus" defined the kind of baptism.

Thus, when the early church would baptize, it was in the "name," that is, **by the authority of** Jesus Christ. To be baptized into something was to be unified or identified with that something...hence, we read in 1Cor 10v2 that the Israelites, "were all baptized into Moses."

Baptizing in the Trinitarian Formula or "In Jesus' name" Only?

"But why" some will ask, "is the verbal formula in Acts different from that of the Trinitarian formula in Matthew 28v19?" First off all, it is questionable and thus assumed that the phrase "in/on/into the name of Jesus" was an actual verbal pronouncement. To pray, ask, or be baptized "in the name of Jesus" was an equivalent way of saying: in or by the authority of Jesus Christ. Jesus said that He came in His Father's name (John 5v43), that is, Jesus came in the "authority" or "on behalf" of the Father. Hence, it was not the verbal formula itself that had efficacy (see Acts 19v13).

Consider also that when Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission, He instructed them to go out into "ALL the nations." Most nations were pagan, worshipping creatures or things that were created, clueless of the true God. The fact is they needed full revelation of God: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Whereas in Acts, the new converts that were baptized, were Jews (Acts 2v5), God-fearing Gentiles (Acts 10v1-2) and disciples of John the Baptist (Acts 19v1-5). All of those new converts had prior knowledge of "God" per se, but the emphasis, for true salvation, was on

Jesus (Acts 4v12). Therefore, it was Jesus that the new converts were baptized, that is, united, and identified with—on behalf of Him.

But even if one insists that the verbal formula was, “in the name of Jesus” which is not itself erroneous, it does not follow that the name formula must be instituted in order for baptism to be valid and salvation a reality. That idea sharply contradicts the clear teaching in the New Testament (e.g., John 5v24, Acts 10v43). Even if granted that the early Christians used the verbal “name formula” (which was never done the exact same way), there is clearly no justification to assert that the name formula is now didactic (i.e., a prescriptive doctrine). “In the name of Jesus” then, was probably not the verbal formula; the actual verbal formula would have been, out of obedience, the Trinitarian formula inaugurated by Jesus Himself (cf. Matt 28v19).

In Oneness theology, they confess “the name of Jesus” but remove Him from the Trinity, remove Him from His relationship with His Father, remove Him as Mediator, and remove Him from truly being God-man. (**Please see Appendix N: Baptism in Water**)

Summary

Jesus Christ consistently affirmed that salvation consist of having accurate knowledge/assent/trust in the Son of biblical revelation (cf. John 8v24). One cannot deny the Person and nature of the Son and yet claim to have the Son, for he does not (cf. John 3v36). As already exegetically outlined, Jesus Christ is God the Son, the second Person of the Holy Trinity. As to the essence of the Son, He has full deity in the same sense ontologically as that of God the Father. He is the eternal Word, the Lord of Glory who became flesh; thus, He is the God-man. Undeniably, Oneness Christology radically departs from the exegetical presentation of the Son, thus redefining Him as a mode or a mere role. Because of its rejection of the Trinity, Oneness doctrine asserts another Christ than that of the biblical presentation.

The Oneness Christological divergences include a patent denial of the unipersonality and deity of the Son, His pre-existence, and His role as Creator. Oneness theology maintains that Jesus is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, thus asserting a unitarian/unipersonal concept of God. Yet, neither Jesus nor His apostles ever claimed this. Nor was Jesus ever called Father or Holy Spirit.

Over two hundred times Jesus is specifically referred to as “Son” and over fifty times Jesus and the Father are rendered distinct in the same verse (Boyd, 1992: 68-69). The Oneness view of Jesus Christ along with its crass unipersonalism is in direct conflict with the New Testament presentation, responsible exegesis of which substantiates the following facts:

- 1) The unipersonality of Jesus Christ
- 2) The full deity and humanity of the Son (and His pre-existence and role as Creator)
- 3) The numerical and personal distinction between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
- 4) The distinct personhood of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
- 5) The personal intimate loving (giving and receiving love) interaction between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, which clearly differentiates between the three Persons

Scripture presents a clear Christology. The Person of the Son is fully God (cf. John 1v1, Titus 2v13). He has distinctly co-existed *with* (*pros/para*) God the Father (cf. John 1v1, 17v5). He became human (cf. John 1v14, Phil 2v7-8) and *was sent* by the Father (cf. John 6v37ff.) to redeem man to God by His sacrificial death on the cross (cf. Mark 10v45, Rom 5v9-11, 8v32). The Son is the only mediator and intercessor between the Father and humans (cf. Rom 8v34, 1Tim 2v5). Thus, the Christ of biblical revelation is the divine Son, a personal self-aware subject distinct from the Father and the Holy Spirit. This is the Christ that saves, this is the Christ that Paul and the other New Testament authors preached. The *very ground* of justification is through this God-man’s infallible and efficacious cross-work, the *very instrument* being faith alone, not the sacrament of water baptism (i.e., a work) accompanied by a five word formula (viz., “in the name of Jesus”) to which the church has never prescribed. The rejection of the unipersonality and deity of the Son, the rejection of the unipersonality of both the Father and the Holy Spirit, and the rejection of the personal distinctions between Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit constitute a rejection of the very nature of God Himself (cf. John 17v3, 1John 2v22-23).

Section II

The Scriptural Proofs of The Absolute Deity Of Christ

As already mentioned in the introduction of this study, the destructive heresies that the Devil came against the early Church with, through his servants, in the first four centuries AD, **ALL** attacked Christ’s true deity and real humanity,

so, in this section I will set forth, from the Scriptures, proof, that He is indeed truly God manifest in the flesh. John 1v1,14, 1Tim 3v16 (KJV)

(NOTE: Please see Appendix E: The Correct Textural Reading Of 1Tim 3v16)

Introduction

Nobody has made the claims that Christ Jesus made and substantiated by His character, life, teaching, miracles and actions. Jesus claimed that He had shared an eternal fellowship, oneness and equality of glory with God the Father. Matt 11v27, John 1v18, 5v18, 10v30, 16v15, 17v1,5,9,10,20-23,25. Jesus said that He had been sent by the Father to live on earth the beautiful divine life that He had lived in heaven with the Father. John 5v17, 16v28, 20v21. "Through the tender mercy of God: the dayspring from on high has visited us." Luke 1v78. Jesus said that His life was the perfect expression of the Father's being and character, and that He and the Father share an interfusion of nature and being. John 10v38, 17v20-23, 14v7-11, Heb 1v3.

Jesus claimed, enjoyed, and will forever receive, the worship and praise that can only be given to God. John 5v23, Phil 2v9-11, Rev 1v5,6, 5v11-14, etc. In heaven Christ shared with the Father the divine qualities and prerogatives that only belong to God; omnipotence, Matt 28v18-20, Rev 1v8; omnipresence, Matt 18v20, 28v19,20; omniscience, Rev 2v23 with 1Kings 8v39. Jesus claimed he had authority to forgive sins. Mark 2v5-10, Luke 24v46-48. He also not only proved that He had the authority and power to raise the dead, but said that at His command all the dead would be raised, and that He is the Judge who will decide the eternal destinies of all mankind on the great judgement day. John 5v22-29, 6v39,40,44,54, 10v17,18, 11v25, Matt 25v31-46.

The Scriptures warn us that many false prophets and teachers would arise and deny the deity of Christ and His atonement. 2Pet 2v1-3. These heretics are not Christians, and until they repent and believe the truth, they can have no place in the kingdom of God. Acts 4v12, Gal 1v6-12, 1John 5v12, 2John v9,10, Jude v4. The deity of Jesus is a fundamental Christian truth and acceptance or rejection of Jesus as our God and Saviour, will decide our eternal destiny. 2Pet 1v1, (Revised Version), Acts 8v35-37, 20v28.

The full complement of the Divine qualities of character are fully revealed in Christ. Col 2v3,9. The disciples who lived and walked with Jesus viewed His life with awe and wonder, and gave unanimous testimony to the fact that He was "that eternal life, which was with the Father." John proclaims the awesome truth, "The Word was God....and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1v1,14, 1John 1v1-3. True Christians worship the Lord Jesus and say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God." John 20v28.

1) Christ's Unique Sonship Proves His Absolute Deity

The sonship of Christ is unique and superior to any other person who is called "a son of God."

A) Christ's Sonship is unique and superior to the sonship of angels

Angels are called "the sons of God" in Gen 6v4, Job 1v6, 2v1, 38v7. However, Heb 1v1-14 emphatically declares that Christ's sonship is greatly superior and different to the sonship of angels, these verses clearly state that Jesus is the great Yahweh who created all things, and whose throne is for ever and ever.

B) Christ's Sonship is unique and superior to the sonship of men

a) Christ's Sonship is Superior to Adam's sonship.

In Luke 3v38, in the genealogy proving Christ's physical descent from Adam; Adam is called a son of God. However, this is only showing that Adam was the direct creation of God, and had no human parents. The Scriptures clearly state that the sonship of Adam is inferior to that of angels and the redeemed sons of God. John 1v12,13, Psalm 8v4,5 with Heb 2v5-7, 1Cor 15v45-50.

b) Christ's Sonship is superior to Israel's sonship

In Hosea 11v1, we read that God looked upon the whole of Israel as His son. God also calls the judges and rulers of Israel by the name "elohim," because as judges they represent Him and take an oath to perform justice. Psalm 82v1,6, Exodus 7v1, 21v6, 22v8,9,28, John 10v34-39. The sonship of Christ is far superior to that of any Israelite or earthly ruler.

c) Christ's Sonship is superior to the sonship of the New Testament sons of God

Believers in Christ are also called "sons of God." John 1v12, Rom 8v14-19, 9v25,26, Gal 3v26, 4v4-7, Phil 2v25, 1John 3v1,2. However, this sonship is only by adoption and grace, and not by right of divine primacy and absolute deity, which is the origin of Christ's sonship.

C) Christ's unique sonship is stated and proved in the Scriptures

a) God the Father testified to the unique sonship of Christ.

God twice openly declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt 3v17, 17v5, 2Pet 1v17,18, 1John 5v9-13.

b) The Jews recognised that Christ's claim of unique Sonship meant equality with the Father

In John 5v15-18 and 10v30-39, the Jews were infuriated over Christ's claim to a unique Sonship and oneness with God, they said He was claiming absolute deity, and making Himself equal to God, and were so enraged that they tried to kill Him. In John 8v56-59, our Lord's claim to "I Am" deity also angered them to the point of attempted murder.

c) Our Lord was crucified for His claims to a unique sonship and absolute deity

At His trial our Lord Jesus could have escaped death by denying His claim to unique Sonship and deity, but He affirmed His divine sonship more strongly, even though it meant His death. Matt 26v63-65, John 19v7.

d) Many Scriptures state that our Lord's unique Sonship affirmed His absolute deity

Jesus is called "the Son of God" in a definite unique sense of absolute deity in the following passages. Matt 4v3,6, 8v29, 14v33, 16v16, Mark 1v1, 3v11, Luke 1v32,35, John 1v34,49, 6v69, 9v35, 10v36, 11v27, 20v28-31, Acts 8v37, 9v20, Rom 1v4, 2Cor 1v9, Gal 2v20, Eph 4v13, Heb 4v14, 6v6, 7v3, 10v29, 1John 3v8, 4v15.

D) The title "The ONLY begotten Son of God" is proof of Christ's deity

Jesus is called the "ONLY begotten Son of God." John 1v14,18, 3v16,18, 1John 4v9. The French Bible translates "His only begotten Son," as "Son Fils unique," which means, "His unique Son," and "monogenes" certainly carries the meaning "unique," and "only one of its kind."

In John 1v18, Burgon, follows the vast majority of manuscripts and a majority of Church Fathers, and says that "vios," "Son;" is the correct text, and rejects the reading "only begotten God," and says that it is an alteration introduced into the text by the Gnostic Valentinus, and his followers. (Valentinus lived about 150 AD, when Gnosticism was at its height.)

The Scriptures also state that THE SON WHO WAS TO BE GIVEN WAS CHRIST THE LORD, GOD WITH US. Isaiah 7v14, 9v6, Matt 1v18-26, Luke 1v35, 2v11. In John 1v1,14, John tells us that the only begotten Son of God, is none other than God the Word manifested in human flesh. In John 1v14, "the only begotten from the Father," "hos monogenous para Patros," does not mean that Christ was created, it declares His unique relationship with the Father, for the Scriptures teach that as God, Jesus had no beginning: His going have been **"FROM EVERLASTING."** Micah 5v2, Psalm 90v1,2, John 1v1, Heb 1v8, 7v1-3, Rev 1v8-11. etc.

NB1 The quotation in Heb 1v5, from Psalm 2v7, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee;" is a declaration by the Father of Christ's unique Sonship and Deity. For the context in Heb 1v1-14, affirms Christ's eternal deity by saying that Jesus is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person:" and in a quotation from Psalm 45v6,7, we read in Heb 1v8 that the Father says to Jesus, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." In another quotation from Psalm 102v25-27, we read in Heb 1v10-12, that Jesus is the immutable and unchangeable Yahweh who laid the foundations of the earth. People have to be spiritually blind to miss, or wilfully ignore, such clear Biblical declarations from God the Father of Christ's unique sonship and absolute deity.

In Heb 1v5,6, "begotten," refers to the time when Jesus took upon Himself our humanity, the day of the incarnate Saviour's birth, "Thou art my Son, **THIS DAY HAVE I BEGOTTEN THEE;**" the day is specifically said to be, "when He bringeth in the first begotten into the world." **It is interesting to note that the quote from Psalm 2v7, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee;" that is applied in Heb 1v5,6 to the incarnation and birth of Christ upon a certain day; is applied in Acts 13v32-34 to Christ being raised from the dead on a certain day; and in Heb 5v5,6 to the start of Christ's high priestly ministry on that day of resurrection and ascension.**

2) The title "Firstborn," "Prototokos" (Strong's NT:4416), proves Christ's Deity

1 "Firstborn" is used as a title of position and honour in relation to Jesus

"Firstborn," "prototokos," is used to describe the firstborn of a human family, and is used to describe Jesus as being Mary's firstborn Son, Luke 2v7, Matt 1v25 and in Heb 11v28, of the firstborn sons of the Egyptians. However, it can be clearly seen from the Scriptures that "firstborn" is used in a special and unique sense in reference to the Lord Jesus. The Scriptures show His right to be the Head and Lord of the Church, and His brethren, of all creation, and of the dead. Jesus is "the firstborn of many brethren," Rom 8v29, "the firstborn of every creature," Col 1v15, "the firstborn from the dead," Col 1v18, "His firstborn," Heb 1v6, "Head of the Church of the firstborn," Heb 12v23, "the firstborn of the dead." Rev 1v5. Jesus is the Head of all things not just because of His absolute deity, but through His glorious sacrificial love, which brought about our salvation. Phil 2v1-13.

NB2 Paul uses "prototokos," "firstborn;" not "protoktisteos," "first creation"

Some heretics and false teachers have said that the word "prototokos," which is translated "firstborn," shows that Christ is the first creation of God. However, if Paul had meant that Christ was the first creation of God, he would have used the Greek word "protoktisteos," meaning, "first creation." The Scriptures clearly state that Christ had no beginning and was from everlasting. Micah 5v2, Psalm 90v1,2 and Neh 9v6,7 with John 1v1-3, Isaiah 9v6, Heb 1v8-12, 7v1-3, Rev 1v8-11, etc. Jesus is, "That eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." 1John 1v2. These Scriptures, and many more, definitely state that Christ was the uncreated Yahweh Creator God of creation.

2 "Firstborn" is used as a title of pre-eminence, not just in a time sense

In the Scriptures "firstborn" is not only used in a time sense, it describes a title of pre-eminence, leadership and special honour as well, for God uses it of men who were not the firstborn child.

a) Jacob was the firstborn in God's eyes, even though Esau was the firstborn by natural birth

God rejected the carnal and godless firstborn Esau, and gave Jacob the position of firstborn because of his integrity and godliness. Gen 25v23,27, 27v29, Mal 1v1-3, Rom 9v12,13, Heb 12v15-17 with Gen 25v33,34. In Gen 25v27 "plain" is "tam," (Strong's OT: 8535); which is used to describe Job as being "perfect" in Job 1v1 and 2v3. See Job 8v20, 9v20-22, Psalm 37v37.

b) Joseph was given the title "firstborn" that Reuben lost because of his sin

Reuben forfeited his position as firstborn because of his immorality. Gen 49v3,4. Jacob recognised that God had given the birthright to Joseph, because of his godliness. Gen 49v22-26, NB v26. **The coat of many colours signified the priesthood and spiritual leadership of the family.** Gen 37v2-11. We also read that later on in Israel's history, "Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler." Gen 49v3,4, 1Chron 5v1,2.

c) God said the whole nation of Israel were His firstborn. Exodus 4v22,23

Israel was chosen by God to be the spiritual leader and head of all the nations of the earth. Israel was not the first of God's creation, but was given the position of honour and spiritual leadership among all the nations, because of the faith and faithfulness of the patriarchs.

d) God said that David, Jesse's last-born son, was to be His firstborn. Psalm 89v20,27

By giving David the title "firstborn," God was saying that David was His appointed leader and head of God's people. God was certainly not saying that David was the first of His creation. David was ordained the shepherd and leader of Israel, because of His loving shepherd's heart and his faithfulness to God.

e) Jesus is called "the firstborn from the dead," even though others were resurrected before Him

Christ is called "the firstborn out from among the dead," "prototokos ek ton nekron," Col 1v18, "the firstborn of the dead," "ho prototokos ton nekron." Rev 1v5. In a time sense others were raised from the dead before Christ; however, only Christ has conquered death and Hades, and owns and holds the keys to them. Jesus alone is the Lord of life and death; He holds the primacy of position over all the dead. Rev 1v18, John 11v25,26. Jesus delivered all the redeemed from the power of death and Satan by His death, and so takes the position of primacy over the dead by right. Heb 2v14,15.

f) The Jews used the title "firstborn" of Yahweh to show His pre-eminence

The title "firstborn" was used to denote pre-eminence, indeed, the Jewish people applied it to God Himself, to show God's pre-eminence over the rest of Creation. The Jews called Yahweh, "the firstborn of all the world," and "the firstborn of all creation," to signify that He was the Creator and Head of all things. This is the sense in which the title "firstborn," "prototokos," is given to Jesus, it is used to show His pre-eminence over all creation, as the New English Bible shows by its translation of Col 1v15, "He is the image of the invisible God; His is the primacy over all created things." The title "firstborn" is applied to Christ to show His pre-eminence, and supreme position of honour.

NB3 Among the Israelites the firstborn son possessed special privileges

He was the successor to his father as the head of the house. **He received a special blessing from his father, and twice as much of his father's possessions as any other son.** Gen 27v4,19,27-29, Exodus 22v29, Deut 21v17. The firstborn was consecrated to God's service and was the priest for the family until the giving of the Law at Sinai, when the Levites became the priests instead of the firstborn. Num 8v13-19. Priests had to be physically perfect to take their place as priests, no blemish could be upon them. Lev 21v16-24. Our High Priest is "holy, without guile, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted higher than the heavens." Heb 7v26.

3 Paul uses the title "firstborn" to teach the absolute deity and divine Majesty of Christ

In Col 1v12-20, Paul affirms the eternal being, divine majesty, and absolute deity of Christ in the most definite way. Paul corrects the false speculative philosophy of the Gnostic teachers at Colosse, who used a misinterpretation of the

title "firstborn" to deny the uncreated and eternal deity of Jesus. These instructive verses state the same truths about Christ's deity as John 1v1-18, Phil 2v4-13 and Heb 1v1-14.

a) In Col 1v15, the "Firstborn," the Lord Jesus, is said to be "the image of the invisible God"

Paul states that the Lord Jesus is the image of the invisible God. In Col 1v15, "image" is "eikon" (Strong's NT:1504), which shows that Christ is the perfect likeness of God the Father, for "eikon" carries the thought of reality and exactness of likeness. Paul definitely states that Christ Jesus is not a vague and shadowy resemblance ("skia") of God; He is the very exact and perfect image of the Father. **In Christ Jesus all the glories of the invisible God become visible.** The essential nature, perfections, attributes and character of the invisible God are clearly seen in the incarnate Son, "For in Him there is continually and permanently at home all the fullness of absolute deity in bodily fashion." Col 2v9 Christ is the very image of the Father; He completely portrays the boundless and infinite love of God.

Jesus communicates to us the otherwise unknowable immensity and incommunicable attributes of the invisible God

The word translated "invisible," "aoratus," means "incommunicable" as well as "unseen," it occurs in Rom 1v20, Col 1v15,16, 1Tim 1v7 and Heb 11v27. Paul tells us in Rom 1v19,20, that the majesty of the creation clearly reveals the eternal power, beauty, and divinity, of God's invisible nature and attributes; however, only the Son can perfectly and experimentally declare and reveal the Father to the souls of men. Luke 10v22, John 1v18. Only God can reveal Himself perfectly to man, no creature can perfectly reveal God, only the God the Word can perfectly reveal God the Father. **Through the incarnate Jesus the glories of the invisible God's character are clearly revealed. We see the amazing sacrificial love of God in the incarnate God the Word.**

In 2Cor 4v4, Paul again states that Christ is the image, "eikon," of God; Jesus shares in the Father's being and is a perfect manifestation of that being. Jesus is the perfect revelation of the Father, as He said to Philip, he who has seen Me has seen the Father. John 14v9. Jesus is God with us. Matt 1v23 with Isaiah 7v14. Paul tells us in Phil 2v6 that Jesus existed in "the 'morphe' of God," that is "the essential form, being, nature and essence of God," and He came to earth to reveal it to mankind.

NB4 By putting off the old man and putting on the new man, and by contemplating our Lord's glory and wonderful character we can be progressively transfigured from glory to glory by the Spirit of God into our Lord's image; when this occurs the divine purpose to conform us to the image ("eikon") of Christ will be fulfilled. Col 3v10, 2Cor 3v18, Rom 8v29. In Rom 8v29, "conformed to the image," is "summorphous tes eikonos," the use of the adjective "summorphous," from "sun," "with," and "morphe," "form," shows that the conformity to the image is inward, deep and real. Phil 2v6. We are not deified, that alone is God's prerogative, but through God's precious promises we are made partakers of the divine nature. 2Pet 1v4.

In Heb 1v3 the Firstborn Son is said to be "the express image" of God the Father

In Heb 1v3 Paul uses a different word from Col 1v15 when he says that Jesus is the "express image" of the being and substance of God the father. "Express image" is a translation of the word "charakter," from which we get our word "character." The Greek word "charakter" is used to speak of THE EXACT REPRODUCTION of an engraved character, or THE EXACT IMPRESSION made by a die upon a coin, or a seal upon wax. Like a die produces an exact impression upon metal, or a seal upon wax. Paul writes that Jesus is "the exact reproduction of the Father's very being," "charakter tes hupostaseos." "Hupostasis" speaks of that which lies or is placed underneath, and in common usage it speaks of the foundation or substratum, and in Heb 11v1 it is used of the faith being "the foundation" and "title deeds" (so used in papyri) of things hoped for. "Hupostasis," is also used to describe essential being and essence, "ousia." If we are wise we will accept the meaning given to "hypostasis" by the early Church, and avoid the philosophical reasoning and speculative terminology on the nature of God that brought such great controversy into the Church in later Church history. It is enough for us to know that Jesus is the exact representation, as a die produces upon metal, or as a seal produces upon wax, of the Father's very being and character. **Only God the Son can be the exact representation of God the Father.**

b) The Firstborn, the Lord Jesus, is definitely stated to be the great Creator

Christ is said to be the architect, constructor, sustainer and purpose behind creation. Col 1v16,17 Jesus is the great Creator God. Psalm 90v1,2, Neh 9v6,7 with John 1v1-3, Heb 1v8-12. Jesus is the great First and Last Yahweh Creator. Rev 1v8,11,17, 2v8 with Isaiah 44v6 and 48v12,13. Jesus existed eternally before all things, and all things hold together in Him, He sustains the creation. Col 1v17. All creation, angelic or human, heavenly or earthly, exist because of Christ our Lord. We will consider this at greater length later. In Rev 1v11, the Majority Text and Critical Texts omit, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last. However, Rev 1v17, 2v8 and 22v12-16, which state that Jesus is "The First and the Last," are in the original Greek text. The conclusion cannot be denied, Jesus is Yahweh, our great Creator God.

c) The Firstborn, the Lord Jesus, is the Lord our Redeemer

The firstborn, the Lord Jesus, has reconciled all things unto Himself by the blood of His cross. Col 1v20,21, cf. 2Cor 5v18,19. We are reconciled to God the Father by the blood of Christ. The Scriptures state that it is Yahweh who is the Redeemer and the righteousness of His people; Christ is our righteousness and our redeemer, the promised Branch, the Son and Lord of David. Jer 23v5,6. We will consider this at greater length later, however, we can see by these brief comments, that the "Firstborn" is the incarnate and glorious God the Word, who was manifested in the flesh for our salvation.

NB5 "ALL the fullness of the Godhead dwells permanently in Jesus"

In Col 2v1-10 Paul rejects the attack on Christ's deity by the proud Gnostics, by stating that, "ALL the treasures of divine wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ," and are available to His Church. Paul warns against the vain philosophy and deceit of the Gnostics, and affirms that in Christ, "there is continuously and permanently at home all the fullness of absolute deity in a bodily form." **"ALL the fullness** ('pleroma') of the Godhead," not just limited and certain aspects of deity, permanently dwell in Jesus in bodily form; "and we are made full and complete in Him." "Godhead," here, is "theotetos," (from "theos," and "deitas") which emphasises the divine essence and nature of God; and it is to be distinguished from "theiotes," (from "theios") in Rom 1v20, which speaks of the divine attributes, God-like qualities. Jesus was not gilded with divine attributes for a season, and with a splendour and glory, which was not His own, His was the nature and being of absolute deity. The word "Godhead," "theotes," means that the exclusive and essential nature of God belonged to Christ. **Jesus came to live on earth the life He had lived in heaven, to reveal God to men; He is the very image of our unseen heavenly Father.**

3) The Deity of Christ is manifested in Christ's humanity

1 Jesus is "the Son of Man"

The title, "the Son of Man" was used by Christ to claim that He was the majestic person referred to in Dan 7v13,14. cf. Mark 14v62, Matt 24v27, 26v64, 10v23, Luke 22v28,29. **The title "Son of Man" is found seventy times in the Gospels; it was the name Christ chose to call Himself most by before men. It is obviously a claim to the Messiahship, but it is also obvious that by it Christ was expressing the limitations that He felt through His humanity.** Christ suffered exhaustion, hunger, thirst, temptation, grief, and indeed, all the trials of man but the taint of sin. **Jesus was truly human as well as truly divine. He had to learn like every human child, and suffered the normal physical limitations of the body.** Matt 8v24, Mark 2v16, 11v12, Luke 2v42-52, 4v2, John 4v6, 19v28, 1Tim 2v5, Heb 2v14, 4v15. The glory of Christ is that He victoriously conquered the World, the flesh and the Devil, in a human body, and against enormous odds accomplished our salvation. Hallelujah. **(Please see Appendix D: 'The glory and victory of Our Lord's humanity,' and Appendix O: Looking away unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith)**

2 In Phil 2v7 Paul said Jesus "emptied Himself," "heauton ekenose," to become man

We read in Phil 2v5-8, that Jesus was eternally existing ("huparchon," the present active participle of "huparcho" (Strong's NT:5225)) in the nature and form of God, "en morphe theou;" He possessed all the exclusive and essential attributes of God, and was worshipped as God by all in Heaven, and at His birth the Father commanded all the angels of God to continue to worship Jesus. Heb 1v6 with Deut 32v43, (Septuagint). Jesus thought it not robbery to be one with the Father and equal to the Father; He already existed in the essential form of God. Jesus claimed this equality with the Father even in His humanity, and His claim so infuriated the Jews that they tried to kill Him because of it. John 5v18. Jesus did not use His equality with the Father as a means to self-enrichment, or self-exaltation, but for our sakes emptied Himself, "heauton ekenose." Praise His wonderful Name!

A.T. Robinson gives the following helpful comments on Christ's emptying: "Phil 2v6....'Emptied Himself' (heauton ekenose). First aorist active indicative of 'kenoo,' old verb from 'kenos,' empty. "Of what did Christ empty Himself? Not of His divine nature. That was impossible. He continued to be the Son of God. There has risen great controversy on this word, a 'Kenosis' doctrine. Undoubtedly Christ gave up his environment of glory. He took upon himself the limitations of place (space) and of knowledge and of power, though still on earth retaining more of these than any mere man. It is here that men should show restraint and modesty, though it is hard to believe that Jesus limited himself by error of knowledge and certainly not by error of conduct. He was without sin, though tempted as we are. 'He stripped himself of the insignia of majesty' (Lightfoot).

v7. 'The form of a servant' ('morphen doulou'). He took the characteristic attributes ('morphen' as in v6) of a slave. His humanity was as real as his deity. 'In the likeness of men' (en homoiomati anthropon). It was a likeness, but a real likeness (Kennedy), no mere phantom humanity as the Docetic Gnostics held. Note the difference in tense between 'huparchon' (eternal existence in the 'morphe' of God) and 'genomenos' (second aorist middle participle of 'ginomai,' becoming, definite entrance in time upon his humanity)." End of quote.

Paul refutes the Docetic Gnostic theory that Jesus had no human body and the Cerinthian Gnostic teaching that the aeon Christ came upon the man Jesus at His baptism and departed just before His death upon the Cross, and that

they were two separate beings. John states that the denial of the humanity of Jesus by the Gnostics was the spirit of antichrist. 1John 4v1-6. Jesus had a real humanity as well as a true deity.

3 In Rom 8v3 Paul proclaims Christ's victory over the flesh

Paul rejoices in Christ's glorious victory over the trials and temptations of true humanity. It is a most wonderful fact, that out of pure love for us, God the Word became flesh "sarx," and suffered and overcame the trials and temptations of true humanity. John 1v14, 1John 4v2,3, 2Jn v7, 1Tim 3v16, Rom 1v4,5, 8v3, Heb 2v17,18, 4v15, 5v7, 10v5.

Jesus was manifest in flesh, "sarx;" but He never allowed the flesh to dominate Him. In Rom 8v3 Paul states that Jesus was, "in the likeness of sinful flesh," "en homoiomati sarkos hamartias," just as Phil 2v7, "in the likeness of men," "en homoiomati anthropon," the likeness is real, Jesus had a real humanity, not a false or phantom humanity as the Docetic Gnostics taught.

The Expositor's Greek Testament gives light on Rom 8v3: It states: "But the emphasis in "homoioima" is on Christ's likeness to us, not His unlikeness; "flesh of sin" is one idea to the Apostle, and what he means by it is that God sent His Son in that nature which in us is identified with sin. This was the "form" (and "form" rather than "likeness" is what "homoioima" signifies) in which Christ appeared amongst men. It does not prejudice Christ's sinlessness, which is a fixed point with the Apostle 'ab initio'; and if anyone says it involves a contradiction to maintain that Christ was sinless, and that He came in a nature which with us is identified with sin, it may be pointed out that this identification does not belong to the essence of our nature, but to its corruption, and that the uniform teaching of the New Testament is that Christ is one with us-short of sin. The likeness and the limitation of it (though the former is the point here urged) are equally essential in the Redeemer." Quote ends. "Homoioima," occurs in Rom 1v23, 5v14, 6v5, 8v3, Phil 2v7, Rev 9v7.

Alford writes on Rom 8v3: "'in the likeness of the flesh of sin' (the flesh 'whose attribute and character was sin). The genitive is not 'hamartolou,' but implies far more-[not merely the contamination by, but] the belonging to and being possessed by."....He had a nature 'like sinful human nature'- but had not Himself 'a sinful nature,' Compare Heb 4v15,....He was able to be tempted, i.e. subjected to sensuous incitements, e.g. of pain, which in other men break out into sin, but in Him did not." End of quote.

Jesus conquered the flesh that had corrupted and led all mankind into sin. His victory over sin, not only condemned sin in the flesh, but also enables us to live in victory over sin, through the law of the spirit and life in Christ. Rom 8v4. **Jesus partook of human flesh, but did not partake of the sins of the flesh; His holy life condemned sin in the flesh and showed that it was possible to live in victory over it.** In Heb 2v16-18, we read that Jesus took on Him the seed of Abraham, and that it was a moral duty and obligation ("opheilen," the imperfect active indicative of "opheilo," to be obligated), for Him to be made in all points like unto His brethren, and experience the same temptations, so that He could be our sympathetic High Priest. To be tempted in all points as we are, He had to be made in all points as we are. Heb 2v17 with 4v15. From the level of our humanity, Jesus conquered the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Blessed be His Name!

4 Our Lord said that during His humanity the Father was greater than Him, John 14v28

When Jesus said in John 14v28, "My Father is greater than I," He was speaking as a human being in His state of humiliation due to His incarnation. We read in Phil 2v5-8 that when Jesus was in Heaven, before His incarnation, He was existing in the essential form of God, and possessed equality with God the Father in glory and power. It was because He emptied Himself of this coequal glory and power, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and became man for the work of redemption, that Christ said that His Father was greater than He. The Lord prayed that this pre-incarnation glory should be restored to Him, and that He should again share the coequal glory that He had before the world began; "Father, glorify thou Me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." John 17v5. Christ prayed for the glory which belongs to Yahweh alone to be restored to Him, Isaiah 42v8, and after His resurrection He stated that this glory, power and authority had been given back to Him again; He had received all power in Heaven and in Earth. Matt 28v18-20. The Lord Jesus now has His full former glory, for we read that He is "the Word of God," and "the King of kings and the Lord of Lords." Rev 19v13-16.

Even in His earthly state of humiliation, the Jews understood that Christ claimed equality with God the Father. John 5v18, 10v33, Phil 2v6. Only deity can be equal to deity. Isaiah 46v5. Christ had laid aside His infinite power and knowledge for the work of redemption, and took upon Him the form of a servant, but He had equality with the Father in the essential Divine nature; they were one; Christ was in the Father and the father in Christ. John 10v30,38. **Christ was "sent" as a "servant," yet was equal to the Father in essential deity.**

5 In His humanity the Father was Christ's God

When Christ speaks in John 20v17 of the Father being His Father and His God, He still speaks, though risen and glorified, as the incarnate Son and perfect man, who became a servant for the work of redemption. In the same way Paul and Peter speak of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2Cor 11v31, Eph 1v33, 1Pet 1v3. Christ is "Lord," and yet in His work as Redeemer and Mediator, God the Father is His God. When Christ spoke to Mary He was

the Great High Priest of the Church, having shed His precious blood for our redemption, He became the mediator and intercessor between God the Father and mankind, "the man Christ Jesus." 1Tim 2v5, Heb 5v5.

NB1 Some heretics use 1Cor 8v4,6, to deny Christ's deity, saying it teaches that only the Father is God.

Bloomfield ably sums up 1Cor 8v6: "As to the Socinian perversion, founded on the distinction here recognised between the Father and the Son, the Apostle, by thus calling the Father the one God, does not exclude Jesus Christ from being the God of Christians, any more than he excludes the Father from being Lord by calling Christ 'the one Lord.' In short, as Dr Pye Smith (Script. Test. vol. 3. p.332) proves, 'the deity of Christ can no more be denied because the Father is here called 'one God,' than the dominion of the Father can be denied because the Son is called 'one Lord.'" By this mode of expression it is intimated that the Father and Son are one God and one Lord in the unity of the Godhead." End of quote.

A.T. Robertson comments on 1Cor 8v4: "No God but one." "This Christians held as firmly as Jews. The worship of Jesus as God's Son and the Holy Spirit does not recognise three Gods, but one God in three Persons....The cosmos, the ordered universe, can only be ruled by one God. Rom 1v20." End of quote.

Paul was certainly not denying the statements he made elsewhere that Jesus is God. Rom 9v5, Titus 2v13, Col 2v9, Acts 20v28. Indeed, Paul here states that Jesus is "The Great Creator God," who created all things.

NB2 Our Lord's reply to the rich young ruler

In Matt 19v17, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but God:" Jesus was certainly not denying His deity, or imply that He was not good, for He was sinless and perfect. Heb 7v26. The Lord did not reject the title "good master" because it was not applicable to Him, but rather because the rich young ruler had only applied it to Him as a mere man. The young ruler had complimented Christ, but he was blind to His deity, mission and kingdom, and Jesus desired to open his eyes to them all. I pray that this book will open many people's eyes to the glory, majesty, and absolute deity of God the Son.

6 Christ's subjection to the Father in 1Cor 15v28 completes His work of redemption

Paul tells us in 1Cor 15v28, that Jesus subjects Himself and His kingdom to the Father at the end of the Millennium, "that God might be all in all." All the probationary ages are past, and Christ's work of redeeming and leading mankind back to God is accomplished. The time has come for the Father to open all the riches of His Being to His dear children. We have to understand Christ's subjection to the Father in 1Cor 15v28 in the light of Christ's work as Redeemer and Mediator. All things have been put into subjection to Christ, Heb 2v3-14, and the Millennial Kingdom will be ruled by Christ. However, when the Millennial kingdom is finished and the Great White Throne judgement is concluded, the Son delivers the kingdom to the Father and His Kingdom merges with the Father's Kingdom, with whom He is one.

The making of a creation made it necessary for the Trinity to take up different activities and responsibilities, and this is particularly true regarding the work of mediation and redemption. Christ in His work as Mediator and Redeemer, has always been subject to the Father, He has only done the will of He who sent Him, and has acted in complete subordination to the Father. There is no new subjection or subordination mentioned in 1Cor 15v24-28; all that is stated is that Christ brings the Kingdom that has been given to Him by the Father, under the authority of the Father, and Christ, as glorified man, Mediator and subduer of all foes, is subject to the Father. The apostle Paul is not referring to a new subjection, He is speaking of the final manifestation of Christ's subjection to the Father, the time when He lays the kingdom under the direct control of the Father. When the Great White Throne judgement is concluded, all the probationary ages are finished; and all who can be redeemed, are redeemed; and sin and sinners are banished from the new Heaven and new Earth; Christ's work as a mediator will cease, and the Father will deal directly with the redeemed and glorified creation.

In 1Cor 15v24-28, Paul is not speaking of the eternal dominion and coequal deity and glory that belongs to Christ as God, but to the Millennial kingdom over which He reigns as Mediator and God-man. In this age and the Millennial age, Jesus acts as Mediator between man and God the Father. Though Christ is God and possesses absolute deity, yet as Mediator He reigns with the power delegated to Him by God the Father; after the Great White Throne judgement, this delegated authority will be delivered back to the Father who gave it. Jesus, who existed eternally in the form of God, and was God, and was equal to God the Father, will deliver the kingdom to God the Father and demonstrate His subjection to God the Father for the work of mediation and redemption. Phil 2v6, John 1v1. **Though Christ is subject to the Father in His work as a Mediator; even while still on earth He claimed equality with the Father in respect to His Divinity**, and the Jews recognised this and tried to kill Jesus because of His claim to Deity and equality with the Father. John 5v18,19,30, 8v58,59.

Having conquered and subdued all foes, Christ subjects His kingdom to the Father; and THE TRINITY, FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT, WILL RULE TOGETHER OVER THEIR KINGDOM. We know from the Scriptures that Christ receives an everlasting kingdom and shares it with the saints. Dan 7v27. His throne as God is

forever. Dan 2v44,45, 7v13,14,18,27, Psalm 45v6 with Heb 1v8, Isaiah 9v6,7, with 2Sam 7v16, Luke 1v32,33. Having fulfilled His work as Mediator and subduer of all evil, Christ will rule and guide in love the redeemed creation with the rest of the Trinity. All the creation will applaud the triumphs of our Lord's grace and power; He will be worshipped forever as the eternally reigning King of kings and Lord of lords, and our Saviour God. Rev 5v10-12, 11v15, 19v6-16, 22v3-5, Titus 2v13, 2Pet 1v1. We can clearly see through the Scriptures that we have studied, that Christ's Sonship is unique and proves His absolute deity. Christ's humiliation in becoming man and His subjection to the Father for the work of mediation and redemption, in no way disproves His claim to absolute deity. Indeed, the glorious, sinless life of Christ under the limitations and temptations of human nature proves the absolute deity of Christ beyond question. Let us now go on to other outstanding proofs of the deity of Christ.

4) The Divine Titles Exclusive to Yahweh Are Applied To Jesus

1 Yahweh's exclusive title of "The First and the Last," is applied to Jesus

One of the most striking of the titles of Yahweh that are applied to Christ is the title "First and Last." In Isaiah 44v6 and 48v12, Yahweh claims that He alone can be called "the First and the Last," yet this title is directly claimed by Christ in Rev 1v17, 2v8 and 22v12-16. Indeed, Christ declares that He is not only "the First and the Last," but that He is "the Alpha and the Omega," and "the Beginning and the Ending." These exclusive titles of eternal absolute deity are used by the Father in Rev 1v8 and 21v5,6, when He proclaims Himself as "the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Since all these absolutely exclusive titles that belong to Yahweh alone, are applied to Christ; the undeniable conclusion is that Jesus has absolute Yahweh deity.

Textual note: In Rev 1v11, the Majority Text and Critical Texts omit, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last. However, the text of Rev 1v17, 2v8 and 22v12-16, state that Jesus is "The First and the Last." The conclusion cannot be denied, Jesus is the great Yahweh of the Old Testament.

2 Yahweh's exclusive title, "The Mighty God," "El Gibbor," is applied to Christ

We read in Isaiah 10v21 and Jer 32v18, that the title "El Gibbor," "the Mighty God," is an exclusive title of Yahweh; yet in Isaiah 9v6, this exclusive title is applied to Jesus, and we read that Christ is "the Mighty God," "El Gibbor." It is an amazing and wonderful fact that "the Mighty God" was born as a helpless little babe, and took upon Himself our frail humanity. God Himself gives a similar prophecy and sign in Isaiah 7v14, "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." This prophecy was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus to Mary. Matt 1v21-25.

3 Yahweh's exclusive title of "Saviour," is used to describe Jesus

Jesus is declared to be the Deliverer and Saviour of Israel and the World. The Old Testament says that Yahweh alone is our Saviour and righteousness, and calling on the Name of Yahweh is the way to be saved. 1Kings 18v24, 1Chron 16v8, Isaiah 12v4, 28v16, 49v23, Joel 2v32. The New Testament states that believing on Jesus and calling on His name is the way to be saved. Acts 2v21, 9v14, Rom 10v8-14, 1Cor 1v2, 2Tim 2v22. (See 1Pet 1v17 Christians can, and do, call on the Father's Name) There is no God and Saviour besides Yahweh, yet Christ is said to be the King, Saviour and righteousness of all believers. Jesus is "THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD." 1John 4v14, John 4v42. Yahweh's exclusive title of "Saviour" is applied to Jesus.

In Isaiah 43v10,11 we read; "before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; AND BESIDE ME THERE IS NO SAVIOUR." We read in Isaiah 43v14,15 that Yahweh is the King, Redeemer and the Holy One of Israel. Yahweh's title "the Holy One," See Isaiah 12v6, 45v11, 47v4, 1Sam 2v2, Hosea 11v9; is used of Jesus, Jesus is not spoken of as "a holy one," but as "THE Holy One." Acts 3v14. See Rev 3v7, 1John 2v20. In Isaiah 45v21,22 Yahweh says He alone is the Saviour and challenges the false gods to foretell the future as He has done; "Who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the Lord? and THERE IS NO GOD ELSE BESIDE ME: A JUST GOD AND A SAVIOUR; THERE IS NONE BESIDE ME. Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." Yahweh then states in v23-25 that to Him every knee is going to bow and every tongue swear; this is quoted in Rom 14v9-12, of people bowing the knee and confessing to Jesus as God at the judgement seat of Christ. Every knee is going to bow to the name of Jesus, and confess that He is Lord. Phil 2v9-11.

In Hos 13v4 we again read; "I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but Me: for THERE IS NO SAVIOUR BESIDE ME." We again read in Zech 9v9, that Israel's just and humble King and Saviour would ride into Jerusalem, upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass; this was fulfilled in Matt 21v1-11, when Jesus rode into Jerusalem.

4 Yahweh's exclusive title of "Yahweh our righteousness," is applied to Jesus

In Jer 23v5,6 we read that Jesus is the "righteous Branch," the King who was to come from David's line, and who will reign and execute judgement and justice in the earth, and He "shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." See

Zech 9v9 with Matt 21v3,4. Jesus is the future Deliverer, King and Saviour of both the Church and Israel. Rom 11v26, Phil 3v20.

5 The Greek title for "Yahweh," "Kurios," is applied to Jesus

The Greek noun "kurios" (Strong's NT: 2962) is derived from "kuros," which means "might or power," and so it is used of those who are in positions of authority and power and as a sign of honour and respect. The Greek translators of the Hebrew Old Testament (Septuagint) have looked upon "Kurios" as the most suitable Greek word to describe the absolute power and exclusive deity expressed by the Hebrew word "Yahweh." The inspired writers of the New Testament have also used "Kurios" to translate "Yahweh" in their quotations from the Hebrew Old Testament, and they apply Scriptures to Jesus, which speak exclusively of Yahweh. When "Kurios" is used as a title of Jesus and the Father, it is used to convey their absolute power and deity, and not the lesser meanings of authority and power mentioned in the following below.

a) "Kurios" is used to speak of people and human masters in positions of authority

"Kurios" is used of an owner of property, the head or master of a house; Paul uses it, when he tells slaves to obey their human masters. Eph 6v5,9, Col 3v22, Matt 10v24. Jesus uses "kurios" in His Parable of the Unrighteous Steward and his Master in Luke 16v3,5. In Matt 10v24, 13v27, 20v8, 21v30,40, 25v19, Jesus uses "kurios" to speak of a Master, who is in reality, Himself.

b) "Kurios" is used, like sir, as a sign of respect to a person of authority, dignity and honour

The Samaritan woman called Jesus "Kurios," "Sir," before she knew He was the Christ. John 4v11. The Greeks who wanted to see Jesus called Philip "kurios," "sir," when they asked to see Jesus. John 12v20,21. Both the Septuagint of Gen 18v12 and 1Pet 3v6 use "kurios" as the translation of the Hebrew "adown," of Gen 18v12; when Sarah's respectfully addressed her husband Abraham as "lord."

c) "Kurios" is used to speak of a supreme human ruler, or an angelic ruler

"Kurios" is used as a title of honour and respect when describing an Emperor, king, or Roman Procurator, without any thought of ascribing deity to them. Acts 25v26, Matt 27v63. In Rev 7v14, John correctly addressed one of the angel Elders as "kurios," "lord;" for we read in Rev 4v4 that the 24 Elders sit on thrones and wear crowns, they are angelic kings and lords. Jesus is "the King of kings and Lord of Lords" of Heaven, as well as earth. Rev 17v14, 19v16. When John twice tried to worship Christ's personal angelic messenger, the angel protested and stopped him. Rev 19v9,10, 22v8,9. This glorious angelic being, who communicated by signs and visions the prophecies in the book of Revelation to John, is said to be Christ's personal angelic messenger, possibly Gabriel, undoubtedly another of the lords of heaven. See Rev 1v1, "His angel." The archangel Michael, "one of the chief princes," is the prince that looks after Israel. Dan 10v13,21, 12v1 with Rev 12v7, Jude v9. Seven mighty angelic lords deal with the world's affair under Jesus and the Father. Zech 4v10, Rev 5v6, Rev 8v2.

d) "Kurios" is used to speak of the absolute deity of the Father and Jesus

The title "Kurios," when used before the name of a person, could mean that the person was thought to be divine, and this was true both in the eyes of the Jews and the Gentiles. When the Roman Emperor claimed divinity, he called himself "Lord Caesar," and demanded that his subjects should say, "Caesar is Lord," and everybody understood that Caesar was claiming divinity by the title "kurios," and Christians chose to suffer dreadful persecution and death rather than give Caesar a title, which belonged only to God.

As we have said, "Kurios," is looked upon as the most suitable Greek word to describe the absolute and exclusive deity expressed by the Hebrew word "Yahweh," by the Greek translators of the Hebrew Old Testament, and the New Testament quotations from the Hebrew Old Testament. It occurs 9,000 times in the Septuagint, and over 700 times in the New Testament; Paul uses it almost 300 times in his writing and Luke over 200 times in his Gospel and Acts. The vast majority of these are speaking of the Lordship and deity of God the Father and Jesus. "Kurios," is applied to Jesus over 350 times in the New Testament; it is used to describe the Lord Jesus in exactly the same way as it is used to describe God the Father, both are called "ton Kurion," "the Lord." Matt 22v43-45, Acts 4v26,33, 10v36, Eph.4v5, Phil 2v11.

Jesus is spoken of as "the Lord of Glory," and "Lord of all," and every tongue is going to confess that He is Lord. 1Cor 2v8, Rom 9v5. Christ is said to be the Yahweh before every knee is going to bow. Isaiah 45v22,23 with Rom 14v10-12 and Phil 2v9-11. The Yahweh of hosts, the Lord of Glory that Isaiah saw in Isaiah 6v1-5,10, is said to be Christ in John 12v40,41. Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who only has immortality. 1Tim 6v14-16 with Rev 19v16 and Rom 9v5.

6 Jesus is called, "the Holy One," an exclusive title of Yahweh

Yahweh is spoken of as "the Holy One," in 1Sam 2v2, Isaiah 12v6, 43v15, 45v11, 47v4 and Hosea 11v9. The Lord Jesus is also spoken of as "the Holy One," in Acts 3v14, Rev 3v7 and 1John 2v20. Jesus is not "a holy one," He is "the

Holy One." Even the demons recognised His title, and called Jesus, "the Holy One of God," who was to be their judge. Mark 1v24, Luke 3v34, 8v28-31.

7 Jesus said He was the "Ego Eimi," the "I Am;" an exclusive title of Yahweh

Yahweh alone is the great "I Am;" and yet Christ claims this exclusive name and title of Yahweh.

a) All three accounts of Christ walking on the water have Christ saying "I Am"

Jesus was not merely saying, "It is I," but rather, as "ego eimi" really means, "I Am." Matt 14v27, Mark 6v50, John 6v20.

b) Jesus claims He is "The Great I Am" of Exodus 3v14, in John 8v58

In John 8v58 Jesus said, "before Abraham was, I Am." Some false teachers have tried to say that John 8v58, "Before Abraham was born, I am," should read, "Before Abraham was born, I have been," these teachers wrongly state that Christ was only trying to claim pre-existence, and not the eternal existence that belongs to Yahweh divinity. However, Christ did not use the words "ego en," which means, "I was" or "I have been," but "ego eimi," which has been translated quite correctly as "I am." Jesus was not claiming mere pre-existence, but eternal existence, and an uncreated eternal existence past as absolute deity.

We have been warned that there will be false prophets and teachers, whose perversions of the Scriptures are designed to deceive and trap those who are unlearned in God's Word. Their vain attempts to deny the Lordship and Deity of Christ bring about their own ruin and destruction. 2Pet 2v1-3, 3v16, Matt 7v15-23. These false teachers say that if Christ had been claiming that He was the Great I Am, the Greek words "ho ohn," which means, "the one who is," would have been used, and they say that they base this on the Septuagint translation of Exodus 3v14. This is completely dishonest, for both "ego eimi" and "ho ohn" are used in Exodus 3v14.

The Hebrew words "ehyeh asher ehyeh," which are translated in the Authorised Version as "I am that I am," are translated into the Greek of the Septuagint as, "ego eimi ho ohn." It is in the second half of this verse, when "ehyeh asher ehyeh" is shortened to "ehyeh," that is, "I am," that the Septuagint translates this as "oh ohn," i.e. "the one who is." However, in most other places in the Septuagint, "ego eimi" is used to translate the Hebrew "ehyeh." e.g. Deut 32v39. "Ego eimi," "I am," expresses the eternal nature of God better than "ho ohn," "the one who is," for as we can see from Rev 1v4,8, 11v17, 16v5, the only places in the New Testament where "ho ohn" is applied to God, that "oh ohn" never stands on its own when it describes the eternity of God, because this alone cannot convey the idea of the eternal being of God actively manifesting itself as does the Hebrew "ehyeh." The Greek "ho ohn," "He who is," is only a part of the verbal expression that is necessary to describe the eternal nature of God, "ego eimi," "I am," expresses far better and more completely idea of the eternal self-existence of God that is declared in the Hebrew "Yahweh."

It is interesting to note that "The Hebrew New Testament" translated from the Greek in 1817 by T. Frey. and G. G. Collyer, which was published by the London Jews Society, and the "Hebrew New Testament published by the British and Foreign Bible Society, at London in 1880, both use Hebrew "ehyeh" for the Greek "ego eimi" in John 8v58.

The Jews fully understood that Christ claimed to be "the Great I Am"

It is possible that Christ used the Hebrew "ehyeh" when addressing the Jews, but whether He used "ehyeh" or "ego eimi," the Jews clearly understood that Christ was claiming absolute Yahweh divinity and they took up stones to stone Him to death. They understood that by using the words, "I am," without any predicate; Christ had signified His eternal pre-existence as Yahweh. Christ had not said, "before Abraham was born, I was, or I was made or created," **Christ uses the perpetual present tense, which signified a perpetual existence independent of time, a claim which only absolute Yahweh deity can make.** The Jews understood this and got ready to stone Christ to death. The Lord Jesus uses Psalm 82v6 to correct His accusers, He said that if the judges and rulers, some of whom were very unjust as this Psalms shows, could be called gods, because they took oaths and dispensed justice, how much more could the one be called God, who the Father had sent into the world. The Jews realised that Christ had not dropped His claim to deity, but that He had reinforced and stressed it more strongly and so they tried to kill Him again. The Jews clearly understood what Christ claimed and took up stones to stone Him to death, a miracle preserved Him from them. John 8v59. Just as in John 5v17,18 they were out to kill Jesus because He made Himself equal to God.

In John 10v30, on another later occasion, the Jews said that they were going to kill Christ, "Because thou, being a man, makest thyself God." Jesus had claimed to be one with the Father, and that the Father was not only in Him, but that HE WAS IN THE FATHER. John 10v38. Jesus prayed that believers might be "one in us," that is, in perfect fellowship with the Father and Son. John 17v21. It was the claim to absolute deity that was used to bring about the conviction and crucifixion of Christ. John 19v7,8. To the sincere mind there can be no doubt that Christ claimed to be "The Great I Am," in John 8v58, and the other Scriptures we have cited. The eternal being of Christ will be considered

further under the heading, "Christ, the everlasting Lord," and under our next heading, where we note that the exclusive title "Yahweh," or as is applied to our Lord on many occasions.

5) Many Scriptures that speak Of Yahweh are applied to Jesus

a) John Baptist prepared the way of Yahweh Jesus

We are told in Isaiah 40v3 that Yahweh was to have His way prepared for Him by a prophet's voice, "prepare ye the way of Yahweh, make straight in the desert a highway for our Elohim." John was the one who prepared the way for Christ Jesus, as Mal 2v17 to Matt 3v3, Mark 1v2,3, Luke 3v4-6, 7v27 and John 1v23 make quite clear. In Mal 2v17 to 3v1, we read that Yahweh of Hosts says that He would send His messenger to prepare the way before Himself, and that the true Lord was to come to His Temple. Christ said that this messenger was John the Baptist and that John had prepared the way for Himself the Christ. Matt 11v9,10, Mark 1v2,3, Luke 7v27. In Isaiah 40v3 we read that Yahweh's ministry was to be preceded by the ministry of a prophet, could anything be clearer that Christ is the Yahweh and Elohim referred to in this Scripture, only the most wilful and determined unbelief could say otherwise. Just as Malachi prophesied in Mal 3v1, after John had prepared His way, the Lord did come to His Temple and was rejected. Yahweh was the Lord of the Temple and the Lord of the Sabbath; Christ applies these titles to Himself in the New Testament. Matt 12v6,8, 21v12,13 with Mal 3v1.

b) The day of Yahweh is the day of our Lord Jesus

The day of Yahweh to which the Old Testament refers to again and again, is spoken of in the New Testament as the day of the Lord Jesus Christ, or as the day of Christ. Joel 1v15, Isaiah 2v12, 13v6,9, etc. with 1Cor 3v10-15, 5v5, 1v7,8, 2Cor 1v14, 5v1-11, 1Thess 3v13, 5v8-11,23, 2Thess 2v1-4, Phil 1v6,10, 2Peter 3v12, Rev 1v7, Matt 24v30 and Matt 25v31 with Matt 16v27, Luke 9v23-26. Indeed, the day of Christ and the day of the Lord are used as interchangeable synonymous phrases in the New Testament. The day of Christ, is the day of Yahweh, the Messiah was Yahweh incarnate. It is very interesting to note that Zech 12v8-10 and Zech 14v1-21 say that Yahweh of hosts is to come and defend Jerusalem, and to bring His saints with Him, these specific prophecies are applied to Jesus in the New Testament. Rev 1v7, 19v11-21 Jude v14,15, 1Thess 4v13-17, Acts 1v11. Christ is the Yahweh of hosts who is going to come again and set up His kingdom on earth.

c) Jesus is the Omniscient Yahweh who searches the hearts of all His creation

This exclusive prerogative of Yahweh is claimed by Christ. Jer 11v20, 17v10 with Rev 2v23. Yahweh is spoken of as "The Shepherd" of all believers, yet this is the title that is applied to Jesus in the New Testament. Psalm 23v1, Jer 23v1. Our Shepherd knows all the fears and problems of His sheep. Ezek 34v1-12,18 with John 10v11,14, Luke 19v10, Heb 13v20, 1Peter 2v25. The Lord Jesus searches our hearts to sanctify them. In Isaiah 8v13, we read, "Yahweh of hosts, Him shall ye sanctify," is applied to Christ in 1Peter 3v15 in most Greek manuscripts, it reads "sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord." We are to "fear this glorious and dreadful name, Yahweh thy God." Deut 23v58. Let us then give to the Lord Jesus the honour that is rightfully His of being recognised and worshipped as the Lord of hosts. Before His kind and searching gaze, let us sanctify our hearts.

d) Jesus is the Yahweh who is "a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence"

Yahweh is said to be "a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel," the apostle Peter tells us that this is referring to the Lord Jesus. Isaiah 5v13,14 with 1Peter 2v7,8, Rom 9v32,33, 1Cor 1v23. Christians are to be willing to witness to the truth even though many will stumble at it, and will make Christians suffer for it. God's people are to witness to Yahweh, Isaiah 43v10. Christians are to be witness to Jesus i.e. Yahweh the Saviour. Acts 1v8. Their invitation is from Psalm 34v8 in the Old Testament, which reads: "Oh, taste and see that Yahweh is good;" and is applied to Jesus in 1Peter 2v3,4. See Heb 6v5.

e) Jesus is the Yahweh of hosts who led captivity captive

Yahweh is said to be the one who is among thousands of angels in the holy place, after ascending on high and leading captivity captive, in Psalm 68v17,18, yet this Scripture is applied to Christ in Eph 4v8-11, the Lord of His Church, directing His Church, ordaining and empowering the greater ministries of His Church.

f) Jesus is Yahweh the Creator

Yahweh is said to be the unchanging creator in Psalm 102v12,25-27, yet this very Scripture is applied to Christ in Heb 1v10-12, cf. 13v8. Only Yahweh is unchangeable and immutable, and the creator, Neh 9v6, but Christ is said to be changeless and the creator and so the conclusion is inevitable that He is Yahweh. John 1v3, Col 1v16,17. Christ is the unchangeable Lord of creation, the great Yahweh who created all things, praise Him for His creating and unchanging love.

G) Jesus is the Yahweh who is life, light and truth

Yahweh is spoken of as "life," this is applied to Jesus. Deut 30v20, Psalm 36v9 with John 1v4, 11v25, 14v6, Col 3v4, 1John 1v2. Yahweh is spoken of as "light," this description is given to the Lord Jesus in the N.T. Psalm 27v1 with John 1v4-9, 8v12. Yahweh is spoken of as "truth," and so is the Lord Jesus. Deut 32v4, Isaiah 65v16 with

John 14v6, Rev 3v7, 19v11, John 19v37. Yahweh is the God of the Amen, Isaiah 65v16. Jesus is the "Amen," Rev 3v14.

After examining these Scriptures, and there are many more that we could have considered, the conclusion is inescapable that the Lord Jesus has been called by the great name of Yahweh our God. Christ has the same divine titles given to Him that belong to the Father, the activities of deity are also attributed to Him, the incommunicable name of Yahweh is given to Him, therefore, no reasonable person can deny that absolute deity belongs to Christ Jesus. Indeed, so interwoven and identical are the titles and attributes of the Father and the Son, that those who deny the deity of the Son, must also deny the deity of the Father if they are to be consistent. Jesus Christ our Lord, is Lord and Yahweh and the Scriptures abundantly demonstrate this.

NB "Yahweh Malak," Yahweh Messenger

In Isaiah 48v12-16 and Zech 2v8-11, we read of one Yahweh being sent by another Yahweh, and in Mal 3v1 we read of Yahweh sending "the true Lord" as His messenger. **In John 1v18 we read that no man has seen God at any time, this undoubtedly means that no man has seen the glory of the Father in all His unveiled fullness; however, the Lord Jesus has manifested and declared the Father's character and glory.** John 14v7-11, 17v6,26. In the Old Testament many manifestations of Yahweh were undoubtedly the manifestations of God the Word revealing Himself to mankind before His incarnation. In these revelations Jesus is called Yahweh, and yet, because the Father has sent Him, He is also called Messenger too. Christ is sometimes called "Yahweh Malak," "Yahweh Messenger." and these are without doubt the appearances of God the Word before His incarnation. In these appearances Christ is called Yahweh, and yet because the Father has sent Him, The words "Yahweh Malak," translated in the Authorised Version as "angel of the Lord," are better translated "Yahweh Messenger.

Bishop Horsley states: "The term "Angel of the Lord," which so often occurs in the English Bible, is so ill conformed to the original that, it is to be feared, it has led many into the error of conceiving of "the Lord," as one person, and of "the Angel" as another. The word of the Hebrew, ill rendered "the Lord," is not, like the English word, an appellative, expressing rank or condition, but it is the proper name Jehovah. And this proper name is not, in the Hebrew, a genitive after the noun substantive "Angel," as the English represents it; but the words "Jehovah" and "Angel" are two substantive nouns in apposition, both speaking of the same person, the one by the appropriate name of essence, the other by the title of office. "Jehovah angel" would be a better rendering." End of quote.

This is why Moses was very sad, when, after the idolatry of Israel at Sinai, the personal guidance and presence of the Lord was withdrawn, and the Lord said, "Mine angel shall go before thee." Exodus 32v1-35. NB: v34, 14v19,24, 23v20-23, 33v2. "Mine angel," could be "His angel," Gen 24v7,40, Dan 3v28, 6v22; and "the angel of His presence," Isaiah 63v9; the angel who is the special messenger of Christ, and was trusted to impart to John, the prophecies, warnings, and Divine consolations contained in the book of Revelation, who in all probability is Gabriel. Rev 1v1, 22v16.

This shows how greatly we need to ask God to send angelic ministry to take away the spiritual evil defences and fortresses of evil angelic power. Psalm 20v1-5, 2Cor 10v1-10, Eph 6v10-22. Caleb knew that God's promise of angelic ministry being sent before Israel, meant that the evil angelic defence of the nations they would fight was taken away, and so Israel was sure to conquer. Numb 14v6-10. Moses, however, was not content with just angelic messengers, as good and blessed as this was; he wanted and pleaded for the personal presence of Yahweh to go with him, and to see His glory, both were granted to him. Exodus 33v12-23. There can be no doubt that "Yahweh Messenger," was the pre-incarnate Christ, the messenger of the Father; He spoke as God in the first person. These manifestations of "Yahweh Messenger," are clearly distinct from visitations by ordinary angelic messengers. Our Lord, as God the Word and Yahweh Messenger, personally visited the following.

a) Our Lord visited Hagar in the wilderness

In Gen 16v3-16, it was Yahweh who spoke to Hagar, she called Him, "You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees." v7,9,10,11,13, cf. Gen 21v9-21, Gal 4v21-31, NB: Gen 16v7-11. Hagar's promise.

b) Our Lord visited Abraham on several occasions

Yahweh, undoubtedly Jesus, visited Abraham in Gen 15v1 and said He was Abraham's shield and exceeding great reward. In Gen 17v1, He revealed Himself as "El Shaddai," the Almighty God, and again visited Abraham at Mamre. Gen 18v1-33. He comes as a man (Theophany) with two others, who are later, declared to be angels. Gen 18v1,22 with 19v1,15. He says that He is Yahweh, v1, and Abraham calls Him Yahweh, and Moses writes that it was Yahweh. Gen 18v1,17,19,20,22,25,26,33. The Lord has a meal with Abraham, and promises Abraham a child named Isaac within a year, which was miraculously fulfilled. What a privilege to have the Lord to visit him! **However, we have an even greater privilege, Christ has condescended to come and live in us, "Christ in you the hope of glory."** Col 1v27.

The Lord shares with Abraham His proposed judgement upon Sodom and the other evil cities of the plain; and Abraham calls his visitor, "the Judge of the whole earth." After an impassioned discussion about the destruction of Sodom, the Scripture says, "then Yahweh went on His way." Gen 18v17,22,25,33. See John 5v22. The angels then went to Sodom and rescued Lot, and destroyed Sodom. Gen 19v1,13,22,28. Note how Lot's sons in law thought the warning of judgement to be a joke. Gen 19v14.

In Gen 22v11-18 God tests Abraham, and 'Yahweh Malak' speaks in the first person as Yahweh and Abraham calls the name of that place. "Yahweh Jireh." Gen 22v1,11,14-18.

c) Our Lord visited Jacob at Bethel

In Gen 31v11-13, Yahweh Malak says that He is the God of Bethel, and directs Jacob to leave Laban and return to the land of his kindred; and in Gen 32v24-32 Jacob wrestles at Peniel with God.

d) Our Lord visited Moses in the burning bush at Horeb

In Exodus 3v1-16, the Angel, "Yahweh Messenger," in the bush in v2, is called "Yahweh" and "God" in v4, and "the God of Abraham" in v6; and "the Great I Am" in v14. He says that the Israelites are His people and promises them deliverance. v7,17. This promise of deliverance was fulfilled by Yahweh, Exodus 13v21 with 14v19. At Sinai the Yahweh who came down, Exodus 19v20,21, is Christ Jesus in the New Testament, Heb 12v24-26. See Heb 11v26, Deut 6v16 with 1Cor 10v9.

e) Our Lord visited and warned the sorcerer Balaam

God's protecting presence guarded Israel. When Balaam tried to use occult powers against Israel, he found himself face to face with God. Balaam did not heed the warnings miraculously given through his donkey, or the direct warnings of our Lord, and as a result died for it. Numb 22v9-35, 31v8.

f) Our Lord visited Joshua just before the battle of Jericho

In Joshua 5v13 to 6v3, the Lord of Hosts, the captain of the armies of God visits Joshua and gives him the orders on how to capture Jericho. The captain of the Lord's host is called Yahweh, and His presence made the ground Holy. Judges 6v2.

g) Many other visits of Yahweh Jesus

Time would fail us to tell of all of the visitations of Yahweh Jesus to mankind, we can only touch on a few of them. Heb 11v32.

- 1) Gideon and Yahweh Malak. Judges 6v11-25.
- 2) Manoah and his wife, Yahweh Malak and Samson. Judges 13v1-25.
- 3) Samuel's childhood visitation. 1Sam 3v1-21.
- 4) Our Lord judges Israel after David sins in numbering Israel. 1Chron 21v1-30, NB: v12,18,30 and 2Sam 24v16.
- 5) Our Lord visits Elijah. 1Kings 19v5-7 and 2Kings 1v3,15. etc.
- 6) Yahweh Jesus defends God's children. Psalm 34v7, 35v5,6, 1Peter 1v4,5.
- 7) Our Lord destroys Sennacherib's army in a mighty act of Divine judgement. 2Kings 19v35 and Isaiah 37v36-38.
- 8) Joshua the high priest. Zech 3v1-10. See Zech 4v1, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

Before God the Word was made flesh, He was totally involved with mankind, in a wide variety of commands, words and acts.

6) Jesus Is Repeatedly Called God in The Scriptures

1 Jesus is called God the Word in John 1v1

"Logos" is derived from "lego," to speak intelligently. **The revelation of Jesus as "ho Logos," the Word, is intended to convey that Jesus is the eternal and full expression of the Father's divine essence and intelligence, and the revealer of those divine attributes to men and angels.** The pre-incarnate God the Word fully revealed the being and essence of the Godhead in Heaven, and, oh glorious truth, fully revealed the divine nature and being of God in his incarnation and true humanity, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." John 14v9. **Even before his incarnation Jesus was the divine revealer of God's wisdom and power, "the Word of Yahweh" to men.** Gen 20v3, Isaiah 22v4.

The term "Logos" is only used to speak of Jesus in John 1v1,14, Rev 19v13 and in 1John 1v1 where He is referred to as "the Word of life." In Heb 4v12 there is a possible reference to Jesus as "the Word of God." Even some heathen philosophers used "logos" to describe the controlling and generative principle behind the universe, but they fell far short of the divine revelation that was given to John of the eternal personal pre-existence and eternal deity of Jesus as God the Word. Three times in John 1v1, John uses "en," the imperfect of "eimi," "to be," to show the continuous eternal existence of God and the Logos. Jesus emphasised His timeless eternal existence, when He said, "Before

Abraham was, 'genesthai,' I am," "eimi," i.e. timeless existence. John 8v58. In John 1v14, "egeneto," "became," is used for the incarnation of the Logos. John 17v5. Paul also teaches the eternal pre-existent deity of Jesus. 2Cor 8v9, Phil 2v5-11, Col 1v15-17, Heb 1v2-12.

Christ was not like John the Baptist; a temporary voice, which cried aloud in the wilderness, Christ, was the Logos, God the Word, who eternally existed with God the Father. **Logos denotes both reason and speech, as reason, it speaks of the mind and purposes of God; and as speech, it speaks of the revelation of God to man.** By describing Christ as the Logos, John was saying in another way, what Paul writes in Col 2v9., "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;" i.e. Christ has all the fullness, ability and knowledge of absolute deity. John, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, took the word Logos, and gave it a fullness of meaning far beyond that which the Alexandrian Jews had given to it. The Alexandrian Jews had used Logos to speak of the revelation that the unseen God had given of Himself in the creation and government of the world. John goes further and states that the full revelation and Word of God to man is in God the Logos, the Lord Jesus Christ, who became incarnate for our salvation. Only God can fully reveal God, and only God the Son can reveal the Father and the Father the Son. Matt 11v25-27, Luke 10v21-23. John could not have given a more positive declaration of the absolute deity of Christ than when he called Him "The Word," and said, "And God was the Word."

The apostle John introduces Jesus by saying, "In the beginning was the Word;" he does not say, "In the beginning God created the Word." John specifically states that the Word, Jesus, is the great Creator, and is not a created being. The statement explicitly declares that God the Father and God the Word existed eternally together. It is necessary to state this because some false prophets have tried to say that Christ was a created being, and have tried to justify their false doctrine by incorrectly translating, "And God was the Word," "kai Theos en ho Logos," as, "The Word was a god." However, the fact that the definite article, "the," is not before "God," in the Greek, does not warrant the placing of the indefinite article "a," before "God."

In Greek the definite article was not always put before a word even though it would be definitely needed to give the correct sense in English. In the New Testament the definite article "the" is not always put in even when it is definitely implied; for example in Heb 10v31, "the living God," has no definite article, but no one would translate it, "a living God." See also 1Tim 3v15. The Greek language has only a definite article.

Dr. Robertson's Greek Grammar states on page 767: "as already explained the article is not essential to speech;" i.e., it could be used or omitted without making any real difference. Dr. Robertson also states in his Greek Lexicon, page 547, "The usage of language varies much in respect to their articles; and in Greek especially, the usage seems in many cases never to have become fixed, to be have been left to the taste and judgement of the writer or speaker, as is also in some measure the case with our English." End of quote.

Arndt and Gingrich in their Greek Lexicon state: "It is difficult to set hard and fast rules for the employment of the article, since the writer's feeling for style had special freedom of play in this area." End of quote.

Greek scholars support the translation, "And God was the Word," in John 1v1

W. E. Vine: makes the following note on page 160 of his "Expository Dictionary of New Testament words.

"Theos is used 1. with the definite article, 2. without (as an anarthrous noun)....it is usual to employ the article with a proper name, when mentioned a second time. There are, of course, exceptions to this, as when the absence of the article serves to lay stress upon, or give precision to, the character or nature of what is expressed in the noun. A notable instance of this is in John 1v1, 'and the Word was God;' here a double stress is upon 'Theos,' by the absence of the article and by the emphatic position. To translate it literally, 'a god was the Word,' is entirely misleading. Moreover, that 'the Word' is the subject of the sentence, exemplifies the rule that the subject is to be determined by its having the article when the predicate is anarthrous (i.e. without the article)."

A.T. Robertson: the scholarly Greek grammarian, makes the following helpful note on "kai Theos en ho Logos," "and the Word was God," in his "Word Pictures in the Greek New Testament." He writes: "By exact and careful language John denied Sabellianism by not saying 'ho theos en ho logos.' That would mean that all of God was expressed in 'ho logos' and the terms would be interchangeable, each having the article. The subject is made plain by the article (ho Logos) and the predicate without it (theos) just as in John 4v24, 'pneuma ho theos' can only mean 'God is spirit,' not 'spirit is God.' So in 1John 4v16, 'ho theos agape estin' can only mean 'God is love,' not 'love is God' as the so called Christian scientist would confusedly say. For the article with the predicate see Robertson, Grammar, pp 767f. So in John 1v14, 'ho logos sarx egeneto,' the Word became flesh,' not 'the flesh became Word." Luther argues that here John disposes of Arianism also because the Logos was eternally God." End of quote.

Williams states: that the Greek construction places an emphasis upon 'Theos,' and so emphasises the deity of Christ.

C. F. D. Moule: states of John 1v1, "and God was the Word," "It would be pure Sabellianism to say 'the Word was ho Theos' (that is to put in the definite article 'the' and say 'the God') No idea of inferiority of nature is suggested by the form of expression, which simply affirms the true deity of the Word." End of Quote.

Without any doubt "kai Theos en ho Logos," should be translated, "and God was the Word," and the Greek construction emphasises the true deity of Christ. How foolish to say that Christ was "a god," meaning that He is a little god, this is akin to heathen thought. In Isaiah 9v6 we read that Christ is "the Mighty God," "El Gibbor;" this Hebrew title is an exclusive title of Yahweh God, and it is applied to Yahweh in Isaiah 10v21 and Jer 32v18. Only blind and wilful unbelief can deny that John 1v1 is teaching the absolute deity of Christ.

2 Christ is called "My Lord and My God" by Thomas in John 20v28

Thomas addresses Christ as, "Ho kurios mou kai ho theos mou," which means literally, "The Lord of me and the God of me." The definite article ("the") is used before both "kurios" and "theos." Thomas goes to the limit of worship and adoration by calling the Lord Jesus, "My the Lord and my the God." This would have been the height of blasphemy if Christ had been a mere created being.

We read that Peter, Paul and Barnabus, and the angel, all refused to receive worship, and protested most strongly when it was given to them. Yet Christ does not rebuke Thomas for his affirmation of Christ's deity, on the contrary, Christ gently chides Thomas for taking so long to believe in Him as Lord and God. Thomas recognised that the Lord Jesus was God manifested in the flesh, and in so doing he exhorts us to do the same. When Thomas said to Jesus, "my Lord and my God," "my God," is "ho theos mou," which are exactly the same words that Christ used when he said "my God, my God" when he spoke to His Father from the cross. Mark 15v34. **In His humanity, and work of mediation, the Father was the God who Christ worshipped and trusted in; yet in His deity Christ was also the God of Thomas and shares with the Father (and the Holy Spirit) the worship and praise of the creation.**

3 We read in Heb 1v8 that Christ is the God whose throne endures forever

We read in Heb 1v8 that Christ is "ho theos;" the quotation is taken almost verbatim from the Septuagint of Psalm 45v6,7. The Septuagint often uses "ho theos" as a vocative, a direct address to God. Psalm 3v7, 4v1, 5v10, 7v1. (The vocative case is the case of direct address: "He said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee." Luke 5v20) The Authorised Version, the Revised Version, and the Revised Standard Version, quite rightly support the vocative and translate, "ho thronos sou, ho theos," as "Thy Throne O God." Bengel goes as far as to say, "They clearly do violence to the text who hold the opinion that it is the nominative case in this passage." This certainly seems true, for to translate "O God" in the nominative case as the subject would read, "God is thy throne," and in the predicate as "Thy Throne is God," both of these translations are absurd and don't make sense, and they have no parallel elsewhere. Those who translate this way are obviously just wilfully determined to avoid recognising the absolute deity of Christ. The whole of Heb 1 is teaching that Christ is "theos," and "ho theos," and possesses absolute deity.

We read in Heb 1v3 that Christ is "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person;" the word that is used for "express image" in Greek is "charakter," (Strong's NT:5481) it means an exact image and resemblance. The "charakter" was the engraved mark, die or stamp that was used to establish a person's identity. Christ is the exact representation of the invisible God, and He reveals His absolute deity and character. In Heb 1v10-14, Paul affirms that Christ is the eternally unchanging Creator who rules and directs the angels and His creation. The whole passage proves the deity of Christ, and like Thomas the unbiased and humble heart will confess that Christ is "My Lord and my God."

4 In Acts 20v28 Paul states that God shed His blood for the Church

In Acts 20v28, some manuscripts have "Lord" for "God" in the Greek, others have both together, i.e. "Lord and God," which Hodges and Farstad put as the majority text. The evidence for both "Lord" and "God" is good, however, Paul never uses the phrase "the Church of the Lord" any where else in his writings, whereas he often uses the phrase "The Church of God", 1Cor 1v2, 10v32, 11v16,22, 15v9, 2Cor 1v1, Gal 1v13, 1Thess 2v14, 2Thess 1v4, 1Tim 3v5,15. Paul uses the phrase "the Churches of Christ" in Rom 16v16 and Christ Himself said that the Church was His Church in Matt 16v18. The Scriptures teach that the Church is called "the Church of Christ, and the Church of God," and like Thomas, true Christians will recognise that Christ is Lord and God of the Church, which He purchased with His own precious blood.

5 In Rom 9v5 Paul declares that Christ is "God over all, blessed forever"

Some have tried to say that these words are a doxology to the Father, however, in all other Scriptural doxologies the word "blessed" precedes the name of God, e.g. "Blessed be God." Psalm 68v35, 72v18. It would be quite strange and quite out of place to use a doxology in such a context, for Paul was discussing Israel's unbelief, a subject that gave him "great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart." **Paul is stating that Christ was an Israelite "concerning the flesh," but that He was "God over all, blessed for ever," in His deity.** Paul was certainly not just giving a

doxology to the Father as an afterthought, he was stressing that Jesus the Messiah was the God who was supreme over all, and that He would be worshipped and blessed forever with the Father. 2Cor 11v31, Eph 4v6, John 5v23.

6 In Phil 2v5,6, Christ Jesus is said to have subsisted as God

W. E. Vine: in his Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words," writes on Phil 2v6, under "Being," "huparcho": (c) the present participle of 'huparcho,' to exist, which always involves a pre-existent state, prior to the fact referred to, and a continuance of the state after the fact. Thus in Phil 2v6 the phrase 'who being (huparchon) in the form of God,' implies His pre-existent Deity, previous to His Birth, and His continued Deity afterwards." End of quote.

Other commentators and translators make the same point. Wordsworth translates, "subsisting or pre-existing in the form of God." Phillips translates, "for He, who has always been God by nature." Rotherham states, "Who in the form of God subsisting." The American Standard Version reads, "who existing in the form of God." **Jesus existed as God before His emptying at the incarnation, and after it He was still God manifested in flesh, even though sorely tried by the limitations of His humanity.**

The Greek word "morphe" translated "form," gives additional proof of Christ's deity, for "morphe" speaks of the essential form and inner nature, not the mere outward form. Paul is stating that Christ was essentially by nature God, having the essential form and incommunicable nature of God, as Warfield states, "possessing the fullness of the attributes that make God, God."

Bishop Lightfoot: writes, "Though 'morphe' is not the same as 'phusis' (i.e. nature) or 'ousia' (i.e. substance), yet the possession of the 'morphe' involves participation in the 'ousia' also; for 'morphe' implies not the external accidents but the essential attributes."

Rev E H Gifford writes about "morphe" on pages 16,19, and 39, of his book, "The Incarnation:"

"Morphe is therefore properly the nature or essence, not in the abstract, but as actually subsisting in the individual, and retained as long as the individual itself exists....Thus the passage before us 'morphe theou' is the Divine nature actually and inseparably subsisting in the person of Christ....or the interpretation of 'the form of God' it is sufficient to say that 1. it includes the whole nature and essence of Deity, and is inseparable from them, since they could have no actual existence without it; and 2. that it does not include in itself anything 'accidental' or separable, such as particular modes of manifestation, or conditions of glory and majesty, which may at one time be attached to the 'form' at another separated from it....The true meaning of 'morphe' in the expression 'form of God' is confirmed by its recurrence in the corresponding phrase, 'form of servant, it is universally admitted that the phrases are directly antithetical, and that 'form' must therefore have the same sense in both." End of quote.

Christ is not a shadowy image, vague resemblance, or outline sketch ("skia," Heb 10v1). He is the exact image ("eikon," Col 1v15), and exact resemblance ("charakter," Heb1v3); and in Phil.2v6, Paul emphasises the fact that in His pre-incarnate state Jesus existed in the essential form of God in the fullest possible sense. At His incarnation the Lord had to of necessity empty Himself of His omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, transcendence and immutability; but He could not and did not empty Himself of His Divine being and essential nature (i.e. ousia); for even in His incarnate state the soul of Jesus was the image of the invisible God. Col 1v15, Heb 1v3, John 14v9. **Jesus came and lived the same beautiful and sinless life in this wicked world that He had lived in Heaven. Christ's existence in the form of God before His incarnation was as real as His existence in the form of a servant in human form after His incarnation.**

In Phil 2v6, Paul states Jesus "counted it no act of robbery to be equal to God"

Phillips translates this verse, "For He, who has always been God by nature did not cling to His prerogatives as God's equal." Paul definitely states that Jesus was God and not a creature, and goes on to say that Christ "counted it no act of robbery, "harpagmos," to be equal with God," that is, it was His own unquestionable right. As Jesus already existed as God, and enjoyed the essential attributes and powers of deity, He did not have to strive for equality with the Father, for it was already His. Jesus chose to lay on one side the throne of glory and power and became flesh for our sakes. However, as John states in John 5v18, even in His humanity the incarnate God the Word was equal in deity to the Father. **Christ was subordinate to the Father in His mission, but equal to Him in His deity.**

Rev E H Gifford writes about "harpagmos" in Phil 2v6, on pages 28 and 36 of his book "The Incarnation:"

"In order to express the meaning of the clause quite clearly, a slight alteration is required in the Revised Version, 'counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God.' The form 'to be' is ambiguous and easily lends itself to the erroneous notion that to be on equality with God was something to be acquired in the future. The rendering 'counted it not a prize that He was on an equality with God,' is quite as accurate and more free from ambiguity....Assuming, as we now may, that the equality was something that Christ possessed prior to His Incarnation, and then for a time resigned, we have...to choose between two meanings of the word 'harpagmos;' 1) with the active sense 'robbery' or 'usurpation' we get the following meaning: 'Who because He was subsisting in the essential form of God, did not regard it as any usurpation that He was on an equality of glory and majesty with God, but yet emptied Himself of that

coequal glory... 2) The passive sense gives a different meaning to the passage: 'Who though He was subsisting in the essential form of God, yet did not regard His being on an equality of glory and majesty with God as a prize and a treasure to be held fast, but emptied Himself thereof.'" End of quote.

Gifford after considering the arguments for and against these two interpretations, believes the second conveys the true meaning of the passage, "to set forth Christ as the supreme example of humility and self-renunciation;" and as this is the theme of the whole passage, we would heartily agree with Gifford.

Jamieson Fausset and Brown's commentary states on Phil 2v6:

"The image of the invisible God at a time before 'every creature' 2Cor 4v4, esteemed (the same Greek verb as in v3) His being on an equality with God no (act of) robbery or self-arrogation; claiming to one's self what does not belong to Him. Ellicott, Wahl. etc. have translated, 'A thing to be grasped at, which would require the Greek to be 'harpagma' whereas 'harpagmos' means the act of seizing. So 'harpagmos' means in the only passage where else it occurs, (Plutarch 'de educatione peurorum' 120). The same insuperable objection lies against Alford's translation, 'He regarded not as self-enrichment (i.e., an opportunity for self-exaltation) His equality with God.'" End of quote.

In Phil 2v1-11, Paul states that Jesus is the perfect example of self-sacrifice and self-abasement, to bring home his exhortation to humility of mind. Paul shows that the self-sacrifice of Christ was voluntary and sprang from the constraint of pure love, and not from force, or a sense of duty. Christ, who existed as God, emptied Himself and took upon Himself the form of a slave and became obedient to death out of pure love for others. Jesus was willing to abdicate the position of equality with the Father, which was His by right, for our salvation. Paul had already stated that Christ had pre-existed as God, and possessed the essential form, nature and essence of God, now he goes on to state that God the Word's equality with the Father was not a spoil which Christ had usurped wrongfully, Christ subsisted from eternity in equality with the Father, Christ did not count it an unjust assumption to be equal with the Father.

In Phil 2v9-11, and Rom 14v10-12, Paul quotes Isaiah 45v21-23, and applies Scripture that applies to Yahweh and to Yahweh alone to Jesus, and says that Jesus is the Yahweh before whom every knee shall bow. Paul tells us that the name of Jesus is above every name, and that every knee is going to bow to Him, and every tongue confess that He is Yahweh to the glory of God the Father. The Christ child was given the name Jesus, or "Yeshua," i.e. "Yahweh the Saviour." As Jer 23v6 states, "this is the name by which He shall be called, 'The Lord (Yahweh) our righteousness.'" cf. Rev 19v12,13,16, Joel 2v32, Rom 10v9,10,11, Acts 4v12, 5v41 with Isaiah 23v16, 49v23.

NB: The "emptying" of God the Word at the incarnation

In His humanity Christ was still God, but God "emptied," the Word became flesh and fully experienced the limitations and temptations of humanity, and the awful death upon the cross for our salvation. Jesus "emptied Himself," but He was still Christ the Lord, God manifest in the flesh. However, the "emptying" of Jesus was very real, and the constraint of a human body was very trying, He said in Luke 12v50, "But I have a baptism to be baptised with; and how am I straitened ("sunecho," (Strong's NT:4912) till it be accomplished!" Liberal theologians, (if they deserve the name theologian), have said that Paul's phrase, "emptied Himself," "heauton ekenose," meant that "Jesus was a child of His times," and so made mistakes, and was in error in some of His ideas and teaching. We totally reject this blasphemous heretical nonsense. Jesus only spoke and did what the Father told Him. John 5v18,19,30. These heretics actually charge the Almighty with folly and error.

The Authorised Version's, "But made Himself of no reputation," in Phil 2v7, gives a very poor idea of the extent of our Lord's incredible sacrificial self emptying. Other translations give a better translation, and shed more light on this remarkable Scripture. The American Standard Version reads, "But emptied Himself." John Wesley, "Yet emptied Himself." Goodspeed writes, "but laid it aside." Conybear reads, "but stripped Himself." This Scripture shows us the reason why Christ could say during His earthly ministry, "My Father is greater than I," John 14v23, and why Jesus said that the Father was His God as well as ours. John 20v17. Jesus had to live, work and minister in absolute dependence on the Father. John 6v57,58, 5v19-30. Jesus stripped Himself of His equal power and glory for the work of redemption, and in John 17v5, He prayed for the former glory that He had laid aside to be restored to Him; this was granted after the first ascension of John 20v17, for Christ had all power in heaven and earth given to Him. Matt 28v18. God does not give His glory to another, only God the Word, who had laid aside that glory for our redemption, could have it restored to Him. Isaiah 42v8.

Paul's lesson on the humility of Christ in Phil 2v5-11, also gives us some of the most important doctrine on the deity of Christ in the Scriptures. Paul emphasises the supreme practical humility and sacrificial love of Christ and in doing so gives us a glorious doctrinal statement that is a real safeguard against heresy. Paul teaches the plurality of persons in the Godhead, and affirms the true deity and humanity of Christ, and His pre-existence and eternal existence as God.

Few Scriptures are so illuminating, practical and inspiring as Phil 2v5-11, the following paraphrase may help to reveal Paul's thoughts in it. "Let the same disposition, attitude, purpose and mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who existed in the essential form of God, having always been God by nature. He did not deem His own equality with God a prize to be clung to, but emptied Himself and became like other men, taking upon Him the form of a slave, and became obedient unto death upon the cross for our salvation. Because of this astounding sacrificial love God has highly exalted Him and given Him a Name which is above every name, and that at His Name every knee is going to bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Yahweh to the glory of the Father." Let us then, with Paul and every true believer, confess Christ as Lord, and praise honour and adore both the Father and Son for our great salvation.

7 Paul writes in Titus 2v13 that Jesus is "our great God and Saviour"

John Wesley translates this verse, "looking for our blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us," and other translators give the verse this same sense.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown make the following very helpful note:

"Translate, as the one article to both nouns requires, 'The righteousness of Him who is (at once) our God and (our) Saviour.' Peter, confirming Paul's testimony to the same Churches, adopts Paul's inspired phraseology." It also states, (1) "There is but one Greek article to 'God' and 'Saviour' which shows that both are predicted of one and the same Being. 'Of Him who is at once the great God and our Saviour. Also, (2) 'appearing' ('epiphaneia') is never by Paul predicated of God the Father (John 1v18, 1Tim 6v16), or even of 'His glory' (as Alford explains it): is invariably applied to Christ's coming, to which (at His first advent, cf. 2Tim 1v10) the kindred verb 'appeared' ('epephanee'), v11, refers (1Tim 6v14, 2Tim 4v1,8). Also (3) in the context (v14) there is no reference to the Father in the exigencies of the context. Also (4) the expression 'great God', as applied to Christ is in accordance with the context, which refers to the glory of His appearing; just as 'the true God' is predicated of Christ in 1John 5v20. The phrase occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, but often in the Old Testament Deut 7v21, 10v17, predicated of Yahweh who, as their manifested Lord, led the Israelites through the wilderness, doubtless the second person in the Trinity. Believers now look for the manifestation of His glory, inasmuch as they shall share in it. Even the Socinian explanation, making 'the great God' to be the Father, 'our Saviour', the Son, places God and Christ on an equal relation to 'the glory' of the future appearing: a fact incompatible with the notion that Christ is not Divine, indeed it would be blasphemy so to couple any mere created being with God." End of quote.

Bishop Wordsworth:

Says the words, 'tou Theou hemen kai Soteris Iesou Christou:' "Are best rendered, 'of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.' That they may be thus rendered, cannot be doubted. And they are rendered thus by Beza, Hemming, Gerhard, Dietlein, and others here; and by the Greek and Latin Fathers in the similar place of it. Paul, viz. Titus 2v13, 'tou megalou Theou kai Soteris hemon Iesou Christou'....This declaration of the Godhead of Christ was very suitable to the commencement of this Epistle, in which the Author is speaking of the gracious dispensation by which we have become 'partakers of the divine nature,' v4; a participation effected by the Incarnation of the Eternal Word (John 1v14) God manifested in the flesh (1Tim 3v16), "God with us" (Matt 1v23)." End of quote.

In 2Pet 2v1, Peter warns that false teachers would bring in "damnable heresies," literally, "heresies of destruction," and that they would even deny the Lord who bought them. Peter states in 2Pet 1v1, that Jesus is our "great God and Saviour;" and in 2Pet 3v18, Peter again affirms that Jesus is our Lord and Saviour who is to be glorified and worshipped forever. Titus 1v4.

And so we could go on; Christ is "the true God," 1John 5v20, the Almighty, Rev 1v8, and in Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Col 2v9. When one considers all the Scriptures concerning the deity of Christ, one can only repeat the worship and praise that came to the lips of Thomas, we cry with all of our hearts "my Lord and my God," Christ is Lord and God, Yahweh God manifested in the flesh for our salvation. He is "the Lord of glory" and His throne will be forever.

7) Jesus Christ Is Our Lord and God

We will consider again in a slightly different way the divine attributes that are seen in Christ, some of the divine titles that are given to Christ, and some of the divine works that are performed by Christ. We will consider these under the following titles.

A) Christ Jesus Is Our Eternal Lord and Great Creator

Some false teachers have said that the statement in Rev 3v14, that Jesus is "the beginning of the creation of God," shows that He was a created being. They ignore the fact that this verse also says that Christ is "the Amen," "ho Amen," a name that belongs to Yahweh alone. In Isaiah 65v16, Yahweh is called, "the God of Amen," which is translated in the Authorised Version and Septuagint as "the God of truth."

Bishop Christopher Wordsworth D.D., comments on Isaiah 65v16

'The God of truth' Literally, 'the God of Amen,' - a remarkable word, repeated here and found only in two other places in the prophetic Books (Jer 11v5, 28v6; Another reference to Deut 27v15-26, 'All the people shall say, Amen.' Jeremiah is their representative.) When we bear in mind that 'in Christ all the promises of God are Yea and Amen' (2Cor 1v20), and that our Lord adopts this word AMEN in His Gospel, where He uses it about one hundred times, and that He calls Himself 'the AMEN' (Rev 3v14), we are led to recognise here a reference to Him and the Gospel in this title, 'the God of Amen;' and we see here a declaration that the characteristic of those Jews who are God's servants, and please Him, and are rewarded by Him, in this, - that they seek for blessing through Christ, 'The WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE' (John 14v6), and adore Him as God. Cp. above, Isaiah 45v23, Psalm 62v17; below, Jer 4v2, Rom 9v5." End of quote.

Jesus is the God of Amen, who answers our prayers and calls for help.

Those who insist that the word "arche," that is, "beginning," in Rev 3v14 teaches that Christ was a created being, must also say that the Father was created too, for the Greek word "arche," "beginning" is used by the Father to describe Himself in Rev 21v6, when the Father says that He is "the beginning and the end." The Abbot and Smith Greek Lexicon states that the word "arche" in Rev 21v6 refers to God as the eternal and first cause, and this is what Christ is claiming in Rev 3v14. In any case Christ's claim to be the "origin" and "first cause" of creation has already been made in the book of Revelation, when Jesus calls Himself "the First and the Last." Rev 1v8,11,17, 2v3, 22v13. Strong and Thayer confirm that "arche," can not only mean "beginning," it can also mean, "the origin, the active cause, the person that commences, the leader, the first place, the chief in rank," and note that it is also used in reference to angels and demons of the highest rank. The Amplified Version translates Rev 3v14, "the Origin, Beginning, and Author of God's creation. Isaiah 55v4." The New English Bible translates it, "The prime source of all God's creation." Only the creator can be the origin, prime source and active cause of creation. So we can see that Rev 3v14 does not teach that Christ was the first of created beings, it clearly teaches that He was the one who brought creation into being by beginning it. Christ was the great Creator and many Scriptures witness to this fact. Neh 9v6, John 1v3, Col 1v16,17, Heb 1v8-12, Rev 4v11. etc.

Micah's prophecy: The prophesy in Micah 5v2, that Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem, also states that Christ was "to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from old, even from everlasting." The word for "everlasting" is "owlam," (Strong's OT:5769). Zodiates says, "The basic meaning of "owlam" is 'most distant times,' whether the remote past or the future, depending upon the accompanying prepositions."

More than 300 of the 440 times "owlam" occurs in the Hebrew Old Testament speak of indefinite continuance into the future; over twenty occurrences speak of the indefinite past. "Owlam" is used to speak of God's everlasting covenants, Gen 9v16, 17v7,13,19, etc.; and God's everlasting being and His mercy are from everlasting to everlasting. Psalm 90v2, 103v17.

The Psalmist in Psalm 102v1,24-27 addresses Yahweh as the eternal being and Creator, and yet in Heb 1v10-13, this very Scripture is applied to Christ. Paul states that Jesus is the great Creator and is unchangeably the same, and greater than the creation that He has made. We also read in Gen 21v33 that Yahweh is the everlasting God and the great creator, and Neh 9v6 tells us that it was Yahweh and Yahweh alone that personally made the creation. This statement is repeated in Isaiah 42v5, 45v5,11,12, 48v12,13, Gen 1v1,16, Heb 3v3 and Rev 14v7; yet the New Testament says again and again that Christ was the Creator. John 1v1-3, Eph 3v9, Col 1v16,17, Heb 1v2,10. All things were created "by" and "unto" the Lord Jesus according to Col 1v16,17. The three members of the Godhead were concerned with the plan of creation as the "Us" of Gen 1v26 makes clear, but the definite statement that Christ was the person who stretched out the heavens and made the creation alone proves the absolute Yahweh divinity of Christ.

We read in Isaiah 40v10, "Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me," yet some false teachers say that Christ was created "a God." However, nowhere in the Bible does the verb "to create" appear in reference to Christ's relationship with the Father. Christ is always spoken of as being the Creator and the Eternal Lord. As God, our Lord had no beginning; it was only His existence as a human being that began on a certain day. Heb 7v3, Micah 5v2, Isaiah 9v6, etc. We read in Phil 2v6, that Christ was eternally existing in the essential form of God, only absolute deity can exist in the essential form of God and be the exact representation of the Father. It would be blasphemy for any created being to claim they existed in the essential form of God and was the exact image of God the Father. The exact representation of God, is God, only God can perfectly reveal God, only an equal to the Father can reveal Him exactly and perfectly, it is the Son's prerogative to reveal the Father. Matt 11v27. He who has seen Jesus has seen the Father. John 14v8,9,23. Only God can reside with every believer at the same time. The Jews knew that Jesus claimed everlasting Yahweh Divinity and equality with the Father by claiming to be God's Son, and for this they tried to kill Him. John 5v18, 8v58, 10v30,38.

Let us consider some more Scriptures that state that Christ is the everlasting Lord

1) Jesus gives eternal life, John 10v27-33, only absolute deity can give eternal life, only Yahweh, the eternal Lord can give eternal life.

2) As we have seen before in John 8v58, Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I am." He did not say, "I was," He said "I am," He used the name that belongs to Yahweh alone. Exodus 3v4,5. The Jews knew what Christ claimed and tried to stone Him for making such an exalted claim.

3) In Isaiah 44v6 and 48v12, Yahweh says He is the First and the Last, a statement that conveys His eternity of being, yet this exclusive title of God belongs to Jesus, which proves His deity. Rev 1v17, 2v8, 21v13. Jesus is described in Rev 1v8,11,17, 2v8 and 22v13, as "the Beginning and the Ending" and "the Almighty", which the Father applies to Himself to describe His eternal nature and deity in Rev 21v6.

4) The apostle John informs us that the Lord Jesus is "that eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us." 1John 1v2. "Was with the Father," is "en pros ton patera," which is exactly the same construction as John 1v1, "was with God," "en pros ton theon."

A.T. Robertson writes on "pros," "with," in 1John 1v2 and John 1v1

1John 1v2, "'Was with the Father' ('en pros ton patera'). Not 'egeneto,' but 'en,' and 'pros' with the accusative of intimate fellowship, precisely as in John 1v1, 'en pros ton theon' ('was with God'). Then John closes the parenthesis by repeating 'ephanerothe' ('was manifested.' First aorist passive indicative of 'phaneroo,' to make known what already exists, whether invisible or visible)." End of quote.

John 1v1, "'With God.' ('pros ton theon'). Though existing eternally with God the Logos was in perfect fellowship with God. 'Pros' with the accusative presents a plane of equality and intimacy, face to face with each other. In 1John 2v1 we have a like use of 'pros:' 'We have a Paraclete with the Father' ('parakleton echomen pros ton patera') See 'prosopon pros prosopon' (face to face, 1Cor 13v12), a triple use of 'Pros.'" End of quote.

"That eternal life," is "ten zoen ten aionion," literally, "the life, the eternal;" this is a very emphatic and exclusive statement. John was clearly saying that the Jesus was **FROM** everlasting and **NOT** just **TO** everlasting. John's statement is also confirmed by Isaiah 9v6, here the literal Hebrew translation of "the everlasting Father," is "the Father of eternity." Jesus is not only everlasting in being, and has been from everlasting, He is the Lord and Creator of time. Micah 5v2, Matt 2v6. Many Scriptures prove the eternal Deity of Christ, for Jesus has Scriptures applied to Him that are exclusively applied to Yahweh; **the conclusion is inevitable, Jesus is the eternal Lord, the Creator and Controller of time, the one who knows and plans the future.**

NB The Lord Jesus is going to be the everlasting Lord in the future

See Dan 7v14 with Col 1v20 with Dan 2v44, Rev 3v21, 5v12,13. These Scriptures are not in conflict with 1Cor 15v28, which states that Christ subordinates Himself and His kingdom to the Father at the end of the Millennium. In His mediatorial work and millennial kingdom, the Son had complete and total authority and power; after the Millennium and Great White Throne judgement of Rev 20, the Son hands the kingdom over to the Father and they rule it together as Dan 7v14, 2v44, Rev 3v21, 5v13,14, Heb 1v8 make quite clear. Christ's kingdom merges with the Father's kingdom and then all shall feel that God, Father, Son and Spirit, is all in all to me. The Son is still honoured and worshipped as the Father is, John 5v22,23, Rev 5v13,14, which brings us to our next main point.

B) Christ Jesus Is our worshipped Lord

Jesus is worshipped as God. In Deut 6v4,13,14,15, we read, "Yahweh our Elohim is one Yahweh; and thou shalt love Yahweh thy Elohim with all thy heart, and with all thy strength....Ye shall not go after other Gods....for Yahweh thy God is a jealous God."

Satan tried to get the Lord Jesus to worship him, "proskuneo," (Strong's NT:4352) but Christ refused, and replied, quoting from Deut 6v13, that worship, "proskuneo," and service, "latreo," must only be given to God. This is why Daniel's three friends refused to bow to Nebuchadnezzar's idol. Dan 3v1-30. NB: v14-18. It is idolatry to bow down and worship an image or creature. God says, "I am Yahweh and my glory will I not give to another," Isaiah 42v8. cf. Isaiah 48v11. However, when God the Father sent His Son into the world at the incarnation, He said "Let all the angels of God worship Him," "proskuneo." Heb 1v6. We see that Peter refused to receive worship, Acts 10v25,26, and so did Paul and Barnabus, Acts 14v14,15, and an angel twice refused to accept the worship of the apostle John, Rev 19v10, 22v8,9, and yet the Father commands the angels to worship the Lord Jesus. This can only mean one thing; Christ is absolute Yahweh deity like the Father.

If it was wrong for Peter, Paul and Barnabus, and the angel that instructed John to receive worship, then we can be quite sure, that if it had been wrong for the Lord Jesus to receive worship, He would have said so, and stopped people from worshipping Him. Indeed, if He had been a created being, as some false prophets teach, it would have been quite wrong for Him to receive worship. But what do we find? We find Christ accepting the praise and worship which

God's angels and good men instantly rejected in horror, and the Father actually commanding the angels to Worship the incarnate Christ. One person has said that "proskuneo" is used 22 times in the New Testament to describe worship given to God the Father, or absolutely to God; 15 times it is applied to worship given to Christ; 5 times it is used to describe a state of worship; 17 times it is used to speak of, and condemn, the worship given to idols; and twice it is used of the salutation and honour being given to a king. Matt 18v26. This proves that Christ was worshipped on many occasions.

1) Jesus was worshipped by men and angels at His birth. The wise men worshipped Christ. Matt 2v11, "proskuneo." It appears the shepherds may have worshipped "Christ the Lord." Luke 2v8-20. We are definitely told in Heb 1v6, that when Jesus was born God the Father commanded **ALL** the angels to worship Him, He said "Let all the angels of God worship Him," "proskuneo."

2) The leper of Matt 8v2 worshipped Christ, "proskuneo."

3) Jairus worshipped Christ. Matt 9v18, "proskuneo."

4) The disciples worshipped Christ after He calmed the storm. Matt 14v33, "proskuneo."

5) The Syrophenician woman worshipped Christ. Matt 15v25, "proskuneo."

6) The mother of James and John worshipped Christ. Matt 20v20, "proskuneo."

7) The children in the Temple worshipped Christ. Matt 21v15,16. The Lord ascribed a Scripture to Himself which could only be ascribed to Yahweh, i.e. Psalm 8v1,2 to describe the praise that had been given to Him by the children.

8) The two Mary's worshipped Christ after the resurrection. Matt 28v17, "proskuneo."

9) The demoniac of Gadara worshipped Christ. Mark 5v6, "proskuneo."

10) The blind man of John 9v38 worshipped Christ, "proskuneo."

11) In John 5v17,18,23, Jesus claimed that God was His Father in a unique way, "ho pater mou," "My Father," not just "our Father. Jesus also put Himself on a par in a unique working relationship with God's ceaseless activities. In John 5v17, Jesus describes His Father's ceaseless benevolent activities with the linear present middle indicative "ergazetai" (Strong's NT:2038), which means, "keeps on working until now," or, "has always been at work," without any break to help people. **Jesus reveals the continuous unbroken compassionate activities and work of God the Father; God made the Sabbath to bless mankind, but cannot observe it Himself, the demands of Creation are too great, and are eternally demanding.** Jesus also uses the linear present middle indicative "ergazomai," (with the emphatic "I," "kago" (Strong's NT:2504), to speak of His own continuous work in His Father's service. Jesus says that He is following His Father's benevolent example and so justifies His healing on the Sabbath. Jesus says in effect, "My Father has never ceased from working and helping people on the Sabbath, from the dawn of Creation until now, and I am following His example and will." The Jews quite rightly understood this to be a claim to deity See John 4v34, "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work," the noun "ergon" (Strong's NT:2041), work, labour, toil, and task.

In John 5v23, Jesus uses "timosin," the present active subjunctive of "timaō," "to honour," to show that he has the same right to continuous honour and worship as the Father. Jesus goes on to say that those who do not honour Him, do not honour the Father. Indeed, those who dishonour Jesus, dishonour the Father. John 8v49, 12v26, 15v23, 1John 2v23. Let us give the same honour to Jesus that we give to the Father, for as we now see, Jesus was honoured and worshipped by the Christians in the early Church in the same way as the Father.

12) The apostles worshipped Christ after the resurrection, Matt 28v17, "proskuneo;" and continued to worship Christ after His ascension to heaven. Luke 24v50-53. "proskuneo." Thomas went to the very limit of praise and worship by calling Christ, "My Lord and My God," ("Ho Theos"). This would have been the very height of blasphemy if Christ was a mere created being; but our Lord does not rebuke Thomas for his awe-struck confession to Christ's absolute deity, instead, He gently chides Thomas for taking so long to believe it.

13) The early Christians accepted the claim that Jesus made upon them, they recognised Him as God and gave to Him the love, worship, service and obedience, that can only be given to God. Matt 10v27-38, Luke 14v26-33, John 12v36, 2Cor 5v14,15. A Roman official said in the early part of the second century, that Christians met before daybreak and "sang a hymn of praise responsively to Christ as it were to God". Paul tells us in 1Cor 1v30,31, that the person who glories must glory in the Lord, i.e. Yahweh, for this is a quote of Jer 9v24, yet Paul says in Phil 1v26, 3v3, that we are

to rejoice in Jesus. The apostle John tells us that the fellowship in worship that Christians enjoy is with the Father and the Son, the basis of this is the eternal deity of Christ, "that eternal life which was with the Father." 1John 2v2,3.

14) Jesus is going to be worshipped as God on the great day of judgement. We read in Isaiah 45v22,23, that only to God will every knee bow and every tongue swear on the great day of judgement. Paul quotes Isaiah 45v22,23 in two places, Rom 14v10-12 and Phil 2v6-11; and in both Scriptures Paul states that Christ is God, and is going to be worshipped as such.

15) The Lord Jesus Christ is going to be worshipped by all the redeemed for ever. Heb 1v6, Phil 2v9,11, Rev 5v13,14, 7v10. In heaven Christ is not a worshipper before the throne of God, Christ is honoured and worshipped on the throne in the same way as the Father, this gives the true sense of John 5v23. In Rev 4v10, 5v8,12,13,14 we find the Son receiving the same praise and worship as the Father, and we read that it is going to be the theme of heaven for ever, v14, "worshipped" is "proskuneo".

NB1 The benedictions in the name of Jesus are based on the worship of His deity

The early Christians linked the name of the Father and Son inseparably together in their benedictions and blessing of Christians. The Name of Jesus is quoted along with the Name of the Father, as the source of the apostolic benedictions and the authority for their writings. Matt 28v19, John 14v1, Rom 1v7, 1Cor 1v3, 2Cor 13v14, Col 2v2, 2Thess 2v16,17, 1Thess 3v11,12, 1Tim 1v2, Rev 1v5,6, 1Cor 1v2, Eph 1v1, Phil 1v1, 1Thess 1v1, James 1v1. etc.

NB2 Prayer is inextricably linked with worship and deity

Prayer and worship is addressed to Jesus. Acts 7v59,60, 1Cor 1v2, 2Cor 12v8. Christians were distinguished from the heathen by their calling in prayer on the name of Jesus. Acts 9v14,21, Rom 10v12,13. The word for "call upon," is "epikaleomai," and it is used in the Septuagint for the ordinary term for invocation and prayer to God. Psalm 114v18, 1Pet 1v17, 2v21. To associate a creature with the Creator, in the offices of prayer, worship and benediction in the way set forth in these Scriptures would be blasphemy, for it would forever destroy the infinite distinction between the eternal God and His creatures.

There are so many things that prove the absolute deity of Christ, and the fact that He is worshipped along with the Father as God, is one of the greatest proofs. How people can ignore one plain Scriptural statement after another is almost beyond comprehension, however every true Christian can rejoice over the fact that Christ is their God and Saviour and their worshipped Lord. All the divine perfections are revealed in Christ, "for it is in Christ that the complete being of Godhead dwells embodied", Col 2v9. Christians worship their Lord who possesses the attributes, titles, works and divine love of absolute deity.

C) Christ Jesus Is Our Unlimited Lord

Jesus is unlimited in His abilities, He is unlimited in His power, He is omnipotent; He is unlimited in His knowledge, He is omniscient; He is not limited by time or space, He is the omnipresent; immutable, unchangeable, I am: **but above all, Christ is the unlimited Lord of love.**

1) Christ Jesus is our Omnipotent Lord

The word "Almighty" occurs nine times in the book of Revelation, Rev 1v8, 4v8, 11v17, 15v3, 16v7,14, 19v6,15, 21v22, and in Rev 1v8 it is the title that Christ gives to Himself. The other titles of absolute deity that the Father links with this title of "Almighty", Christ also applies to Himself, He calls Himself "Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, the First and the Last." Rev 1v8,11, 2v8, 22v13. The apostle John also tells us that the Lord of Hosts spoken of in Isaiah 6v1-13, is none other than Jesus, "These things said Isaiah, when he saw His glory and spake of Him." John 12v41, cf. v37-42, Rev 19v15,16. Christ has all power in heaven and earth given to Him. This was His before the incarnation, indeed, this was His before the foundation of the world. Matt 28v18 with John 17v4,5. Christ's power and authority are also referred to in other Scriptures. Matt 9v6, 1Cor 1v24, Eph 1v21,22, Phil 3v21, Col 2v9,10, 1Pet 3v22. **It is very sad that many Christian leaders limit the workings of our omnipotent Saviour Christ in their Churches through unbelief. Like the Israelites of old, "they limit the Holy One of Israel." Psalm 78v41. It is very wrong and deceitful to say that our Lord Jesus is omnipotent and yet deny that He still performs signs, wonders and miracles. Christ is the Mighty God. Isaiah 9v6, He is not "the great I was," He is "the great I am."**

2) Christ Jesus is our Omniscient Lord

Jesus in His humanity did not know all things, for we are told in Luke 2v42,52, that He increased in wisdom, and in Matt 24v36 and Mark 13v32 that in His humanity He did not know the date of His second coming. Jesus, in a great sacrificial act of humiliation, took upon Himself a true humanity. Heb 2v16-18, Phil 2v5-8. Jesus tells us in John 5v19-21, that the Father directed and informed Him what to do in His ministry by revelation. John 1v48, 4v16-19, 5v42, 6v61,64, 13v38. etc. The Father informed Jesus of all that He needed to know, and this caused His disciples to say, "Lord, Thou knowest all things." John 16v30, 21v17. Christ often surprised His enemies by revealing their secret thoughts. Matt 9v4, 12v25, Luke 6v8, 9v47. However, after His resurrection and ascension Jesus received again the

glory that He had left behind for our sakes, and in Him are hidden **ALL** the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Col 2v3. Jesus has omniscience; He searches the hearts of **ALL**. Rev 2v23, 1Kings 8v39. Jesus knows and feels all our sorrows, woes, pains, hurts and problems that we have and suffers with us. **We are always on His heart, He prays for all of us, and meets the needs of all His saints.** Heb 2v18, 4v14-16, 7v25, 1Cor 1v30.

3) Christ Jesus is our Omnipresent Lord

In His pre-incarnate state Jesus had existed as God, and knew no limitations in regard to space, He was omnipresent. However, in His humanity He was limited and straightened in a human body. Phil 2v6, Luke 12v50. He is now again our omnipresent Lord, He is with every believer, caring for us, empowering us, and sustaining us. Matt 18v20, 28v20, John 14v23, Lev 26v12, Eph 1v23. It is a wonderful consolation for us to know that Jesus is with us in all our trial and sorrows; His presence gives us joy and victory, peace and comfort.

4) Christ Jesus is our Great I Am

Christ is not only our eternal Lord, He is the Lord who is not limited by time. Christ was before Abraham, John 8v56-58, before the flood, 1Pet 3v18-20, before creation and from eternity, John 1v1, 17v5,24, Col 1v17, Heb 1v2, 13v8, 1John 1v2,3, Phil 2v6. But Christ is not only before all things, He is the Great I Am. Jesus said to the Jews, "Before Abraham was, I Am," not, "I was." **The past, present and future are all present with our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a wonderful comfort to know that God holds the future in His hands, and He not only holds it, He can control and change it, and inform us of it. Christ is our great, immutable, unchangeable, "I Am."** Heb 1v10-12, 13v8.

5) Christ Jesus is our Lord of unlimited love

Paul tells us in Eph 3v19 that "the love of Christ, passeth knowledge", and we read in 1John 4v8, that God is love. It is our privilege to enjoy and glory in the perfect unlimited love of God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus "emptied Himself", Phil 2v7, and laid aside His glory and power at the incarnation, He made the ultimate in self-sacrifice for our redemption. In Rom 5v6-11, we read that Jesus died for us while we were in sin and enemies of God, and 1John 3v1 tells us that through Christ we have been adopted as Sons into God's family, to receive a glorious inheritance that will never fade away. 1Pet 1v3,4. This is eternal unlimited perfect love. God gives the fullness of His blessing to His reconciled enemies; prove His perfect and unlimited love for you by accepting Jesus as your Lord and Saviour.

The doctrine of Christ's unlimited ability has a very practical application to us in our daily lives. Jesus is omnipotent; He can save, deliver and keep us. Jesus is our omniscient and all wise Lord, He knows all about us, and can guide us in all our problems. Jesus is omnipresent; He is with us in every situation. Christ is the Great I Am; He knows and is in control of our future. Jesus is the Lord of unlimited love, He really cares for us. What a comfort these Divine attributes of Jesus give to those who love and serve Him.

D) Christ Jesus is our Redeeming Lord

Jeremiah prophesied, that the Branch that was to be born to David's house, was to be a king, and His name was to be called "Yahweh Tsidkenu," that is, "The Lord our righteousness." Jesus is "Yahweh our righteousness," as can clearly be seen from Rom 3v22-26, 10v1-4, 1Cor 1v30, Phil 3v9. We also see from Joel 2v32 and Acts 2v21,38, 4v11,12, 9v14, 13v38,39, 16v30,31, 22v16, Rom 10v8-14, that Christ is the Lord upon whom we are to call for salvation. The Old Testament tells us that Yahweh is the Saviour and Redeemer, and beside Him there is no other Saviour, Exodus 34v6,7, Isaiah 49v26, 43v11, Psalm 106v21. However, the New Testament tells us that Jesus is the only name by which we can be saved, Acts 4v12; and that Christ is the Saviour of the world, John 4v42, Luke 2v11, 1John 4v14; and that Christ is "our great God and Saviour." Titus 2v13,14. The Church is the Church of Christ "which He hath purchased with His own blood," Matt 16v18, Acts 20v28, and Christ states that He is the great Yahweh who searches the hearts of His redeemed Church. Jer 17v10 with Rev 2v23.

After considering these Scriptures the conclusion is inevitable that Jesus is our redeeming God, "The Lord our righteousness," and that those who accept Him as Lord and Saviour can know forgiveness of sins and peace with God. It is as our Redeeming Lord that He directs the Holy Spirit, and baptises us in the Holy Spirit, this is the prerogative of Yahweh. Isaiah 40v13, Joel 2v27,28, Luke 3v16, Acts 2v17,33. The redeemed believer is made complete in Christ, Col 2v10, all that we need for body, soul and spirit is ours in our dear Lord Jesus, our redeeming Lord. **The supreme quality of God's character is His love, and the full extent to which God is willing to go to save and bless us is revealed in Christ's death for us on the cross, it is God's supreme and final appeal to mankind.** It is the rejection of Christ as Saviour that brings the final certainty of damnation. To see and hate God's perfect redeeming love is the final act of spiritual suicide. John 15v22-25.

E) Christ Jesus is our Returning and Judging Lord

Jesus is going to return in power and glory to set up His kingdom on earth, at a literal personal coming. The motto and glorious hope of the early Church, was "Maranatha," "The Lord cometh." 1Cor 16v22, Phil 4v5, James 5v8. It is a tragedy that many Christians have forgotten the glorious hope of the Church; the return of Jesus is one of the great

themes of the Scriptures. John 14v3, Acts 1v10,11, 1Thess 4v13-17, Heb 9v28, 12v25-29, Rev 1v7,8, 6v14-17, 19v11-21, Zech 14v4, Matt 24v29-31, 26v63,64, 25v31,32. These Scriptures prove that the coming of Christ is a literal personal coming at which He comes to reign.

Christ's coming will have four main objectives:

1) Jesus will come for His Church, of which He is the bridegroom: Matt 9v15, 24v30,31, 25v1-13, Luke 12v35,36, John 3v29, 14v2,3, Eph 5v25-32, 1Thess 4v13-18, Rev.19v7-9, 21v2,9-27.

2) Jesus is the Lord of life and death: Jesus holds the keys of death and Hades and eternal life, the eternal destiny of every soul, and the issues of death are in His hands. Psalm 68v20, John 5v21-29, 11v25,26, Phil 3v20,21, Rev 1v18. The doctrine of Christ's deity is vitally important, for the apostle John tells us that, "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." 1John 2v22,23, 5v10-13. The names of those who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour are written in His book of life. Rev 13v8, 17v8, 20v15. Is your name written in the book of life? Accept Christ as your Saviour and on that judgement day you will enjoy life in the kingdom of God forever.

3) Jesus is the King and Deliverer of Israel: Isaiah 49v22-26, Jer 30v3,8-11, Joel 3v1-16, Zech 12v1 to 14v21, Rom 9v25-29.

4) Jesus will come as the Judge and King of the whole earth: Zech 14v9, Dan 7v13,14, Luke 19v11-27, Acts 10v42, 17v31, Rom 2v16, 14v10, 1Cor 4v5, 3v11-15, 2Cor 5v10, 2Tim 4v1, Rev 11v15, 19v11-16.

We are told in 1John 4v2,3, that those who confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh are of God, but those who do not confess that Christ is come in the flesh are not of God. This is much more than someone saying, "I believe that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." It is a confession that Jesus is the Christ who fulfils the Old Testament prophecies. That is, Christ is Emmanuel born of a virgin (Who became flesh), He is God with us. John 1v14, Isaiah 7v14. "The Mighty God," who has existed from all eternity, and whose reign will be for ever. Isaiah 9v6,7, Mic 5v2. He is the Yahweh who John Baptist prepared the way for. Isaiah 40v3-5. Christ is the Redeemer, the Lord of our righteousness, the Saviour of the world. Jer 23v5,6. Christ is the Yahweh who is to come again, and His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives. Zech 14v3,4, Mal 3v1-3, Acts 1v11,12.

The person who is a true Christian, or as the apostle John puts it, "of God," accept what the Scriptures teach concerning the person of Christ, and accept what Christ teaches in the New Testament concerning Himself, salvation, Hell, Heaven, healing. etc. John tells us that those who deny the vital Scriptural truths concerning Christ are "antichrist" and "not of God". There are many false teachers about today, and Christians, particularly those who are young in the faith, need to store in their minds the truths of the Scriptures, so that they may be able to answer the active and ardent servants of the Devil. Those who know the Scriptures will be able to answer these false prophets, and may with love, tact, and prayer win them over to the truth. I pray that this study will not only inform and teach Christians, but that it also may save many from the snares of false and devilish doctrines, which damn and destroy the soul. 2Pet 2v1.

How wonderful it will be to worship the Father and the Son forever in their kingdom of light and love. If you do not know Jesus as your Friend and Redeemer accept Him now as your Saviour and Lord, and you will eternally enjoy the unspeakable joy of the revelation of the being and love of God, in the kingdom that He has prepared for you.

Section III

The Doctrine of The Trinity

There exist three distinct self-conscious Persons (or self-aware subjects cognizant of their own existence) the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. All three distinct Persons share the nature of the one God, being coequal, co-eternal and co-existent. All three Persons are called (Greek) 'theos' (Strong's NT:2316), and 'kurios' (Strong's NT:2962), in a religious context, sharing in the works of God and possessing the very attributes of God. We find the truth of the Trinity contained in nearly every page of Scripture. The clear differentiation of all three Persons of the Trinity is well exemplified in the New Testament.

Theologians have long noted three important aspects of the Trinity, ontological, economic and soteriological. Scripture clearly distinguishes these three aspects. The ontological Trinity focuses on the essence or nature of the three Persons. Thus, all three Persons are in nature God, being ontologically co-equal. The economic Trinity, however, focuses on the mutual operations or functionality of the three Persons. Now the soteriological Trinity focuses on the specific functions or specified role each Person of the Trinity has in the redemptive and salvific work of God's elect

The Athanasian Creed

1. Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic [true Christian] faith
2. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.
3. But this is the catholic faith: That we worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity;
4. Neither confounding the persons; nor dividing the substance.
5. For there is one person of the Father: another of the Son: another of the Holy Ghost.
6. But the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one: the glory equal, the majesty coëternal.
7. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost.
8. The Father is uncreated: the Son is uncreated: the Holy Ghost is uncreated.
9. The Father is immeasurable: the Son is immeasurable: the Holy Ghost is immeasurable.
10. The Father is eternal: the Son eternal: the Holy Ghost eternal.
11. And yet there are not three eternals; but one eternal.
12. As also there are not three uncreated: nor three immeasurable: but one uncreated, and one immeasurable.
13. So likewise the Father is almighty: the Son almighty: and the Holy Ghost almighty,
14. And yet there are not three almighties: but one almighty.
15. So the Father is God: the Son is God: and the Holy Ghost is God.
16. And yet there are not three Gods; but one God.
17. So the Father is Lord: the Son Lord: and the Holy Ghost Lord.
18. And yet not three Lords; but one Lord
19. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord
20. So are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say, there are three Gods, or three Lords.
21. The Father is made of none; neither created; nor begotten.
22. The Son is of the Father alone: not made; nor created; but begotten.
23. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and the Son: not made; neither created; nor begotten; but proceeding.
24. Thus there is one Father, not three Fathers: one Son, not three Sons: one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.
25. And in this Trinity none is before or after another: none is greater or less than another.
26. But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal
27. So that in all things, as aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.
28. He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity.
29. Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation, that we believe also rightly in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
30. Now the right faith is, that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man.
31. God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds: and Man, of the substance of His mother, born in the world.
32. Perfect God: perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.
33. Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead: inferior to the Father as touching His Manhood.
34. And although He be God and Man; yet He is not two, but one Christ.
35. One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh; but by assumption of the Manhood into God.
36. One altogether, not by confusion of substance; but by unity of person.
37. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man; so God and Man is one Christ.
38. Who suffered for our salvation descended into Hades rose again the third day from the dead. **(Please also see Appendix A: Peter says that Jesus has preached to the dead in Hades. (1Pet 3v18-20, 4v6)**
39. He ascended into heaven: He sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father almighty
40. From whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
41. At whose coming all men must rise again with their bodies;
42. And shall give account for their own works.
43. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; but they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.
44. This is the catholic faith; which except a man believe truly and firmly, he cannot be saved.

(Please also see Appendix B: The Deity and Personality of the Holy Spirit and Appendix C: The Scriptural Proofs of the Trinity)

Section IV

The Consequences of Believing 'The Oneness' Doctrine during the Great Tribulation

Before I start this section, I would very much like to say that I know that in many Oneness Pentecostal churches there are many sincere born again Christians, who have called upon the name of the Lord Jesus and been washed in His blood and are indeed saved, but who have not carefully thought through what they actually believe on the nature of the Godhead. I urge these dear brothers and sisters to diligently search the Scriptures, even as the Bereans did when

Paul preached the Gospel to them, before the last seven years of this age (and especially the last three and a half years, the period known as the Great Tribulation) begins to come to pass, to discover for themselves the truth on this most important subject. Dan 9v27, 12v1, Matt 24v15-21, Acts 2v21, 17v10-12, Rom 10v7, Rev 7v14.

William M Branham (1909-1965) had a truly remarkable evangelistic and healing ministry, indeed, his was probably the greatest that arose out of the great revival that started at the beginning of the 20th century. During the mid 1950's he started to openly teach more, which resulted in him teaching erroneous doctrines and indeed even destructive heresy (i.e., Oneness, Serpent Seed and a few others, he also had a very bad opinion of women). The Lord spoke to him through different persons, one of these being Gordon Lindsay that he was to cease his teaching, for God had not placed him in the Body of Christ as a teacher, but as an Evangelist with a great healing ministry. However, William Branham did not listen to any of these warnings and one can only wonder how many times God told him directly to cease from teaching (destructive) heresy, for God is so very patient and longsuffering (Exodus 34v5,6). There is also an account of what happened some months before he died (24th December 1965), after his car was hit by a drunken driver (18th December 1965), that a certain believer (Gordon Lindsay?) fasted for a month and the Devil appeared to him and told him that he was going to kill William Branham. One can only wonder why did God permit the Devil to kill His servant, William Branham; certainly for teaching destructive heresy, Paul executed Hymenaeus, Philetus and Alexander (1Tim 1v20, 2Tim 2v16-18) by delivering them over to Satan, Elijah executed the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal (1Kings 18v40), and in Rev 2v18-29, the Lord Jesus states that He will execute 'that woman Jezebel' and 'her children' with death, because she taught His servants to commit fornication and eat things sacrificed things to idols, if they did not repent. Also note that in 1Cor 5v1-5, Paul, along with the Corinthian Church, was going to hand over the immoral man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh as well (i.e. for execution) if he did not repent, which he then did and was restored to fellowship. God, the Holy Spirit also executed Ananias and Sapphira for something far less severe than blatant immorality or teaching destructive heresy. Acts 5v1-11. So, the early Church looked upon blatant immorality and the teaching of destructive heresy in the same light and that was that those who carried out such deeds and did not repent should be executed so as to maintain the purity of the Church. The responsibility of the ministry of pastor teacher is so very great, and a severer judgement awaits them, so how important it is for those whom God has set in the Church as such to take heed not only to the flock, but to themselves as well. Acts 20v28, Phil 2v12, James 3v1. From Matt 24v45-25v13 we see the effect that a pastor teacher, who teaches (esp. see Matt 24v45, '...to give them meat in due season.') destructive heresy (including that of the 'Jesus Only' error) has during the last seven years of this Age (but especially during the Great Tribulation) upon not only themselves, but upon the believers whom they pastor, in that both groups (the evil servant and the foolish virgins) backslide and go into apostasy.

It cannot be overstated just how important having the mind, soul and spirit filled with truth will be during the last seven years of this age, but especially during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation, when evil will fill and pervade the earth like at no other time since the earth was created. This great evil which will flood into the earth at the beginning of the Great Tribulation will be the result of Satan and his evil angels being cast out of heavenlies into earth (the cleansing of the heavenlies) and God's restraint being removed from them, so that the mystery of iniquity (or better lawlessness) will work fully. Dan 11v31, 12v1, Matt 24v15-21, 2Thess 2v1-12, Rev 12v7-12, 13 (all). Hence, how important it is that we make sure our doctrines are correct, especially on the nature of the Godhead, so that what Hosea warns against (Hosea 4v6, "**My people are destroyed (perish) for lack of the knowledge (of ME).**") does not happen to the believer. (see also Prov 29v18)

In Matt 7v24-27 and Eph 6v10-20, both the Lord Jesus and Paul teach that it is believing and having the mind filled with truth (i.e. correct doctrine) that is **VITAL** for spiritual survival when the believer has to go through evil times and severe trials and temptations (especially during the Great Tribulation, Matt 24v21). In Matt 7v24-27 Our Lord teaches that it is taking heed to and believing His words and those written by the apostles and prophets under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Eph 2v19-22), that will enable the believer to stand firm when the great floods and storms of life come against them, and Paul in Eph 6v10-20, teaches that we must put on the whole armour of God to be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand. Most of the weapons that Paul mentions represent having a correct understanding of the Scriptures, so that the believer has their mind filled with truth and so can answer the lies of the Devil, even as their Lord did during His temptation in the Wilderness, with the words, 'It is written...' (Matt 4v4,7,10) It is the truth that we have made our own from the Scriptures that is our shield to protect us from the fiery darts and energisings from the Devil and the evil angels, enabling us to stand firm in the evil day. Eph 2v2, 6v16.

In the following Scripture (1John 4v1-6, 2v22,23, 1Tim 3v16-4v5 (with Isaiah 8v20), 2Tim 3v1-9, 2Peter 2v1-22, Jude v3-25, Eph 6v10-20) is given a detailed description of the effects of believing the Oneness doctrine during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation (Matt 24v21 with Luke 6v47-49):

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. **Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist,** whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already

is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error...**Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also...**And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: **God was manifest in the flesh**, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. (To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.) **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. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer...**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 there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. 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; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: **But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government.** Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings **while they feast with you; Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;** But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. **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...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. **For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.** I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. 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. **Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.** Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation,

but said, The Lord rebuke thee. But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. **These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;** Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. **And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, 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.** These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. **But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.** These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. **But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.** And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. **Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen... Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.** For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. **Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.** Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; **Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.** And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

(Please see Appendix F: Put On The Whole Armour of God)

If the believer does not have the Truth of the Trinity firmly fixed in their heart, soul, mind and spirit during the last seven years of this age, and more especially during the last three and a half years, the period known as The Great Tribulation, they will become far more vulnerable to being attacked by the Devil and the powers of darkness, from energisings, fiery darts and blasts of evil Satanic energy. These energisings of evil power will contain in them (amongst other things) all sorts of lies and half truths (i.e., 'doctrines of devils,' of which the 'Oneness' heresy is), which, having been put into their minds and spirits with great evil seducing power, will completely fool these unprepared Christians into believing the lie and this because they won't have on the whole armour of God, which would have enabled them to refute these lies in an instant, even as the Lord Jesus did in the Wilderness during His Temptation, where He answered the lies of the Devil with Truth from the Scriptures. 1John 2v23 states: **'Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father:** (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also;' and so because they have rejected the Truth of the Trinity and believed the Oneness heresy these Christians, because they have rejected the Truth that 'God was manifest in the flesh' do not know God the Father or Christ, especially as their Great High Priest, nor are they in receipt of His ministrations of divine power, grace and blessing. As they are not in receipt of the Lord's intercessions (Greek, 'entugchano' (Strong's NT:1793), which means 'to make interventions with power so as to change circumstances'), during the Great Tribulation they are overcome (and so backslide and go into apostasy) by the great deluge of evil that comes into the world when the Devil and his evil angels are cast out of the Heavenlies into the earth and God's restraint is removed from them, with the result that the Mystery of Lawlessness works fully. Dan 8v23, 12v1, Matt 4v1-11, 24v15-22, Luke 6v47-49, Rom 8v34, 2Cor 10v4,5, Eph 2v1-10 (esp. 2v2), 6v10-20, 2Thess 2v1-12, 1Tim 3v16-4v3, Heb 7v25, 1John 4v1-6, Rev 7,9,10,14, 12v7-12.

One of the cardinal features resulting from believing the 'Oneness' heresy during the Great Tribulation is that these backslidden Christians (who will then go into apostasy, 2Pet 2v20, Jude v12) will give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, resulting in them believing and practising evil ascetic lies. Having destroyed their conscience by their love of evil, they will speak hypocritical lies, by forbidding their followers and flock to marry and to abstain from certain foods, while they eat the foods they forbid their disciples to eat and indulge in fornication (1Tim 3v16-4v5). In 2Tim 3v2-4 we see the character of these apostate Christians, they will have a 'form of godliness' but denying its power. 'Form' is in Greek, 'morphosin', from 'morphosis' (Strong's NT:3446), which means, a shadowy pencilled outline of the 'morphe' without any inner substance, essence or reality, the outer shell (of wheat) without the inner kernel. In 2Tim 3v5, Paul tells us to turn away from Christian forms which lack the reality and power of God (It speaks of persons who have only a form of godliness, with absolutely no power whatsoever, either in the fruit or (spiritual)

gifts of the Spirit, 1Cor 12v7-11, Gal 5v16-26). **Though Scriptural constitutions and fundamental beliefs may give us a necessary outline and code of faith, they will not on their own preserve the purity of the Church. We need a heart cry for mercy, earnest prayer, and a return to early Church practices, if we are to be preserved from error.** We can have correct rules of faith and conduct and resist the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that we could only preserve our spiritual life only by abiding in Him and obeying His words (Luke 6v47-49, John 6v57, 15v1-8, Gal 2v20). The impartation of God's life comes from seeking God, and not from church constitutions, or even from a correct doctrinal outline of Truth, as valuable and necessary as this can be. Psalm 24v3-6, Isaiah 40v31. It is a disturbing fact that the constitutions of men often deny and reject some vital Scripture truths on their teaching on Church government. Mark 7v1-23, Luke 11v52. It is not so spiritually demanding to depend on an organisation, or follow a formal Church order and service. To recognise and follow our Heavenly Father's directions and plans, and to have His love and power operating in our churches demands real humility, prayerfulness, and a close walk with God. This is directly opposite to man's carnal nature, for flesh dominated people love their own ways, and seek for power, position, prestige, influence and wealth. The unconsecrated carnal mind loves to build its own kingdom and say, "Is this not great Babylon that I have built?" and, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing." Dan 4v30, Rev 3v17. **Many have decided against seeking God for a manifestation of His love and power, and have chosen instead, power, popularity, and influence within a religious structure.** These persons, like the first generation of Israelites who came out of Egypt, because of their unbelief and rejection of truth remain in a spiritual wilderness and fail to enter into their Heavenly Canaan, despising their Heavenly inheritance and refusing to partake of the powers of the age to come, now. Psalm 78v41, Heb chapters 3 & 4, 6v5, Jude v5. It can be difficult and frustrating for earnest Christians to operate or manifest the love and power of God through His spiritual gifts, in churches where the leadership manifests these wrong motives, and resists the Holy Spirit and His gifts. By such rebellion and unbelief these leaders, like the ten spies sent out by the first generation of Israelites (and the evil report they gave), keep God's people (those under their spiritual leadership) firmly out of their Heavenly Canaan. Num 13v1-14v38, Psalm 78v41, Heb 3v16-19. 'Morphosin' is also used in Rom 2v20, where Paul says that it was folly for Jews to be proud of being chosen recipients of divine Truth, when they did not obey that Truth, or experience God's life, power and presence.

These apostates indulge extensively in the works of the flesh and habitually seek to lead others along the same evil path that leads to the condition that they themselves are in. Psalm 1 (all), Gal 5v19-21. They will particularly delight in targeting vulnerable women, who, because of their lack of self-control and domination by the flesh, will be fooled into not only letting these people into their lives but into their beds. Because of their sexual addictions, they will not be able to come to a knowledge of the truth, which would have resulted in their salvation, because they did not have a love of the truth. Rom 8v5-8, 2Thess 2v10-12, 2Pet 2v19-22. Amongst the destructive heresies that these false prophets and teachers put forth will be those that are antinomian, that is, false doctrine that says moral law is not binding upon Christians; these must be quickly and unhesitatingly rejected. Christ's death does not give us a means of sinning without reaping the consequences. His death established the moral law and taught that the wages of sin will always be death. Rom 3v26,31, 6v1-4,11-18,23, 8v1-13, Jude v3-25. All lies are dangerous, but moral lies are especially dangerous, for they destroy the character and testimony of the Church. Rom 2v24. These false teachers and false prophets will be amongst God's people, in their denominations and even feasting with them in their informal fellowship meetings, so it is particularly important that pastors recognise such people and initiate disciplinary action against them as laid down by the Lord Jesus in the Scriptures. Matt 13v24-30,36-43, 18v15-20, Acts 20v28-30. If such persons do not repent (after being brought before the Church), they must be handed over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh even as done by Paul in the case of the immoral person and those teaching destructive heresies. 1Cor 5v1-5, 1Tim 1v19,20, 2Tim 2v17,18, 4v14. They will also, having been motivated by covetous, attempt to fleece God's people of their money to line their own pockets, this kind of evil practise (along with many other of their pernicious ways) will cause many to speak evil of Christianity. These apostate false teachers (who go after strange flesh and take delight in defiling the flesh, like the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah) will be like Cain, haters of the brethren and murders, who by their false doctrine corrupt and destroy the souls of men, and like Balaam (who for payment) will twist the Scriptures to entice God's people to indulge in fornication, so as to bring them under the curse of the law (Gal 3v13), also like Korah, who opposed the true leaders that God had placed in the Church, which will result in their swift judgement by those ministries and believers who recognise what they are trying to do and who know their authority to bring such judgement upon them. Jude writes (in v12,13) of such apostates that, '...They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.' The new spirit that they had received when they were born again, through persistent rebellion and wilful sin, in the full light of the character and works of God they will once again force God, by not wanting to have Him in their knowledge, to give them over to a debased mind and so become twice dead, in that they die spiritually for a second time and so become apostate, being irrevocably hardened in sin and so force God to confine them eternally in the Lake of Fire. Jer 13v23, 17v1, John 15v22-25, Rom 1v28, Heb 6v4-8, 10v26-31. The works of these evil false prophets and teachers was revealed to the prophet Enoch (the seventh from Adam), over five thousand years ago, when he saw the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus accompanied by his saints and Holy Angels to not only destroy the wicked but to take His people home and bring in the Millennium Kingdom. Dan 2v44,45, 12v1,2, 1Thess 4v13-18, 2Thess 1v6-10, Rev 6v12-17, 11v15-19, 16v17-21, 19v11-21.

The Lord gives us a wonderful promise through Jude, that even during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation we can still have an overwhelming victory over the world, the flesh and the Devil by 'praying in the Holy Spirit' (that is, by exercising the gift of tongues) along with the wonderful continuous intercessions of our dear Lord Jesus, will keep us in the love of God so that we will not stumble, enabling the Lord Jesus to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Matt 25v14-30, John 15v1-17, Rom 8v1-11,26-39, 1Cor 3v11-15, 10v13, 12v7-11, 14v4, Gal 5v16-26, 2Tim 2v12, Heb 7v25, 1John 2v14-16, 4v4, Jude v20-25, Rev 7v9-17, 14v1-5. **(Please see Appendix J: The Gift Of Tongues)**

1John 4v1-6 states: 'Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: **Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist**, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.'

John tells us that those who believe the Oneness destructive heresy, will backslide and go into apostasy during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation and so will become the false prophets and teachers that he is referring to in this passage of Scripture. These false prophets will be energised by the same spirit that energises Antichrist and will perform great lying signs and wonders so as to deceive even the very elect of God. These false prophets will be present in amongst God's people, not only amongst the denominations but also in Christians' informal fellowship meetings in their homes, (as already stated) hence the great need for Christians and Christian leaders to be on the lookout for these destructive heretics. These false prophets because of their Oneness belief will hold the false doctrine of Docetic Gnosticism (which teaches that Christ did not come in the flesh and so His humanity was not real, but that He was only a phantom). The Docetic Gnostic heresy, which denied Christ's true humanity, is automatically generated in the minds of believers who accept and believe the doctrine of Original Sin **(Please see Appendix K: The Disastrous Effects Of Augustine's Doctrine Of 'Original Sin')**. It occurs in the following way, believers conclude that if we have been "born in sin," with sinful natures, which compel us to do evil; and since Jesus was without sin, He obviously did not possess this same sinful nature, so then He **MUST** have had a different kind of "humanity" to us. So the thought arises in the believer's mind, that the humanity of Jesus was different from theirs. Thus, in a very subtle and cunning disguise, the destructive heresy of Docetic Gnosticism has come into the Church, and has corrupted the theology about the humanity of Jesus. However, the Scriptures clearly teach that our Dear Lord Jesus certainly came in a like humanity, being tempted in **ALL** points like as we are, but without sin. To be tempted in **ALL** points like as we are, it was **MOST** necessary for Him to have the same kind of humanity as the rest of the human race (so being made in all points like as we are), however, unlike the rest of humanity, He did **NOT** yield to the temptation which arose from 'sin in the flesh' and was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. Although these apostate Oneness false prophets and teachers will do great lying signs, wonders and miracles (being energised by the spirit of Antichrist), the apostles John and Paul inform us that God's dear children, who have the Truth firmly fixed in their minds and spirits and being mightily anointed by the Holy Spirit (during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation), will easily out-miracle them and also be able to put a restraint (by divine power) upon their evil and dark activities, so that all and sundry will be able to see (if they so wish to) their folly, even as Jannes and Jambres when they resisted Moses and the prophets of Baal when they tried to call fire down from Heaven in the sight of all Israel and Elijah, and couldn't, because Moses and Elijah had each shut down the powers of darkness that energised these false prophets and magicians through the making of interventions with power in the Heavens by manifesting the gifts of the Holy Spirit there (especially the gift of faith and working of miracles). 1Kings 18v20-46, Dan 8v24, Joel 2v28-32, Matt 24v11,15-25, Luke 2v40,52, 12v50, 18v1-8, John 1v14, Acts 2v16-21, Rom 3v23, 7v7-8v3, Eph 2v2, 2Thess 2v1-12, 1Tim 3v16, 2Tim 3v8,9, Heb 2v14-18, 4v15, 7v26, 10v5, James 5v17,18, Rev 11v3-6, 7v14, 13v2,12-14.

'To pray' in Greek is 'proseuchomai' (Strong's NT:4336) which (basically) means 'to make interventions with power so as to affect a change in circumstances' (see Luke 18v1-8 (esp. v1) and 'entunchano' (Strong's NT:1793) which also has the same meaning as 'proseuchomai' (see 1Tim 2v1-8 (esp. v1 where the noun 'enteuxis' (Strong's NT:1783) is used). **(Please see Appendix M: Studies on the Greek Words Used For Prayer in the Scriptures)**

Conclusion

As has been shown in this study, the destructive heresy of the 'Jesus Only' (also called 'Oneness') teaching primarily attacks the Person of Christ, that being His true Deity and real humanity and so because of this, those who hold such erroneous beliefs do not know and indeed cannot know, the dear Lord Jesus as their Great High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek and because of this neither will they be in receipt of His intercessions (the making of interventions with power so as to affect a change in circumstances). Rom 8v31-39, Heb 3 & 4 (all), 7v25. It is through Our Lord's intercessions that each and every believer receives His grace, strength, power and blessing into their lives (via the

Holy Spirit, Rom 8v26-28), which is **ESSENTIAL** for them to overcome the world, the flesh and the Devil in their Christian life, walk and experience, especially during the Great Tribulation. Dan 12v1, Matt 24v21, 1John 2v12-17, Rev 2v7,11,17,26, 3v5,12,21, 7v14. Because of the great inrush of evil into the world at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, the 'Oneness' believers, who have not studied and embraced the doctrine of the Trinity, will be quickly overwhelmed by it, so that they quickly backslide and go into apostasy. Rev 12v7-12.

Let us therefore harken unto the Lord's dire warning, through the prophet Hosea in Hosea 4v6 which states: **"My people are destroyed (perish) for lack of the knowledge (of ME),"** so that we might pray for light from the Scriptures when we study them with an open mind (even as the Bereans did, Acts 17v10-12), so that we come to a **FULL** knowledge of the Triune Godhead, so that we might be prepared for the last seven years of this age, but more especially for the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation, so that we might overcome with a victorious faith so that an entrance will be supplied to us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Jer 30v7, Dan 9v27, Matt 24v15-24, 2Thess 2v1-12, 2Peter 1v11, Rev 7v9-17, 12v7-12, 13 (all).

Yahweh Shalom

Appendix A: Peter says that Jesus has preached to the dead in Hades. (1Pet 3v18-20, 4v6)

After seeing the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge in John 17, it is difficult to understand why men and angels have rejected that great love. It is also difficult to understand why Christians refuse to accept that there will be a chance of salvation after death, when Peter, in 1Pet 3v18-20 and 4v6, declares that Jesus has already preached to the dead. Jesus did this preaching after His soul was made an offering for sin in Hades, and He had won salvation for us. Isaiah 53v10, Matt 12v40, Acts 2v24,31, Rom 10v7, Eph 4v8-10. **In 1Pet 4v6**, Peter uses **"euangelizo"** (Strong's NT:2097) to state that Jesus preached the good news of the Gospel to the dead, that is human beings who had died. **We read in 1Pet 4v5,6**, "They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. **For this reason the Gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.**" "Euangelizo" is always used of the preaching of the good news concerning Jesus. Matt 11v5, Luke 3v18, 4v18,43, Acts 8v4,12,25,35,40, 17v18, Rom 10v15, Gal 1v8,9, 1Pet 1v12,25, Rev 10v7, 14v6. **In 1Tim 2v5,6**, Paul states that God will give a full opportunity of salvation to all, for He has no pleasure in the death of anyone. It is inconceivable and unscriptural to say that a God of love will put people into an eternal Hell without a chance of salvation, because, due to no fault of their own, they were not fortunate enough to hear the Gospel.

Is an opportunity given for angels to repent and be saved?

Paul tells us in Col 1v20, that Christ's blood bought the opportunity for salvation for "all on earth and all in Heaven alike," however, whether people or angels repent and accept His sacrifice is another matter, both angels and men can refuse to repent and accept the Divine mercy. Peter also informs us in 1Pet 3v19, that Jesus preached to the wicked angels imprisoned in the Abyss by God, who had taken upon them human flesh in the time of Noah. Gen 6v1-7, Jude v6. Here "preached," is **"kerusso,"** (Strong's NT:2784) to publish, to proclaim, to preach the Gospel as a herald, a "kerux." For "kerusso," see Matt 3v1, 4v17,23, 10v7, 11v1, 24v14, Acts 8v5, 9v20, 28v31, 1Cor 1v23, 2Cor 4v5, 2Tim 4v2. etc. Jesus proclaimed like a herald His great victory to the wickedest beings that have ever lived, the evil angels who were expelled from Heaven with Satan for choosing evil while living with God in Heaven. **We know from 2Pet 2v4,17 and Jude v6,12, that they are so hardened by evil, that they are beyond repentance and redemption, and are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgement of the great day."** We know they are beyond repentance, and so they are still imprisoned in Hades in everlasting chains of darkness. 2Pet 2v4,17, Jude v6,13. **Even the revelation of the wonderful dying love of the Lamb of God fails to bring them to repentance. They wail in enragement and frustration, and gnash their teeth in fury and bitter anger. As the Lamb and the holy angels test and scrutinise the souls of the wicked, they find no trace of repentance, or any grounds for their release, they are proved irreconcilable.** Matt 13v42,50, Rev 14v9-11.

These evil angels were full of sullen rebellion and bitter anger when our Lord Jesus proclaimed His glorious victory and His salvation to them. Jesus told us that the wicked will wail at their fate but will gnash their teeth in bitter anger. Matt 8v12, 13v42,50, 22v13, 24v51, 25v30, Luke 13v28. "Weeping, or wailing, and gnashing their teeth," is, "ho klauthmos kai ho brugmos." The noun "brugmos" (Strong's NT:1030), is from the verb, "brocho," (Strong's NT:1031), to grind or gnash with the teeth. How different from the wailing and lamentation of the mothers when Herod killed their beloved children. How different too from the grief in Acts 20v37, "And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him." Weymouth's Translation reads, in Acts 20v37,38., "and with loud lamentation they all threw their arms round his neck, and kissed him lovingly, grieved above all things at his having told them that after that day they were no longer to see his face. And they went with him to the ship." "They all wept sore," is "hikanos klauthmos egeneto panton." Literally, "There was a great weeping on the part of all." "Kissed him," is "katephiloun auton," the

imperfect active of "kataphileo," They kept on kissing Paul, one after the other they kept on falling on his neck and kissed him. See Gen 46v29 and Matt 26v49.

We read in Acts 7v54, "they gnashed on him with their teeth," is the imperfect active of "brucho," (Strong's NT:1031) "to bite with loud noise, to grind or gnash the teeth." Literally, "they began to gnash their teeth at him," just like a pack of hungry, snarling jackals. The gnashing and grinding of teeth here demonstrates the meaning of our Lord's words, they speak of the unrepentant bitter anger of the wicked. See Rev 16v9,11,21, where men blaspheme God to His face because of his judgements and will not repent. See Rev 2v21 Jezebel would not repent. Rev 9v20. Many Jews refused to repent even after the powerful preaching of John the Baptist and Jesus, and the mighty miracles of Jesus. Matt 11v20, 21v32.

The noun "klauthmos" (Strong's NT:2805), is translated in the AV as "weeping" in Matt 2v18 (the weeping of mothers whose children had been murdered by Herod), Matt 8v12, 22v13, 24v51, 25v30 and Luke 13v28, and as, "wailing," in Matt 13v42,50, and as "wept sore," in Acts 20v37 when the elders of Ephesus heard that they would not see Paul again on earth. The words "cast into outer darkness," and "cast into a furnace of fire," come from the lips of Jesus and cannot be ignored, they could not be more solemn and serious.

We read that Israel's religious leaders gnashed their teeth at the martyr Stephen in Acts 7v54-60:

"When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at Stephen. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him, and the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died."

NB The early Church fathers testify that Jesus preached to the dead.

In 1Pet 3v19 and 4v6, Peter gives sufficient proof for an honest person, that the early Church believed and preached that Jesus proclaimed His glorious atonement and victory to the dead in Hades. Plumptre states that the evidence of our Lord's descent into Hades and His preaching to the dead includes all the leading familiar names which are consulted when the early faith and practice of the Church are examined. The weight and authenticity that is attributed these witnesses on vital truths such as the Incarnation, baptism, the Eucharist, and the authenticity of the Gospels, must also be granted to the facts they give on the doctrine of our Lord's preaching to the dead.

Irenaeus says explicitly that the Lord "descended into the regions beneath the earth, preaching His advent there also, and the remission of sins ready for those who believe in Him," and he also states that remission of sins was received by, "all who had hopes towards Him, who proclaimed His advent and submitted to His dispensations." Irenaeus 4.27,2.

Justin accused the Jews of mutilating a prophecy of Jeremiah's, which had read, "The Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, remembered those His dead who slept in the dust of the grave, and descended to them to proclaim to them His salvation."

Clement of Alexander preached that the souls of the Heathen as well as Jews benefited from the revelation of Christ to them in Hades. The Jews being in bonds to the burden of the Law, and the Heathen being "those in darkness," received the proclamation of the truth of the Gospel from Jesus. This proclamation involved the offer of salvation, and the possibility of repentance and forgiveness of all the sins that a man had committed in ignorance, when not clearly knowing God.

Origen, Clement's pupil, as we have already stated, believed that Jesus preached to the dead. A famous infidel named Celsus was speaking with Origen and ridiculed this widespread belief of the Church, he said, "I suppose Christ, when He failed to persuade the living, went down to Hades to persuade those who live there?" Origen answered him, "Whether it please Celsus or no, we of the Church assert that the soul of our Lord, stripped of its body, did there hold converse with other souls, that were in like manner stripped, that He might there convert those who were capable of instruction, or were otherwise in ways known to Him fit for it." Origen c. Celsum, 2.43.

Tertullian also stated that the belief that Jesus descended into Hades and preached there, had been held in the Church since the days of the apostles, his testimony is of great value since Tertullian censured anything that was new.

Cyril of Jerusalem states, in beautiful picturesque language, that: "The holy prophets ran unto Him {Jesus}, and Moses the lawgiver, and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; David also and Samuel, and Isaiah and John the Baptist, who

bore witness when he asked, Art thou He that should come, or look we for another? All the just were ransomed whom death had devoured, for it behoved the King who had been heralded to become the redeemer of His noble heralds. Then each of the just said, O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? For the Conqueror hath redeemed us." Cyril Hieros., Catech. 14. 9,10.

Athanasius said that more than the Patriarchs and prophets were delivered from Hades, he extended the circle of those who Jesus delivered from Hades through His preaching, "and thinks of the souls of Adam as held fast under sentence of death, and crying to his Lord ever more, and of those who had pleased God, and had been justified by the law of nature, as mourning and crying with Him till the mercy of God revealed to them the mystery of redemption."

More evidence could be given, but these quotes will suffice to show that the early Church believed that Jesus preached to the dead.

Appendix B: The Deity and Personality of the Holy Spirit

The words "spirit and "holy spirit" are used to speak of the power, influence and operating energy of the person who the Scriptures call "The Holy Spirit." However, many Scriptures definitely establish the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit.

1) Personal pronouns are repeatedly applied to the Holy Spirit

The Hebrew word for "Spirit" is "Ruach," which is in the feminine gender; the Greek word for "Spirit" is "Pneuma," which is in the neuter gender. However, in John 14v26, 15v26 and 16v8,13,14, the personality of the Holy Spirit is emphasised at the expense of violating the rules of strict grammar. The emphatic pronoun "ekeinos", "He", is in the masculine gender, whereas the noun "pneuma", that is, "Spirit", is the neuter gender. Note the neuter "ekeino" is not used.

The translation "itself," in Rom 8v16,26, in the Authorised Version, is corrected in the Revised Version to "Himself." A.T. Robertson, makes the following helpful comment on Rom 8v16, in his "Word Pictures in the New Testament:" "'The Spirit himself' ('auto to pneuma'). The Grammatical gender of 'pneuma' is neuter as here, but the Greek used also the natural gender as we do exclusively as in John 16v13 'ekeinos' (masculine 'he'), 'to pneuma' (neuter). See also John 16v26, ('ho -- ekeinos). It is a grave mistake to use the neuter 'it' or 'itself' when referring to the Holy Spirit." End of quote.

In John 15v26, "Parakletos," (Strong's NT:3875), means, "another sent alongside to help," that is, another person like Jesus, with active benevolent intelligence. John 14v26, 16v8,13,15. The Holy Spirit comes from beside the Father, to be by the side of us. "Parakletos" occurs in John 14v16,26, 15v26, 16v7, as "Comforter," and in 1John 2v1, as "Advocate." Jesus says in John 15v26 that He will send the "Parakletos," which again, like the emphatic demonstrative pronoun "ekeinos," is masculine. Jesus twice informs us that the Holy Spirit is sent and proceeds, "from beside the Father," "para tou patros." The A.V., "which proceedeth" should read "who proceedeth;" for A.T. Robertson states, "'Which' ('ho') is the grammatical neuter to agree with 'pneuma,' and should be rendered 'who' like 'ho' in John 14v26." End of quote.

Greek scholars tell us that the use or absence of the definite article ("the"), does not on its own determine whether the reference is to the Holy Spirit the person. However, the use of the definite article before both "pneuma" and "hagios," "the Spirit the Holy," does stress the personality of the Holy Spirit; as in Matt 12v32, Mark 3v29, 12v36, 13v11, Luke 2v26, John 14v26, Acts 1v16, 5v3, 7v51, 10v44,47, 13v2, 19v6, 20v23,28, 21v11, 28v25, Eph 4v30, Heb 3v7, 9v8, 10v15. Note: Acts 21v11, "Agabus....said, These things says the Spirit the Holy:" and Acts 15v28, (one definite article in Majority Text, two in Critical Texts) "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." The Scriptures clearly show the Holy Spirit speaks and directs and has plans and purposes, and so must have a will, mind and personality.

2) Personal actions and qualities of character are ascribed to the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is said to have active intelligence and will. 1Cor 2v10,11, 12v11. He strives, Gen 6v3; He speaks, reproves, guides, and directs. Neh 9v20, Luke 12v11,12, John 16v8-11,13, Acts 1v16, 8v29,39, 10v19, 11v12,28, 13v2,4, 15v28, 16v6,7, 20v23, 21v4,11, Rom 8v11-14, Heb 3v7, 10v15. The Holy Spirit works signs, wonders and miracles, and decides through whom they shall be performed. Rom 15v19, 1Cor 12v7-12. He sanctifies, 1Cor 5v11, Titus 3v5; He seals, Eph 1v13, 4v30; He regenerates, John 3v6.; He inspired the Scriptures. 2Tim 3v16; He prays and intercedes for the Church. Rom 8v26,27. These are all qualities, and attributes of character, and actions, that are inseparably connected with, and certify, a definite personality.

3) Personal insults and injuries can be performed against the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit can be resisted and grieved. Acts 7v51, Isaiah 63v10, Eph 4v30, 1Thess 5v19, Heb 3v7-11, 4v7. He can be lied to and tempted, Acts 5v3,4,9; He can be blasphemed and rejected. Matt 12v31,32, Heb 10v29. Jesus said

the Jews who had wilfully rejected and opposed His mighty signs, wonders and miracles, had seen and hated Him and His Father. John 15v22-27. Jesus said that when they attributed the works that the Holy Spirit did through Him to the Devil, they committed a sin that could not be forgiven. Mark 3v28-30. **Offending and personally insulting the Holy Spirit is the most serious sin of all.**

4) Absolute Deity is ascribed to the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures

a) Divine names are given to the Holy Spirit: He is called God. Acts 5v3,4, 1Cor 3v16, 6v19,20, 2Tim 3v16 with 2Pet 1v21. The Holy Spirit is called Yahweh. Isaiah 6v5,9 with Acts 28v25, Exodus 17v7 with Heb 3v7-9, Jer 31v31-34 with Heb 10v15-17. We also read in 2Cor 3v17 that "the Lord is that Spirit;" as we have seen before, when Caesar said he was Lord, everybody knew that he was claiming divinity, and in the New Testament it is used to translate the Hebrew "Yahweh." Paul in 2Cor 3v18, writes that the "Spirit of the Lord" transfigures us as we behold the glory of the Lord. This is obviously a reference to "the Spirit of Yahweh," of the Old Testament; and v17 obviously means, "Yahweh is that Spirit."

b) Divine works and perfections are ascribed to the Holy Spirit: Omnipresence, Psalm 139v7-10, Rom 9v26,27, 1Cor 6v19. **Omniscience,** Isaiah 40v11-14, John 14v26, 16v12,13, Rom 11v33,34, 1Cor 2v9-11. **Eternal uncreated existence,** Heb 9v14. **Omnipotence,** Isaiah 40v13-17, only infinite power can talk thus. Gen 1v2, Job 26v13, 33v4.

c) Worship, love and blessing are given to Him: Some people foolishly say that we should not worship the Holy Spirit, this is wrong. In Acts 28v25, the Holy Spirit is the Yahweh who is worshipped in Isaiah 6v3-9, Rom 15v30, 2Cor 13v14, Matt 28v19. Only God can be worshipped. **Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the greatest sin; those who reject the workings, deity and personality of the Holy Spirit, and say His works are of the Devil, commit this sin.** Matt 12v31,32, Mark 3v28-30.

Appendix C: The Scriptural Proofs of the Trinity

As we have seen, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are both looked upon as having absolute Yahweh divinity, they are both looked upon as "God" as well as the Father. However, some false teachers brush to one side the mass of evidence for the absolute deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit, and say that the Bible teaches that there is only one God and that He is the Father. The following Scriptures do teach the fact that God is one. Deut 4v35, 6v4, 32v39, 2Sam 7v22, 1Chron 17v20, Psalm 83v18, 86v10, Isaiah 43v10, 45v18, Mark 12v29,32, 1Cor 8v4, Gal 3v20, James 2v19. However, "one" in the Scriptures does not always mean a mathematical one, it can be a compound unity and oneness, as is seen in the following Scriptures. Gen 2v24, 11v6, 41v1,5,25, 1Kings 22v13, 2Chron 5v13, John 17v22, Acts 4v32, 1Cor 3v8, Eph 2v14, 1John 5v7. **In these Scriptures there is a oneness, but there is also a plurality.**

NB The unity in the Godhead is a compound unity. "Echad." (Strong's OT:259)

In Deut 6v4, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:" the word "one," which here, and elsewhere, is used to speak of the unity of God, is, "echad," it can speak of a compound unity of distinguishable entities, for the same Hebrew word, "echad," that is used to speak of the unity of God in Deut 6v4, is used in Gen 2v24 to speak of the oneness of Adam and Eve.

"Yachid," (Strong's OT:3173), is used to speak of a mathematical unity, it means, sole, unique, and one of a kind; it is never used of the unity of God. "Yachid is translated, as "darling," Psalm 22v20, 35v17; as "desolate," Psalm 25v16; as "only," Gen 22v2,16, Prov 4v3, Amos 8v10, Zech 12v10; as "only child," Judges 11v34; as "only son," Jer 6v26; and as "solitary," Psalm 68v6. Ruth Rachel Spencer, in her book, "The Bud and Flower of Judaism," writes: "Yachid" is used forcefully in the Bible as an absolute unity and is found twelve times in the Old Testament, but not once is it used of the unity of God." End of quote.

The compound unity of the Godhead is also proved by the fact that the word for "God" in Deut 6v4, is the plural "Elohim;" which is used over 2,700 times in the Old Testament, at least ten times more than the singular "El." The objection that "Elohim" is used just as "a plural of magnitude," is completely invalidated by the fact that in the Bible, "Elohim" is never used to describe the majesty of a king, nor is this kind of practice used with reference to kings in the Scriptures. In the Old Testament the Israelites always addressed their kings in the singular. It must be noted that "Elohim", though plural, when speaking of God, is nearly always constructed with verbs and pronouns in the singular. Sometimes, however, "Elohim" is sometimes significantly used with plural pronouns. e.g. Gen 1v26, "And God ('Elohim') said, Let us make man in our image." And Gen 3v22, "And the Lord God said, Behold man is become as one of us." In some cases the singular "Yahweh" is united with plural verbs. e.g. Gen 11v6,7, Isaiah 6v3,8. The singular "Yahweh" is also linked with the plural "Elohim" many times in the Scriptures. e.g. Deut 6v3,4,5, Exodus 20v2,5, Isaiah 42v5. etc. **God gave a sure indication of the compound unity of the Godhead by the use of these plural and singular words being linked together.**

The compound unity of the Godhead is seen in the way that Father, Son and Spirit are linked together in statements of authority and truth, confessions of faith, benedictions and baptismal formula. To link a creature, or an impersonal spiritual power, with God in this way would be out of the question, it would forever destroy the infinite distinction between God and the creature. Only absolute deity can be linked with the Father in the way that the Son and Spirit are. Isaiah 45v5,6,18,21,22, 46v9, 61v1-3, Isaiah 11v1,2 with Jer 23v5,6, Matt 3v16,17, 28v19, Luke 1v35, 3v21,22, John 3v34, 14v16,26, 15v26, 16v7-15, Acts 20v28, Rom 1v1-4, 15v30, 1Cor 2v7-10, 12v4-6, 2Cor 13v14, Gal 4v6, Eph 2v18, 4v4-6, Heb 2v3,4, 9v14, 1Pet 1v2, 3v18, 1John 3v21-24, 5v7. (Though the Codex Montifortii and Vulgate contain 1John 5v7, it is not found in the early Greek manuscripts; however, Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, 200 to 258 AD, quotes this as being written by the apostle John, Vol.5.418, 423, Ante-Nicene Fathers.

There are also numerous salutations, which the name of the Father and the Son are linked together. Rom 1v7, 1Cor 1v3, 2Cor 1v2, Gal 1v3, Eph 1v2, Phil 1v2, Col 1v2, 1Thess 1v1, 2Thess 1v2, 1Tim 1v2, 2Tim 1v2, Titus 1v4, Philemon v3, James 1v1, 2Pet 1v2, 3John v3. In 1Pet 1v2 the Holy Spirit is mentioned with the Father and the Son. In the Scriptures, "God," can sometimes refer to the entire Trinity, or it can at other times refer to separate members of the Godhead. "God" can mean either plural or singular in the same way that "sheep" or even "man" can. There is a perfect oneness of purpose, mind, love and fellowship in the Godhead; however, this oneness and unity goes beyond this, for we read in John 10v38 and 17v21, that the Father is not only in the Son, but the Son is also in the Father. **In the Trinity there is an interfusion and sharing of personality and nature and glory.** It is no good false teachers saying that this is not so, the Bible says it is so, it clearly says that all are called God. Let God be true and every man a liar who contradicts the truth of God's word.

We will close this study on the Trinity with a few comments on John 17v3, where Christ calls the Father "the only true God", this will also help to explain such Scriptures as Gal 3v20, Eph 4v6, 1Tim 1v17, 2v5. In John 13v3, Jesus is not denying His deity, for many Scriptures clearly state that Christ is God, the context of John 17v3 shows why the Lord prayed in this way.

1) Jesus is praying as our Mediator and Redeemer

Christ in praying to the Father calls Himself "thy Son," He was praying as the incarnate Son who became a servant for the work of redemption. This is why the Father is not only called "the only true God," but also "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2Cor 11v31, Eph 1v3, 1Pet 1v3, John 17v3, 20v17. **Christ is our Lord and God, yet in His work as mediator and redeemer, God the Father is His God.** However, in the opening words of this prayer Christ claimed again a unique Sonship, which Christ's enemies and the apostle John knew was a claim to absolute deity. John 5v17,18, 10v30-33. Christ's claim to be the Son of God was a claim to coequal deity with the Father.

2) Jesus is praying as the God who emptied Himself to become the Messiah

Jesus is speaking as the Messiah, He calls Himself, "Jesus Messiah whom Thou hast sent," He was speaking as the Messiah of the Israelites, and as the Saviour of the world. We read in Phil 2v5-11 of the humiliation and emptying of God the Word for the work of redemption; and in John 17v5, Christ refers to the glory which He shared with the father before the world was, and he prays for it to be restored to Him again. Christ uses the striking words, "glorify me **WITH THINE OWN SELF** with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." The Messiah that was promised to the Israelites was very definitely stated to be God. e.g. Isaiah 7v14, 9v6, Micah 5v2, etc. The Messiah was "the Lord our righteousness." Jer 23v5,6 with Isaiah 43v11, Hos 13v4.

3) Jesus affirms His Oneness with the Father

When Jesus said to the Jews in John 10v30, "I and my Father are one," they took up stones to stone Him, "because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." When Jesus said in John 10v38, "the Father is in me, and I in Him," the Jews again tried to capture Him and kill Him; they well understood it as a clear claim to coequal deity with the Father. See John 17v21. In John 17v3,21, Jesus said that eternal life is found in knowing both the Father and Son, and prays that believers "may be one in us." We rejoice that we are accepted in the beloved, and are one in the Father and the Son. Jesus is no less God because the Father is called "the only true God," in John 17v3, than the Father is not God, because Jesus is called "the only Potentate," in 1Tim 6v15, and "the true God," in 1John 5v20; and "the true Lord," in Mal 3v1; and "the one Lord," in 1Cor 8v6. When Jesus said the Father is "the only true God," He is speaking as a man, and as Mediator and Redeemer, He is certainly not excluding Himself from deity. "The only true God," is applied to God the Father, in contrast, not with the Son, or the Holy Spirit, but with the false gods and idols of the heathen. Jesus is one with the Father; in the Son dwells all the fullness of the Godhead, and he who has seen Jesus has seen the Father. John 14v7-14, Col 2v9,10.

NB: Textual note on "vios," "Son," in John 1v18: Burgon, follows the vast majority of manuscripts and a majority of Church Fathers, and says that "vios," "Son;" is the correct text, and rejects the reading "only begotten God," and says that it is an alteration introduced into the text by the Gnostic Valentinus, and his followers, whose strange teaching denied that "the Word" is the Son of God. (The Gnostic Valentinus lived about 150 AD, when Gnosticism was at its height.) Arius also used the reading, "Theos," "God," in John 1v18, for His arguments against the eternal pre-existence of Christ, maintaining that the Son if begotten by God, must have had a beginning, and there must have

been a time when He was not. Arius, strangely, believed in the deity of Christ and yet not of His eternal pre-existence, he stated, "The Son....has existed before time and before ages, as Perfect God, only begotten and unchangeable; and that He existed not before He was begotten or created." Valentinus and Arius are about the worst people to follow for textual purity. The solid evidence against the reading "only begotten God," and its association with heretics cannot be ignored, and must be rejected.

Appendix D: The glory and victory of Our Lord's humanity

a) A. T. Robertson states that Heb 2v17,18, teaches the true sympathetic humanity of Jesus in his commentary.

Heb 2v17,18. "{It behoved him}" "ôpheilen." Imperfect active of "opheilô," old verb to owe, money (Matt 18v28.), service and love (Rom 13v8), duty or obligation as here and often in N.T. (Luke 17v10). Jesus is here the subject and the reference is to the incarnation. Having undertaken the work of redemption (John 3v16), voluntarily (John 10v17), Jesus was under obligation to be properly equipped for that priestly service and sacrifice. {In all things} "kata panta." Except yielding to sin (Heb 4v15) and yet he knew what temptation was, difficult as it may be for us to comprehend that in the Son of God who is also the Son of man (Mark 1v13). Jesus fought through to victory over Satan. {To be made like unto his brethren} "tois adelphois homoiôthênai." First aorist passive infinitive of "homoioô," old and common verb from "homoios" (like), as in Matt 6v8, with the associative instrumental case as here. Christ, our Elder Brother, resembles us in reality (Phil 2v7, "in the likeness of men") as we shall resemble him in the end (Rom 8v29, "first-born among many brethren"; 1John 3v2, "like him"), where the same root is used as here "hoiôma, homoios." That he might be "hina genêtai." Purpose clause with "hina" and the second aorist middle subjunctive of "ginomai," to become, "that he might become." That was only possible by being like his brethren in actual human nature. {Merciful and faithful high priest} "eleêmôn kai pistos archiereus." The sudden use of "archiereus" here for Jesus has been anticipated by 1v3; 2v9, and see 3v1. Jesus as the priest-victim is the chief topic of the Epistle. These two adjectives "eleêmôn" and "pistos" touch the chief points in the function of the high priest (5v1-10), sympathy and fidelity to God. The Sadducean high priests (Annas and Caiaphas) were political and ecclesiastical tools and puppets out of sympathy with the people and chosen by Rome. {In things pertaining to God} "ta pros ton theon." The adverbial accusative of the article is a common idiom. See the very idiom "ta pros ton theon" in Exodus 18v19; Rom 15v17. This use of "pros" we had already in Heb 1v7f. On the day of atonement the high priest entered the holy of holies and officiated in behalf of the people. {To make propitiation for} "eis to hilaskesthai." Purpose clause with "eis to" and the infinitive (common Greek idiom), here present indirect middle of "hilaskomai," to render propitious to oneself (from "hilaos," Attic "hileôs," gracious). This idea occurs in the LXX (Psalm 65v3), but only here in N.T., though in Luke 18v13 the passive form "hilasthêti" occurs as in 2Kings 5v18. In 1John 2v2 we have "hilasmos" used of Christ (cf. Heb 7v25). The inscriptions illustrate the meaning in Heb 2v17 as well as the LXX. **(2v18)** {In that} "en hôi." Literally, "In which" ("=en toutôi en hôi," in that in which), a causal idea, though in Rom 14v22, "en hôi" means "wherein." {Hath suffered} "peponthen." Second perfect active indicative of "paschô," permanent part of Christ's experience. {Being tempted} "peirastheis." First aorist passive participle of "peirazô." The temptation to escape the shame of the Cross was early and repeatedly presented to Christ, by Satan in the wilderness (Matt 4v8-11), by Peter in the spirit of Satan (Matt 16v22f), in Gethsemane (Matt 26v39), and caused intense suffering to Jesus (Luke 22v44; Heb 5v8). {He is able} "dunatai." This word strikes the heart of it all. Christ's power to help is due not merely to his deity as God's Son, but also to his humanity without which he could not sympathise with us (Heb 4v15). {To succour} "boêthêsai." First aorist active infinitive of the old compound verb "boêtheô" "boê," a cry, "theô," to run), to run at a cry or call for help (Matt 15v25). {Them that are tempted} "tois peirazomenois." Dative plural of the articular participle (present passive) of "peirazô." **These Jewish Christians were daily tempted to give up Christ, to apostatise from Christianity. Jesus understands himself "autos" their predicament and is able to help them to be faithful.**" End of quote.

The flesh that had corrupted and led all mankind into sin was conquered by Jesus. His victory over sin, not only condemned sin in the flesh, but also enables us to live in victory over sin, through the law of the spirit and life in Christ. Rom 8v4. Jesus partook of human flesh, but did not partake of the sins of the flesh; His holy life condemned sin in the flesh and showed that it was possible to live in victory over it. In Heb 2v16-18, we read that Jesus took on Him the seed of Abraham, and that it was a moral duty and obligation ("opheilen," the imperfect active indicative of "opheilo," to be obligated), for Him to be made in all points like unto His brethren, and experience the same temptations, so that He could be our sympathetic High Priest. To be tempted in all points as we are, He had to be made in all points as we are. Heb 2v17 with 4v15. From the level of our humanity, Jesus conquered the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Blessed be His Name!

Appendix E: The Correct Textual Reading Of 1Tim 3v16

(Quote From Dean J W Burgon, The Revision Revised, Pages 98-106)

VI. Hitherto we have referred almost exclusively to the Gospels. In conclusion, we invite attention to our Revisionists' treatment of 1 Tim. iii. 16—the *crux criticorum*, as Prebendary Scrivener styles it. We cannot act more fairly than by

inviting a learned member of the revising body to speak on behalf of his brethren. We shall in this way ascertain the amount of acquaintance with the subject enjoyed by some of those who have been so obliging as to furnish the Church with a new Recension of the Greek of the New Testament. Dr. Roberts says:—

"The English reader will probably be startled to find that the familiar text,—*'And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh,'* has been exchanged in the Revised Version for the following,—*'And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; He who was manifested in the flesh.'* A note on the margin states that 'the word GOD, in place of *He who*, rests on no sufficient ancient evidence;' and it may be well that, in a passage of so great importance, the reader should be convinced that such is the case.

"What, then, let us enquire, is the amount of evidence which can be produced in support of the reading 'GOD'? This is soon stated. Not one of the early Fathers can be certainly quoted for it. None of the very ancient versions support it. No uncial witnesses to it, with the doubtful exception of A.... But even granting that the weighty suffrage of the Alexandrian manuscript is in favour of 'GOD,' far more evidence can be produced in support of 'who.' κ and probably ζ witness to this reading, and it has also powerful testimony from the versions and Fathers. Moreover, the relative 'who' is a far more difficult reading than 'GOD,' and could hardly have been substituted for the latter. On every ground, therefore, we conclude that this interesting and important passage must stand as it has been given in the Revised Version."

And now, having heard the learned Presbyterian on behalf of his brother-Revisionists, we request that we may be ourselves listened to in reply.

The place of Scripture before us, the Reader is assured, presents a memorable instance of the mischief which occasionally resulted to the inspired Text from the ancient practice of executing copies of the Scriptures in uncial characters. S. Paul *certainly* wrote μέγα ἐστὶ τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον; Θεὸς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί, (*'Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh'*) But it requires to be explained at the outset, that the holy Name when abbreviated (which it always was), thus,—ΘΣ ("God"), is only distinguishable from the relative pronoun "who" (ΟΣ), by two horizontal strokes,—which, in manuscripts of early date, it was often the practice to trace so faintly that at present they can scarcely be discerned. Need we go on? An archetypal copy in which one or both of these slight strokes had vanished from the word ΘΣ ("God"), gave rise to the reading ΟΣ ("who"),—of which nonsensical substitute, traces survive in *only two* manuscripts,— κ and 17: not, for certain, in *one single* ancient Father,—no, nor for certain in *one single* ancient Version. So transparent, in fact, is the absurdity of writing τὸ μυστήριον ὅς ("the mystery *who*"), that copyists promptly substituted ὃ ("which"): thus furnishing another illustration of the well-known property of a fabricated reading, viz. sooner or later inevitably to become the parent of a second. Happily, to this second mistake the sole surviving witness is the Codex Claromontanus, of the VIth century (ρ): the only Patristic evidence in its favour being Gelasius of Cyzicus, (whose date is A.D. 476): and the unknown author of a homily in the appendix to Chrysostom. The Versions—all but the Georgian and the Slavonic, which agree with the Received Text—favour it unquestionably; for they are observed invariably to make the relative pronoun agree in gender with the word which represents μυστήριον ("mystery") which immediately precedes it. Thus, in the Syriac Versions, ὅς ("who") is found,—but only because the Syriac equivalent for μυστήριον is of the masculine gender: in the Latin, *quod* ("which")—but only because *mysterium* in Latin (like μυστήριον in Greek) is neuter. Over this latter reading, however, we need not linger; seeing that ὃ does not find a single patron at the present day. And yet, this was the reading which was eagerly upheld during the last century: Wetstein and Sir Isaac Newton being its most strenuous advocates.

It is time to pass under hasty review the direct evidence for the true reading. A and C exhibited ΘΣ until ink, thumbing, and the injurious use of chemicals, obliterated what once was patent. It is too late, by full 150 years, to contend on the negative side of *this* question.—F and G, which exhibit ΟΣ and ΟΣ respectively, were confessedly derived from a common archetype: in which archetype, it is evident that the horizontal stroke which distinguishes Θ from O must have been so faintly traced as to be scarcely discernible. The supposition that, in this place, the stroke in question represents *the aspirate*, is scarcely admissible. *There is no single example of ὅς written ΟΣ in any part of either Cod. F or Cod. G.* On the other hand, in the only place where ΟΣ represents ΘΣ, it is written ΘΣ in both. Prejudice herself may be safely called upon to accept the obvious and only lawful inference.

To come to the point,—Θεός is the reading of *all the uncial copies extant but two* (viz. κ which exhibits ὅς, and ρ which exhibits ὃ), and of all the cursives *but one* (viz. 17). The universal consent of the Lectionaries proves that Θεός has been read in all the assemblies of the faithful from the IVth or Vth century of our era. At what earlier period of her existence is it supposed then that the Church ("the witness and keeper of Holy Writ,") availed herself of her privilege to substitute Θεός for ὅς or ὃ,—whether in error or in fraud? Nothing short of a conspiracy, to which every region of the Eastern Church must have been a party, would account for the phenomenon.

We enquire next for the testimony of the Fathers; and we discover that—(1) Gregory of Nyssa quotes Θεός *twenty-two times*:—that Θεός is also recognized by (2) his namesake of Nazianzus in two places;—as well as by (3) Didymus of Alexandria;—(4) by ps.-Dionysius Alex.;—and (5) by Diodorus of Tarsus.—(6) Chrysostom quotes 1 Tim. iii. 16 in conformity with the received text at least three times;—and (7) Cyril Al. as often:—(8) Theodoret, four times:—(9) an unknown author of the age of Nestorius (A.D. 430), once:—(10) Severus, Bp. of Antioch (A.D. 512), once.—(11) Macedonius (A.D. 506) patriarch of CP., of whom it has been absurdly related that he *invented* the reading, is a witness for Θεός perforce; so is—(12) Euthalius, and—(13) John Damascene on two occasions.—(14) An unknown writer who has been mistaken for Athanasius,—(15) besides not a few ancient scholiasts, close the list: for we pass by the testimony of—(16) Epiphanius at the 7th Nicene Council (A.D. 787),—of (17) Œcumenius,—of (18) Theophylact.

It will be observed that neither has anything been said about the many indirect allusions of earlier Fathers to this place of Scripture; and yet some of these are too striking to be overlooked: as when—(19) Basil, writing of our Saviour, says αὐτὸς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί:—and (20) Gregory Thaum., καὶ ἔστι Θεὸς ἀληθινὸς ὁ ἄσαρκος ἐν σαρκὶ φανερωθείς:—and before him, (21) Hippolytus, οὗτος προελθὼν εἰς κόσμον, Θεὸς ἐν σώματι ἐφανερώθη:—and (22) Theodotus the Gnostic, ὁ Σωτὴρ ὤφθη κατιὼν τοῖς ἀγγέλοις:—and (23) Barnabas, Ἰησοῦς ... ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ τύπῳ καὶ ἐν σαρκὶ φανερωθείς:—and earlier still (24) Ignatius: Θεοῦ ἀνθρωπίνως φανερούμενον:—ἐν σαρκὶ γενόμενος Θεός:—εἷς Θεὸς ἔστιν ὁ φανερώσας ἑαυτὸν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ.—Are we to suppose that *none* of these primitive writers read the place as we do?

Against this array of Testimony, the only evidence which the unwearied industry of 150 years has succeeded in eliciting, is as follows:—(1) The exploded *Latin* fable that Macedonius (A.D. 506) *invented* the reading:—(2) the fact that Epiphanius,—*professing to transcribe* from an earlier treatise of his own (in which ἐφανερώθη stands *without a nominative*), prefixes ὅς:—(3) the statement of an unknown scholiast, that in one particular place of Cyril's writings where the Greek is lost, Cyril wrote ὅς,—(which seems to be an entire mistake; but which, even if it were a fact, would be sufficiently explained by the discovery that in two other places of Cyril's writings the evidence *fluctuates* between ὅς and Θεός):—(4) a quotation in an epistle of Eutharius of Tyana (it exists only in Latin) where “qui” is found:—(5) a casual reference (in Jerome's commentary on Isaiah) to our LORD, as One “qui apparuit in carne, justificatus est in spiritu,”—which Bp. Pearson might have written.—Lastly, (6) a passage of Theodorus Mopsuest. (quoted at the Council of Constantinople, A.D. 553), where the reading is “qui,”—which is balanced by the discovery that in another place of his writings quoted at the same Council, the original is translated “quod.” And this closes the evidence. Will any unprejudiced person, on reviewing the premisses, seriously declare that ὅς is the better sustained reading of the two?

For ourselves, we venture to deem it incredible that a Reading which—(a) Is not to be found in more than two copies (κ and 17) of S. Paul's Epistles: which—(b) Is not certainly supported by a single Version:—(c) Nor is clearly advocated by a single Father,—*can* be genuine. It does not at all events admit of question, that until *far* stronger evidence can be produced in its favour, ὅς (“who”) may on no account be permitted to usurp the place of the commonly received Θεός (“God”) of 1 Tim. iii. 16. But the present exhibits in a striking and instructive way all the characteristic tokens of a deprivation of the text. (1st) At an exceedingly early period it resulted in *another* deflection. (2nd) It is without the note of *Continuity*; having died out of the Church's memory well-nigh 1400 years ago. (3rd) It is deficient in *Universality*; having been all along denied the Church's corporate sanction. As a necessary consequence, (4th) it rests at this day on wholly *insufficient Evidence*: Manuscripts, Versions, Fathers being *all* against it. (5th) It carries on its front its own refutation. For, as all must see, ΘΣ might easily be mistaken for ΟΣ: but in order to make ΟΣ into ΘΣ, *two horizontal lines must of set purpose be added to the copy*. It is therefore a vast deal *more likely* that ΘΣ became ΟΣ, than that ΟΣ became ΘΣ. (6th) Lastly, it is condemned by internal considerations. Ὅς is in truth so grossly improbable—rather, so *impossible*—a reading, that under any circumstances we must have anxiously enquired whether no escape from it was discoverable: whether there exists no way of explaining *how* so patent an absurdity as μυστέριον ὅς *may* have arisen? And on being reminded that the disappearance of two faint horizontal strokes, *or even of one*, would fully account for the impossible reading,—(and thus much, at least, all admit,)—should we not have felt that it required an overwhelming consensus of authorities in favour of ὅς, to render such an alternative deserving of serious attention? It is a mere abuse of Bengel's famous axiom to recal it on occasions like the present. We shall be landed in a bathos indeed if we allow *gross improbability* to become a constraining motive with us in revising the sacred Text.

And thus much for the true reading of 1 Tim. iii. 16. We invite the reader to refer back to a Reviser's estimate of the evidence in favour of Θεός and ὅς respectively, and to contrast it with our own. If he is impressed with the strength of the cause of our opponents,—their mastery of the subject,—and the reasonableness of their contention,—we shall be surprised. And yet *that* is not the question just now before us. The *only* question (be it clearly remembered) which has to be considered, is *this*:—Can it be said with truth that the “evidence” for ὅς (as against Θεός) in 1 Tim. iii. 16 is “*clearly preponderating*”? Can it be maintained that Θεός is a “*plain and clear error*”? Unless this can be affirmed—*cadit quæstio*. The traditional reading of the place ought to have been let alone. May we be permitted to say without offence that, in our humble judgment, if the Church of England, at the Revisers' bidding, were to adopt this and

thousands of other deprivations of the sacred page,—with which the Church Universal was once well acquainted, but which in her corporate character she has long since unconditionally condemned and abandoned,—she would deserve to be pointed at with scorn by the rest of Christendom? Yes, and to have *that* openly said of her which S. Peter openly said of the false teachers of his day who fell back into the very errors which they had already abjured. The place will be found in 2 S. Peter ii. 22. So singularly applicable is it to the matter in hand that we can but invite attention to the quotation on our title-page and p. 1.

And here we make an end. (End of quote)

Appendix F: Put On The Whole Armour Of God

We have to overcome Satan by answering every lying temptation with the Truth, we have to put on **ALL** the armour of God. Matt 12v18-30, Mark 3v22-30, Eph 6v10-20. We can only defeat Satan if we wear all our Christian armour. It is as follows:-

The belt of truth: A right knowledge of God's Word and Christian Doctrine.

The breastplate of righteousness: God's Word of Truth is applied to the life and it results in a practical holy life, the heart is kept pure, there is integrity of purpose, truthfulness, sincerity, genuine love and faithfulness.

The feet shod with the Gospel: An evangelistic fervour; a desire to extend God's kingdom and preach God's good news of forgiveness and peace.

The shield of faith: The 4 feet by 2 feet Roman type shield is spoken of here. A complete trust in God and His word at all times, can quench all Satan's flaming darts.

The helmet of salvation: A disciplined and pure thought-life. We think what God thinks, and weigh everything up in the light of God's Word and our salvation. False doctrines, impure thoughts, and worldliness are banished from the Christian mind. All is looked upon and judged in the light of an eternal future.

The sword of the Spirit: The ability to use God's Word against Satan and his children. This presupposes a knowledge of the Scriptures and essential Christian Truth.

Prayer: (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335) and "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783) which mean "the making of interventions with power so as to affect a change in circumstances"). The spear, or bow and arrow? A vigilant, intelligent and persevering prayer life, for all the saints and the ministries that God has set in the Church. Rom 12v6-8, 1Cor 12v28, Eph 4v8-11.

Appendix G: The Great Necessity For Informal Fellowship Meetings During The Great Tribulation

Heb 10v25 states: 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.

During the last seven years of this age (of Grace) and especially the last three and a half years (the period known as The Great Tribulation), God is primarily not going to use the mainline denominations to minister His Presence, Power and Life through to the world (and the Church), but He is going to use small groups of Christians who are earnestly and fervently seeking His face in prevailing prayer for His plans and purposes (and His Presence and Power to fulfil them). These groups of praying Christians will meet wherever they can, but mostly like the early church they will be gathering in their homes in informal fellowship meetings, and it is in this kind of meeting that God is going to manifest His Presence and great Power in a way never known or experienced before from the foundation of the world (Acts 2v16-21). During the last few decades, God has been raising up these small groups of earnestly seeking praying Christians and preparing them for the Great Tribulation. **(NOTE:** It will (mainly) be these small groups of praying Christians in Israel (and in every country around the world) that will make up the Glorious Woman of Rev 12v1, a group of people, who are foreknown, designed, specially created and empowered by God for the Great Tribulation. It will be these believers who will fully trust and rely upon their Dear Saviour for His plans and purposes and His Presence and Power to fulfil them and this will be because they have no finances, political power or position behind them, so they have no choice but to have full faith and confidence in their Risen Lord, not like the many immature believers in the established denominations and worldly minded and unspiritual Pentecostal churches who have been kept in such a state by their blind leaders, who are in that state because they have followed the way of the Laodicean church, who find seeking the Lord for His plans, purposes, Presence and Power to demanding. A large majority of the 'foolish virgins' and 'evil servants' will be those Christians who have belonged to and attended the established denominations and unspiritual worldly minded Pentecostal churches, and likewise the vast majority of the 'faithful and wise servants' and 'wise virgins' will be those who fellowship and attend the small informal fellowship meetings. Matt

6v6, 15v14, 24v45-25v13, Acts 2v42-47, 4v23-31, Rev 3v14-22.) These groups will contain a considerable greater proportion of women than men and these praying women will be God's instrument in bringing in the last great revival upon the earth as spoken by God through the prophet Joel (Joel 2v28-32, Acts 2v16-21). It will be the same as when He used two elderly sisters, Peggy and Christine Smith, who were eighty four and eighty two years old respectively, one of them was nearly blind and the other bent almost double with arthritis. Unable to attend public worship, their humble cottage became a sanctuary where they met with God, even as godly Anna had done in the Temple in Jerusalem. Luke 2v36-38. These two dear sisters received a promise from God, which was, 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground.' Isaiah 44v3. Having received this promise they prayed and sought the Lord incessantly, a group of men in the same district who were also praying in a barn experienced a foretaste of the coming blessing and a young in this meeting one night stood up and read out Psalm 24v3-6 with his hands held up to Heaven crying out, 'Oh God, are my hands clean? Is my heart pure?' He got no further, but fell prostrate to the floor. An awareness of God filled the barn and a stream of supernatural power was let loose in their lives and this was the beginning of the great Hebredian revival of 1949-52. These two dear elderly sisters had prayed fervently for over twenty years for revival and our wonderful Risen Saviour did not disappoint them. In these informal fellowship meetings, God will bring those Christians to a spiritual maturity far quicker than He ever could in the mainline denominations and unspiritual Pentecostal churches that practice one man ministries ever could (which keeps God's people perpetually in a state of spiritually immaturity), for in these informal fellowship meetings it will only be 'body ministry' operating, i.e. God, the Holy Spirit will use and minister through **every member** of the Body of Christ. 1Cor 12v7 states: 'But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to **every man** to profit withal' and 1Cor 14v26: 'How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, **every one of you hath** a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation...' The Church, which is the Body of Christ, is going to be changed from one that is totally vulnerable, to one that is empowered with the might and power of God and **NOT** only in defence but also in attack. **We need to pray that God will give us the realisation of this and pray it into reality.** It will be this kind of Church in many countries, equipped with the true 'charismata' ('gifts of grace'), which will preserve the 'denominational churches' from total destruction due to the terrible evil and persecution in the world during the Great Tribulation when the Mystery of Iniquity (or better, Lawlessness) works fully. The Christians in these informal fellowship meetings will also collectively exercise the same spiritual power and authority in judgement upon the wicked (through the gifts of the Holy Spirit) during the Great Tribulation, like the Two Witnesses will manifest. Dan 11v32, Zech 12v8, Luke 18v1-8, Rev 11v3-6

It is also the 'Gideon Principle' that is going to operate during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation, God will only use those humble trembling souls, who feel their great need of His strength, blessing, power and presence. Judges 6v12,15 states, 'And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour...And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house,' and 1Cor 1v27,28 states, 'But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.' The first words that the Angel of the Lord (Heb. Malak Yahweh, which means Yahweh Messenger, Who was none other than the pre-incarnate Christ, not only the Sent One under the New Covenant, but also under the Old as well, John 12v49) speaks to Gideon who had been hiding in the winepress from the Midianites threshing corn, are: 'The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.' The Lord sees Gideon **NOT** as he felt, **BUT** as He would make him, and gives him repeated demonstrations of His power to build up his faith to enable him to carry out the Lord's commission to deliver Israel. The Lord came and visited him on different occasions and gave him the signs of the fleeces, God built up his faith again and again, until he could believe. He did not expect Gideon to believe by raw faith (i.e. He did not just say to him, 'come on now believe the word that I have spoken'), no, the Lord visited him again and again and built up his faith. Judges 6v36-40. (Abraham and Sarah were visited by the Lord and angels, in order to strengthen their faith and overcome their unbelief and failure in the past. Gen chapters 17 & 18 (esp. 17v18, 18v12-15). See Rom 4v20, "was strengthened in faith;" Abraham's faith was strengthened by these visits, and the unveiling of the Divine presence and purposes. An increase of faith is always due to something that God does; either through the deposit of a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the soul and spirit, or through an open revelation of the Divine person and presence, or through angelic revelation, or through some other act and manifestation of Divine power. These divine encouragements transforms our faith to a living faith. This is a great consolation and leads to peaceful trust in God, instead of fretful striving. Let us cling fast to our heavenly Father's unveiling of His presence and purposes, and thank God for His angels, and cherish their help, and even more the Lord who sends them. James 2v21-26). God then showed Gideon that the Midianites and the Amalekites were trembling with great fear at the thought of the sword of Gideon the son of Joash coming against them for they knew that God had delivered them all into his hand. Judges 7v13-15. With man, the lesser the odds look that a thing will happen increases the probability that it will actually happen, however, it is the reverse that is true with God, in that the greater the odds, the greater the certainty it will happen and we see this in Gideon's three hundred men destroying, by God's Presence and Power, one hundred and twenty thousand men of the Midianites. When it is time for God to fulfil His purposes, **NOTHING** can stop it and the wicked and the powers of darkness tremble in great fear. Hence, as it is written in Acts 2v17, 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh...' will most surely come to pass (and we should continue to pray earnestly for this divine promise to be

fulfilled until it actually is!), for this is one of the major divine purposes that God has for His people during the last seven years of this age, but especially the last three and a half years of this age, the period known as the Great Tribulation, when God visits His people with His Presence and Power like never before, to give the Church great authority and power over the Devil and the evil angels. God is going to show the wicked that He is not only a God of Love and Mercy, but a God of judgement as well!

It is also God's great desire to give us a revelation of Himself to our souls. Matt 11v27 states, 'All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him,' with Eph 1v15-23, 3v14-21. The Ephesian Christians, were saved, filled with the Holy Spirit and for many years experiencing spiritual gifts, but Paul prayed for them to have a revelation of God to their personality. All those in the Old Testament and early Church who did anything for God, all had an open revelation of God, and so we need to pray that we will experience this as well. It is God's great longing to give each one of His dear children the same kind of experience that the Old Testament prophets and early church experienced, for without a vision the people shall surely perish. Proverbs 29v18, Isaiah 6.

It is a fact today, that the vast majority of the Church are like the proverbial ostrich with its head stuck deep in the sand as regards to its being upon earth during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation, when God's time bomb, the Mystery of Iniquity will explode. In churches today they are so often taken up with the immediate that they miss what is ahead. This situation is just like when Christ entered Jerusalem and the children were singing His praises and Christ said that such praise and worship was perfect; but their knowledge was deficient, in that in another forty years the Temple and Jerusalem was going to be totally destroyed by the Romans, under Titus, Vespasian's son, due to the uprising of the Jews and the war that followed from 66 AD-70 AD. It is vital for the Body of Christ to pray now that God will raise up and set in the Church last day Elijah ministries like the Two Witnesses. **(Please see Appendix H, 'Looking For And Hastening The Coming of The day of God')** It is also important to note, that when God releases His time bomb (i.e. the mystery of iniquity) into human history, He also will bring into the Church new levels of power and authority for judgement gifts. Judges 6v11-23, 1Kings 17v1,7, 18v5, 2Kings 1v2-17, Psalm 8v2, 24v3-6, 133 (all), Isaiah 66v2, Dan 11v32,33, Joel 2v28-32, Zech 12v8, Matt 18v20, 21v15,16, 24v9, Luke 18v1-8, 19v41-44, 21v16,17, John 14v12-14, 15v1-8, Acts 2v16-21,46, Rom 16v5, 1Cor 1v26-31, chapters 11-14, 2Thess 2v1-12, James 5v7,17, Rev 11v3-6, 12v1.

The Church Was Planned And Ordained By God, Not Men

A) Christ gave us the full and permanent teaching on Church Organisation

Our submission to the Lordship of Christ is proved by our submission to His will and truth, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." John 7v17. The doctrine on Church government is as inspired and permanent a part of the foundation of Scripture truth as any other truth. Eph 2v20, 3v5, John 15v16, 16v13. When Christ founded the Church, He instituted its doctrine on organisation as well as its other doctrine. **God conceived and planned the Church before Creation; it is not a man-made institution.** Eph 1v4,5,11, Col 1v26,27, Rom 8v28-30, 1 Cor 2v7. The New Testament Scriptures are our only basis for doctrine on Church organisation as well as the other Christian doctrine. Our standard of Church organisation is not even early post-apostolic Church organisation, for the traditions of even this early period can lead us astray. **The Scriptures alone are the sole rule of faith and conduct.** 2Tim 3v14-17, 1Cor 14v37, 2Pet 3v2,15,16, Rev 22v18,18. God was not negligent of the organisation of the Church; He did not leave it to the discretion or ingenuity of its leaders, or to the customs of the people, district, or land where the Gospel was preached. **Before creation the Trinity had ordained, planned and predestined all things in relation to the Church and its organisation.** They considered what was the best method of Church organisation to encourage spiritual growth and evangelistic success, and at the same time be suited to every age, nation and circumstance, and would survive best in persecution. **When Christ founded the Church, He built it to his own specifications, design, plan and order.** Matt 16v18.

God did not leave Church organisation to human ingenuity

The same ingenuity of man, that has produced many different systems of worldly government, has been applied to Church government. This has inevitably resulted in a departure from New Testament organisation, doctrine and practice; and a consequent loss of the spiritual life and power that the early Church experienced. God did not leave the pattern of Israel's worship to the ingenuity of godly Moses. Indeed, God warned Moses to follow the exact pattern of organisation and worship that He had given him. Heb 8v5, 1Chron 28v19. God did not leave the structure of Church organisation to men's desire, ingenuity, discretion, accommodation or expediency, He has given clear details of how His Church should be organised and run. Unfortunately, Christian leaders throughout Church history have followed the example of Israel's religious leaders and built religious power structures, and replaced the divinely ordained organisation of the Church with their own traditions. This has resulted in the frustration of the Divine purposes and the disappearance of the manifestations of Divine love, life and power that were so apparent in the early Church. If it were not for the godly praying hearts in many churches, all that would be left is a dead form, which brings disillusionment and discouragement to needy souls desperately seeking God's power and blessing.

B) Unscriptural Church Organisation often violates Christ's Lordship

Church history reveals that men have arrogantly and presumptuously altered the structure of Christ's Church; they felt that they could improve upon Christ's form of Church organisation. Psalm 19v13,14, Col 1v18-20, 2v6-10. **If we lay aside His truth for our own ideas, we can end up with a religion, which though called Christianity, has really little to do with it.** Gal 1v6-10, 2Cor 11v1-6. The Church is Christ's Church; converts are born at God's will, not at the will of men; the Church is God's flock; it is bought with Christ's blood, and it is under the superintendence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. John 1v12,13, Isaiah 53v11, Acts 20v28, Titus 3v5, 1Pet 1v3,23. God can, and does, overlook genuine ignorance, but he cannot overlook wilful ignorance and rebellion. Acts 17v30, 1Sam 15v23.

The unity of Christ's Church cannot take place around the constitutions of men, it can only take place when the Church is subordinate to the Lordship of Jesus and the Holy Spirit and follows their directions. The true Christian finds no appeal in the organic unity of church federations; he looks and longs for a true fellowship and unity of the Spirit, and a genuine body ministry of believers, who own Jesus as Lord. If we refuse to accept the Lordship and leadership of Christ, there is always barrenness in our organisations and constitutions no matter how doctrinally correct or adequate they may seem to be. When the Church lost its first love and began to get away from God, men began to usurp God's authority and build their own religious kingdoms, while claiming that they were building God's kingdom.

The Church as God's "Ecclesia," is under His direction and control

When God used the Greek word "Ecclesia" to describe His followers, it signified an assembly or congregation to the Jews. **"Ecclesia" had been used by Israel for many years to signify a united group of people under God's control.** In the Old Testament the Hebrew words for the gathering together of the Israelites are "edhah," which means "congregation;" and "qahal," which means "assembly." In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), "edhah" is almost always translated as "synagogue", and "qahal" usually as "ecclesia." Young states that "edhah" is "an appointed meeting," and "qahal" is "an assembly called together, a called and invited gathering."

To the Greeks, "ecclesia," meant the gathering together of the citizens of a town by an heralds trumpet, and according to Num 10v1-3, the Israelites were gathered together in this way. So when God used the word "ecclesia," it signified an assembly to His hearers. The Hebrew equivalents had been used by Israel to signify a united group of people under God's control. **God intended the Church, like Israel, to be under His permanent control, supervision and guidance.** In the Gospels Jesus only spoke twice of the "ecclesia;" in Matt 16v18, He speaks of the universal and complete Church; in Matt 18v17, He speaks of the local Church which can consist of as few as two or three Christians. We see from Matt 16v18, that there is a close connection between "the Kingdom of Heaven" and the "ecclesia." The "ecclesia" are not only God's assembly, they are the visible representatives of God on earth, and under His direct control and guidance. The direction and guidance of the Church should come from God, not from organisations, committees, or conferences directed and guided by men.

God's all-embracing Church compared with Judaism and the Jewish Synagogue

The Christian Church, "ecclesia," was no longer only Jewish, it included every person of every nation who accepted Christ as his or her Saviour. Gal 3v26-29. God's worldwide Church fully embraced Gentiles which the Jews did not do. The use of the word "ecclesia" would distinguish Christ's people from the Jews in their synagogues; synagogue is from "syn," which means "together," and "ago," which means, "to bring." Though synagogue is used of a Christian meeting in James 2v2, Christ's words in Matt 16v18, give a strong hint of separation from the Jewish synagogue, for Jesus speaks of "My Church," as distinct from the Jewish synagogues. Christians gathered together and recognised Christ as their Lord, which the Jews certainly did not do. In Acts 19v32,39,41, the citizens of Ephesus formed an "ecclesia," that is, an assembly; the citizens of the kingdom of heaven should form an assembly in the locality where they live. **The Church is not the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God, it is part of that kingdom, and its visible representative upon earth, and it preaches the coming of that kingdom on earth. Let us never forget that the headquarters of the Church of Christ is in heaven, not upon earth.**

C) Church organisation is not a progressive Revelation

Some would say that there is no systematic explanation of Church government in the Scriptures, and that Church government is a progressive revelation, which varies according the varying circumstance or need. **There may be no systematic and logical explanation of Church government in the Scriptures, but neither is there systematic teaching on other Christian doctrines and theology.** There are general principals and incidental references to Church government in the Scriptures, and these combined together give a clear picture of the early Church teaching on Church organisation. It is very difficult for many Christians to follow the formal prolonged doctrinal treatises and systematic theologies on Christian doctrine, as good and necessary as these may be. God, in His great wisdom, gave the basic truths of Christian doctrine simply, so that all can understand, and the Scriptural teaching on Church organisation is no exception.

The New Testament Scriptures give no support to the idea of organisational development. Indeed, these Scriptures condemn any deviation from their revelation. Gal 1v6-12, Jude v3,4. To believe in progressive revelation outside of the Scriptures, is a most dangerous doctrine, and it has led to many soul-destroying heresies, and a denial of our Lord

Jesus Christ. 2Pet 2v1, 3v16. There are many cults today that have been founded on the claim of extra revelation outside of the Scriptures. The Scriptures are the only foundation for Christian doctrine and practice. These Scriptures are the revelations of God to His Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles and prophets, and the accounts of His dealings with mankind. Eph 2v20, 3v5. A church organisation that defies God's pattern cannot preserve the purity and power of the Church. The statement that progressive organisational development of the Church was necessary to preserve the Church from heresy and fanaticism, has no support from Scripture or Christian experience. Church federation has nearly always led to persecution of godly Christians, and has caused far greater evils than it has cured. John 16v1-4, 2Tim 3v12.

Do we experience the essential heart of living truth, or do we have an empty outline of truth?

Paul uses the word "morphosin," in Rom 2v20 and 2Tim 3v5, to speak of "an outline of truth without the substance," the "morphosin" without the "morphe." In Rom 2v20, Paul says that it was folly for Jews to be proud of being chosen recipients of divine truth, when they did not obey that truth, or experience God and His truth. In 2Tim 3v5, Paul tells us to turn away from Christian forms which lack the reality and power of God. Though Scriptural constitutions and fundamental beliefs may give us a necessary outline and code of faith, they will not on their own preserve the purity of the Church. **We need a heart cry for mercy, earnest prayer, and a return to early Church practices, if we are to be preserved from error.** We can have correct rules of faith and conduct and resist the Holy Spirit. **Jesus said that we could only preserve our spiritual life only by abiding in Him and obeying His words.** The impartation of God's life comes from seeking God, and not from church constitutions, or even from a correct doctrinal outline of truth, as valuable and necessary as this can be.

It is a disturbing fact that the constitutions of men often deny, reject some vital Scripture truths, and their teaching on Church government. It is not so spiritually demanding to depend on an organisation, or follow a formal Church order and service. To recognise and follow our heavenly Father's directions and plans, and to have His love and power operating in our churches demands real humility, prayerfulness, and a close walk with God. This is directly opposite to man's carnal nature, for flesh dominated people love their own ways, and seek for power, position, prestige, influence and wealth. The unconsecrated carnal mind loves to build its own kingdom and say, "Is this not great Babylon that I have built?" and, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing." Dan 4v30, Rev 3v17. Many have decided against seeking God for a manifestation of His love and power, and have chosen instead, power, popularity, and influence within a religious structure. It can be difficult and frustrating for earnest Christians to operate or manifest the love and power of God through His spiritual gifts, in churches where the leadership manifests these wrong motives, and resists the Holy Spirit and His gifts.

Are we God's "Ecclesia," or are we only His "kuriakon?"

Our English word "church," like the Scottish "Kirk" and the German "quirt," is derived from the Greek "kuriakon," which means, "belonging to the Lord," or simply, "the Lord's." The adjective "kuriakon," only occurs twice in the New Testament, where it speaks of "the Lord's supper," and "the Lord's day." 1Cor 11v20, Rev1v10. In the New Testament the word "kuriakon" is not used in reference to Christian believers, instead it uses "ecclesia," which, as we have already seen, conveys not only the thought of a people belonging to God, but also a people under His direction and control. Church federation can take the control of the Church out of the hands of God and put it in the hands of men. Christians in such churches belong to God, but as they are so often under men's control instead of God's, it is more correct to call them by the word "kuriakon," than by the word "ecclesia." The belief in the progressive revelation of Church government, and the consequent development of church organisations, has proved to be an unmitigated disaster for Christ's Church. The evils that have come as a result of a departure from New Testament organisation, and the resultant affiliation and federation of churches, cannot be over-emphasised or exaggerated. The blood of the millions of Christian dead, who have been killed in the name of God, cry out against the religious kingdoms of men that have committed the sin of Cain. Gen 4v10,11, Jude v11.

The Churches Must Obey Jesus As Lord

A) The early Church owned Christ's Lordship in Evangelism and Worship

The Scriptures insist that Jesus is the Head of our churches, and so we should seek His will, plans and guidance, and not depend on our plans or programmes. Matt 18v18-20, 28v18-20, Eph 1v20-23, 4v7-16, 5v21-23, Phil 2v9-11, Col 1v18,19, 2v19, 3v9-11, Rev 19v16. The early Church at Jerusalem enjoyed the liberty, flexibility and power of the Holy Spirit in both fellowship and evangelism; this resulted in a great number of converts, and a considerable variety of content and great blessing in their fellowships meetings. It was not like so many modern Churches who extol Jesus as Lord, but do not obey Him, and please themselves in what they do. Peter learned by bitter personal experience that it was wise to obey his Lord; God cleansed him of his bigotry, and made him a great blessing. Acts 10v1-48.

Paul states that the Holy Spirit should direct our Church gatherings, and the person who is moved by the Holy Spirit has the right to minister. All rights in a church fellowship gathering should depend upon the direction and blessing of Christ, and rigid control of a meeting by one person should be unknown. The early church Pastors guided and taught each local church, but they certainly did not monopolise the ministry in a church, several believers could minister on a

theme as the Lord led them, and other Christians ministered in "psalm, doctrine, tongue, revelation, or interpretation." 1Cor 14v26. Even the most spiritual and capable were not allowed to monopolise a meeting, they had to give way to others who had something from God, "Let the first hold his peace." 1Cor 14v29-31. The domination of ministry by one person denies Christ's Lordship over His Church. It is not till post-apostolic times and literature that we read of a presiding officer in the worship and fellowship meetings of the local churches. It is true that Paul as an evangelist had a preaching hall and took the lead there as the principle speaker and debater, and he could and did take the major part in a special meeting for ministry, but he did not monopolise the local Church fellowships. Paul said that in the local Church fellowships, the Christians were to act as a body, and to minister to one another under the direction of the Holy Spirit and Christ. Acts 19v8-10, 20v6-12, 1Cor 12v4-27.

The presence of God through communion with Him is the secret of blessing and victory
Moses was quite unwilling to lead Israel and fight her enemies without the presence, blessing and guidance of God, he had the sense to realise that it was only God's overshadowing providence that made Israel different from the surrounding nations. Exodus 33v11-20, NB v14, 34v5-9. **It was the presence and power of God that gave the early Church victory.** The acid test of our dependence upon God, is the amount of time that we give to prayer and waiting upon God, as groups or individuals. True prayer is not the ability to say long prayers in public, God condemns this. Matt 6v5-15, 23v14, Mark 12v40, Luke 20v47. If we fail to earnestly seek God we shall be in the same lamentable spiritual state as the church at Laodicea. They were "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;" but they did not know it. They said they had need of nothing, when they needed to seek Jesus and humbly ask Him to open their eyes and heal their pitiful spiritual condition. Rev 3v17-19. Those who really love God love His presence. Heb 11v5,6, Psalm 27 all, NB v4,8. Earnest and prolonged seeking of God is a searching test of ones spirituality and love of God. See how the early Church practised prayer and waiting upon God.

The verb "deomai." Luke 10v2, 21v36, 22v32, Acts 4v31, 10v2, 2Cor 8v4. The verb "erotao," Luke 16v27, John 14v16, 16v26, 17v9,15,20.

The verb "euchomai." Rom 9v3, 2Cor 13v7,9, James 5v16, 3John v2, Acts 26v29, 27v29.

The verb "proseuchomai." Luke 3v21, 5v16, 6v12,28, 9v28,29, 11v1,2, 18v1,10,11, 22v46, Acts 1v24, 6v6, 8v15, 9v11,40, 10v9,30, 11v5, 12v12, 13v3, 14v23, 16v25, 20v36, 21v5, 22v17, 28v8, Eph 6v18, Col 1v3,9, 4v3, 1Cor 14v13,14,15, 1Thess 5v17,25, 2Thess 1v11, 3v1, 1Tim 2v8, James 5v13,14,18, Jude v20.

The noun "deesis." Luke 1v13, 2v37, 5v33, Rom 10v1, 2Cor 1v11, 9v14, Phil 1v4,19, 2Tim 1v3, Heb 5v7, James 5v16, 1Pet 3v12.

The noun "enteuxis." (Intercession) 1Tim 4v5, plural in 2v1. **The noun "entugchano."** Rom 8v26,27,34, Heb 7v25.

The noun "proseuche." Matt 21v13,22, Luke 6v12, Acts 1v14, 2v42, 3v1, 6v4, 10v4,31, 12v5, 16v13,16, Rom 1v9, 12v12, 15v30, 1Cor 7v5, Eph 1v16, 6v18, Phil 4v6, Col 4v2,12, 1Thess 1v2, 5v5, Philemon v4,22, 1Pet 3v7, 4v7.

B) The variety and flexibility of a fellowship led by the Holy Spirit

In the early Church there was flexibility under the guidance of God, in many modern churches the services are in a cast iron rut and routine, with a resultant spiritual deadness and bondage. **Paul's preaching in the Hall of Tyrannus was to non-Christians, here he preached and defended the Gospel; the Christian fellowship meetings took place in the homes of Christians. We need to clearly see the difference between an evangelistic mission and a Christian fellowship, where Christians are gathered together to build each other up in God.**

a) Informal Christian fellowship gatherings

This consisted of prayer, praise and worship, conversational sharing of experience, discussion of problems and prayer for them, the manifestation of spiritual gifts, the study of the Scriptures, with all being able to comment, and a meal at which the Lord's Supper took place. In Cor 11v1 to 14v40, Paul is correcting disorders at the Lord's Supper, and showing them the correct way to conduct their gatherings for fellowship, prayer and worship. **The Last Supper conducted by Jesus gives us the divine order for Christian fellowship, as well as the celebration of the Lord's Supper.** There was a great blessing produced by the open and flexible informal fellowship meetings, which were under the guidance and control of the Holy Spirit. Nowadays, religious leaders exclude almost all ministry or participation from their flocks, and do not allow God to inspire Christians to give a contribution and to develop their ministries, and so ministries are often strangled at birth. **The ministries that do develop, do so in spite of these religious systems, and not because of them.** No matter how competent a minister may be in preaching and pastoral work, he is a failure if he does not practice informal body ministry and develop ministries in the local church. God desires His children to develop ministries, not remain in permanent spiritual babyhood. Some will object to this participation in ministry by all Christians and say, "You open the door to fanatics and encourage the immature to make mistakes by your informal body ministry." To this I answer, "Informal body ministry is God's order, not mine."

Godly, wise, spiritual and gracious elders will preserve churches from the dangers of fanaticism, and gently correct the mistakes of the immature and inspire them to further effort. **We should not restrain profitable ministries, but unprofitable ministries should be restrained.** Jesus has set ministries in the Church, but He has not relinquished

the control of the Church to them, He is the Head of the Church. The substitution of Christ's Lordship over His Church and informal body ministry, with one-man ministry, cannot help but produce frustration, barrenness and division. Formal, spiritually lifeless services are as great an abuse of God's order as fanaticism, and are just as great an offence to God. There can only be real growth and blessing when the Holy Spirit is given His rightful place and ministry.

b) An informal evangelistic meeting

This could take place in synagogues, the open air, hired building, or home; to large groups, or even to one person, like our Lord's conversation with the woman at the well. **There are instances of Jesus and Paul preaching sermons, however, the practice of informal discussion in synagogue, hall, home, or open-air, and the confirmation of the truth by miracles, was the usual Divine pattern for apostolic evangelism.** Rom 15v18-21. This informal evangelism was attractive to the outsider, and was anything but boring, which certainly cannot be said of many modern services, which often have to be endured rather than enjoyed. I am not thinking only of some traditional churches; the lightness and frivolity, spoken of in the King James Version of Jer 23v32, has afflicted many Pentecostal churches. "Lightness," is "pachazuwth," (Strong's: OT6350), frivolity, from (Strong's: OT6348), "pachaz," to bubble up or froth. See 2Cor 1v17, "elaphria," (Strong's: NT1644), levity. **God wants us to enjoy His presence and the fellowship of other Christians in profound depth; this will fill us with "joy unspeakable and full of glory."** 1Pet 1v8.

Jesus and His apostles expected to be questioned or interrupted while preaching, and they experienced this regularly, indeed, it was the norm. In their proclaiming the gospel as an herald, "kerusso," Acts 8v5, 9v26, 10v37,42, 15v21, 19v13, 20v25, 28v36; or telling and announcing good news, "euangelizo," Acts 5v42, 8v4,12,35,40, 10v36, 11v20, 14v15, 15v35, 17v18; they "talked and discoursed," "laleo," Acts 8v25, 11v19, 13v42, 14v25, 16v6; they told thoroughly, "katangello," Acts 4v2, 13v5,38, 15v36, 17v3,13, 1Cor 9v14; they often did this in a conversational style by reasoning, questions and even heated debate, "suzeeteo," Mark 8v11, 12v28, Luke 24v15,32, Acts 6v9, 9v29; and dialogue, "dialogomai," Acts 17v2,17, 18v4,19, 19v8,9, 20v7,9, 24v12,25 (also occurs Mark 9v34, Heb 12v5, Jude v9). See also "peitho," to persuade," Acts 13v43, 14v19, 18v4, 19v8,26, 26v28, 28v23, 2Cor 5v11. **The best method of evangelism, preaching and teaching is by informal discussion, dialogue and persuasion in friendly and amiable conversations with people.**

The early Church Christians did not invite people to hear the Gospel and sit passively and mutely until an appeal was made; they preached the Gospel in the open air, in their daily contacts, and from house to house, and those who were converted joined their Christian fellowships. Acts 5v42, 8v4. Inviting unbelievers to meetings is not normal New Testament evangelism, the early Church went out to preach the Gospel. **The miraculous was the cutting edge of New Testament evangelism,** in Rom 15v18,19, Paul said that he made the Gentiles receive and obey the Gospel "by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ." Formal Church services will certainly not meet the needs of this modern generation, we need the greater apostolic and evangelistic ministries to win converts and break the ground for the witness of the ordinary church members. The informal New Testament meetings for fellowship, under the blessing and guidance of the Holy Spirit, will sustain those who come to know Jesus as their Saviour. This Divine pattern is suitable, and will be successful, with every age and nation. When Jesus is owned as Lord, the Church is victorious in both evangelism and worship.

C) The new testament ministry gifts are appointed by God, not by Men

The ministries that God sets in the Church, are based on His spiritual gifting and not on natural talent or ability. **The early Church turned the world upside down by spiritual ministry gifts from God, not by their natural talents, and it is these ministry gifts that the Church needs so badly today, not more money, machinery, or better education.** These ministry gifts are the result of divine sovereignty, not human desire, or ordination. God sets these gifts and ministries in the Church, and Jesus directs them. Matt 9v38, 1Cor 12v28, Eph 4v8-11.

Ordination, is it from Heaven, or from men? Matt 21v25, Mark 11v30, Luke 20v4.

Some object to the statement that ordination to ministry comes from heaven, and not from men, and state that elders, deacons, and even apostles, had hands laid upon them to appoint them to a ministry. This was undoubtedly true, however, this appointment to God's work, was really the recognition of the gift and call already received from God, and which was already manifested in their ministries. **The laying on of hands by men is an empty formality without the divine ordination and gifting of God.** The religious leaders who killed Jesus were certainly not ordained by God, they resisted God. Acts 7v51-53. In God's eyes a person has authority in Christ's Church, not because men will it, or because a person has received ecclesiastical training or ordination, but because He Himself has given them a ministry.

The modern term "ordination" has come to have a technical significance not found in the New Testament. The Greek words translated as "ordain" in the Authorised Version simply mean, "to appoint, choose and set apart." Acts 6v5,6, 13v2,3, 14v23, 1Tim 2v7, 4v14, 5v22, 2Tim 1v6. Modern denominations have replaced God's ordination and Christ's commission, with their ordaining councils. I recognise that ordaining councils do choose people who have had a call

from God. However, it is also true that many people are ordained to lead in God's work, who have no call or right to do so, and many others who have received a definite commission from Christ are excluded and rejected. **Very few of our modern denominations would have ordained any of the twelve apostles, even though they are so highly regarded by religious leaders today.** Many Church leaders today reject the miraculous powers that the apostles experienced, and oppose those who manifest the same spiritual gifts. **These religious leaders, as in Christ's day, extol the prophets of the past, but oppose the same kind of ministries in the present.** Matt 23v29-39. The apostles of Christ's day were looked upon as deluded, undesirable, unlearned and ignorant men, by the religious leaders of Israel. Christ's apostles had not been taught in the schools of the Rabbis, but they were certainly not unlearned or ignorant in regard to hearing and obeying the voice of God. The apostles were lacking in men's ecclesiastical training, but God Himself had trained them in the essentials of true religion.

Systematic traditional training often disqualifies one from divine ordination

God did not choose any of the learned Rabbis that men had ordained, the systematic training in men's traditions had made them entirely unsuitable for leadership in Christ's Church. Christ's apostles had the essentials of true religion, faith, hope, love, humility, a love for Jesus, and a thirst for God, and so God chose these simple, earnest, and spiritual young men to lead His Church. Young men, who have received spiritual gifts and spiritual ministries from God, have an important part to play in Christ's Church today. The apostles were chosen by God, and not by men, or by themselves, even Jesus did not appoint Himself. 1Cor 12v18,28, Heb 5v1-10. **It was ordination from heaven that counted.**

Giving people the names of the New Testament offices will not give them that ministry, a person has to have a ministry from God, or they are an empty pretender. In the New Testament it was the actual ministry of a person that decided what they were called. They were not just called apostles, prophets, pastor-teachers, and evangelists, they possessed and manifested these ministries, and they were clearly seen and recognised by the members of the churches. **You can label "treacle," as "best quality jam," but it is still "treacle;" an empty claim to New Testament ministry gifts is even more foolish and wrong.**

Denominational closed-shop ministries often oppose divinely given ministries

The early Church ministry was not a closed denominational shop. The ministerial certificate of the early Church was a ministry gift from Christ, which was accredited by signs, wonders and miracles. **It is sad that ecclesiastical machinery has replaced God's empowerment in many denominations, and this is a major reason for the lack of revival.**

The elders who pastored and taught the local churches, were ordained by Paul, not by his own feelings, it was because they were seen to possess a ministry gift from Christ. The Holy Spirit had given these ministries and made them overseers in their churches. Their ministries were actually in operation in the local churches before Paul appointed them; it was purely a matter of recognising these divinely given ministries. Acts 20v28-32. The seven deacons at Jerusalem were chosen by the people for their spiritual ministry as well as their wisdom and godly character. They were well-known and well-trusted by all the Christians, not only on the grounds of their wisdom, graciousness, godly character, and ability to "show mercy;" they were also "full of the Holy Spirit," and possessed a definite spiritual ministry. Deacons should not only be gentle and kind, and good people of "good reputation," they must be "full of faith and the Holy Ghost." Acts 6v3,5,8.

The early Church recognised and appointed local people to Church leadership

When the local church was founded and the elders appointed, the local church recognised and appointed other ministries that the Holy Spirit had given and developed in the church. The local church appointed Timothy, and the elders laid hands on him and asked God to bless him. They recognised that his ministry had developed sufficiently for Timothy to take his place among the ministries of the local church. 1Tim 4v12-16, 2Tim 1v6. When Paul wrote his letters to Timothy, he was between 35 and 40 years of age. **Local elders did not resent developing ministries in their churches, they glorified God for them; and if God gave some younger Christian in the local church a greater ministry than any one else in it, the elders particularly rejoiced, because this was the fruit of their oversight and proof that their ministry was a success.** It is a bitter, sour, Saul-like spirit of jealousy that looks upon developing ministries in the local church as a threat to one's authority. 1Sam 18v6-14. Love greatly rejoices when others are blessed more than themselves, and heartily thanks God for the part that He has given them in developing these ministries, and the part that they have to play in God's work. 1Cor 13v4-7.

Paul appointed local people as leaders whose life and ministry gift were recognised, appreciated and loved by the people in the local church. **The question seems to have been, "Who do you have confidence in to lead you?"** After Paul had appointed the first elders in the local church, the appointment of other elders was left in the hands of the local elders and Christians; they knew the spiritual qualifications that were necessary for a man to be an elder or deacon, because Paul had instructed them in this matter. 1Tim 3v1-16, Titus 1v4-16, James 5v13-18. **Paul and the other itinerant ministries exercised a spiritual oversight and moral authority over the local churches, but they did not take the control of the churches out of the hands of the elders, or interfere with their**

decisions, each church was responsible to God for its own work. The apostles exercised the oversight of love and fellowship, not of official position, their work was to start churches, and then to instruct and inspire the flocks and develop their ministries, not to dominate, or dictate to them. Eph 4v8-14, 1Pet 5v1-7.

D) The ministries God gives can only be sustained by communion with God

We must follow the glory cloud

The New Testament ministries can only be sustained by communion with God. We see in the Scriptures that God gave His authority to those who followed His leadings and commands. Moses was Israel's leader, but he did not lead them in his way and will, he obeyed God's orders. God led Israel through His glory cloud, Moses had the good sense to obey God's directions, and follow His glory cloud. This same is true of the New Testament ministries, only those who have a ministry of divine life and follow the glory cloud, who have the right of leadership and authority in Christ's Church. 1Cor 12v28, Acts 10v38.

We can be channels of God's love and power

Jesus earnestly desires us to be channels of His love and power, He longs to pour His mercy, tenderness, truth, delivering power, and deep affection through us to others, but this can only happen when we abide in Christ. John 15v1-17. No one is a true minister of Christ who does not minister His love, mercy and power to others. It is not enough to preach truth; truth must minister God's power, life and love to needy souls and bodies. 1Pet 1v12. All the ministry gifts are intended to minister the love, power and grace of God to God's flock and to knit it together in love. The ministry of elders is particularly pastoral; however, the Lord Jesus told the young apostle Peter, that pastoral ministry was included in his apostolic ministry. John 21v15-19. **The ministry gifts should reveal Christ and the Father to people.** Gal 1v15,16. **A spiritual ministry does not just teach doctrine, it brings people into a living experience of God.**

The development, extension, and interdependence of spiritual ministries

The ministry gifts Jesus gives are capable of development and extension. Stephen and Philip were ordained to be deacons, because the church recognised that their spirituality, godliness and love for people, proved that they had a ministry from Christ to fulfil that work. Jesus also ordained them to be fervent evangelists, and they had a double ministry. We read in Acts 13v1,2, that Paul and Barnabus possessed teaching ministries in the church at Antioch, then God made them apostles. They had received a previous call to this work, "Separate me Barnabus and Saul for the work to which I have called them." They had faithfully prepared for this work by fulfilling a pastoral and teaching ministry, and so the call became a reality, and God sent them out on an apostolic mission. They were not sent out at their own desire, or man's direction, they were sent out by the Holy Spirit, God confirmed the reality of their call through other prophets and teachers.

In Acts 13v1,2, we see that the ministry gifts were directed by God, but they were not independent of other Christians, they worked together, as should all the parts of the body of Christ. Even apostles needed helpers, and the comfort and spiritual help of other Christians, a striking example of this is in 2Cor 2v12-14, where Paul states that he was incapacitated because Titus was not there, and so was not able to take advantage of God's door of opportunity. See also Acts 12v11,12, 21v4,11,12, 28v12-15, 1Cor 8v6, 2Cor 8v16-24, Eph 6v21,22, Phil 2v25, 1Thess 3v1,2, 2Tim 4v9-13,20,21, Titus 1v5, 3v12,13. We read in Acts 15v32, that Silas was a prophet, but when he went with Paul, God gave him the additional authority and ministry of an apostle. 1Thess 1v1 with 2v6. Peter was an apostle, but Jesus also gave him the office of Pastor and Elder as well. John 21v15-19, 1Pet 5v1-5. So we can see that one person can have several ministries given to them by Christ. God usually founded local churches through apostolic or evangelistic ministry, and then He developed ministries in this church. Every ministry working together and operating under the guidance of Christ the Lord.

E) God still sets these ministries in the Church today

God has "set" spiritual ministries and their accompanying spiritual gifts in the Church all through this age of grace, and He still sets them in the Church today, when He can find those who love God and people enough, to desire to be channels of His power and love. The word for "set" in 1Cor 12v28, is "etheto" the third person singular aorist indicative of "tithemi," it is the same word that is used in John 15v16, which is translated "ordained." It simply means, "to put, place, or appoint." See Acts 5v25, Matt 5v15, 1Tim 1v12, 2v7, 2Tim 1v11, Heb 1v2, etc.. **God has permanently placed these gifts in His Church during this age.** Those who say that these miraculous ministries of the Church no longer exist, resist this ordination and gifting by God. The truth is that they do not have the spiritual qualifications to manifest these ministries, and are unwilling to expend the spiritual effort necessary to receive these qualifications, and to keep these ministries. They fear the opposition that comes against such ministries. **It is spiritually demanding to seek God for His plans and power, but there is little spiritual effort required to rely upon oratory, good music, and a pleasant program of services, and so men have replaced God's abilities and ministries with their own standards, abilities and ministries.** This unwillingness to follow the example of the early church, and obey God's command to desire spiritual gifts, is a grave sin, "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." 1Sam 15v23. It is certainly not Scriptural to say that spiritual gifts ceased after the apostolic age, as the following facts prove.

1) Peter said that spiritual gifts would continue to the end of this age

In Acts 2v16-21, Peter confirmed the prophecy of Joel that spiritual gifts would continue right up to the great and terrible day of the Lord, the day of Christ's return. Rev 16v14-16, 6v12-17, Matt 24v29-31. Peter insists that the gift of the Holy Spirit is for all, "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." Acts 2v38,39. There is no Scripture to contradict or limit the prophecy of Joel; indeed, both Scripture and Christian experience confirm this prophecy. Those who deny that spiritual gifts are for today have looked in vain for one clear Scriptural statement that spiritual gifts were withdrawn after the apostolic age. They have wrested and distorted 1Cor 13v8-13 in an attempt to justify their unbelief, and have made the quite unwarranted assumption that the, "that which is perfect," at which the gifts of the Holy Spirit are to pass away, was the completion of the canon of Scripture. Honest theologians state that there is no justification for this interpretation. Ellicott says of the "that which is perfect," "This verse shows, by the emphatic "then," that the time when the gifts shall cease is at the end of this dispensation. The imperfect shall not cease until the perfect is brought in."

"A New Testament Commentary," edited by Howley, Bruce and Ellison, states on 1Cor 13v10, that there is no support in the Biblical usage of "perfect," or its cognate forms, for the suggestion that "the perfect" refers to the completion of the Scripture canon, and that the interpretation of "that which is perfect" as the Scripture canon, has been made to explain away the absence of certain spiritual gifts from their churches. How illuminating! An examination of 1Cor 13v10, proves that it is totally untrue to say that "that which is perfect" is the Scripture canon.

a) The subject under discussion in 1Cor 13 is love in relation to the whole of Christian experience

Paul includes giving, martyrdom and knowledge, as well as spiritual gifts; there is no mention of the Scriptural canon. Paul's theme is love, he does not close 1Cor 13 with the greatest of these is the Scriptural canon," he says, "the greatest of these is love." "That which is perfect," occurs at the coming of the kingdom of God, when we have a face-to-face vision of the God of love. 1Cor 13v12. The Christian enjoys this kingdom at death, 2Cor 5v6-8, Phil 1v21-23, Heb 12v22-24, Rev 6v9-11, but this endless kingdom of love will not come to earth until the return of Jesus on the great "day of the Lord," at the end of this age.

b) How can it be the Scripture canon if "full knowledge" has not been given and perfected?

It is certainly inconsistent and dishonest to say that 1Cor 13v8 informs us that spiritual gifts have passed away, and yet admit that our present partial knowledge has not yet been replaced by the full knowledge of God's kingdom. This verse makes it quite clear that the "perfect day," when "that which is perfect" comes, is when God's kingdom comes to earth. It is only then that we shall have the full knowledge of ourselves and others, and "we shall fully know as we are fully known." This "full knowledge" occurs at the judgement seat of Christ, when our works and character are revealed. 1Cor 3v11-15.

The time when the gifts "pass away," is when the Church of Christ on earth exchanges its present partial spiritual power and knowledge, for the complete and perfect "face to face" experience of God and the "full knowledge" of His power, truth and love. What 1Cor 13v8, is really teaching, is that the Church on earth can expect its spiritual gifts and limited knowledge to continue, until they are superseded by, and swallowed up in the experience and knowledge of God's kingdom. When 1Cor 13v8 is really fulfilled, the Church will be glorified in Heaven and enjoying God's glory, power, truth and love to the full.

c) Paul compares his own Christian experience on earth with that of the perfect day

Paul compares his experience of God on earth with that in heaven to a non-speaking baby's experience with that of an intelligent man. This certainly does away with the idea that Paul is referring to the Scripture canon, when he speaks of the perfect day, for Paul even knew truth outside of the New Testament canon, truth he was not permitted to utter. 2Cor 12v1-4. Paul knew by revelation much, if not all, of the truth contained in the book of Revelation, for he speaks of the trumpets, 1Cor 15v51-53; of the evil career of Antichrist and his judgement, 2Thess 2v1-12; of the two resurrections and the last judgement. 1Cor 15v21-28. The lack of the future knowledge of the condition of the churches in Revelation did not make Paul "a non speaking babe," he knew the vast preponderance of New Testament truth. Indeed, Paul knew more of God's truth in theory and experience than any person who has ever lived, except the Lord Jesus. 1Cor 15v10.

Having the full New Testament canon does not make us superior in knowledge to Paul, indeed, in comparison to Paul, we are the babes. The illustrations that Paul used of a non-speaking babe compared with a man, and a dull reflection in contrast with a face-to-face vision, only makes sense if they are interpreted in the clear sense of the context, as a comparison of our present earthly experience of God now, compared with our experience of God in His kingdom. The only things that will bear any comparison with Heaven, and are the same in Heaven as on earth, are faith, hope and love; our present knowledge is nothing compared to the knowledge of Heaven. Paul said that his partial knowledge was to cease and pass away when the complete came, so it cannot be the canon of Scripture, for we still need all of it until Jesus comes. Those who insist on interpreting, "that which is perfect," as the Scripture canon, end up with a great many contradictions and difficulties, a proof of wrong exposition.

d) Notice how Paul tells the Corinthians after 1Cor 13, to desire spiritual gifts

Paul does not say that they did not need to bother with spiritual gifts any more because they were soon to finish; he gives them the correct teaching on the gifts, and tells them to seek them for their spiritual welfare. 1Cor 14v1-3,12,18,39. Spiritual gifts profit and built up Christians, they carry on the ministry of Christ, and meet great needs in the body of Christ. Isaiah 53v10, 1Cor 12v7,18-31. **Both Israel and the Church have always needed God's power, as well as God's truth, to meet the needs placed before them.**

e) In 1Cor 13, Paul considers spiritual gifts and the other principal aspects of our experience in relation to love

Paul speaks of "ALL sacred secrets and ALL knowledge," the ultimate in sacrificial giving, and martyrdom for God's sake, as well as spiritual gifts. The knowledge mentioned is not just supernatural knowledge; it is "all knowledge" and includes Scriptural knowledge. Even divinely inspired truth will be nothing compared with the face-to-face meeting with God its author. There is no Scripture that gives stronger evidence that spiritual gifts will continue right up to the end of this age, than Paul's statement in 1Cor 13, that spiritual gifts will continue right up to this face to face meeting with God.

2) Spiritual gifts occurred throughout the Old Testament dispensations in periods of revival

This was usually when there were people willing to receive them and seek God for them. **If spiritual gifts were manifested throughout the age of Law, should they not be manifested throughout the age of grace, during which the Spirit of God is said to work in greater measure and with greater manifestations, than He did in the age of Law.** Heb 8v10-13, 2Cor 3v6-18. The Scriptures tell us that the new covenant was to be more glorious and more full of the Holy Spirit's workings throughout all its duration, than the age of the Law.

There is no Scriptural justification for the statement that signs, wonders and miracles could only be expected at the start of the age of grace. Acts 2v16-21,38,39. To say that we could not expect miracles after the apostles finished their ministries, would mean that the age of grace was less spiritually powerful than the age of Law, a statement the Scripture absolutely refutes. **The cause of the lack of spiritual gifts in this age of grace, is the same as it was in the previous age of Law, spiritual apathy, backsliding, low or non-existent faith, and the lack of love for needy mankind.** Gideon had the sense to realise that when God was with you, miracles took place. Judges 6v13. The Jews required a sign of spiritual authority from any prophet; they knew that if God commissioned anyone, He gave them the spiritual power and authority to manifest spiritual gifts. 1Cor 1v22. All New Testament ministries, including elders, were expected to manifest spiritual gifts. 1Cor 12v28, James 5v13-19. If God manifested spiritual gifts throughout "the ministration of death," that is, the Law, how much more will He do it during, "the ministration of the Spirit?" 2Cor 3v6-11. The New Testament dispensation is promised, and possesses, more gifts from God than the Law, not less. All thirsty believers in Christ can receive the Holy Spirit's power and fullness. John 7v37-39.

3) All spiritual gifts must be here if all have not gone

Those who insist that spiritual gifts and spiritual ministries are not for today, must insist that God has removed them all, not just some, if they are to be consistent. If they believe that spiritual gifts and spiritual ministries are not for today, then they must not pray for divine healing, this is a gift of healing; they must not pray for guidance or illumination upon a problem, this is a word of wisdom; they must not pray for God's anointing upon ministry or for Satan's power to be lifted from people's lives or minds, or for people to be blessed, this is a gift of faith; they must not pray for material needs to be met, this is a working of miracles; they must not pray for a revelation of God to the soul, this is a discerning of spirits; they must not pray for an inspired utterance from God, this is a prophecy; they must not pray for inspired praying, this is the prime use of the gift of tongues.

Those who say that spiritual gifts have ceased, often actually pray for the manifestation of spiritual gifts.

Christians who say that spiritual gifts are not for today are really unwilling to seek God for those gifts; they refuse to submit to the experience that God desires to give them. They are not prepared to accept the full Scriptural standard, or the Lordship or wisdom of Christ over these spiritual gifts. **Those who reject spiritual gifts completely, would in reality totally remove God's influence from His Church.** If God only works through His word today, as some insist, there is no point in the ministries of the Holy Spirit at all. Paul clearly states in 1Cor 12v21, that we cannot say that we have no need of these ministries and gifts, they are all essential, if Christ's body is to function as He intends. It is only difficult for Christians to witness effectively if God's gifts and ministries are missing.

Some would say, "I believe in God's power and influence, but how can you be sure that you will get the Holy Spirit and not some evil spirit?" We answer that true Christians believe the promise of Christ, that they cannot receive any false spirit or gift, if they are seeking God for His gifts and blessing. Indeed, the Scriptures emphatically state that it is only by seeking God for His power and gifts that we can be spiritually safe, and successfully resist the Devil, we certainly can't outwit or defeat Satan on our own. Psalm 24v3-6, 27v1-14, 42v1-11, 46v10, 62v1,2, Acts 1v14, 2v42, 3v1, 4v29-33, 6v2-4, 8v14-17, 9v11,12, 10v2,9-20, 12v5,12, 13v1-4, etc. Eph 6v10-20, James 4v7-10, 1Pet 5v5-11. etc. **Those who refuse to seek God's power for fear of receiving some false spirit, have in reality already**

been defeated by Satan, and have shown a lack of faith in God's ability to care for His children. Satan kept Israel out of Canaan through fear and unbelief; they could not trust God to look after them. Indeed, the Scriptures reveal that it has always been those who have failed to seek God for His blessing and spiritual gifts, who have been influenced by evil spirits. Heb 3 and 4. Let us see, then:

F) The distinguishing characteristics of God's Spirit-Filled children

a) God's children believe God's promise of blessing for them

God has given many "exceeding great and precious promises" that tell us that He will give us spiritual blessing and spiritual gifts, those who deny that the miraculous is for today, don't have a Scriptural leg to stand on. All the promises of God are still "yea" and "Amen" in Christ Jesus, and we can still experience God's love, gifts and power today. 2Cor 1v17-20. It is certainly not honest or consistent to believe in a Christianity that has none of the New Testament love, life, and power. Just as the body is dead without the spirit, so is an intellectual Christianity that is devoid of the movings of the Holy Spirit. James 2v26. Christianity is not a doctrinal exercise; it is an experience of God. **Those who refuse to accept that spiritual gifts and spiritual ministries are for today, make Christianity an intellectual exercise over God's dealings in the past, instead of a living experience of God and His gifts in the present.** God's children should accept God's promises to them, not try to find an excuse for not seeking or receiving them, by wresting the Scriptures.

b) God's children earnestly seek and love God's presence

Those who have clean hands and pure hearts love to seek God, "this is the generation of them that seek Him," Psalm 24v3-6. True Christians, like David, love to wait upon and seek God. Psalm 40v1, 62v1,5. Their hearts pant for Him. Psalm 42v1-3. The last thing that heretics and apostates want to experience is the overwhelming presence of God, but true Christians long for it. The early Church loved to seek God and spent hours and days doing it. There is a vast difference between a short prayer aimed at the hearers, and the prolonged and earnest seeking of God that we see in the New Testament. False cults may say short prayers, but they will not spend time in prolonged seeking of God, for the evil spirits that influence them, will not allow them to do this. False cults are under the influence of evil spirits, and in Deut 18v9-19, we see that seeking God, and true and full recognition of Christ is diametrically opposite to seeking or pursuing evil spirits. Lev 19v31, 20v6, Isaiah 8v19-20. Prolonged, earnest seeking of God, is an acid test of one's source of inspiration. Heb 11v6, 1John 4v1-6.

c) God's children manifest God's character and love in their lives

Jesus said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Matt 7v15-23. This does not mean the size or growth of a church organisation. True Christianity does not consist of statistics or empty talk, but rather of consecration to God, purity of life, and love of people. Paul warned those of the Corinthians, who were living deplorable lives, that they had no knowledge of God. 1Cor 15v34. It is true that even godly men, like David or Peter, may fail God badly under heavy temptation, but this is totally different from the sinful wallowing in the mire spoken of in 2Pet 2v1-22, Jude v3-25 and Rev 2v13-16, 20-24. **Christian love and purity cannot be truly counterfeited or imitated by Satan's children.** Hypocrites may pretend and play-act, but "agape" love is inimitable and incomparable. Christians will not only die for their brethren, but also for their enemies. 1John 5v1,2, 2v1-22, Matt 5v43-48.

d) God's children believe the truths in God's Word

Another acid test of a person's source of inspiration is whether they conform to the fundamental doctrines of Scripture. If the Holy Spirit moves a person, their doctrines and practices will be the same as those of the early Church. When a person is taken over by an evil spirit, their doctrine is corrupted and bears no resemblance to New Testament truth. John said that those who are inspired of God believe that Jesus is the promised Messiah, and that He has come in human flesh, whereas those who are inspired by Satan reject this. The Messiah of the Old Testament is "The Mighty God," Hebrew, "El Gibbor," an exclusive title of Jehovah. Isaiah 9v6, 10v21, Jer 32v18. He is "God with us." Isaiah 7v14 with Matt 1v23. Many Scriptures state that Jesus is the eternal Creator God of the Old Testament.

A person's source of inspiration is revealed by their attitude to Jesus, those who reject His deity, humanity, atonement, and teaching, are moved by Satan, those who accept them are inspired by God. The personal appropriation of Christ's sacrifice for sin is always the cleavage point between Divine and Satanic doctrine. Rev 12v10-12. We know and rejoice in the experience of redemption by Jesus from the penalty and power of sin. False cults reject the Christian teaching about sin and judgement, and state that personal redemption by Christ's blood is unnecessary. False cults either reject completely the idea of a personal God, or so pervert the idea of God that He is unrecognisable as the Christian's God. Many false prophets address prayers to God and Christ, but they distort the doctrine of Christ, and preach "another Jesus, ---and another gospel," and are "accursed." 2Cor 11v3,4, 1John 4v1-5,15, 2v11,23, 5v1, Matt 7v15-29, Gal 1v8,9.

e) God's children desire to answer Satan's lying wonders with God's miracles

How illogical and inconsistent it is to say that the Almighty God no longer does any miracles, and only Satan does miracles today. God is a God that only does wonders, and His children should do the same by His power. Exodus 3v20, 15v11, Job 9v10, Psalm 77v11,14, 136v4, Isaiah 8v18, Acts 4v22,43, Rom 4v2,3, Heb 2v4. God has not left all

the miracle-working to Satan during this age, God has promised miracles throughout this age, and that this age will close with the greatest show of spiritual power the world has ever seen, God's two witnesses have amazing spiritual gifts given to them to answer Satan's lying wonders through the Antichrist. Rev 11v1-12, 2Thess 2v7-12. **None of the prophets or apostles vindicated God merely by talk; God confirmed the truth of their words through signs, wonders and miracles.**

G) The financially undemanding structure of the early church ministries

The itinerant ministries enjoyed some measure of support from the churches, but the churches did not direct them, nor did they control the churches. Acts 13v1-4, 16v6,16, Phil 4v10-19, 3Jn v5-11. In the early churches there was no local church buildings, or centrally governed denomination into which funds were sent, and which kept the preachers of the Gospel with a fixed income. In the Bible we see individual faith in God, not faith in an organisation. Ministers in a modern church organisation can expect some measure of security without trusting and depending on God. Few modern ministers would be prepared to accept the financial insecurity and poverty of Christ and His early Church ministries. Matt 8v19,20, Luke 9v57,58, Acts 3v6, 2Cor 8v9. A sacrificial cross was an essential part of New Testament ministry. Matt 10v38, 16v24. The Lord Jesus chose men who were prepared to trust God over their finances, the idea of a group of Christians building a church building, and supporting their minister, was unknown in the early Church. The pastor-elders of the early Church usually worked and kept themselves, those who had devoted themselves to study and Church responsibilities, and were financially embarrassed as a result, received gifts from the local church, but usually on the level of financial aid given to the poorest in the church. 1Tim 5v17,18, 1Pet 5v1,2. The itinerant ministries also received gifts and hospitality to meet their needs, or like Paul they worked to meet their own essential needs. 1Cor 9v1-19, 2Cor 11v8,9, Phil 4v10-19. **The vast majority of the finances collected by the early churches was for the poor, and these collections for the poor are totally different from the disgraceful and corrupt appeals for money that we often see in our day from some so-called Christian ministries.** John 12v5,6,8, 13v29, Acts.2v44,45, 4v32-37, 2Cor 8v1-9, Rom 16v17,18.

Hatch writes on page 147 and 148 of his Bampton Lectures on "The Organisation of the Early Christian Churches:"

"The funds of the primitive communities had consisted entirely of voluntary offerings. Of these offerings those officers whose circumstances required it were entitled to a share. They received such a share only on the grounds of poverty. They were, so far, in the position of the widows and orphans and helpless poor. Like soldiers in the Roman army, or slaves in a Roman household, they were entitled to a monthly allowance. The amount of that allowance was variable. When the Montanists proposed to pay their clergy a fixed salary the proposal was condemned as a heretical innovation, alien to Catholic practice. (Eusebius H.E.5.18.2.: 5.28.10:) Those who could supplemented their allowances by farming or by trade. There was no sense of incongruity in their doing so. The Apostolical Constitutions repeat with emphasis the apostolic injunction, 'If any man would not work, neither should he eat.' (Const. Apost.2.62. 2Thess 3v10,12, 1Thess 4v11). Those who could supplemented their allowances by farming or trade. There is no early trace of the later idea that buying and selling, handicraft and farming, were inconsistent with the office of a Christian minister. The bishops and presbyters of those early days kept banks, practised medicine, wrought as silversmiths, tended sheep, or sold their goods in open market. They were like the non-juring bishops a century and a half ago (about 1730), or like the early preachers of the Wesleyan Methodists. They were men of the world taking part in the ordinary business of life. The point about which the Christian communities were anxious was, not that their officers should cease to trade, but that in this as in other respects, they should be examples to the flock." End of quote.

Hatch continues in his notes at the bottom of page 148, to tell how the leaders of the primitive Church usually worked, he states; - "Among the latter are the case of Spiridion who tended sheep in Cyprus, ---of a bishop who was a weaver at Maiuma, ---of one who was a shipbuilder in Campania---one who practised in the law courts, ---of a presbyter who was a silversmith at Ancyra. --- Basil, Epist.198 (263), vol.4 p.290) speaks of the majority of his clergy as earning their living by sedentary handicrafts, and Epiphanius, ---speaks of others doing it in order to earn money for the poor." End of quote.

All Christians are priests in the eyes of God: 1Pet 2v5,9, Rev 1v6, 5v10, 20v6.

The early Church Christian ministry was not looked upon as a priesthood, in the sense of ministers alone having a priestly authority and power. God has made all Christians members of "a royal priesthood," and "kings and priests unto God." When two or three Christians gather together (Matt 18v20), they make up a church, even if no church ministries are present. There is only one High Priest of Christianity, our Lord Jesus. The early church at Jerusalem shows us that God intended His Church to be a voluntary fellowship of Christians, who are united by love for Christ and one another, and free from priest craft, despotism, or dictatorship.

Authority or Insubordination?

The Scribes and Pharisees challenged both John Baptist and Christ as to the source of their authority; they looked upon them as insubordinate rebels, and divisive troublemakers. The Church of Jesus has always had the same problem; Christ's heaven-sent ministries have always been looked upon as "insubordinate" and "divisive," by people who are determined to preserve their religious power structure and position. The apostles were insubordinate to men,

but obedient to God; the Scribes and Pharisees were obedient to men but insubordinate to God. Dissension always comes between those who seek influence from men, and those who seek authority from heaven. Authority from Heaven is not decided by human opinion; it is proved by Divine gifting and conformity to Biblical teaching and experience. The people who murdered Jesus claimed that they had been given authority from God to kill Him; this false claim to Divine authority has been repeated again and again in Church history, by those who have murdered many dear children of God, who had received a definite authority from God. Indeed, it almost seems impossible not to be called a heretic by men, when you have God's authority, and we should certainly doubt if our calling and ministry is from God, when all men speak well of us. Matt 5v10-12, 23v19-39, Luke 6v26.

The New Testament Ministries, Their Gifts And Work (Eph 4v11)

In 1Cor 12v18,28, we read that God has "set" the members in the body according to His will and plan, "kathos ethelesen." "Set" is "etheto," the aorist indicative middle of "tithemi," the middle voice indicates that God did it for His own use, and "kathos ethelesen," for His own will, plans and purposes. In 1Cor 12v28, Paul again uses the aorist indicative middle "etheto," to emphasise that God has "set" the ministries in the body for His purposes. **It is, therefore, essential for the Church members and ministries to find out what God desires them to do, and not just try to fulfil their own plans.** Theologians who state that God no longer places miraculous ministries in the Church, resist God's will, and refuse to accept His Divine appointments, and persecute His ministries. The Divine "Woe," is upon them. Luke 11v46-52, Rom 9v20.

We will limit our discussion to the ministry gifts mentioned both in 1Cor 12v28 and Eph 4v11, that is, apostles, prophets, teachers who are pastors as well, and evangelists. **We must remember that people with the same ministry gift can vary very considerably in their spiritual authority and power.** Gal 2v6-9, 2Cor 11v5, 12v11. A Christian can have a prophetic or teaching ministry that is only for the local church, whereas others, like Barnabus, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen and Saul, Acts 13v1, had such great ministries that they were called of God to establish infant churches in the faith. In the same way an evangelist may have such a great and conspicuous ministry that he travels outside of his local area, at the direction of God, to evangelise and establish churches. **We also need to note that all the higher ministries possess, in greater or less measure, the lower ministries, indeed, one could not be an apostle unless they had some prophetic, teaching and evangelistic gift above the normal standard expected in a local ministry.**

In Acts 13v1-4, we see Paul and Barnabus, both of whom had prophetic and teaching ministries, given an apostolic mission after their tender and faithful oversight of the infant church at Antioch and other places. Unless the local church gives pride of place to developing prophetic ministries, it will never see genuine New Testament apostolic ministry. **The local church, not a theological institute, good as some of these may be, is God's supreme choice for the development of His ministry gifts, and this development can only take place where there is a genuine New Testament body ministry. This is why Paul urged Christians to seek after prophecy and the revelation gifts and to act as a complete body.** 1Cor 12v1 to 14v40.

A) "Firstly Apostles"

We read in 1Cor 12v28, that apostles are "placed, appointed, and set in the Church by God," and as long as the Church exists God will exercise His prerogative. Apostles, like all the other ministries, are permanently set in the Church, "en tei ecclesia," by God during this age. It is only rank unbelief and a resistance to God's Word and Spirit that makes Christians say that God has amended this Scripture, and now only appoints non-miraculous ministries. **God looks upon apostolic ministry as the most important ministry of the Church.** Who are we to resist His will?

In the New Testament we see the chief apostle, our Lord Jesus Christ, Heb 3v1; then there are the twelve apostles who had a unique position, and were chosen by Christ after a night of prayer. Mark 3v13-19, Luke 6v12-16, Matt 10v1-5, Acts 1v13,26. After the apostasy of Judas, the remaining eleven apostles taught others their hallowed memories of Christ's life, glory, and His public and private teaching, they also enjoyed additional special revelation and outstanding personal spiritual experiences. See Acts 1v1-4, for Christ's 40 days of ministry to them after His resurrection. **It is interesting to note how many brothers were in the twelve, Simon Peter and his brother Andrew; James and his brother John; Philip seems to have been Bartholomew's brother, otherwise known as Nathanael, Luke 6v14 with John 1v43-51; James the son of Alphaeus could have been the brother of Matthew as well as the brother of Judas, not Iscariot. Tradition says that James the son of Alphaeus was brother to Matthew, Simon Zealotes, and Judas, not Iscariot. Luke 6v16. Families, who have learned to live together and love one another, can be really used by God; they are a strong unit for God, if they keep close to Him.**

There are other apostles besides the original twelve mentioned in the New Testament, Matthias, Acts 1v26; Paul and Barnabus, 1Cor 9v5,6, Acts 14v4,14, Gal 2v9; Apollos, 1Cor 4v6-9; Timothy and Silas, 1Thess 1v1, 2v6. "Messengers" in Greek can sometimes mean "apostles," Epaphroditus and Titus could have been apostles, the word

for "messenger" in Phil 2v23 is "apostolos," and "messengers" in 2Cor 8v23 is "apostoloi," it could mean that Titus and Epaphroditus were "sent-ones" of the churches as distinct from the "sent-ones" of God, but they could have been apostles for God as well as men. James the Lord's half brother, also became an apostle. Gal 1v19, 2v6, James 1v1. It is also possible that Andronicus and Junia were apostles, they had been Christians before Paul, and had suffered imprisonment with him it seems from the words "fellow-prisoners." Rom 16v7. "Of note among the apostles" could mean "highly esteemed among the apostles," but it probably more likely that they were "distinguished among the apostles," or literally, "stamped, marked, bearing a mark, among the apostles." They had by their suffering for Christ certainly fulfilled an essential qualification for apostleship. 1Cor 4v9-13. **If Junia was an apostle, it could mean that there was one woman apostle. Church leaders of the first few centuries have written that Junia was a woman, and that she was also an apostle.** Leaving all conjecture aside, we see around 20 apostles in the New Testament Scriptures.

"Apostle" was used by the Greeks to speak of any responsible person "sent" by someone who did a job for them. There were throughout the Middle East thousands of people called "apostles" in the business and political world, who were sent to do work for their master or ruler. "Apostle" means literally "one sent forth," from "apo" meaning "from," and "stello" meaning "to send." Apostles in the Church are, and were, the messengers, workers and "sent-ones" of God, with "a mission," "apostolee," from God. Acts 1v25, Rom 1v5, 1Cor 9v2, Gal 2v8. The ministries of prophet, teacher and evangelist may be "sent" on a mission by God, as were the ministries of Acts 13v1, and Agabus and Philip, but this does not mean that they had the ministry or authority of apostles. **Apostles were Christians who were sent by God with His full-delegated authority, and fully equipped by God to found and care for churches.** The New Testament shows the ministry of apostles consisted of the following qualities and gifts.

1) "The most eminent Apostles" had great spiritual power and spiritual revelation from Christ 2Cor 11v5, 12v11

A miraculous ministry was an essential part of apostolic ministry, whether a person was a major or minor apostle. Apostles had a heavenly power and commission that manifested itself in miracles, it was not a formal title, it was a ministry and commission from Christ. Gal 1v1, 2Cor 12v12, 1Cor 9v1,2, Col 1v11. The miracles that God performed through apostles gave them great ability to win converts and found churches. **The "chiefest apostles" also had a great prophetic revelation from God, and it seems that it was this difference in degree of revelation ministry that made the difference between major and minor apostles.** 1Cor 9v1,2, 2Cor 11v5, 12v11,12. It is only those who have had this kind of tremendous revelation of God, and from God, who can stand true in the malicious persecution that comes against those who have a truly apostolic ministry. Apostles had Christ's truth and mighty gifts and keys of authority to open doors of blessing and healing, but it was all because of God's grace. Matt 16v19, 18v18,19, John 20v23. Jesus alone has the keys to eternal life, or death. Rev 1v18, Rev 3v7, Isaiah 22v22.

2) Apostles had a God-given ability to pastor churches

What the young apostles of Christ lacked in age they received through contact with their Lord, and through His gifts. They later exercised a pastoral care of the flock, as we see from Christ's instructions to Peter. John 21v15-17. Once a church was founded the work of an apostle was pastoral, so apostles needed great fruits of character and a real love for their converts. They had to be spiritual fathers to the flock, not just teachers; **Paul said that the Corinthians had many teachers, but not many fathers.** 1Cor 4v15. Paul speaks of "all patience," and "much patience." 2Cor 6v4, 12v12. **Great power demands great grace, and the need for tenderness towards God's babes.** Acts 4v33, Gal 4v19, 1Cor 9v1. We see from 1Thess 2v5-13, the tender feelings that Paul and his associates had towards their converts, it is an example that every ministry should imitate. There was no flattery, covetousness, or self-seeking, by Paul and his companions; they were gentle and affectionate to their converts. The whole aim of the apostolic ministries was to bring people into living contact with God, and to establish Christian fellowships that were dominated by "agape" love. Paul totally rejected any thought of glorifying himself, or of increasing his sphere of influence, or of establishing a personal kingdom or denomination. He recognised that apostolic ministry demanded a tender love for people, and a willingness to give his all for the welfare and blessing of people, just as his Lord had done. 1Thess 2v8.

3) Apostles were responsible for the foundation of Christian doctrine

Apostles laid the necessary foundation of faith, we read in Acts 2v42, that the converts at Jerusalem "continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine." Eph 3v5. **God fully equipped His Church with the doctrine for this age, at the start of this age, so no one can now lay claim to new doctrine outside of the Scriptures.** Anyone who does so charges God with folly, because they suggest that God allowed His Church to carry on without vital truth for nearly 2,000 years. The Scriptures are the only foundation for doctrine and practice; any claim to vital new revelation on doctrine should be treated as heretical. New doctrinal revelation is not given today, even to people with a genuine apostolic ministry. Eph 2v20, 3v5, Rev 22v18,19, Acts 15v28, 1Cor 2v13, 1Thess 4v15, 1John 5v9-13. **We can receive personal guidance from God, but NOT new doctrinal revelation.**

The apostles were inspired in their doctrine, because they received it directly from Jesus, but they were

not infallible in other things. Peter denied his Lord, and on another occasion had to be corrected by Paul. Luke 22v54-62, Gal 2v6,11-14, Acts 14v15. From Acts 17v10-12, we see that the Bereans carefully examined Paul's apostolic teaching in the light of the Scriptures, and they were said to be "noble-minded" because of this. These sincere people believed Paul's teaching, when they found that it was foreshadowed in the Old Testament, and was wholly in agreement with God's previous revelations to His children. 1Thess 5v21, 1John 4v1-5, Heb 8v5, 10v1. The vague shadows of the Old Testament were illuminated by divine revelation. Eph 3v1-11. The apostles taught eternal Old Testament moral truth with the new Christian truth, this truth was passed on to other Christians with a teaching ministry. We see Timothy teaching local elders in 2Tim 2v2. Paul had valuable helpers who were able to assist him in the foundation and care of churches. Acts 17v10-15, Col 4v7. etc.

4) Apostles had a God-given ability to develop spiritual ministry in their converts

Apostles experienced in some measure certain aspects of prophetic ministry, particularly in the impartation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to Christians. Paul wanted to visit the Roman church in order to share and impart some "spiritual grace-gift," "charisma pneumatikon," to them. Rom 1v10,11. **The first essential was to get the converts baptised in the Holy Spirit and manifesting spiritual gifts, so that they could edify themselves and minister Christ's power and love to others.** Acts 1v4-8, 2v4, 8v15-18, 9v17, 10v44-48, 19v1-6. Paul did not just give intellectual teaching on doctrine, essential as this is, he brought his converts into a living experience of God, His gifts, and His truth. Paul, like Moses of old, had the power and authority to impart spiritual gifts and spiritual ministry. Deut 34v9.

We see from Col 2v1-5, that Paul watched over the condition of churches by the revelation gifts of the Holy Spirit, and exercised the gift of faith in prayer to transform the lives of Christians he had never met in the flesh. Gal 4v19. In Cor 5v1-5, we see that Paul was present in spirit in the Corinthian Church, when the man who had committed incest with his father's wife was being disciplined, and he exercised spiritual power in that discipline. **We need to remember that Paul did not only rely upon spiritual revelation for knowledge about the churches under his care, he also wrote letters, and relied on the reports of others about the spiritual progress of his converts.**

5) Apostles were responsible for appointing elders in the churches they founded

The New Testament states that Paul ordained elders in all the churches that he founded, and instructed Titus and Timothy to do the same and told them the qualifications that an elder must have. Titus 1v5-10, 1Tim 3v1-7, Acts 14v23. However, their choice was not autocratic or arbitrary, they chose those who the local Christians had confidence in. The popular will of the local Christians was prayerfully considered, for they knew which leaders were trustworthy, godly, wise and spiritual, and to whom the Holy Spirit had given a definite ministry. The advice and agreement of the local people was sought, and they nominated those who had the necessary qualifications of character and spirituality to perform this ministry.

The local church, then, had an important say in the ordination of both elders and deacons. Acts 1v25,26, 6v2-6, 14v23. Elders were chosen by the popular vote, and ordained by elders as well as apostles, in the will of the Holy Spirit. Acts 20v28, 14v23, 1Tim 3v2-13, 4v14. In Acts 14v23, "appointed," is "cheirotoneo," the aorist active participle of "cheirotoneo" from "cheirotoneo," which means "extending the hand," it is derived from "cheir," "hand," and "teino," "to stretch." It means "to vote and elect by a show of hands," and as in 2Cor 8v18,19, to appoint with the approval of an assembly of people. Ellicott says of Acts 14v23: "The word for ordained occurs in the New Testament here and in 2Cor 8v19, where it is translated 'chosen' and certainly seems to imply popular election (election by a show of hands), which is, indeed, the natural meaning of the word." Quote ends. The seven deacons of Acts 6v1-6, were first selected by the Jerusalem church, and then chosen, "eklego, and appointed, "kathistemi," by the apostles, this was almost certainly what Paul did in Acts 14v23, and what he advised Titus to do in Titus 1v5.

Paul appointed the elders of local churches in the churches that he had founded; modern prelates, who have never founded a church and never manifested spiritual gifts, cannot claim the right to ordain elders, never mind the exclusive right of apostolic succession. **There is no such thing as humanly ordained apostolic succession, it is only a miraculous ministry of the most conspicuous kind that proves a person has apostolic ministry.** From Acts 13v1-4, we see that the leaders of the church at Antioch gave themselves to prayer and fasting for guidance in their work for God, and when God revealed His will for Paul and Barnabus, they earnestly prayed for their ministries, and sent them on their divinely appointed work. In like manner, Paul and the local church, not only appointed spiritual and godly men; they prayed earnestly for them, that God might impart further blessing and ministry to them. 1Tim 4v14, 5v22, Acts 6v6, 13v1-3, 14v23, 2Tim 1v6.

NB1: The time lapse before elders were appointed by apostles

We see from Acts 14v23, and the instructions to Timothy and Titus, that there was a definite time lapse between a church being founded and ministries being appointed in that church. **Time was given for ministry in the local church to develop, there was no premature ordination and so mistakes were cut out.**

In Acts 13v1-3 we see the Christians at Antioch were guided by prophets and teachers from outside for about three

years before their own local ministries had developed enough for God to send Paul and Barnabas on their way to other work. From Acts 14v23, we see that Paul ordained elders within about two years of churches being founded. It appears that up to this time the Christians had gathered together for Bible study, prayer, the Lord's supper and fellowship, and the baptism of new converts, without any formally appointed elders or deacons. Christ Himself made leaders in these churches by giving His ministry gifts to some of them, and when these divinely given ministries manifested themselves, they were accepted and recognised by the people, and then appointed by Paul. **Ministries were proved before they were appointed.** 1Tim 3v10 God Himself sets ministries in the Church, men's ordination does not mean a thing if God is not in it, the churches should recognise those who God has ordained and given a ministry gift. Acts 20v28.

NB2: Apostles were not despotic; they exercised the superintendence of love

A prolonged apostolic mission in a city did not hinder the body ministry of the local church, or the development of ministries, it encouraged both. Paul did not stay in a place to be the permanent pastor of the flock, he always appointed local elders to guide and care for the local church. Paul followed our Lord's direction in Matt 20v25-28, and never "lorded it over" or dictated to the local Christians. He had the humility to look upon himself as, "the least of the apostles," and "less than the least of all saints," and even as "the chief of sinners," and this genuine humility won people's hearts to him, and accomplished far more than autocratic, bombastic claims could ever have done. 1Cor 15v9, Eph 3v8, 1Tim 1v15.

Paul founded and established churches and moved on, and then returned to confirm and give spiritual guidance and oversight to the churches, but he never took over the rule of the local church from the local elders. Paul stayed in Ephesus almost 3 years, and at Corinth for about 18 months to evangelise these strategic areas, not just to pastor the flocks formed by his evangelism. At Ephesus he had a mission in the hall of Tyrannus to reach all the district. Acts 19v8,9. This was the place for Paul's daily evangelism, and seekers came to him there. The Codex Beza adds "from the fifth hour to the tenth," that is, from just before midday and the noon meal to the close of the afternoon. What a Challenge! Paul had at least five hours evangelism a day in a public building or lecture hall. Paul needed quite a time to fully evangelise these strategic areas of evangelism, with their constant change of population. The local Christians would doubtless gather to listen to Paul's superlative theological discussions, and they would learn much from them. **However, Christian fellowship and body ministry could not take place in a public meeting place for evangelism, so the Christians gathered in homes like that of Priscilla and Aquila.** 1Cor 16v19, Acts 18v26. The Christian fellowship had plenty of scope at night, and Paul would do his very best to inspire body ministry and develop spiritual ministries, he was not in agreement with one-man ministry in Christian fellowship groups. 1Cor 12. etc. **One-man ministry in a local church is wrong, even if, like the apostle Paul, a man has all the ministry gifts; body ministry is God's way for developing spiritual ministries and healthy Christians.**

The elders were local men, the apostles itinerant men

Through their itinerant ministries the apostles cemented fellowship between the churches, but they did not constitute either central government, or even an organisational fellowship of churches. Apostles, prophets and elders had the work of overseeing the flock of God, but they were not to dominate it, their work was the superintendence of love. Apostles were not to lord it over God's Church, "all ye are brethren and one is your Master, even Christ." Matt 23v8,10. Indeed, they were to humble themselves as little children, otherwise they would not even enter the kingdom of God. Matt 18v3. They were to be the servants of God's people, not their lords. Matt 20v20-28, John 13v4-17. They were not to be put upon a pedestal and called Rabbi. Matt 23v1-8. The aim of these ministries was to bring people into a living experience of God and develop ministries among them; they helped God's babes to grow into mature Christians. **They showed the same grace to young Christians in developing their ministries, as God had shown to them in developing their ministries.**

After Paul had appointed the first elders in a local church, it was the responsibility of the local church and local elders to appoint other elders, as it became necessary or desirable. **As long as a person had the necessary qualifications, they could be an elder; there is no restriction as to numbers in the New Testament.** It is only when men follow worldly principles of government and one-man ministry that a plurality of elders becomes inconvenient, in spiritual oversight a plurality is a blessing not a hindrance. Prov 11v14, 24v6.

If a person has an apostolic ministry they manifest signs, wonders and miracles, and are also able to found, establish and care for churches. The office is proved by results, not by hollow claims. Paul had to refute the false claims of false apostles ("pseudapostoloi") in his day. 1Cor 11v13. Paul also speaks not only of the power, gifts and revelations, but also the sufferings and persecutions that are the essential characteristics of true apostolic ministry. 2Cor 11v1 to 12v21, 1Cor 9v1-27. **Christians need to pray continually that God will raise up truly apostolic ministries in these dark days, so that the fullness of Christ's ministry can shine out to the world.** Matt 9v35-38.

B) "Secondarily Prophets" 1Cor 12v28

A prophetic ministry is distinct from a ministry of preaching or teaching, even though prophets may exhort, preach

and teach, as did Judas and Silas, both of whom were prophets. Acts 15v32. Prophetic ministries are also not to be confused with Christians who possess the simple gift of prophecy, which is for edification, exhortation and comfort. 1Cor 14v3. **A prophetic ministry possesses not only the simple gift of prophecy, but also a continual manifestation of gifts of revelation from God.** A Christian in a local church may have the simple gift of prophecy and occasional manifestations of gifts of revelation, but it does not mean that they have a prophetic ministry. This difference in gifting will become clear as we consider the essentials of prophetic ministry.

Under the New Covenant there was a significant change in the function of prophetic ministry. The Old Testament prophet and priest came between the people and God, but in the New Testament all children of God can have personal guidance direct from their heavenly Father. Rom 8v14-17, Heb 8v7-13. **We have the right, and duty, to reject any "guidance" from another person about which God has not personally told us.** Prophets may be, and are, used by God to confirm guidance, but never to guide us against our own revelations from the Lord.

1) A New Testament prophet can warn of dangers and needs ahead

A person with a prophetic ministry may predict major events in the world, or future events in the Church, as Agabus did in the case of the famine, and of Paul's imprisonment. Acts 11v27-30, 21v4,10-14. However, as we have said, prophets in the New Testament are not intended to give direction to order, **Christians are intended to seek God for themselves.**

The Scriptures reveal that prophets were sent by God to warn of divine judgement, or natural catastrophe. Gen 6v18-22, 18v17-33, 19v12,13, 41v1-44, 2Kings 4v8-17 with 8v1-6, Acts 17v9-11,21-25, 30v34,44. God can warn of war and persecution. 1Sam 23v9-12, 25v5,6, 2Kings 3v4-27, 6v8-12, Matt 16v21-24, Luke 22v31-34,54-62. A prophet can reveal spies and traitors in God's flock, 1Kings 14v5,6, John 6v70,71, and the evil thoughts and plans in the minds of opponents before they are spoken. Luke 14v1-6, Mark 2v5-8, Luke 5v22, Matt 22v15-22. God reveals people's hearts and exposes a hypocritical veneer. 1Sam 16v6,7.

2) Prophetic ministry can keep God's Church clean and in victory

By the revelation of sin in the churches: Acts 5v1-12, 2Kings 5v20-27, Joshua 7v1-26. The apostle John had the spiritual condition of the seven churches in the Roman province of Asia revealed to him, the bad as well as the good. Rev 2 and 3. The New Testament apostles on occasions had judgement ministries similar to the Old Testament prophets; they had the authority to discipline by God's power. This is a rare but real New Testament occurrence. Matt 16v18,19, 18v15-19, John 20v21-23, Luke 10v19, Acts 5v1-11, 13v6-12, 1Tim 1v20, 1Cor 5v1-5.

By the restoration of the wounded and spiritually sick: Jesus desires restoration, not judgement, and prophetic ministry can reveal those with deep spiritual needs and meet their needs by divine power and grace. Gal 6v1,2, Phil 2v1,2, Heb 12v12-29.

3) Prophetic ministry can greatly help and comfort people, and inspire them trust God

Prophetic ministry can inspire discouraged people: Christ came to heal the crushed and broken in heart, the revelation of the secrets of people's hearts can inspire them to seek and trust God. John 1v48,49, Luke 13v12-16, Isaiah 61v1-3, Luke 4v18,19.

God can expose the unconverted sinner's heart and bring them to Himself: 1Cor 14v24,25, 2Sam 12v1-9, John 1v40-51, 4v16-19,29. The very day I wrote this I saw a person amazed and challenged through the secrets of her heart being revealed, and she found Christ as her Saviour as a result. Prophetic ministry of this kind has a mighty evangelistic ministry, as we clearly see in John 4, from our Lord's conversation with the woman at the well. Also see Acts 9v10-18 and 10v48. etc.

4) Prophetic ministry can reveal God's strategic plans and confirm God's call

A prophetic revelation from God guided Paul and his party to evangelise Macedonia, with great results. Acts 16v1-15. The Church needs to know God's strategic plans. Acts 8v26,29, 10v1-48, 13v2, 2v5, 4v4. Samuel confirmed his prophecy of God's call to Saul through many words of knowledge about future events. 1Sam 9v19, 10v1-16. Paul's conversion and call to God's work was confirmed by Ananias, who told Paul of his experience on the Damascus Road, and also ministered divine healing to him. Acts 9v17-25, 13v2.

5) Prophetic ministry is not limited by time or space in its ministrations

Since the Holy Spirit is not limited by time or space, His ministrations to us, and through us, are not limited either. We can have the revelation of things to come, and minister to God's people at distance by His mighty power. Col 2v5, Gal 4v19. The Holy Spirit can take us through the time barrier to behold and live in the past, as He did with Moses to see the creation being made, and possibly with Ezekiel to see the sins which brought about the captivity, or see far distant events in the future as He did with Daniel and other prophets. Gen 1v1 to 2v25, Ezek 8v1-3, Dan 7 all, Isaiah 53 all, Rev all. The gift of faith can enable prophets to minister the powers of the age to come to needy people whether they are present or absent. All Christians can expect this to take place, but it occurs more

regularly and at a greater level of authority with prophetic ministry.

6) Prophetic ministry is intended to develop spiritual ministry in Christians

Prophetic ministry has an important place in the local church in the development of spiritual gifts and spiritual ministries. It is very sad to see the majority of Christians without spiritual gifts or spiritual ministry, because prophetic ministries have been absent, despised, stifled and opposed. Prophets have a delegated authority and power, and can be the channel of God in the impartation of spiritual gifts, even as Moses was to Joshua, Deut 34v9; and Elijah to Elisha, 1Kings 19v16,19-21, 2Kings 2v9-14, NB: v9. "Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you." Jesus imparted spiritual gifts to His apostles and the 70, Luke 9v1,2, 10v1-9, Paul ministered spiritual gifts to the Ephesians and Romans, Acts 19v1-6, Rom 1v10,11, and Paul and the elders to Timothy. 2Tim 1v6, 1Tim 4v14. Prophets, like apostles, have the responsibility to develop spiritual gifts and spiritual ministries, but they usually do not have a commission to found churches like apostles, unless like Silas, they are sent on an apostolic mission, then they become apostles, Silas was both a prophet and an apostle. Paul was a teacher with a prophetic voice, who became an apostle. Acts 15v32, 13v1-4.

Few will be led into a manifestation of the greater gifts, and spiritual ministry through formal ministry and formal meetings. Christians cannot be led into a deep spiritual experience of God and His gifts merely by preaching doctrine, you have to have to spend considerable time with them in prayer and ministry. A pulpit can be a means of real self-deception, it is not pretty sermons but spiritual power ministered in love that counts with God. It is only as we minister directly with needy people that the depth of our ministry is revealed. A pulpit ministry that never directly ministers to people's needs, is an unscriptural delusion. **Love came down from heaven to minister even to death, and we should come down from our pulpits to minister and care. Where possible, every sermon should be followed by informal ministry to those in need.** Christ's love can never be ministered at a safe distance. True prophetic ministry requires real prayer, caring love and sacrifice, and perhaps the demands and exacting qualifications for this ministry are one reason why there is a lack of prophets in the Church.

The Relation Between the Growth of a Christians Spirit to Spiritual and Prophetic Ministry

NB: Both John And Jesus "Waxed Strong In Spirit." Luke 1v10, 2v40

As Christians our spirits can, and should grow, and give us not only a greater appreciation of spiritual things, but also a greater ability to minister spiritual life to others. **The Majority Text uses the identical Greek words to state that John Baptist and Jesus not only grew physically strong, but spiritually strong as well as God prepared them for their ministries.** We read in Luke 1v80, of John Baptist, "the child grew and waxed strong in spirit," this strong growth continued during his years in the wilderness. And in the Majority Text of Luke 2v40, we read that Jesus, "grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him." God the Father educated our Lord for thirty years at Nazareth, to prepare Him for His ministry. Isaiah 49v1-3, 50v3-7. "Waxed strong," is "ekrataiouto," the imperfect passive of "krataioo," (Strong's NT:2901), to strengthen, to make strong, the passive means to be strengthened, to grow strong, to be made strong. The Father and Holy Spirit made Jesus strong for ministry (Isaiah 48v16 KJV). "krataioo," only occurs in Luke 1v80, 2v40, 1Cor 16v13 and Eph 3v16.

The words "in spirit," in Luke 2v40, are omitted from most modern translations, the Jamieson, Fausett and Brown commentary states that they are left out without sufficient reason and evidence. "In spirit" is "pneumati," it is omitted from Aleph and B from the fourth century, D and W from the fifth century, L from the eighth century, N from the sixth century; some Latin manuscripts, p eighth century, and C twelfth century; the Coptic (Egyptian) versions, third and fourth centuries; the Sinaitic Syriac, fourth century; and Origen, who died 254 AD.

However, the evidence that "en pneumati" is in the original texts is extremely strong, for it is found in all the remaining uncials including, A, Theta, Psi, 053, etc; every known cursive copy and the massive Byzantine evidence includes it; so do the f1 and f13 codex compilation of important manuscripts by Kirsop Lake; all the Lectionaries; some Latin manuscripts (aur, f, q), Aureus 7th century (aur), the Brixianus 6th century (p), the Monacensis 7th century (q); the Syriac Peshitto, second century; the Syriac Harklean, the seventh century; and the Gothic version, from the fourth century. Many early Church fathers quote or discuss "pneumati" and accept it as correct; Leontius of Cyprus, 6th century; Theodoret, died 466 AD; Epiphanius, died 403 AD; Cyril of Alexandria, died 444 AD; Theodore of Mopsuestia, died 428 AD; and others.

Dean John W Burgon, states in his book, "The Causes of Corruption of the New Testament Text: (In unholy hands on the Bible page B-95,96.) that "en pneumati," "in spirit," was deliberately removed from Luke 2v40 in some manuscripts by orthodox Christians, because they feared that those who denied our Lord's deity would use this text to say, "How could Jesus be perfect God, if it says that His spirit waxed strong." Burgon records that Epiphanius states (2:36) that some of the orthodox, out of jealousy for our Lord's divinity, eliminated from Luke 19v41 the record that the Saviour wept.

Burgon goes on, "Codexes B Aleph D may be regarded as specimens of Codexes which have been once and again passed through the hands of such a corrector. St Luke 2v40 records concerning the infant Saviour, that 'the child

grew, and waxed strong in spirit.' **By repeating the same expression, which already had been applied to the childhood of John the Baptist (1v80), it was clearly the design of the Author of Scripture to teach that the Word 'made flesh' submitted to the same laws of growth as every other man.** The body grew; the spiritual part waxed strong. The consequence might have been foreseen. Certain of the orthodox were ill advised enough to erase the word 'pneumati' (spirit) from the copies of Luke 2v40. And, lo, at the end of 1500 years four 'corrected' copies, two versions, one Greek father, survive to witness to this ancient fraud. And because it is Aleph, B,D,L, Origen, and the Latin, the Egyptian, and the Lewis versions, which are without the word 'pneumati,' Lachmann, Tregelles, Tischendorf, and the revisers jump to the conclusion that it is a spurious accretion to the Text. They ought to reverse the proceeding, and to recognise in the evidence that this is one more indication of the untrustworthiness of certain witnesses. How can it be supposed that this word 'pneumati' ever obtained its footing in the Gospel? We are assured by them that it was imported from St Luke 1v80. We answer, How does the phrase 'ekrataiouto pneumati' in 1v80 explain that 'pneumati' now can be found in every known copy of the Gospels except four, if in these 996 places out of a thousand it is an interpolation? Is it credible that all the remaining uncials, and every known cursive copy, besides all the Lectionaries, should have been corrupted in this way? Is it credible to suppose that the truth should survive exclusively at this time in only four uncials, B, Aleph from the fourth century, D from the sixth, and L from the eighth?" End of quote.

God the Father knew that both John Baptist and our Lord needed thirty years of "waxing strong in spirit," before they were ready for their ministries." Luke 1v80, 2v40. God will give us time to grow, for He is a thoughtful Father who will not overburden us, and "much more" than any earthly parent will wait for, and watch over, our spiritual development, and will graciously and kindly recognise and make allowances for our immaturity. Even in our immaturity we can know our Heavenly Father's "much more" generous giving, and His outpourings of the Holy Spirit. Luke 11v9-13. **It is a great pity that the Church is emphasising intellectual growth, but neglecting growth in spiritual strength and power, strength of spirit is an essential part of prophetic ministry.** However, we must always remember that God's spiritual gifts and ministry gifts are not products of our own personality, they are "charismata," grace gifts from our Heavenly Father.

The need to know the Christian ABC of theology to grow as Christian babes

In 1Pet 2v2, Peter tells us to "Intensely yearn for the unadulterated milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby." All Christians need food for the mind, soul and spirit, God's babes need God's milk, "gala," of the Word, the foundation truths Paul mentioned in Heb 6v1-3 (**Please see Appendix P: Foundation Truths by C L Parker**); mature Christians need the solid food, ("broma," 1Cor 3v2, "stereas trophes," Heb 5v12-14.) of the Word of God. The foundation truths of Heb 6v1-3 are, repentance from dead works, faith towards God, doctrine about baptisms, (baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit), the laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgement.

The word that Peter uses for "intensely yearn" is "epipothéo," it occurs nine times in the New Testament, and on each occasion it is used to describe intense yearning. In Rom 1v11, Paul states his intense longing to see the Romans to impart some spiritual grace gift to them. Paul uses "epipothéo" in 2Cor 9v14 to speak of the intense longing of the Jews at Jerusalem for the Gentile Corinthian Christians, and their appreciation of their generous gifts. In Phil 1v8,26, Paul said that both he and Epaphroditus greatly longed for renewed fellowship with the Philippians. In 1Thess 3v6 Timothy brought the news of the great desire of the Christians at Thessalonica to see Paul and his helpers, and Paul tells them that he greatly longed to see them too. In 2Tim 1v2-4, Paul said that he longed to see Timothy, his beloved son in the faith. In 2Cor 5v2, Paul speaks of his great longing to be clothed with his new heavenly body at the Christ's return. There are several possible translations for James 4v5; Alford feels that, "The Spirit that He placed in us jealously desires us," is the best one, and quotes, Deut 32v10, Num 35v34 and Ezek 36v27, to show God's jealous caring love. The choice is between the human spirit, and the Holy Spirit, who takes up His dwelling in us. Finally, in 1Pet 2v2, Peter exhorts the babes in Christ to earnestly desire the genuine milk of God's Word, so that they can become spiritually strong. All Christians can and should grow spiritually strong in this way.

"Waxing strong in spirit" is an essential prerequisite for the operation of a powerful prophetic ministry, the divinely given gift of prophetic ministry is developed by divine education, through continuous manifestations of revelation wisdom and knowledge, and acts of divine power. The human response to this education should be submission to God, prayer and fasting, and a deep study of the Word of God, for even the greatest prophets can err if they do not know the correct meaning of the Scriptures, just as John Baptist did when he asked the Lord Jesus, "Art thou He that should come? or look we for another." Jesus asked John to consider the wisdom and knowledge imparted in His preaching to the poor, and the signs, wonders and miracles that He did, all of which fulfilled prophecy and proved that He was the promised Messiah. Mark 12v24,27, Luke 7v19-23. NB: v22 with Isaiah 8v18, 11v1-3, 29v18,19, 35v3-10, 42v1-7, 60v1-3, 61v1-3.

NB It is essential to grasp what the Scriptures say about the make-up of the human personality.

The Bible states that we are a soul that possesses a body and spirit; the body puts us in contact with earth, and the spirit puts us in contact with heaven. 1Thess 5v23, Heb 4v12, Rev 1v10, 4v2. Many Christians are so ignorant about

spiritual things and spiritual gifts, that the mere mention of the word "spirit," makes them suspicious and they think it is "spiritualism." We should remember the "God is a Spirit," John 4v24, and His good angels are spirits, Heb 1v13,14, and everybody, including Christians, have an organ called their spirit. The Bible condemns the seeking of evil spirits via Spiritualism and Witchcraft, not spiritual experience from God. We need to know the following facts.

1) Our spirit was renewed at conversion

When we became Christians, our spirit, which was dead to God because of our sins, was "quickened," or "born again," and we received the spirit of adopted sons, which enables us to contact God and cry "Abba," that is, "Father."

Christians can, and should, experience sitting in heavenly places in Christ through their renewed spirit.

Eph 2v1-6, 6v10-20, John 1v12,13, 3v3-13, Rom 8v14-19, Col 3v1-3. Peter tells us in 2Pet 1v4, that we are partakers, "koinonoi," that is, "sharers," of the divine nature. Our spiritual rebirth at conversion enables us to receive the life of Jesus through our renewed spirit, and to share His life with others, and minister to those in need of spiritual and physical help. The needy world is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. Jesus earnestly desires us to communicate His life to them.

2) Our spirit is our means of contact with God and our worship of God

In Prov 20v27, Solomon said, "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord," it is the means whereby God lights the human personality, and lights the world through that personality. The spiritual blessings that come to Christians from God come upon their spirits. Eph 1v3, 5v19, Col 1v9, 3v16, 1Pet 2v5. God intends Christians to experience spiritual blessings and manifest spiritual gifts, and sing divinely inspired spiritual songs. 1Cor 12v1, 14v1,37, Eph 1v3, 5v19, Col 3v16. However, Christians can be carnal, "sarkikos," instead of spiritual, "pneumatikos." 1Cor 2v13-15, 3v1-4. The spiritual Christian can, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, discern things through their spirit, whereas a carnal Christian may have great difficulty in doing the same. Sowing to the flesh ends in corruption and spiritual death, whereas sowing to the spirit, that is, obeying God and living in communion with God in the spirit, results in eternal blessedness. Gal 6v1,7,8.

God desires His Church to be a spiritual house, spiritually equipped to fight the evil spiritual forces that come against it. 1Pet 2v5, Eph 6v12. Jesus said that only worship in spirit and truth is acceptable to God, and that unless a person's spirit is in touch with God, their worship is in vain. Intellectual knowledge of the truth is not sufficient, there has to be a living contact with God in spirit. Matt 15v8, Mark 7v6, John 4v21-24. The people who opposed Christ prayed regularly, but their worship and prayer was in vain. True spiritual worship is not lip worship, it is heart worship linked to God by vital spiritual contact.

Paul warns us in 2Tim 3v1,5, that one of the great perils of this day will be, a form of godliness without the power. "Form," is "morphosin," which means a shadowy pencilled outline without any reality, it is religion without contact with God. People can go through a Christian form and yet have no contact with God. **God intends that prophetic ministry should bring people from intellectual knowledge of spiritual gifts and spiritual ministry, to a vital experience of God and His gifts.**

3) Our spirit is the means of fellowship between Christians

Because our spirits are "born again" and renewed we can not only contact God, we can have fellowship with other Christians in the spirit. We need the spiritual help and companionship of other Christians otherwise we grow spiritually lonely and ineffective, even Paul found that his ministry was limited without the right kind of spiritual fellowship. 2Cor 2v12,13. **We are intended to draw spiritual strength from one another as well as directly from the Lord, and this brings a real sense of dependence upon one another and a growth together in Christian love.** 1Cor 12v21-26, Eph 4v11-16. The New Testament speaks of an incredibly beautiful "fellowship of the spirit," Phil 2v1-5, Philemon v6. Christianity consists of much more than an intellectual sharing of doctrinal truth, there is a fellowship and sharing of spiritual life and love in Christ, that is heaven upon earth. 1John 1v3,6,7. United together with God and Christ, we can experience a heavenly oneness that is indescribably holy and beautiful. John 17v22-26. In the world there is a terrible spirit of competition, "the rat race," which is a by-product of sin and selfishness. People build up barriers inside themselves to protect their emotions from an evil and unloving world, and become lonely and starved within. In formal services people seldom get to really know each other, and often never experience a real sharing and fellowship of the Spirit. God desires to break down the inner barriers within us and He wants us to know, trust and love each other, and prophetic ministry is intended to facilitate this.

4) Our spirit is God's channel for giving us spiritual gifts and spiritual ministry

The Holy Spirit communicates His spiritual gifts to us through our spirits, when He uses us to be the channel of His power, love and tenderness. He graciously gives us part of His unlimited abilities; this was the secret of Paul's ministry. Rom 7v6, 8v1,2,4,5,9-16,26,27, 15v19, 1Cor 2v4,10-14, Eph 2v18,22. Paul knew what it was to be "strengthened with might by His spirit, in the inner man," and the reality of a strong faith and a transforming experience of Christ's love because of it, and he prayed for the Ephesians to have the same experience. Paul said that the Spirit's power can do more for us than we can ask or think. Eph 3v16-21. In Rom 1v9, Paul writes that he served God with his spirit. Exercise of the spirit is not exercise of the mind, notice the difference between mind and spirit in

Heb 4v12,13, many preachers exercise their minds when they preach and pray, but the spiritual deadness of their preaching and praying shows that they do not exercise their spirits. **Christ could say that His words were spirit and life, and so people were greatly affected by them.** John 6v63, 7v45,46. **We too should not rely on oratory, but should preach with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven.** 1Pet 1v12, James 3v1.

Jesus told His townspeople at Nazareth that He was anointed "to preach good news to the poor," "ptochois," the penniless beggars who would feel and admit their need. Jesus was anointed "to preach as an herald, deliverance to the captives." The Greek word for captives is "aichmalotois," which means "captured prisoners at spear point;" Christ was "sent," "apestalken me," to deliver these captives of sin, sickness and Satan, He was also anointed and sent to bring recovery of sight to the blind.

Jesus turned the roll of Scripture back from Isaiah 61v1 to Isaiah 58v6, and quoted, "to set at liberty them that are bruised," or better, "to send forth the crushed in liberty." Hallelujah! "Bruised," is "tethrausmenous," from "thrauo," it means, "to break in pieces." Praise be to God, Jesus can heal the broken in heart and body, and put all the pieces together and send them forth in liberty. All texts omit "heal the broken hearted," however this idea is included in "sending forth the crushed in liberty."

Jesus was sent and anointed "to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," the year of Jubilee, the year when all captives and slaves were released, all debts were cancelled, and all lost inheritances were restored. Lev 25v8-17. This Scripture was fulfilled through the strong and loving soul of Jesus. Luke 4v21. Divine life and power poured through Him to needy people and delivered them. We see apostolic and prophetic ministry in its most perfect manifestation in our Lord's ministry.

By quoting from Isaiah 58v6, Jesus emphasised that He was not just sent to talk, or be an out of touch holy man, He was deeply involved with peoples needs, and sent to deliver them and send them forth in liberty. We read in Isaiah 58v5-11: "When you fast, you make yourselves suffer; you bow your heads low like a blade of grass and spread out sackcloth and ashes to lie on. Is that what you call fasting? Do you think I will be pleased with that? The kind of fasting I want is this: Remove the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice (stop oppressing those who work for you and treat them fairly), and let the oppressed go free. Share your food with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless poor. Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear, and do not refuse to help your own relatives. Then my favour will shine on you like the morning sun, and your wounds will be quickly healed. I will always be with you to save you; my presence will protect you on every side. When you pray, I will answer you. When you call to me, I will respond. "If you put an end to oppression, to every gesture of contempt, and to every evil word; if you feed the hungry and satisfy those who are in need (help those in trouble), then the darkness around you will turn to the brightness of noon. And I will always guide you and satisfy you with good things. I will keep you strong and well. You will be like a garden that has plenty of water, like a spring of water that never goes dry." (TEV etc)

From Isaiah 58v1-14, we see that God rejects fasting and prayer, when it is formal, empty and lacking in love, and does not meet people's real needs. God informs us that the thing that energises faith and prevailing prayer is practical caring love. Gal 5v6. Our Lord's ministry enshrined the desire of God in Isaiah 58, we read in Luke 4v18,19: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives ("aichmalotois" (Strong's NT:164), prisoners of war at spearpoint will be released), and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

We read in Psalm 69v8,9, that Christ's love for people had driven Him to a life of fasting and prayer, so that He could be the perfect channel of His Father's love and mercy, and He manifested the ultimate in mercy and healing gifts, and met the deep needs of all who came to Him. Jesus came to make people whole, and release them from physical, emotional and spiritual problems, and the evil forces that injure, oppress and destroy mankind. Luke 4v16-21. Jesus warned the Jews in Luke 21v24, that rejection of God's mercy would open them to Satan's merciless attacks, and result in them being taken captive at spearpoint (the future passive of "aichmalotizo" (Strong's NT:163) and dispersed among the nations. Our Lord's broken hearted sobbing in Luke 19v41-44, shows that the horrific events which took place at the destruction of Jerusalem were the very last thing that Jesus and His Father desired.

Paul tells us the secret of his powerful ministry in 2Cor 10v4,5, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity (the present active participle of "aichmalotizo" (Strong's NT:163), a captive at spearpoint in war) every thought to the obedience of Christ." (KJV) Paul writes in 2Cor 10v4,5, that the weapons of our warfare and campaign, "strateias," are not of the flesh, "sarkika," that is, fleshly ability such as craft, worldly power, wisdom, and oratory. Paul states that we fight with Divine weapons, which are "mighty before God." God's spiritual gifts "tear down fortresses," and "cast down reasonings and imaginations." Even the most entrenched and seemingly impregnable citadels of Satan, that keep people from a knowledge of God, can be destroyed by the mighty gifts and ministries of the Holy Spirit. Paul recognised that the battle for people's souls was

in their minds and thoughts, but he did not fight with carnal reasonings, but with God's power and gifts. By these he could bring into captivity (the present active participle of "aichmalotizo" (Strong's NT:163), take captive at spearpoint) every thought to the obedience of Christ."

Both Luke 4v18 and 2Cor 10v5, inform us, that by the power of God, Satan's dominion over people's thoughts and minds, can be broken and brought as a captive in war to Christ. God can completely heal people with broken hearts, minds and spirits, through spiritual gifts, which outpour the love, faith and power of God. A spiritual ministry is never mere talk, a person can say exactly the same words and prayers, but without a living contact with God, they will minister no spiritual blessing, and so bring no blessing, healing and release to people. 1Cor 2v4, 4v20, 1Thess 1v5. Bringing people into a living, transforming, and liberating relationship with God, is the most important function of prophetic ministry.

In the Old Testament God gave prophetic ministries to young men, like Jeremiah, Daniel, Samuel, and the young prophets of 2Kings 2v3,5, to mention but a few. The apostles of Christ, developed and manifested some of the miraculous aspects of prophetic ministry under the guidance of Christ, and these were young men. We are told in Acts 2v17,18, that God has promised to pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, and that He will give prophecy and visions to His dear sons and daughters. Through prophetic ministry God can reveal when a timid Christian has a prophecy, and even the details of that prophecy, to encourage them to manifest spiritual gifts. If this kind of prophetic ministry is lacking in churches, the manifestation and development of spiritual gifts and spiritual ministries will be hindered.

NB Prophetic ministry in the last days

In this age of grace the emphasis has been upon mercy, not Law or judgement, and so we see few acts of judgement by God through spiritual gifts, however, as this age nears its end, we will see a great increase in wickedness, and as a result more acts of judgement by spiritual gifts. We read in Rev 11v5,6, that the two witnesses at Jerusalem will have the authority and power to destroy their enemies with fire, and to smite the earth with plagues, **"AS OFT AS THEY DESIRE."** Prophetic ministries like Moses and Elijah will be again restored to certain chosen and anointed children of God. 2Kings 1v1-18. It needs gifts like these to evangelise the militant godless countries of today, in a truly effective way. **In 2Kings 13v14-19, we see that we get what we believe for, a statement which is confirmed by our Saviour in Mark 11v22-24, so let us set our faith as high and wide as the Scriptures, and we will see God do wonderful things.** We already have some reliable reports of miraculous transportation as in 1Kings 18v12 and Acts 8v38-40, and miraculous protection as in Luke 4v29,30, John 8v59, 10v39. Let us look to God in these last dark days to show forth His glory through mighty prophetic ministry. Matt 11v25,26, Luke 10v21.

C) "Thirdly Teachers," "Some Pastor-Teachers," "Elders," "Bishops"

Unbiased authorities state with Dr. Hort, that "poimen," shepherd or pastor; "episkopos," bishop, or more accurately, overseer; "didaskalos," teacher; and "presbuteros" elder; are all speaking of the same office. The elders of the early Church were its pastors, overseers and teachers. Paul said that the elders of Ephesus had the oversight, "episkopein," of their church, that is, they were its overseers; and he charged them as shepherds, pastors and teachers to feed and care lovingly for God's flock. Acts 20v17,28-32. In 1Pet 5v1-3, Peter states that elders have to shepherd, teach and feed God's flock, in taking their oversight, "episkopountes," of His Church. In Titus 1v5-7, elders and bishops are looked upon as the same office. In Eph 4v11, the office of pastors and teachers are linked together by the construction of the Greek, "tous de poimenas kai didaskalous." The "tous de," "some as," is lacking before "didaskalous," which indicates that they were not two distinct offices. All the elders of the early Church had to be "apt to teach," and were "to feed the flock of God" with truth, so they were "teachers." The teachers mentioned third in the list in 1Cor 12v28, are undoubtedly the elders, who were to teach and lead each local church by their godly example as well as by their words. Heb 13v7. In 1Pet 5v1-5, "examples," means "patterns" of the flock.

New Testament elders were certainly not either "helps" or "governments," which are sixth and seventh in the list in 1Cor 12v28, which obviously refer to the work of deacons. Elders had a very high authority and were very highly regarded, as can be seen from the place and regard, which the apostles gave to the elders of Jerusalem. Acts 15v4,6,22,23. **Feeding and guiding the flock of God into an experience of spiritual truth, not just an intellectual knowledge of the truth, is a truly great and important work for God, and this is why elders who pastor and teach are third in the list of the ministries of the Church.**

Leaders of Christian meetings are not to be any ambitious, or ill equipped person; they should be pastor-elders with the qualifications laid down in 1Tim 3v1-7, Titus 1v5-9 and James 5v14-16. Elders with these qualifications are to be highly esteemed, and their Scriptural teaching, experience and wisdom are to be recognised and followed. **Elders, not Youngsters, should shepherd and guide our churches.** God appointed wise, godly, spiritual, and mature grey-haired elders with a proven heaven-blessed spiritual ministry to shepherd and guide His sheep. Lev 19v32. "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God, I am the Lord." True elders aim to bless and build up the body of Christ, not draw disciples after themselves, or cause division. They protect the flock of God not divide it, Robertson tells us that the word "poimen," shepherd, is from a root meaning to protect. Jesus said that He was the Good Shepherd who would lay down His life for His sheep. In Heb 13v25, Jesus is called

"the Great Shepherd of the sheep. In 1Pet 2v25, Peter says Jesus is "the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls," and in 1Pet 5v4, Peter calls Jesus "the Chief Shepherd." Our Lord uses the verb "poimaino," to shepherd, to commission Peter in John 21v16, and Peter uses it in 1Pet 5v2, for other overseeing elders.

Elders will try to ensure that all things are done "decently and in order," and that both doctrine and experience are kept sound. Titus 1v5,9. Churches have to be preserved from false teachers, ambitious persons and other dangerous wolves that can harm God's flock. Titus 1v11, 2Pet 2v1, Acts 20v28-32. Elders must have a shepherds heart, full of love for God's flock; it is not enough to be an able talker, they must have a faithful and loving ministry. Spiritually lifeless intellectual talking has nothing whatever to do with a true pastoral teaching ministry. **A genuine teaching ministry is a Divine gift that imparts truth with Divine life and power, and should not be confused with natural talent, human intellectual training, or oratory. This anointing can only be maintained by prayer, faith and waiting upon God.** A person who has a genuine pastor-teacher ministry shuns causing division and preaches the great Scriptural fundamentals, not unprofitable doubtful theories or disputations, their ministry is particularly directed to helping young believers. Acts 8v14, 11v20, 14v21-23, 15v36, 18v27. etc. There are some more important things that we need to note regarding the ministry of elders.

1) Several Pastor-Elders guided each local church

Leading a local church is too important, and too demanding a task for one man, as W.F.P. Burton said, "It is too much for one man." This is why several, or many elders, were put over each local church, and this is why elders are always spoken of in the plural in the context of the local church. 1Cor 12v28, Heb 13v7,17,24, 1Pet 5v1, Acts 11v30, 13v1-3, 14v23, 15v4,6,22,23. This is particularly true, when, as in Paul's day, there is malicious persecution. Jerome stated that the churches were originally governed by a plurality of presbyters, but in the course of time one was elected to preside over the rest as a remedy against division. Neander says that some think that the local elders presided in rotation however; the important thing is to let Jesus preside over and direct His churches.

The New Testament informs us that there were recognised leaders of each local church, but no exclusive one-man ministry. Paul ordained elders, plural, in every church, singular. Acts 14v23. Even though 1Tim 3v2 and Titus 1v7 speak of "the bishop," "ton episkopon," and of deacons in the plural in 1Tim 3v8,10,12; it must not be thought that each local church was governed by one elder or bishop. Paul in Titus 1v5, speaks of "elders in every city," and Heb 13v7,17 and 1Thess 5v12 speak of local Christian leaders in the plural.

Some would say that there are not enough men with the qualifications of New Testament elders to have plurality of elders in a local church. This is not correct, for many godly Jews, who loved the Scriptures, came to accept Christ, besides the 3,000 out of every nation under heaven who got converted on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2v5,41. Paul went and preached to the Jews first, and got a lot of his best elders from among them. Rom 1v16, 2v9,10. If we have the intense revival and many converts which they had in the early Church, there will be more than enough converts and elder brethren, to have a plurality of elders. **The New Testament churches had as many elders as desired the office and had the qualifications, there is no number or limit laid down in the Scriptures, except that there was a plurality of elders.** 1Tim 3v1. The advantages of a plurality of pastor-elders over one pastor-elder are as follows.

Churches have better instruction and more spirituality with several pastor-elders

Christians mature much more quickly when there is a diversity and variety of ministry gifts operating in the local church. What one lacks another may possess, and so the diversities of gift, evangelism, teaching, comfort, and visitation, complement each other. **Even the most complete ministry, that of apostle, needs the other members of the body of Christ to be fully effective. Christ can only be manifested in all His fullness, when all parts of His Church work together as a body under Him as its Head.** The local church guided by a plurality of elders has greater efficiency in evangelism, better instruction, and greater spirituality.

Churches have greater protection from wolves with several pastor-elders

A body of elders are better equipped to protect the church from ambitious people in the church, and from persecution and false teachers from outside. Acts 20v28-32. "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety." Prov 11v14, 24v6. **Wise Christian leaders or pastors will ensure that they never run the churches on their own, but that decisions and government are shared with other responsible and spiritual people, and the local church as a whole.** Several pastor-elders also prevent the great evils of clerical pride, ambition and tyranny. **Many pastors and ministers practice a monarchical form of government, and say, "I am monarch of all I survey, My right there is none to dispute." This love of power cost Satan his place in heaven.** A plurality of elders also results in greater efficiency in looking after the flock of God in visitation, and a greater knowledge of people's needs, conditions and problems. This brings greater security for the flock, particular when it is under great persecution; it is more difficult to destroy the flock, when there are several or many leaders guiding each local church.

2) The Pastor-Teacher's ministry is pastoral, not dictatorial

Pastor-elders had authority from God to oversee and guide the local church, but they did not form an ecclesiastical

hierarchy. Elders are not to dictate to, or lord it over the Christians in a local church, they are to exercise the care, guidance and superintendence of love. 1Tim 3v4,5, 5v17, Titus 1v9, Acts 20v28-32, Heb 13v7,17, 1Pet 5v2. Elders are the executors of God's Word, not the legislators of their own rules. **Indeed, there is no Scripture that says it was the exclusive privilege of elders to baptise converts, or preside at worship or the Lord's table, in fact the very reverse is true.** The pastor-elders did not take over everything, the body ministry of the local church continued as before. The elders were not just to show their ability to minister, they had the responsibility to develop the ministries of others in the local church, and this is one of the major functions of a pastor-elder-teacher in the New Testament.

In Matt 20v25-28 and Mark 10v42-45, Jesus states that God's great ones are known by their humble service, and warns Christian leaders that they are not to lord it over, or "play the tyrant" with God's people, and instructs them to be like Him, and be humble servants of the people of God. "Lord it over," in both Matthew and Mark, is "katakuriueousin," the present indicative active of "katakuriueo," (Strong's NT:2634), to lord it over someone, to exercise complete control, to exercise dominion, to domineer. "Exercise authority," is "katexousiazousin," the present indicative active of "katexousiazō," (Strong's NT:2715), to exercise authority, to wield full power over, to play the tyrant.

In 1Pet 5v3, Peter remembers our Lord's word's and uses "katakuriueontes," the present active participle of "katakuriueo," to instruct elders that that they are not to be lords over God's heritage, and instructs all God's people, to put on the apron of humility, as His Lord did at the Last Supper. Domination of others is the mark of worldly rulers, and of the demon in the man in Acts 19v13-16, who overpowered "katakuriueo," and prevailed, "ischuo," over the seven sons of Sceva, when they tried to exorcise the demon in the Name of Jesus, without any relationship with Jesus, or any authority to use His Name. "Katakuriueo" only occurs in Matt 20v25, Mark 10v42, Acts 19v6, 1Pet 5v3. Elders are not "to lord it over," the flock of God, like worldly rulers do, they are to be loving shepherds, as Peter says in 1Pet 5v2, elders are to "feed," or better "shepherd the flock of God." The Greek word is "poimaino," that is, "to act as a shepherd," or "to tend the flocks," it occurs in Matt 2v6, Luke 17v7, John 21v16, Acts 20v28, 1Cor 9v7, Jude v12, Rev 2v27, 7v17, 12v5, 19v5, 1Pet 5v2.

The verb "hegeomai," is used for the rule of elders, it is translated in a variety of ways in the New Testament, it primarily means, to lead, to guide, to consider, to esteem. In Phil 2v3, Paul tells us that we are "to esteem" other Christians as better than ourselves; and in 2Thess 3v15, he says that we are not to consider even disorderly Christians as enemies, but look upon them as brothers. In Acts 14v12, Paul is spoken of as the chief speaker. In Acts 15v22, "hegoumenous," the present participle of "hegeomai," is used as a noun, "leaders, leading men," in describing Paul and Barnabas as "leading men among the brethren." In 1Thess 5v13, Paul says that we are to "esteem," "hegeisthai," the present middle infinitive, of "hegeomai," Christian leaders very highly because of their work. In Luke 22v25-27, Jesus gives the greatest light upon the use of "hegeomai" as it is applied to Christian leaders, the word translated "chief" in v26, is "hegoumenos," the present middle participle of "hegeomai," to lead, to be the leader. Jesus says that His leaders are to be the slaves and servants of the flock, and are not even to be looked upon as "Benefactors," never mind "Lords," the greatest is to become as the youngest, and the leader as the slave. We can see, then, that though "hegeomon," the noun, denoted elevated rulers, and "hegeomai," the adjective, meant leadership and rule, it was not to be in the spirit of the world, but in the spirit of Christ, who was among us as one who serves. Luke 22v27.

Vine says that "hegeomai" should be translated in Heb 13v7,17 as "guides," so verse 7 says, "Be mindful of those who are guiding you," and verse 17, "Give ear to those who guide you, and be willing to do what they say." The word translated "obey" in Heb 13v17 is "peitho," which means "to persuade," and Vine says, "The obedience suggested is not by submission to authority but resulting from persuasion." The teaching and suggestions of the elders are acceptable because they are seen to be reasonable, not because they are dictatorial. In Heb 13v17, "submit," is "hupеiko," which is only used here, it means "to yield under," the younger particularly are to submit themselves to the elder, but we must not forget that Peter tells us that the elders have also to submit themselves to the younger, for all have to submit themselves to each other, and all are to submit themselves to Christ. Eph 5v21, 1Pet 5v5. "Hupotasso."

In 1Thess 5v12, Paul directs the Thessalonians to appreciate, and get to know, and follow the leaders who laboured amongst them. The words "over you in the Lord," mean literally, "those who stand in front of you," the words "admonish you," mean, "to put into the mind," they gave wise counsel and put sense into the mind, sometimes a thankless and difficult task. No wonder that the writer to the Hebrews tells us to remember, and have hallowed memories of the lives of godly Christian leaders.

Another word used for the rule of elders in Titus 3v8,14, is "maintain," "proisteemi," which means, to stand before, and hence, to direct, lead, attend to, and to maintain. It speaks of care, diligence, guidance and maintenance. "Proisteemi" also occurs in Rom 12v8, 1Thess 5v12 and 1Tim 5v17, all of which speak of the thoughtful guidance and rule of the elders of a church, and in 1Tim 3v4,5,12 of the able guidance and maintenance of elders of their own

families, for elders have to be able to properly guide their own families before they can guide a church. **Elders have to love, develop, guide and maintain God's flock, as a good father does his own beloved family.**

NB Elders did not have exclusive rule of the churches

The government by elders did not exclude the whole local church participating in the management of church affairs as Acts 15 etc, makes quite clear. The rule of the local church was not left entirely in the hands of the elders, they had the spiritual oversight of the local church, but not the exclusive rule of the church, important matters were brought before the whole local church as Jesus instructed in Matt 18v15-17. **Matters were not settled by a body of elders or ministers in secret.** In matters of policy all the local church could, and did, contribute and suggest answers and direction. **In matters of discipline, justice was not only done, it was seen to be done by all.** This kind of procedure makes all the difference between failure and success in a church. A leading Pentecostal minister has told me, that the weekly church meeting at which policy and problems are discussed and settled is one of the major reasons for the outstanding success of the Swedish Pentecostal churches, and I can well believe it. If church members cannot be trusted with decisions, there is no possibility for progress. In the early Church there were no secret sessions and unknown decisions behind locked doors; there was no clerical hierarchy. The representatives of the church at Antioch and the whole body of disciples at Jerusalem had a share in the decision concerning the relation of the Church to Judaism; it was the decision of the whole Christian community. Acts 15v1,12,30-33, 11v26,29, 14v27,28.

The elders work, however, is not just to carry out the common will of the people, all were to wait upon God for His answer, and then they were to perform the revealed desires of the Holy Spirit. Acts 15v28. The Holy Spirit made the elders overseers; they had to carry out His desires. Acts 20v28. Their first work was to watch their own spiritual condition, "take heed unto yourselves," and then to the flock of God. It is for this reason that we find the elders at Antioch, gathered for prayer and waiting upon God, and to this praying and worshipping leadership God moved to direct Barnabas and Paul on an apostolic mission. These leaders led in prayer and worship, the flocks followed them and the results were amazing, may we follow their example. **These church members were not dominated by their leaders, nor were they unhappy with them, they loved and trusted them for their love, genuine humility and sacrificial service.** Acts 15v26.

3) Pastor-elders were usually local men who were well known and well loved

We see from Acts 13v1-4 that mature prophetic and teaching ministries went to help and guide infant churches, and to correct things that were deficient. Titus 1v5. **The church at Antioch was founded by the evangelistic efforts of ordinary Christians and so the converts needed outside help to guide them into New Testament truth and experience.** Outstanding Christian prophets and teachers came to help them for about three years until the ministries in the church at Antioch had developed and matured. We also know that the New Testament speaks of Christians receiving "the right hand of fellowship," and of well respected Christians with ministry gifts receiving "letters of commendation." Gal 2v9, Acts 15v25. Paul and Barnabus: Acts 18v27, Apollos: 1Cor 16v10,11, Phil 2v19-23: Epaphroditus Phil 2v25-30: Phoebe Rom 16v1: Mark Col 4v10: Titus and friends 2Cor 8v19-23. The Jewish synagogues, could, if they desired, call in a trained Rabbi; in the early Church prophets or pastor elders from other churches, could, under the direction of Christ, be sent to help either infant or mature churches. **Apart from this temporary help given to infant churches, and these visits by mature ministries, we find no other rule other than the superintendence of local men.** These visiting ministries were accepted and welcomed, but they certainly did not take over the exclusive permanent oversight of the churches, this was the work of the local elders as we see from Acts 20v17-38. We see no other ruling ministries in the church at Ephesus other than the elders. Paul elected these pastor-elders out of the local church, **the church did not import its permanent pastor-elders, they were local men.**

In the New Testament we find no bringing in of elders or "ministers" from outside to permanently and exclusively run a local church, never mind the choosing of a minister by a centrally governed ordaining council. Mature New Testament churches did not elect strangers, of whom they knew little or nothing about, to run their churches, the pastor-elders were men who were well known for their character, talents, ministry, spirituality and personality by all the members of the local church. The practice of importing one person to take over the exclusive rule of a local church, whether it is by central government or local invitation, is unscriptural. The invitation of some well-known ministry to help with the local elders took place, but there was no setting aside of the local leadership. There was the recognition of the part that leading ministries had in the body of Christ under the guidance of Christ the Lord, but there was no surrender to them of their own responsibilities.

From the New Testament we see that the early Church ministries desired to put the local church in the hands of local people as soon as possible. **Paul and his helpers appointed local leaders in 1 to 3 years of churches being founded.** Without such outstanding ministries it would obviously take longer for an infant church to develop its own ministries. **However, it is a tragedy when churches are still infant churches, which are full of immature baby Christians, and still in need of imported supervision, ten, twenty, thirty, or even forty years after they are founded.** The problem is that some leaders want to make their congregations permanently dependent upon them; their aim is personal or denominational kingdom building, not the spiritual growth of the Christians in their

churches.

4) Our attitude to denominational churches and their ministers

Denominational churches and their ministers must be judged on their individual merits, churches of the same denomination vary very considerably. Some churches are centres of evangelism, fellowship, and teaching; others are so far from God that they are mission fields, and have no ministries. **Some denominational churches are more evangelical and Pentecostal than many Pentecostal churches, whereas others reject the gifts of the Holy Spirit; the new wine put into their old bottles causes them to burst, and the new wine spills out elsewhere.**

What, then, should be our attitude to denominational churches and their ministers? We should ask ourselves the following questions. What is the spiritual condition of a church, and what does the Lord want me to do about it? Is the church an opportunity for witness, or is it a fellowship centre? Is it profitable for evangelistic work or teaching? Has the minister a ministry gift from Christ, and a good and sound Bible teaching ministry? Is he a man of prayer, able and willing to pray a prayer of faith for the sick? Does he have the qualifications of a pastor-elder laid down in 1Tim 3, Titus 1, and James 5? Does he love his flock? Does he welcome the Holy Spirit's workings and gifts? If he does, then this man, or woman, should receive our help and support, for such a church will enjoy the guidance and blessing of God.

Even if a church or minister is spiritually dead we should not cut off all association or fellowship from them. Spirit filled Christians should lovingly witness in these churches of their experience and try to bring them into blessing. This responsibility should not be shirked Jesus and Paul preached in synagogues until they were violently opposed, and their message rejected. Acts 18v1-11, 28v17-31. We too should be prepared to suffer persecution in witnessing about Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Churches of all kinds have been transformed by the radiant witness of truly Spirit-filled Christians, and have become centres of evangelism and blessing. Those who take on this task should make sure that they have some really lively, loving and prayerful fellowship behind them, to which they can resort to for spiritual sustenance and help. **However, one does not have to become a member of a lively Spirit-filled group to have fellowship with them, and be blessed of God. Membership is men's way; fellowship is God's way.** Many people join the wrong 'ship,' membership confines us within a church, fellowship reaches out to the body of Christ. If a denominational church can become a centre of blessing, it will forward God's work, and this is what we should try to achieve. Love suffers long and is kind, and desires, and strives to see others blessed.

We are, then, to follow church leaders if they fulfil God's qualifications and God's Word, and work with spiritual pastor-elders in the local church, but if they become formal and deny and oppose God's power, we are told to turn away from them by the apostle Paul. 2Tim 3v1,5. In 2Tim 3v5 the word for "form," is "morphosin," a rare word which means, according to A.T. Robinson, "the rough sketch, the pencilling of the 'morphe,' the outline without the substance." The word is only found in the New Testament here in 2Tim 3v5 and in Rom 2v20, where Paul said the Jews had an outline of God's truth without the experience of that truth. Denominational churches that oppose and reject the saving power of Christ, and the movings and gifts of the Holy Spirit, are empty of spiritual reality, and Christians will have to separate from them, even as the early Christians had to leave the synagogues that rejected Christ and His power. Acts 13v42-52. In Acts 18v4-8, we see that Paul started his meetings next door to the synagogue in the house of Titus Justus, after the Jews had rejected Christ and vital New Testament truth, and division can occur for these very same reasons today. **Let us help seekers with every means at our disposal, but let us never compromise truth to keep in with unspiritual or unconverted "Christian leaders."**

5) How old does a person have to be to become a Pastor-Elder?

The Jews and other nations highly respected wise old men; indeed it was a command of God. We read in Lev 19v32, "You shall rise up before the face ("pawneem," (Strong's OT:6440) of the grey headed ("seybah," (Strong's OT:7872), the feminine of (Strong's OT:7869)), and honour the face ("pawneem," (Strong's OT:6440)) of the aged ("zagen," (Strong's OT:2205), old man, old woman, elder in authority), and fear and revere your God; I am Yahweh. See also Lev 19v32, Deut 32v7, Job 12v12, Prov 16v31. The very old, who are wise, godly and spiritual, are obviously elders, the question is, "At what age can a person be a pastor-elder?" We read in Acts 7v58 that Paul was a "young man," "neonias," however, there is fairly strong evidence that Paul the persecutor was a member of the Sanhedrin, if not at Stephen's death, certainly soon afterwards, for Paul states that he not only had power given to him from the High Priest to imprison Christians, but that "when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them." Acts 26v10. Many scholars believe that this proves that Paul was a member of the Jews supreme court of judicature, the Sanhedrin, which alone had this right, and so was looked upon as an elder. So though Paul is said to be a "young man," most people believe he was at least 30 years of age, and having a vote in the Sanhedrin was looked upon as an elder. Matt 26v59, Luke 22v26, Acts 22v5.

Upon his conversion Paul proclaimed as a herald that Jesus was the Son of God, and the Messiah of promise. Acts

9v20. Within six years Paul taught the converts at Antioch with Barnabas, as a pastor-teacher. Acts 11v26. In Acts 13v1, about three years later Paul is mentioned among leading prophetic and teaching ministries at Antioch, so Paul fulfilled an elder's ministry at about 40. The law would not allow people to be priests under 30 years of age. Num 4v3,23,30,35,39,43,47, Lev 8v30, 1Chron 23v3. **One notable expositor states that he had known Christians of about 30 who had the qualifications laid down for elders in 1Tim 3 and Titus 1; and that he had known men of 60 who did not.** This is the crux of the matter, if a person over 30 has reached the maturity and spirituality laid down in Timothy and Titus, then they can function as an elder. If they do not have these qualities, they should not be an elder, even if they are a 100. There may be some like Paul, who can fulfil the office of pastor-elder-teacher, under the age of 40. **However, it is not age that is the most important factor in choosing elders, the length and depth of Christian experience, an ability to shepherd, love, oversee, teach and guide people into a deep experience of God are the really essential qualifications of elders.**

It is not desire for position, but love of people and a spiritual ministry gift from Christ that makes New Testament elders, or, indeed, any New Testament ministry. Every New Testament elder has to have a pastor's heart of love, or he is not a New Testament elder-teacher. Teachers with no love for Christ's flock, and I mean a genuine concern, not a professional bed-side manner, should not be leaders in God's work. There will, obviously, be in each local church, young men who are developing ministries given to them by Christ, that will later make them a recognised elder. A young person can be used of God in prophetic and evangelistic ministry, without being in charge of a church. Christ gave young men, apostolic and evangelistic ministries, but they could not take on the work of an elder, until they were old enough to do so. **God knows that it needs wise, spiritual, older men, with both an experience of God, and an experience of life, to guide His people.**

God intends all the ministry gifts to be manifested and developed in the local church under the supervision of mature prophetic and pastor-teacher ministries, until people are able to perform the ministries that God has given to them, without supervision and guidance. New Testament ministry is not a title in name only; they are a ministry that manifest Christ's power, truth and love. There are many who are called elder or pastor by men, who are not in God's eyes; there are others who are not called elder or pastor by men, who are so in God's eyes, for they are fulfilling a ministry given to them by Christ.

A New Testament ministry is not a seeking or scrambling for position and power; it is a ministry of Christ's love, power and truth to others. God has given many solemn and terrible warnings against false shepherds, who fail to care for God's flock. Jer 23v1-6, Matt 23v1-39, Ezek 34v1-31. God hates shepherds who "with force and severity" dominate God's flock. God says, "Woe to these shepherds...I will make them cease from feeding sheep...I shall deliver my sheep from their mouth." Ezek 34v3,4,10. Being a shepherd is not only a great privilege, it is also a very grave responsibility, and it should not be entertained lightly. **No one will ever get away with spoiling God's flock, no matter how eminent their position, or exalted their reputation amongst men or denominations!** James gives the solemn warning, "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall be judged with special strictness and a more severe standard." James 3v1. **Greater condemnation, not greater reward, comes to those who fail to lead God's flock in the way He intends.**

6) Pastor-Elders, paid ministry and deacons

It is quite unscriptural to think that a person has to leave secular work to be a pastor-elder. In the early Church if it was necessary for an elder to give himself to church responsibilities, or to study, the local church made it up to him, but there was no regular princely stipend that some modern "prosperity gospel" preachers expect and demand. Christ and His apostles were satisfied with their essential needs for food being met by people's hospitality. Luke 8v1-3. Paul worked to keep himself while he was engaged in apostolic evangelism, he claimed the right for financial support, but often did not use it, so that there could be no criticism of his message. 1Tim 5v17,18, 1Cor 9v1-27, NB: v12,18. As we have already seen from Dr. Hatch; "There is no early trace of the later idea, that buying, and selling, handicraft and farming, were in themselves inconsistent with the office of a Christian minister. The bishops and presbyters of those early days kept banks, practised medicine, wrought as silver-smiths, tended sheep, or sold their goods in open market. They were men of the world taking part in the ordinary business of life."

That some pastor-elders did devote themselves entirely to the ministry, study and prayer and were financially supported, is confirmed by Peter, who says that elders were not to do their work for "filthy lucre," or "for sordid gain and personal profit." 1Pet 5v2. Certainly the pressure upon Christians with outstanding ministry gifts, can be so great that, like Jesus and the twelve apostles, they have to choose others to do even charitable works. The meeting of people's needs consumed all of their time, "It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables...But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word." Acts 6v2-4. However, because there were several, or many, elders over each local church, and they all usually worked in secular employment, there was no drain on the financial resources of the churches, and this could be used to help the pioneer and itinerant ministries where necessary, and particularly to meet the needs of poor Christians. Acts 2v44, 4v31-37, NB: 3v6, Gal 6v6,9,10, 2Cor 8v1 to 9v15, Phil 4v14-19. The early Church did not pay for expensive buildings, Christ's base was a simple home in Capernaum, not a mansion, or expensive headquarters. Matt 4v13, 8v5, 11v28, 17v24,

Mark 1v21, 2v1, 9v33, Luke 4v23-31, 7v1, 10v15, John 2v12, 4v46, 6v17-24,59.

Deacons

Financial matters were not handled by those who had the spiritual oversight of the churches. Deacons had the responsibility for charitable work, and were to relieve the spiritual ministries of the practical caring for the needs of the poor. 1Tim 3v8-13, Acts 6v1-6. Deacons fulfil the ministries of "helps," "antilempseis," which means an undertaking on the behalf of another; it is used in the Septuagint of help from God and men. Deacons could also come under the description of "governments," "kuberneseis," literally refers to the steering and piloting of a ship, so "organisers, administrators," this could refer to the administration of funds. The more important ministry of pastor-elders comes third in the list under "teachers," so it is doubtful if it would be mentioned again, and certainly not after "helps." We know the word "diakonos," "deacon," is also used of the higher spiritual ministries, 1Cor 3v5, 2Cor 3v6, 6v4, however, Paul uses "diakonos" in this context to show that the higher ministries are servants, not lords, over God's flock.

In Greek literature "diakonos" spoke of a servant or slave within a household, whose chief work was waiting upon his master at the table, and sometimes in marketing for him. The English equivalent to the Greek usage would be "menial," or "servant," though it can speak of someone giving free service or even civil rule as in Rom 13v4. In both the Old Testament and New Testament the poor had a major place in receiving the gifts of God's people; the Old Testament tithe was for the poor, fatherless and stranger as well as the Levite. The tithe was Israel's income tax, and it not only upheld Israel's religious system, it was also used for Israel's welfare state aid for the poor, fatherless, widow and stranger. It seems that women could take part in this work of ministering to the poor and needy, we read in Rom 16v1 of "Phebe our sister, which is a servant, that is, deaconess, of the church which is in Cenchrea." **There can be no doubt that deacons have an important part to play in the work of God, for God is very concerned over the material and physical well-being of His children.**

D) Evangelists, Eph 4v11

In 1Cor 12v28, the ministry of evangelist is almost certainly mentioned under gifts of healings, and possibly workings of miracles as well. Evangelists, as the Greek word "euangelistes" suggests, are proclaimers of the Gospel. "Euangelistes" means literally "a messenger of good;" so evangelists preach, "euaggelion," "glad tidings and good news." To evangelise, "euangelizo," is to proclaim good news of salvation in Jesus. The main theme of an evangelist is Christ and His death for sinners. 1Cor 2v1-5. **Evangelists convey the same truths as apostles but do not have the same level of authority and power;** the seventy evangelists were not instructed to raise the dead, whereas apostles were told to do so. Matt 10v1,7,8, Luke 10v1,8,9. Apostles also had the authority from God to judge and discipline both believer and unbeliever who withstood the truth, an authority, which it seems, was lacking in evangelists. Acts 5v1-11, 12v1-6,18v25, 13v6-12, 1Cor 5v1-5, 1Tim 1v18-20 with 2Tim 2v16-19. **Evangelists, like apostles, preach God's love for mankind, and like apostles they have a ministry of signs, wonders and miracles, which results in the founding of churches. However, unlike apostles, they usually do not have the ability to care for converts, or lead them into the fullness of the Spirit, and the manifestation of spiritual gifts.**

Philip is a good example of a New Testament evangelist, he founded a thriving church at Samaria, but he did not have the ability to consolidate it, he had to send for Peter and John to lead the converts into the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Acts 8v1-25. Evangelists who have this limitation in their ministries need the help of the more mature apostolic, prophetic, or pastor-teaching ministries to establish their converts in the faith, otherwise the good they have done can be dissipated. It is good to know that those who have little or no ability to feed and care for Christians, can be used in evangelistic ministry. **Philip was as willing to follow God's guidance to speak to one person in a wilderness, as he was to preach to an entire city.** After Philip had led the Ethiopian eunuch to Jesus and baptised him in water, God gave Philip supernatural transport to his next assignment. May God give us more evangelists like Philip, who have experiences like this.

One has to question the financially demanding structures and commitments of some modern preachers and evangelists, their emphasis upon giving and demands for money, shock and dismay thoughtful Christians, and give unbelievers considerable grounds for criticism. Some openly state that they can only preach to large gatherings in cities, so that they can obtain big offerings to sustain their expensive financial commitments. These are dubious practices in the light of the practice of Jesus and His early Church ministries, who were directed by God, not by financial commitments. It was a good thing for the Ethiopian eunuch that Philip was not directed by the size of the offerings that he could get, and for the Samaritan woman by the well, that our Lord, was driven by the constraint of love, not by a need or desire for finances. Acts 8v26-40, John 4v1-43. The financially undemanding nature of Christ's apostolic band and His early Church ministries, is a Divine design, and it meant that they could be sent anywhere by the Father. **Christ's total poverty censures those who demand riches from God's people, and preach a prosperity gospel. Paul states in 2Cor 8v9, that our Lord was totally destitute.** "He became poor," is "eptochousen," the aorist active indicative of "ptochouo," to be a beggar, to be reduced to abject

poverty. "His poverty," is the noun "ptocheia," which again describes poverty to the point of the danger of starvation, and meant that Jesus did not have one penny in His pocket, which is proved by the incident of the coin in the mouth of the fish. Matt 17v24-27. **Wonderful Jesus! He who owned all things became totally destitute to give us the riches of Heaven. The sacrificial love of the Trinity is beyond praise. Jesus has given us the supreme example of sacrificial apostolic evangelism. He is the pattern to follow.**

The ministry gifts should bring an experimental, not just an intellectual knowledge of God

God desires His New Testament ministries to bring people to an experimental knowledge of truth and Himself, as well as an intellectual appreciation of truth. This is shown by the Greek words for knowledge in the New Testament. In Eph 3v14-21, Paul prays for the Ephesian Christians to be strengthened with all might by the Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith, and that being rooted and grounded in "agape" love, they may be strong enough ("exischuo," (Strong's NT:1840), to have full strength) to eagerly grasp ("katalambano," (Strong's NT:2638) and know experientially ("ginosko," (Strong's NT:1097) the love of Christ that surpasses ("huperballo," (Strong's NT:5235), to surpass in throwing, to transcend) knowledge ("gnosis," (Strong's NT:1108), knowledge, understanding), so that they might be filled with all the fullness of God.

"Ginosko" (Strong's NT:1097). Scholars say "ginosko" usually means, to know experientially, in contrast to "oida," or "eido," which usually mean to know intuitively, and that it often speaks of knowledge producing a relationship, and an experimental appreciation as well as intellectual knowledge. 1Cor 8v3, Gal 4v9, John 8v32, 14v20,31, 17v3, 1John 2v3,13,14, 4v6,8,16, 5v20. **The Scriptures reveal that a deep experiential knowledge of God is brought about by a revelation from God, and not by intellectual effort.** Matt 11v25-27, Luke 10v21-24, Eph, 1v15-19.

"Epiginosko" (Strong's NT:1921). "To know fully, to fully perceive, to receive full knowledge of, or become fully acquainted with." It suggests an even more special or advanced experimental appreciation than "ginosko," as in 1Cor 13v12, "Now I know ("ginosko") in part, but then I shall fully know ("epiginosko"), even as I am fully known," ("epiginosko").

"Proginosko" (Strong's NT:4267), to know before hand." Is used of God's foreknowledge concerning Christians; Rom 8v28,29, and Israel, Rom 11v2. It is used to speak of Jesus being foreordained to be the Lamb of God before the foundation of the world. 1Pet 1v18-20. See Rev 13v8, Titus 1v2, Rom 16v25,26. In Acts 26v5, Paul uses it to speak of the Jews knowledge of how Paul behaved before his conversion. In 2Pet 3v17, it speaks of the foreknowledge of future end-time events, through the knowledge of prophetic facts in the Scriptures.

"Oida" (Strong's NT:3608), and "eido" (Strong's NT:1492). Both mean to perceive and know intuitively, or to perceive with the physical senses, with sight, or perceive with the mind, or to know from observation. As we have seen, "ginosko" speaks of experimental growth of knowledge, and an active relationship whereas "oida" can suggest perceptive and intuitive knowledge, and can speak of a fullness of knowledge. e.g. John 8v55, "Ye have not known Him "ginosko," but I know him," "oida." See John 13v7, 14v7 and Mark 4v13 for a similar contrast. In Matt 7v23, "I never knew you," the aorist of "ginosko," means, "I have never at any point of time been in any relationship with you."

Compare "Epistamai" (Strong's NT:1987). To put the mind upon, comprehend, or be acquainted with, to know, understand. Peter's denial. Mark 14v68. Peter at the house of Cornelius. Acts 10v28. See Acts 15v7, 18v25, 19v15,25, 20v18, 22v19, 24v10, 26v26, Heb 11v8 etc.

The Early Church was Guided by Christ into Body Ministry

The Church is described as Christ's building and temple, Eph 2v21; as Christ's beloved bride and wife, Eph 5v22,23, Rev 19v6,7, 21v2,9, 22v17; as Christ's household. Eph 2v19, Gal 4v10, 1Tim 3v14, Heb 3v5. However, here I want to consider the Church as Christ's body. 1Cor 12v11-31, Rom 12v3-5, Eph 4v7-11. Christ desires all the members of His Church, from apostles to young converts, to act together as a body under His guidance. Under the inspiration of Christ every member has something to contribute to the spiritual ministry of the Church, this is what we mean by body ministry.

1) Body ministry took place in fellowship, worship, evangelism and ministry

Body ministry involves the participation of all believers in fellowship, worship, evangelism and ministry. **There was no division between clergy and laity in the early Church, all believers are priests.** 1Pet 2v5, Rev 1v6. Every child of God has the right to minister what they receive from God. "Everyone hath,"---"ye may all prophesy one by one." 1Cor 14v26,31. Paul said that the Corinthians had the right idea in desiring body ministry, but they selfishly wanted to do everything, and did not make way for other people's ministries. **Paul said we need a Holy-Spirit co-ordinated body ministry, not all-ministry.** All rights in the Church spring from Christ; the Quaker principle is correct, members have the right to minister only as Christ directs. The prophets and pastor-teachers in the local church should only act under the inspiration of Christ, like the rest of the believers. This is spiritually much more

demanding than a program. It also demands real humility and gentleness in the pastor-elders, who may have to call a halt to unprofitable ministry, or correct wrong teaching and fanaticism.

In many churches, Christians are judged to be faithful and true by their ministers, if they sit passively in their church pews for years. Paul did not teach this kind of spiritual decadence, he certainly did not want Christians to be passive listeners, or "none-speaking babes," he desired them to develop ministries and grow spiritually. Eph 4v11-15. This shows the importance of having a fellowship meeting where Christians can develop their gifting and ministries. Paul taught that in these fellowships there was to be a real participation of all the local church members in body ministry. Today, many Christians fear body ministry, because of the demands that it will make upon them. Others feel that young Christians will make mistakes, and will not be as presentable to the world as a polished well-spoken minister. However, unless "everyone has" something from Jesus in our fellowships, they are not genuine New Testament church fellowships. Some modern Christians, who go regularly to church services, have never been to a New Testament fellowship meeting at all. In most churches a "minister" has replaced Christ-directed body ministry, and this has kept multitudes of Christians in spiritual infancy and immaturity.

The Greek word "kerusso," "to proclaim as a herald," obviously implies that there was a place for an uninterrupted discourse in preaching, teaching, and evangelism in the early Church. However, in both evangelistic and fellowship meetings, the more usual pattern was dialogue, discussion, reasoning, and question and answer in an informal conversational manner. There was far more participation and discussion in Paul's preaching hall, than there is in today's church services. "Dialogue," "dialegomai," is used in Acts 17v2,17, 18v4,19, 19v8,9, 20v7,9, 24v12,25. "Peitho," to persuade, occurs in Acts 28v23,24, in connection with Paul's evangelism. "Suzeteo," to reason, is used of Paul's and Stephen's irresistible Scripture reasoning with those who opposed them. The arguments of these great Christians was unanswerable, so their opponents murdered Stephen, and planned to murder Paul. Acts 6v9,10, 9v29,30. Modern Christianity has cramped and straightened even the Gospel mission to a formal service, which it certainly was not in the early Church.

2) Body ministry encourages and developes ministries in God's flock

The Holy Spirit is the overall superintendent of the whole Church of Christ, His aim is to produce ministry in each local church. The object of the New Testament leaders, therefore, was to produce ministries in the flock by informal body ministry. Eph 4v8-14. In Eph 4v14, Paul speaks of immature believers without the ability to minister; the word he uses for "children," is "neepios," which means literally, "none-speaking ones," or "without the power of speech," its literal meaning was lost in general use, but immaturity was always associated with it. "Neepios" occurs in Matt 11v25, 21v16, Luke 10v21, Rom 2v20, 1Cor 3v1, 13v11, Gal 4v1,3, Eph 4v14, Heb 5v13. Paul says in Eph 4v14, that those who remain children, and do not grow and minister, are at the mercy of false teachers, who though seeming to play the game, are really using loaded dice and trickery. "By the sleigh," is "en tei kubia," which means literally, "in the throw of a dice." By craft and trickery is "panourgia," and methodical deceit is "methodia." Crafty false teachers can fool God's babies as easily as a conjurer or trickster can deceive a young child. Paul's statement has been proved true again and again by the way that false cults have deceived many Christians, because they have been kept in doctrinal and spiritual infancy by the churches which they have attended.

We read in Heb 5v13,14, that the Hebrew Christians had been converted long enough to have grown into able teachers of God's Word, but most of them were still immature non-speaking babies, when they should have grown to maturity. Christians who are mature ("teleios," Strong's NT:5046), full grown, perfect), have "by constant use" ("hexis," (Strong's NT:1838), habit), had their senses "exercised" ("gumnazo," to exercise vigorously) and are "able to discern" ("diakrisis," (Strong's NT:1253), judge thoroughly) between "good" ("kalos," (Strong's NT:2570), properly beautiful, but also that which is good, virtuous, valuable and precious.) and "evil" ("kakos," (Strong's NT:2556), worthless, depraved, injurious, pernicious, evil). Elders are to bring their flocks to maturity as soon as possible; this involves giving them moral example, doctrinal stability through correct teaching, and leading them into an experience of spiritual gifts. Elders are to make sure that the doctrine and experience of their charges is sound and healthy, "hugiaino." 1Tim 1v10, 6v3, 2Tim 1v13, 4v3, Titus 1v9,13, 2v1,2. The maturity of their flocks is the test of an elder's ministry.

Many Christians have been kept in spiritual infancy by their religious leaders for decades, and are "none speaking ones," they have been taught only to listen, and have not developed any ministries. This is very dangerous for the Christians concerned, and disastrous for the effectiveness of the Christian witness. **Ministers who keep their members in spiritual immaturity, and don't allow God's babies to grow, frustrate God's longing desire for the spiritual and doctrinal growth of His children. Those who thwart the spiritual growth of God's children in this way, certainly cannot expect a, "Well done," when they meet Jesus.** Indeed, such ministeries that are in the Church during the last seven years of this age, but especially during the last three and a half years, the period known as the Great Tribulation, are the 'evil servants' referred to in Matt 24v45-51, and the vast majority of their flock are the 'foolish virgins' referred to in Matt 25v1-13. God gives a ministry of some kind to every Christian, but if people are not given a chance to develop their ministries, they will wither and die, instead of grow and develop. Happy, indeed, is the Christian fellowship, or church, that allows the Holy Spirit to give and develop ministries, it can

be a veritable heaven upon earth. Eph 4v7,12.

Christians are stultified by passivity and formality in one-man ministry meetings. However, in the freedom of informal meetings, with sympathetic friends we know, love and trust, there is far less stress and strain, and we feel much more at ease and are less likely to be nervous, and we know that our friends don't mind if we do stutter, stammer or hesitate. The informality, sympathy and friendliness, enable and encourage even the most timid to discuss God's Word and manifest spiritual gifts. Informal, body ministry meetings bring greater interest, absorption and increase in Scripture knowledge. Christians can learn far more by dialogue and discussion, than they can by passively listening to one speaker, and if they get something from God's Word for themselves and minister it to others, it will mean far more to them than if they are just a passive listener. In Luke 11v5-13, Jesus said that God will abundantly bless with the Holy Spirit, those who earnestly seek Him to obtain "bread for others." This determined seeking of God for something to meet the needs of people, brings greater dependence upon the Holy Spirit, this will certainly bring greater operations of the Holy Spirit. **In 1Cor 14v23-25, Paul says the revelation of the secrets of peoples hearts will make them acknowledge that God is in the midst. This shows that we can manifest the same gifts that Jesus manifested when the Samaritan woman had the secrets of her life revealed by Jesus.** This brought about her salvation and brought revival among the despised Samaritans, this can happen today, when we submit to the leadings and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

I have found that informal meetings have a really beneficial effect upon children. **When children associate Christianity with formal, dead services, they grow up not wanting it.** However, when they see the liberty, fellowship, love and joy in Christian meetings, and feel the presence of God, and see His acts and manifestations, they desire and enjoy Christian experience.

3) Informal body ministry meets deep spiritual needs in the Church

There are important ministries of the Holy Spirit that rarely take place in many churches; such as the healing of memories and hurts, and a release from burdens and worries, by the gift of faith. This is not a kind of Christian psychology, which under the guise of spirituality is really an invasion into people's privacy. **It is a sin to resurrect and demand the details of people's past sins and lives, they are buried with Jesus.** Woe betide anyone who digs up what God has buried. Rom 6v1-4. The Christian who operates God's power and revelation gifts, often never needs to know what that need is; there is often simply the revelation of a burden and need, and the knowledge when God has met that need. The Holy Spirit is a perfect gentleman, He does not want to parade people's innermost secrets and problems before all. He will only show us specific needs, if He thinks that it is absolutely necessary, and many times this information will only be for the person praying to know, and it should not be spoken out to others. Many of the Holy Spirit's revelations are for secret prayer, not public utterance. It is also often very wise and necessary to seek God for the lifting of people's hurts and burdens without them even knowing it, or openly praying for them, just as our Lord did for people in need when He attended the synagogue services at Nazareth.

I have found, through over 50 years experience, that people come into formal meetings with burdens and time after time go out with the same burdens. Christians just don't get to know one another, or each other's needs in formal meetings. In an informal meeting, or in a time of prayer after a formal meeting, these burdens can be met by the power and revelation gifts of the Holy Spirit. **Formal meetings can have a definite place, but they need to be followed by informal fellowship and ministry, if we are to meet people's needs and experience the fullness of God's blessing.**

4) Informal body ministry produces a remarkable fellowship of "Agape" love

Body ministry makes Christians depend on one another instead of themselves, and this is not only a real antidote to pride, it also produces real love between Christians. 1Cor 12v20-26, John 13v35. We are to learn from, and help each other. 1Thess 2v4-9. In genuine body ministry, there is an exercise of mind over doctrine, and controlled emotion in worship and praise. There is also an exercise of spirit in contact with God and in ministry to others, and a remarkable fellowship of love between Christians and their God. It is this contact with God and love for each other that gives life to our doctrine and worship. Jesus said that we must worship God in spirit and in truth, and this involves loving our brothers and sisters in Christ. John 4v24, 13v35. Those who have experienced this remarkable love and fellowship of spirit with other Christians, know what Christ meant when He said, "I pray that they may be one, as we are one." John 17v20-22. When Christ ministers through the local church as a body, there develops a remarkable fellowship of saints, which is as real as their fellowship with God. It is this deep ministry of the Holy Spirit and real fellowship in Christ, that creates and constitutes the liberty Paul speaks of in 2Cor 3v17,18. **Freedom and liberty in the spirit, does not consist in the repetition of twenty lively choruses again and again, this can be the worst form of bondage, if it is not led by the Holy Spirit. True liberty comes from a God anointed worship, and a love impregnated body ministry, which produces real fellowship and friendship in Christ.**

In many modern churches there is no fellowship of the saints, Christians just don't get to know one another. In the early Church there was the atmosphere of love and friendship, which enabled Christians, not only to share their blessings, but their burdens too. They could talk of their deep problems, and even their sins, knowing that they would

be lovingly and thoughtfully prayed with, until their spiritual and physical needs were met through the power and love of Christ. James 5v14-20. When Jesus is in control, a friendship, fellowship and tender burden bearing, can take place in an informal house fellowship, that can never take place in formal church meetings.

We can have fellowship without membership and membership without fellowship. Many Christians are looking to the wrong "ship" for blessing. In many churches fellowship takes place in loving conversations after the services, but often there is little or no fellowship during the services. This is certainly not a New Testament Christian fellowship, where all were of "one accord," "one soul" and "one mind." It says in Acts 4v32, "There was one heart and soul in the multitude of those who believed." This shows that there can be a real unity in a multitude of Christians, and Christians should gather together in these large groups for teaching and fellowship, but they should also break up into separate small meetings for closer fellowship and body ministry participation. Where numbers get large, there can, of necessity, only be a limited number of people taking part. This is why John Wesley divided a church into a number of class meetings, and limited the size of these class meetings. This deep and loving fellowship of saints with God and each other, will preserve us from backsliding in these evil last days. Heb 10v24,25.

The depth and beauty of true Christian fellowship can be seen in Phil 2v1, Paul speaks of "consolation in Christ," "parakleesis;" and "comfort of love," "paramuthion;" and "bowels of compassions," "tis splanchna," tender higher emotions; and "mercies," "oiktirmoi," pities. All these beautiful, heavenly emotions, spring from a "fellowship of the spirit," "koinonia," a partnership and sharing of the common fountain of their life in God. "Koinonia," means a common sharing, communion, joint participation and fellowship, occurs in Acts 2v42, Rom 15v26, 1Cor 1v9, 10v16, 2Cor 6v14, 8v4, 9v13, 13v14, Gal 2v9, Eph 3v9, Phil 1v5, 2v1, 3v10, Philemon v6, Heb 13v16, 1John 1v3,6,7.

In Phil 2v2, Paul speaks of Christians being "one in soul," "sunpsuchoi;" and "of one mind," "to hen phronountes," we are to have harmony of desires and feelings, and unity of thought. The book of Acts is full of this unity; when Christian's enemies are of one accord, Acts 7v57, 18v12, 19v29, Christians certainly need to be united and of "one accord." See Acts 1v14, 2v1,46, 4v24, 5v12, 15v25, Rom 15v6, in every case the word is "homothumadon." See Acts 8v6, 12v20.

The early church at Jerusalem experienced a glorious unity, fellowship and love, and a joint participation in the Holy Spirit's ministries. It is true that Satan tried to spoil this unity, and succeeded in many churches, but in Acts 2 and 4, we certainly see this lovely fellowship in Christ. The fruit and influence of the Holy Spirit is love, and where He is in control, there is entreaty, tender consolation, tender higher emotion and pity, and a real sharing, trusting and binding together in Christ.

5) Body ministry even took place in newly formed Churches

Infant churches depended upon their founders for the majority of their teaching and spiritual guidance, however, they were also encouraged to exercise body ministry. 1Cor 12v4-31. Indeed, body ministry participation in teaching was a normal part of synagogue services, so the Jews would be used to this. The Jewish synagogues were more conformed to the New Testament pattern of body ministry, than most of today's churches. **Modern ministers would die of shock if their sermon was interrupted by a question, or their statement challenged, or someone else asked permission to comment or give a contribution, yet this was the normal procedure of the synagogue and early Church.** The Jewish converts in Paul's churches already had a good knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures, and already knew how to practice body ministry in relation to teaching, they just had to learn and practice body ministry in relation to spiritual gifts. The Jews in Paul's churches, knew the Old Testament Scriptures very well, but it was not just a question of learning the doctrines and teaching of the New Covenant, it was also essential for them to experience the powers of the age to come. It was not just a question of theology, but of spiritual dynamic as well. **The rapid spiritual development of the churches through body ministry enabled Paul to appoint elders within two or three years of churches being founded.**

Unlike Paul, many Christian leaders today, resent rather than encourage developing ministries in their churches, however, to keep God's children in an infantile state is a serious sin, for it frustrates God's purposes and ministrations. This is especially true in regard to God being able to let the last seven years of this age to begin to come to pass, because He finds it so difficult to find believers who will seek Him so that He may prepare them to become members of the Glorious Woman in Rev 12. When ministries are not allowed to function, or are suppressed, there are only two alternatives, frustration or separation. The early Church members developed rapidly in spiritual strength in the informal meetings in believers homes, they got to know each other well, and shared each others burdens and joys.

6) Body ministry took place in the Lord's Supper

We see in 1Cor 11v21 to 14v31, what actually happened at a New Testament communion service, which took place in the believers' houses, it consisted of spiritual ministry plus spiritual gifts. The Lord's Supper was part of the fellowship that took place in the body ministry of the local church.

a) The Lord's Supper nearly always took place in a home

The insistence that the Lord's Supper should only take place in a church building under the control of a paid minister, is quite unscriptural. For well over 250 years, the Romans did not allow Christians to own church property, they met in homes, catacombs, the open air, or hired buildings. With so many believers in the churches, Christians had to celebrate the Lord's Supper in many homes, and this they did. Acts 2v46. When our Lord instituted the communion service, He did so in a private house, and with close friends. Church leaders usually object to the Lord's Supper taking place in homes, because they desire to uphold their power structure, and to have things firmly under their control. It was for this reason that the religious leaders of our Lord's time persecuted Jesus and His Church. Love is content to see others blessed and rejoices to see God's Word fulfilled. **How often has clerical tyranny disguised itself as zeal for God and righteous indignation.** We can celebrate communion and remember our Lord's death, whenever, or wheresoever it is desirable, in a church building, a home or in the open air. Only two or three believers are necessary, and any believer can administer and partake of the Lord's Supper.

b) The Lord's Supper had the divine order of informality and spirituality

The Passover feast was a family occasion, a social event, as well as a spiritual event; there was the divine order of informality and spirituality. The Lord's Supper was also an informal occasion, part of a Christians social fellowship with other Christians, part of an ordinary simple meal, and after a family meal, it was naturally supernatural. **God intends Christians to ENJOY spiritual fellowship together, not to be formal, distant and restrained with each other.** Notice the sweet, conversational, natural, informal nature of the Lord's last supper. We see the conversation between Christ and John, Christ and Peter, Christ and Judas, Peter and John, and separate conversations between other disciples. Jesus gave informal teaching, prophetic insights from the Scriptures, and prophetic warnings of His death and betrayal, mixed with encouraging promises, sublime praying, and a telling practical lesson in humility, when He washed their feet.

It is a striking fact that the early Church linked the Lord's Supper and Christian fellowship with social fellowship. Their Christian fellowship was also a glorious free informal Holy Spirit anointed social fellowship, "And day by day continuing with one mind in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart." Acts 2v46, 1Cor 11v20,21,32-34. The idea that we should fast before taking the Lord's Supper has no Scriptural basis; Jesus instituted it, "as they were eating in the Passover night." Matt 26v26. The whole aim of the Lord's Supper in the early Church was not just listening, but also the development of ministry and spirituality through sharing fellowship and experience in a conversational manner. The joy of the Lord that makes us strong is developed in this environment. Neh 8v10.

In many churches Christians gather for the Lord's Supper, but there is little communion or fellowship of the saints. I am not saying that the formal communion services are wrong, or that Christians are not remembering their Lord's death, they certainly are. I am saying that if there is no informal, conversational sharing of experience and loving ministry to one another, we have not reached the New Testament ideal of a communion service. There can be no communion, where there is disagreement and division; deep love, trust and fellowship was the New Testament basis of fellowship. 1Cor 10v17, Matt 5v23,24. Paul warned the Galatians that if they did not walk in love to each other they would bite and devour one another. Gal 5v13-16. Fellowship is based on mutual love for each other. We are one body, united by one Spirit, having one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one Father. Eph 4v1-6, Rom 8v9.

We see from Acts 20v7-12, that hours of fellowship, instruction and talk could take place both before and after the Lord's supper. There was prolonged informal fellowship, discussion, teaching and worship, as there was at the actual Last Supper. It is a sign of spiritual inertia and weakness, when a great deal of time is given to singing, and there is hardly any teaching and discussion of the Scriptures. At the actual last supper we only read of one hymn being sung, this obviously is not the rule, for we read in Eph 5v18,19, of Christians thanking God and admonishing one another in "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." We read in Col 3v16, that these songs are to be based on the Scriptures, like the marvellous hymns of the Wesley's, their content being full of glorious doctrinal and experimental Christian truth. Beautiful church music may be elevating, but without the blessing of God it can degenerate to the level of mere entertainment. Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs are indeed very blessed, when we are filled with the Spirit, and make melody in our hearts to the Lord.

c) The Lord's Supper took place at any time, any number of times a week, anywhere, and by any believer

The Lord's Supper was instituted, not on the first day of the week, but on a weeknight, as a supper. We read in Acts 20v7, that Christians gathered on that occasion on the first day of the week, however, this is not the only day, for the Lord's supper can be celebrated on any day. Though the Passover meal was a supper, it does not mean that the communion service should only take place in the evening, for Acts 2v46, indicates that it can take place at any time during the day, though evening was probably the best time for most believers. The head of the house administered the Passover feast, however, all Christians are kings and priests and can administer the Lord's Supper. **Men have replaced the simplicity, beauty, and freedom of the communion service with their own forms, and have taken much of the blessing away, however, if we follow the pattern laid down by Jesus, we shall always find blessing, and God.**

7) Christ inspired women to take part in Body Ministry

The New Testament tells us that women were anointed by God to participate in the worship and ministry of the Church. Indeed, the Scriptures reveal that women sometimes led in God's work. **Miriam, a notable prophetess, led the women in praise and prophecy; she is given the credit with Moses and Aaron for delivering Israel from Egypt.** Exodus 15v20,21, Micah 6v4. Deborah was not only a prophetess, she was also the leading judge of Israel; notice that she was not made the leader of Israel by men, God appointed her, and led her to victory over overwhelming foes. **Through her spiritual power, Israel had victory for 40 years.** Judges 4v1-5v31. The prophetess Huldah was the spiritual giant and spiritual leader of her day, when anyone wanted to have a word from God they went to Huldah. Jeremiah was alive at this time, but when good king Josiah needed a word from God, he sent the high priest to Huldah for God's guidance; she had a superior prophetic ministry, and could get the word of the Lord far quicker than Jeremiah. (See Jer 42v7, it took ten days for Jeremiah to get the word of the Lord.) Huldah's prophecy brought about Josiah's revival. 2Kings 22v13-23v25. Anna the prophetess was the person closest to God in Israel at the time of Christ's birth, Israel's male religious leaders were spiritually dead, and were spiritual babes compared to this godly prophetess. God used Anna to minister His love and life, and to meet the needs that they missed. God can, and often does, do the very same today. Luke 2v36-38. History reveals a vast army of godly women, like David's mother, "the handmaid of the Lord;" and Hannah, the mother of Samuel; Jochebed, the mother of Moses, and many others, who have been the channels of God's love and power to their children and their generation. They changed history by their prayers and spiritual ministries. **When men have grown spiritually cold and formal, it has often been left to godly praying women to rekindle the fires of revival. Men nearly always monopolise the pulpits and positions of authority, women usually take the lead in love, spirituality, prayerfulness and faith.**

The Devil and misguided men have tried to squash the ministry of women by misquoting certain texts.

An examination of these verses shows that both are concerned with domestic matters.

The first Scripture is 1Cor 14v34,35: "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; --- it is a shame for women to speak in the church." In 1Cor 14v34,35, we see that the wife had to ask their husbands at home, this was certainly not over teaching, for in the informal house meetings of the early Church there was always liberty to do this. Paul had just stated in 1Cor 11v4, 5, that women could pray and prophecy in the church, and you cannot do this and be silent, and an examination of 1Cor 11v16-20, proves that Paul had been considering church practice, not private prayer. 1Cor 14v4,5,22-24,29-33, Acts 2v16-18. Paul said they must not discuss domestic matters at church fellowship meetings. Paul had said in Gal 3v28, that in Christ there is neither male or female.

The word "speak," "laleo," in 1Cor 14v34, has been translated "chatter" by some scholars, because "laleo," literally means, to chatter like a bird, to talk much, to prattle. It is true that in the New Testament the word is more used in the sense, "to talk," "to speak," but who is to say that Paul was not using it in its basic meaning, which would make very good sense in the light of the Christian fellowship gatherings in the Middle East in Paul's time. The synagogues did not possess our modern order, propriety, formality and "reverence." While the synagogues did not have the drunken, uproarious and disgraceful revelry that accompanied heathen religions; they enjoyed a real freedom and informality. The word "silence" was spoken to the restless, emotional and talkative Orientals, Greeks and Latins in Corinth, who were not used to any discipline, routine and order, not even in the informality of the synagogue meeting. **In the synagogues there was a very definite informality; extempore prayers were permitted, and those who desired to read the Scriptures and make comments upon them, could do so. Anyone who was thought to express wrong teaching in prayer or preaching was immediately stopped.** Acts 13v45-47, 18v6,7. Dialogue freely took place in the synagogue meeting. Acts 17v2,17, 18v4,9, 24v12,23. "dialogomai," Matt 2v34, Jude v9.

In "A New Testament Commentary," Howley, Bruce and Ellison, state with commendable honesty, that the verb "lalein," translated as "speak" in 1Cor 14v34, is used to generally to refer to any specific kind of speaking. They say that the suggestion cannot be ruled out, that Paul is merely speaking of irregular talking, in the form of soothing or rebuking babies, shouting out a remark or query, or just plain chattering. **There can be no doubt that Paul is referring to unedifying abuses of their freedom to speak, pray and prophecy in church gatherings, which Paul says is their right in 1Cor 11v5,6.** Since two or three Christians could make up a New Testament fellowship, Matt 18v20, when two or three Christian women meet and pray together, they make up a church meeting, must they be silent? of course not! The New Testament meetings were nearly always informal meetings in a home, and it was certainly not disgraceful for women to talk in this social fellowship, which accompanied Christian fellowship. **Satan is delighted over the restrictions that men have placed on the ministries of the Holy Spirit through God's handmaids; he knows that the Church has lost a great deal through these restrictions.**

The ordinance in 1Cor 14v34, is said to be based on the law, "but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law," however, no Scripture states that a woman could not pray, prophesy or preach. In Gen 3v16, God warns women that men would ruthlessly dominate them; however, this was a warning of bad home relationships, not

church practice. In Gen 3v16, God did not curse women, it is a bad translation. **(See Appendix 1: In Gen 3v16, God Did Not Curse Women)** In Eph 5v21-33, Paul instructs husbands to love their wives as Christ loves His Church, there is to be no bossing or hardness, there is to be the fellowship of love. In 1Pet 3v7, Peter warns that God will cut off and not listen to the prayers of a bad or inconsiderate husband. Ill-treatment of wives or women will have to be answered for on judgement day.

The second Scripture is, 1Tim 2v11: "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man," should be viewed strictly in the context of which they are spoken. In 1Tim 2v11,12, Paul is also referring to domestic matters, as the context clearly shows, for in v13,14, Paul speaks of Eve's relation to Adam and to child-bearing. Paul said that women should not usurp a man's place, and this is certainly true in the home; however, if God gives a woman a ministry, she is not usurping a man's place, she is taking her Christ-appointed place, she is only usurping a man's place if God has given her no ministry. **The trouble with the Church today, is not that women are usurping men's authority in the Church, but rather because men are usurping God's authority over the Church, by their traditions and practices.** It is true that Miriam tried to usurp Moses place and authority and suffered a very necessary chastisement from God for it. Num 12v1-16. However, there are far more cases in Scripture of men resisting and usurping God-appointed ministries, than there ever are of women. **It is a fact that women have manifested apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, and pastor-teaching ministries.** Women are ideally suited to a prophetic ministry, for God has given women a love and gentleness of spirit to care for their children and husbands, which is really the basic essential for a prophetic ministry. As Paul said, love towards others is the best and most powerful channel of spiritual gifts, and so women, who have developed love, by loving and caring, are often able to manifest the higher gifts of revelation, power and comfort, with great blessing. The women that do this are certainly not usurping men's authority; they are fulfilling the ministry that God has given to them.

Women certainly did not keep silent in the early Church, God told them to speak and minister

Women were included in the great commission, they can proclaim the Gospel, and be used in healing the sick. Women first announced that Jesus had been raised from the dead. Matt 28v5-10,18,20, Mark 16v16,17. They also spoke out in tongues in the upper room, on the day of Pentecost. Acts 1v8,12-14. Women are looked upon in the same way as men regarding worship and ministry by the apostle Paul. Gal 3v28. We read in the New Testament of women who were recommended for their spirituality and ministry. There were the women without whose help Christ's ministry could not have continued in the way that it did. Luke 8v1-4. There was godly Priscilla, helper of Apollos, she had a church in her home. Acts 18v24-26, Rom 16v3-5,19, 2Tim 4v19. We see Paul's women fellow labourers, Junia, Rom 16v6,7; Phebe, Rom 16v1,2; and other women. Phil 4v3. Luke was impressed by the prophetic gifts of Philip's four daughters. Acts 21v8,9. Dorcas had a spiritual as well as a practical ministry; she was loved by all for her practical godliness. Acts 9v32-42. We read of the "elect woman" of 2Jn v1, another notable spiritual woman. Besides these there were a multitude of women who prayed, prophesied and preached, as the Hebrew of Psalm 68v11 states, "The Lord gave the word, and great was the multitude of women who published it." Blessed are those who publish the good tidings of Christ's Gospel. Isaiah 52v7. I feel that it is dishonest and hypocritical to give a woman a place in the ministry in difficult mission fields, and refuse them the same place in much easier conditions at home.

Women can make their homes a ministry, and men should co-operate with them in this. Paul said that older women should teach younger women sound doctrine and wise practice in the home. Titus 2v1-5, 1Thess 4v11. It is often better for Christian women to minister to women's needs for prayer, where this is possible, to save from criticism. **It is certainly very unwise and dangerous for men to pray with women on their own, if a man does have to pray with a woman, others should be present if it is at all possible.** If we practice this it will save from appearance of evil, and will in particular save young people from emotional involvement, which can injure their feelings and spiritual growth, and cause even greater problems. Women, who have children, already have a congregation in their home, and they can minister love, faith and teaching to their children, which will never leave them. I owe an incalculable debt to my own dear departed mother for her constant love, concern, and support, and the inspiration of her prophetic ministry. God has often changed history through the ministries of godly mothers; think of godly Hannah, the prophetess, the mother of Samuel; Elizabeth the prophetess, the mother of John the Baptist; godly Mary the prophetess, the mother of our Lord. 1Sam 2v1-11, Luke 2v1-16. We thank God for women, like Hannah, who have made their grief, problems and frustrations, an incentive to seek God, and as a result have blessed whole communities and nations. Mary of Bethany was the one above all others, even more than John, to minister to Jesus in His hour of need. Mary's faith, genuine affection, concerned love, and fellowship of spirit, strengthened and sustained Jesus, and her name is recorded in the Gospel for all time because of it. Luke 10v38-42, John 12v3-8, Matt 26v6-13, John 11v1,2,5,6. Godly praying women are the spiritual backbone of most churches.

There are millions of Christian women today who are winning souls, blessing saints, preaching, prophesying, teaching, comforting the needy, and labouring on very difficult mission fields, with a ministry from Christ, out of a pure love for Him and mankind. May God richly bless every one of His handmaids! God puts His Spirit upon those He commissions, and Spirit-filled women have the right to minister as God directs. Num 11v29. **God has poured His Spirit, not only upon His menservants, but upon His handmaids as well, and given them a very definite ministry and place**

in His Church, therefore, those who resist women's ministry, resist God. Acts 2v15-20. Sister, obey God, not men's traditions. You must pray, prophesy, and preach as God leads and enables you, and do not allow anyone to make you bury your God-given talents, in the soil of silence.

8) Body ministry took place in Church decisions and Church discipline

We have already seen under pastor-elders, how the local churches put forward those Christians who had a definite ministry from Christ, to be their pastors. We see from Acts 6v2,3, that all the Christians in Jerusalem gathered to discuss the problem of looking after poor widows, "then the apostles called the multitude of the disciples unto them and said, 'Look ye out, seven men'....and the saying pleased the multitude." There was leadership, but not exclusive leadership or exclusive authority, not even by the twelve apostles; all the believers were consulted, and they put forward the men they knew would do the job the best. It was a family matter decided by all. There seems to have been no disagreement at all in the choice of the seven deacons. This is Divine wisdom; there is nothing more divisive than clergy or councils making decisions regardless of the feelings of "the multitude of the disciples." The regular meeting in the Scandinavian Pentecostal churches, at which policy is discussed and problems ironed out, where all can take part, is an essential part of New Testament Christianity. This means that problems in the churches are not allowed to carry on without being dealt with, so undercurrents of criticism or frustration of ideas do not occur. Important decisions should not be imposed on the local churches by the leadership of the churches with a "take it or leave it" attitude, they should be tested to see if they "please the multitude" of the disciples. Acts 6v5, 15v28.

In the church at Antioch, prophets and teachers gathered for fellowship and prayer together. Acts 13v1-4. However, they were not deciding church policies, they were "ministering to the Lord," and waiting upon Him, for His blessing, guidance, and a deepening of their ministries. It was God who sent Barnabus and Paul on their apostolic mission, the church at Antioch recognised this call and stood behind them in it.

The "Council" Of Jerusalem

Many church leaders believe that councils of ministers should make decisions for their churches, and they quote "The Council of Jerusalem" to prove their point. However, **if we examine Acts 15 closely, we will find that it gives no authority for councils, or synods composed of ministers, or representatives, autocratically deciding the policies and running of the churches.**

Dean Farrar writes on page 243 of his, "The Life and Letters of St. Paul:" "It is only by an unwarrantable extension of terms that the meeting of the Church of Jerusalem can be called a 'Council,'....It was not a convention of ordained delegates, but a meeting of the entire Church of Jerusalem to receive a deputation from the Church of Antioch." End of quote.

1) Notice who gathered at Jerusalem and why

God had opened "a door of faith" to the Gentiles, but Satan tried to destroy the basic and essential truth of justification by faith, through those who had joined Christ's Church. Satan had tried to destroy the Church by persecution, but his attack by intrigue from within was far more deadly and dangerous, and but for the apostle Paul would undoubtedly have succeeded. Certain "false brethren" from Judea tried to close "the door of faith," and bring the lovely converts at Antioch into the bondage of their own belief, they demanded obedience to the Law of Moses, instead of proclaiming the glorious liberty and freedom of the New Covenant. These Judaizers refused to accept the obvious implication of God's dealing with Cornelius and his friends. Satan through them tried to destroy the Church with the God-given tradition of the Old Covenant. **The Judaizers blindly refused to see that Christ had fulfilled the Law with its types and prophecies, so the type was no longer necessary; they had Christ the living fulfilment of the type, not the shadow.** Heb 8v1-13, 9v15,23,24, 10v8,9.

The Judaizers inferred that the Gentile Christians were not only inferior to unregenerate Jews, they systematically taught that Gentile converts had to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses, or they could not be saved. Acts 15v1,5. "Except," is "ean me." In Acts 15v1, the word "taught," is "edidaskon," the imperfect active of "didasko," to teach, to teach or speak in a public assembly, the imperfect shows that they began to teach and kept it up. The Judaizers made a systematic attempt to bring the converts at Antioch into legalism, they practised a determined espionage and proud indoctrination of these lovely young converts. Antioch had proved its love and friendship with the church at Jerusalem with a very generous gift. Acts 11v30.

These Gentiles' hearts burned with love for Christ and their Jewish brethren in Christ, Paul was determined that this was not going to be extinguished by legal bondage. Paul and Barnabus challenged these Judaizers, "they had no small dissension and disputation with them," Acts 15v2, the word for "dissension" is "staseos," which means "insurrection" or "violent disruption;" the word for "disputation," is "zeteseos," which means dispute or discussion. It was a prolonged row, and these Judaizers refused to accept the revelation of the Church age as preached by Paul, Satan made a determined attempt to destroy the New Covenant truth through these Judaizers. Gal 5v1-4. Even the combined mighty ministries and Scriptural knowledge of Paul and Barnabus failed to convince these self-appointed guides of Christ's Church of the error of their ways. The church at Antioch appointed Paul and Barnabus and some

others to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders to settle this matter.

On their journey to Jerusalem Paul and Barnabus reported to the churches of Phoenicia and Samaria how the Gentiles had turned to God, and their news was received with great joy and praise. At Jerusalem Paul and Barnabus again "declared all things that God had done with them." Acts 15v3,4. After the welcome of the Jerusalem Church and the elders and apostles, battle is joined, the Christian Pharisees insist that these Gentile converts "must," "dei," be circumcised and charged to keep the Law of Moses. They evidently were still as narrow in their outlook as when they challenged Peter over his preaching to the Gentiles in the home of Cornelius. Acts 15v5 with 11v2-18.

We read in Acts 15v24, that the Judaizers from the Jerusalem Church had greatly troubled and subverted the church at Antioch. "Troubled," is "etaraxan," the aorist of "tarasso," to agitate, to disturb, to throw into confusion, to make the heart palpitate. John 14v1,27. "Subverting," is "anaskeuazontes," the present participle of "anaskeuazo," to plunder, ravage, pervert, and destroy," it has the thought of the reversal of good that had been done, or the tearing down of what had been built, and is used to describe the plundering of a town. The idea of deciding the matter with the church at Jerusalem, came from the church at Antioch, not from the church at Jerusalem, and so all the Jerusalem church, and representatives of the Antioch church, gathered to discuss the problem. The Judaizers had greatly damaged the church at Antioch, and were severely censured for it. It seems the Judaizers either withdrew, or submitted to the decision for a while, whatever they did at this point, they later certainly started up their divisive and satanically inspired activities again.

This conference at Jerusalem was not a conference of ministers from many churches, but appointed representatives of the church at Antioch, meeting the whole church of Jerusalem. This is the only meeting of this kind in recorded in the New Testament, even though, by modern standards, many more would have been thought necessary, and held on a regular basis. It was a meeting to decide the answer to a fundamental doctrinal point. The decision had consequences for the Church universal, for it decided whether the Church and Gentile believers were to keep the Jewish Law, or be separate from Judaism.

When Christian leaders insist that they have the right to lead and decide matters on their own, they are departing from New Testament principles, and in particular Acts 15v22,25, where we see that "the whole church" was involved and of "one accord" in this critical decision. The Holy Spirit confirmed their decision, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us." Acts 15v28.

NB It is obvious that the first gathering at Jerusalem in Acts 15v4 was adjourned, for 15v6, speaks of another gathering. It is between these two gatherings that the private conferences of Gal 2v1-10 undoubtedly took place. Dean Farrar writes: "I have here assumed without hesitation that the visit to Jerusalem of Gal 2v1-10, though here mentioned as though it were a second visit, was identical with that of Acts 15, and therefore was in reality his third visit." End of quote.

Farrar then details the five visits of Paul to Jerusalem, which I have detailed as follows in my own words.

1. Paul's visit after his conversion on the Damascus Road. Acts 9v26.
2. When Paul brought the contribution for the poor at Jerusalem. Acts 11v30.
3. Paul's visit to resolve the problem of the Judaizers at the Council of Jerusalem. Acts 15v2.
4. Paul's visit after his second missionary journey. Acts 18v22.
5. Paul's visit to fulfil a vow at Jerusalem, and before his imprisonment at Caesarea. Acts 21v17.

Farrar continues: "Now this visit of Gal 2 could not possibly have been the first; nor as it is proved by Gal 2v7, as well as by the whole chronology of his life, could it have been the second; nor, as we see from the presence of Barnabus (compare Gal 2v1 with Acts 15v39) could it have been the fourth; for no one can assume that it was without accusing Paul of disingenuous suppression when he spoke to the Galatians of this sole intercourse which he had with the apostles; and that it was not the fifth is quite decisively proved by Gal 2v11.

By the exhaustive method, therefore, we see that the visit dwelt on in Gal 2 must have been the third. It would, indeed, be inconceivable that it was some visit not recorded by the author of the Acts if there were any reason whatever for such a supposition; but when we consider how impossible it was that such a visit should have occurred without the knowledge of St. Luke, and how eminently the facts of it accorded with the views which he wished to further, and how difficult it is to find any other occasion on which such a visit would have been natural, we have no reason for adopting such an hypothesis. Nor, indeed, can anything be much clearer than the identity of circumstances in the visits thus described. In the two narratives the same people go up at the same time, from the same place, for the same object, in consequence of the same interference by the same agitators, and with the same results. Against the absolute certainty of the conclusion that the visits were one and the same there is nothing whatever to set but trivial differences of detail, everyone of which is accounted for in the text." End of quote.

Luke would hardly have passed over the events of Gal 2v1-10, if they had taken place in Acts 11v29,30; it is also

difficult to fit 14 years between Acts 9v27 and Acts 11v29,30; also Gal 2v1-10 cannot be Acts 11v29,30, for Paul saw the elders, not the apostles, and in Gal 2v1-10, Paul proved that he was not behind the greatest apostles in experience and knowledge. So, we come to the conclusion that in Acts 15v5-29, we have the public narrative of events, and in Gal 2v1-10, we see the private discussions of Paul with the other apostles. Paul and Barnabus saved the Church from staying within the Old Covenant.

We see, then, leading men among the brethren meeting for discussion, but not for decision without the approval of the rest of the church at Jerusalem. In Acts 15v4,6,12,22, the whole church at Jerusalem gathered to consider the problem of the relation of Gentile Christians to the law and circumcision; not only apostles and elders, but "all the multitude," and "the whole multitude of disciples," and "the whole church," were involved in the discussion and the decision.

2) Notice the freedom of participation in discussion and the unanimous decision

The apostles did not assume authority over the meeting of the two churches, they let discussion freely take place, they did not direct by apostolic authority, or by prophetic revelation. Nor did the elders, who were the pastors of the two flocks, insist that they were the only ones to hear and decide the matter. The apostles and elders did not decide the issue on their own, all the Jerusalem church was there, and all God's local family was at the discussion. Considerable time was given for people to air their points of view, grievances and objections. The Judaizers were given opportunity to fully state their views and there was "much questioning and disputing," "polles zeteseos," but there was no attempt to silence them, or to rush things to a decision by a majority vote, or to limit discussion and debate. There was a prolonged controversy and discussion over what to believe, it was a question of faith, and all could take part, not just a select few. This questioning, debate and discussion, was a blessing, it made everyone think through the implications of the New Covenant.

After there had been much debate, Peter stands up and repeats how God directed him to preach the Gospel to Cornelius and his friends (about twelve years before), all of whom were Gentiles. God saved these Gentiles and filled them with the Holy Spirit just as He did the Christian Jews. Peter then asks the telling question, "Why tempt ye God?" that is, how could they accuse God of making a mistake, or refuse to follow His guidance as the Israelites had done at Massah and Meribah. Exodus 17v7, Deut 6v16, 1Cor 10v9. Peter then says that the Christian Gentiles should not be compelled to carry a yoke, which they as Jews had never been able to bear. Matt 11v30, 23v4. Peter finishes by saying that salvation is by faith in Christ not in ceremony or ritual, and it is fitting that the last words of Peter in Acts are for forgiveness and liberty in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul and Barnabus follow up Peter's account and conclusions from God's dealings with Cornelius, with their own account of God's dealings and mighty workings with the Gentiles. Peter's words had silenced everybody, Acts 15v12, and prepared the way for the appeal to Christian experience, these facts were far more eloquent than any intellectual argument. James then gives the Scriptural proof to back up God's directive to Peter to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, by quoting Amos 9v11,12, from the Septuagint, and finishes by recommending four simple prohibitions for the Gentiles, which would stop them stumbling the Jews. These were abstaining from eating food offered to idols; from things strangled, Gen 9v4, Lev 3v17, 7v26, Deut 12v16, 1Sam 14v33, Acts 10v15, Rom 14v14; from blood, dishes made from blood were common among Greeks and Romans; and from fornication, which was treated very lightly, indeed, as natural and permissible, by the heathen. Acts 15v21. Notice the insistence of appeal to God's workings and God's Word, not only to God's Word, or just God's workings, but also to both. Peter, Paul and Barnabus, tell of God's workings, Peter gives a very strong Scriptural warning as well, and James concludes with Scriptural proof and the practical application of that truth.

3) Notice the unanimous decision

There was prolonged discussion, then decision; nothing was done until unanimity was reached, "having come to one accord," v25, "then it pleased the apostles and elders, **WITH THE WHOLE CHURCH,**" v22, "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." v28. **The decision was confirmed to be of God by the unanimous decision of the whole church, and the Holy Spirit.**

We cannot expect to get God's will in a church with a prayerless and worldly "rule by majority vote," this is a carnal expedient. We know that elders were elected by the popular vote of Christians, but this was a statement of confidence in proven ministries, and this was done prayerfully, and is quite different from worldly majority voting. Both Christian and worldly experience has often proved the majority to be wrong and the minority right. The report of the twelve spies proves that the carnal and unbelieving often outnumber the spiritual and full of faith. Num 13v1 to 14v45. Rule by majority vote often brings dissension, disagreement, confusion and distrust, and hinders fellowship, which is certainly against the divine desire that God's children should be one. Rule by majority vote has led to families and friends being either estranged, or indoctrinated to vote certain ways, and has resulted in fights for power behind the scenes, which can only be described as worldly and wicked. **It is a tragedy when churches are divided into voting power groups, these power struggles destroy fellowship, and frustrate the desires of the Holy Spirit, and instead of the unanimity that brings certain victory, there is a division that brings sure defeat.**

We must seek "the mind of the Lord," and recognise Jesus as the Head and Guide of His body the Church. Rom 12v4,5, 1Cor 12v12-27, Eph 4v11-16. **A body goes into convulsions when it is sick and is not directed by the head, this is a true picture of Christ's Church, when we do what we want, and not what He wants. We must be willing to pray until we all come to the same mind, this proves our subjection to Jesus.** John 17v20-22, Rom 15v5-7, 1Cor 1v10-13, 2Cor 13v11-14, Eph 4v1-6,14-32, Phil 1v27, 2v1-5, 4v2, 1Thess 5v12-15. Jesus desires us to be one as He was with the Father, this oneness springs from mutual love, and this alone gives an effectual testimony to the world. A public practical unity of the spirit is essential, and the God who brought the Christians of the early Church, with their different ways, thoughts and backgrounds, to one accord, will do the same for us if we will humble ourselves and seek His face.

To obtain the mind of the Lord, prolonged united prayer has to be exercised by a church; there is no short cut. Prophecy may well confirm guidance from God, but it can never do away with the necessity of a person or church earnestly seeking God for His will. All local church members must have God's peace in their hearts before important decisions are made, if there is no unanimous decision, the matter should be left week by week, month by month, again and again, until all are of one accord. The China Inland Mission of Hudson Taylor practised this method, the secretary said, "When there has been a delay, it has always proved to have been a wise step, and the necessary guidance has come later on....no inconveniences have been found to arise from the plan." In an age of rush, quick decisions and worldly government and management techniques, churches have to be careful not to partake of the spirit of the world, or they can miss the good and perfect will of God. **The Trinity works by unanimity of plan, and churches should too, we should seek and follow the perfect plans that God has for His churches.** If the early Church had been as prayerless as many modern churches, Satan's attack by cherished tradition would certainly have succeeded. **Without diligent waiting upon God in prayer and worship, defeat is inevitable.**

Some have objected to the practice of unanimity on the grounds of 2Cor 2v6. "hoi pleiones," "the many," or "the majority," of 2Cor 2v6, means all the church except the sinning brother. A church should restrain action until there is unanimity of opinion, this demands the fruit of the Spirit, longsuffering and self-control, but it is the divine highway to divine guidance.

4) Notice the appealing and reasonable spirit of the decrees to the churches

The apostles and elders at Jerusalem gave their decisions to the Gentile churches in a gentle manner, they did not pontificate, or act as lords. Matt 20v25-28, 1Pet 5v3. The decrees are given in an appealing advisory spirit, for Acts 15v28,29, reads, "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well." "Ye shall do well," is certainly not hard legalism, it is the language of love and reasonableness.

We read in Acts 16v4, that the decisions of the apostles and elders and members of the church at Jerusalem are called, "the decrees," "ta dogmata," meaning decisions, or decrees, from "dokeo," to give an opinion. "Dogma" is used in Col 2v14 and Eph 2v15, of the legal requirements of the ordinances of the Law, and in Luke 2v1 and Acts 17v7, of the decrees of the Caesars. The decrees of Acts 16v4, are said to be, "ordained of the apostles and elders;" "ordained," is "kekrimena," the perfect passive participle of "krino," to judge, to decide, the perfect emphasises the permanence and abiding nature of the decrees. In Eph 2v20 and 3v5, Paul confirms that the foundation of doctrine was laid down by apostles. The important thing about the Jerusalem decree was that the heads of the church at Jerusalem, and the apostles, admitted that circumcision was not essential to salvation, and a Gentile was not to be compelled to be circumcised or keep the Law. This brought temporary peace to the Gentiles, but it did not finally settle the problem, as we see from our next point.

5) Notice the danger of being restricted by a former God-blessed tradition

There was a great conflict in the early Church over the relation of the Law to Christianity; even genuine Christians were very slow to realise that Christ had fulfilled the types and prophecies of the Old Covenant, and He had instituted a completely New Covenant. The early Jewish Christians still followed and cherished their old forms and traditions, we are no different from them, and we too are often slow to follow the Lord Jesus to the blessings of the New Covenant. In our day we often still see former God-blessed cherished traditions being an hindrance to Christians experiencing the fullness of New Testament Christian experience. The numbers of zealous Jews who became Christians was so great, that it appears that Peter, James and Barnabus were overcome by them, it seems from Gal 2v12 that they had compromised New Testament truth through fear of offending them. This proves how we all need to watch our hearts, if men of God of this calibre can be inconsistent and compromise truth when pressured to do so by Jews who were loathe to put on one side their former Jewish traditions. We can all fail God if we do not keep close to Jesus. It is only as we seek the mind and will of God in earnest prayer, that we shall be clear-sighted enough to discern God's will, and strong and courageous enough to perform it.

We read in Gal 2v11-21, that Paul reproved Peter and Barnabus, for living like Christians one day and like Jews

another day. It was very wrong for them to treat Gentile Christians as brothers one day, and then to shun them as Gentiles another day, because of the fear the Jews and the Judaizers in the Church, so Paul publicly rebukes Peter and Barnabus for this. Paul's words were obviously received by Peter, for we find no trace of bitterness in Peter towards Paul, he recognised his great ministry, and his divinely inspired New Testament truth. 2Pet 3v15. Peter and Paul honoured and respected each other, and Paul's correction did not spoil their affection for each other, they parted in friendship, a lesson we need to note. Barnabus did not separate from Paul on the grounds of this correction; it was on the issue of Paul's rejection of Mark, a relative of Barnabus. Paul later as good as admitted that he had been wrong over Mark, when he asked for his help, and Peter spoke well of Mark also. Col 4v10, Philemon v24, 2Tim 4v11, 1Pet 5v13. This teaches us that even the judgement and actions of apostles and notable Christian men, can be suspect at times, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." 1Cor 1v26-31.

When Paul came to Jerusalem after his second apostolic mission, the issue of the relation of Christianity to the Law came to a head again. The church praised God for what He had done through Paul, but they were obviously suspicious of Paul's doctrine. They asked Paul to take part in a Nazarite vow, to show that he did not teach "apostasy from Moses," as the Judaizers had said that he did. **Paul did not teach "apostasy from Moses," this was a devilish parody of his teaching, he taught the fulfilment of Mosaic type and prophecy in Christ.**

Paul had made a vow in Acts 18v18, and undertook a Nazarite vow in Acts 21v23-27. This involved the sacrifice of burnt offerings, sin offerings and peace offerings, as well as a basket of unleavened cakes and a libation of wine. Num 6v1-21. While it is true that God had ordained the ceremonies of the Law, and the Jews had practised them in God's will for fifteen centuries, and the apostles had used the Temple for a period, Luke 24v53, Acts 3v1, there can be no doubt that the Old Covenant had passed away when Christ came and died. John 1v17, Matt 11v11-14, Heb 8v7-13, 10v1-9. It is almost unbelievable to see Paul, the chief exponent of justification by faith, not only standing in the Temple and submitting himself to the Law, but also to the petty ceremonial additions of the Rabbis. Paul must have realised that he was giving the Judaizers, who had seized on his circumcision of Timothy as a proof of his inconsistency, Acts 16v3, some real ammunition to use against him. Why did Paul do it? Some have tried to justify Paul's visit to Jerusalem and his involvement with Temple worship on the following grounds, which I personally am not happy with.

1) Those who try to justify Paul's observation of Temple rites, say that Paul did not give way on the issue of justification by faith, the brethren at Jerusalem admitted that this was not the issue. Acts 21v25. They say Paul was acting on the principle he laid down in 1Cor 9v19-23, it was an act of love, to the Jews, he became a Jew to win them to Christ. **However, this expediency involved a considerable compromise with truth.** Paul had called the Judaizers, who said that keeping the Law was essential to salvation, "false brethren," "dogs," "false apostles," "deceitful workers," and servants of Satan. 2Cor 11v13-15, Gal 2v4, Phil 3v2. In both Galatians and Corinthians, Paul had said that no one could be justified by the Law, and said that all who taught they could were accursed. Gal 1v6-10, 2v16, 3v10-14. Paul had called the ceremonies of the Law "weak and beggarly elements," as a means of justification, and said that circumcision was an unnecessary mutilation. Gal 4v9-11, 5v12.

2) Those who try to justify Paul's observation of Temple rites, say that when Paul withheld truth from those who could not bear it, he was following the example of Jesus who withheld truth from those who could not bear it. John 16v12. Jesus did veil the truth of the implications of the New Covenant from His apostles, even after His cross and resurrection, because of their inability to bear that revelation, because they were so bound by the traditions of the Old Covenant. Jesus had to leave that to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is evident from the apostles question, "Lord will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" that even after the forty days ministry of the risen Christ, the apostles did not understand the truth about the Church. Paul might have tried to justify his observation of Temple rites by thinking that if Jesus had been limited in what He could say to His apostles, then he had the right to act in the same way, and that if the matter had been thrashed out immediately, it would have produced great disorder in the Church, and great opposition from the Jews.

However, nothing can justify Paul's visit to Jerusalem, for the Lord had told Paul not to go there. The problem of the relation of the Church to Judaism was going to be solved a mere ten years ahead, when the destruction of Jerusalem ended the Jewish state and religion. Those who defend Paul's action, say that he looked upon his vow as an act of public consecration to God and as an appeal to the Jews, not as a means of justification, however, it was an act of expediency, and was a carnal attempt to remove barriers and win people over, but instead of doing this it produced a riot and more persecution, just as the Lord had warned Him.

NB: Paul disobeyed God when he went to Jerusalem

The above reasons are not satisfactory, for in Acts 21v4, God told Paul **NOT** to go to Jerusalem, and his disobedience brought about tragic results. Acts 20v22,23, 21v4,11-14. Why did Paul disobey the Lord and go to Jerusalem? Paul's love for his people drove him to Jerusalem; he was willing to be accursed from Christ, if it could only have saved them. Rom 9v1-5. **It is very sad that the apostles and elders of the church at Jerusalem were the means of bringing the prophetic warnings to pass.** They should have defended Paul's teaching of the New Covenant, but

their appeal was based on an unscriptural expediency, and it nearly cost Paul his life. It all shows how difficult it is to break free of our traditions, and how the fear of man can hinder and harm the church of God. **If we are not careful we can be as presumptions and disobedient as the Israelites, who disobeyed God's command to Moses that nothing was to be added or taken away from the pattern that He had given, Heb 8v5, they ignored this command and added thousands of their own traditions and rules and so made the Word of God of none effect. In the end they persuaded themselves that their tradition was God's truth and rejected Christ in favour of their own tradition and murdered their Messiah.**

Excommunication and Discipline

Jesus personally instituted the procedure for discipline in the Church. Matt 18v15-22. **Not every private wrong has to be brought before the local church as the Lord makes clear in Matt 18v15-17, the person wronged should first aim at a private reconciliation, then, if there is no repentance and reconciliation, before witnesses, and finally before the whole church; then if they do not repent, they are not to be treated as a Christian brother until repentance is forthcoming.** Matt 5v23,24, Luke 17v3,4. Jesus insisted that the whole local church performed the discipline of a member of a local church. Charges must be established in the presence of all, and confirmed by at least two or three witnesses, there is to be no conviction or hearsay or tittle-tattle. 2Cor.13v1. In the whole of the New Testament there is no such thing as a group of ministers gathering to discipline and excommunicate at their own will; there must be no secret sessions or private condemnations, justice has not only to be done, it has to be seen to be done by all the local church. Failure to do this puts the 'judges' in the way of discipline from Christ Himself. If we fail to follow Christ's pattern of church discipline, then Jesus, as the Head of the Church, personally disciplines the saints that He loves. This is why some of the Corinthians had died, and many others of them were very ill, so that they would not be condemned with the world. If we will judge ourselves, we will have no need of Christ's discipline and judgement. 1Cor.11v23-33. **The Lord's supper is either a place of cleansing or a place of condemnation.**

Immorality, dishonesty, heresy, and the like have to be publicly dealt with by the whole local church, and believers who will not repent of wrong are to be shunned. Matt 18v17, 1Cor 5v1-5,9-13, 1Cor 6v4-10. **However, the aim of discipline is not mere punishment, it is the preservation of the church and the restoration of the offender.** 1Cor 5v5, 2Tim 2v17, 1Tim 1v20, Rom 12v19-21, Gal 6v1. The Scripture also makes it clear that a person is a heretic who rejects Jesus as their Saviour and divine Lord. 1John 4v1-5, 2John v9,10, Gal 1v6-9. Rejection of apostles and their writings by Christians, was to result in their company being shunned and the person looked upon as a perverted and sinful Christian. 2Thess 3v6,14,15, Titus 3v10,11. If a person loved the pre-eminence they could be cast out. 3John v9,10. No one can be accused unless there is firm evidence; the elders are not to be accused unless there are two or three positive witnesses. 1Tim 5v19. **The emphasis should always be upon mercy and longsuffering, where this is at all possible.** However certain sins are so serious that severe spiritual discipline has to take place, this can involve direct judgement from God, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira; or the delivering to Satan for discipline as in the case of the wicked man of 1Cor 5v1-5, and Hymenaeus and Alexander. 1Tim 1v20. **Notice, those who upset the faith of Christians with wrong doctrine are dealt with in the same way as the immoral.** The exercise of the gift of faith in judgement was performed in the New Testament by the whole local church, or by apostolic ministry. 1Cor 5v1-5, 4v21, 2Cor 1v23, 13v10. This kind of disciplines brought a very healthy fear of God upon the early Church. Acts 2v43, 5v11.

The Lord Jesus warns us that religious people will excommunicate us, when we fulfil His words, and follow Him and others who have prophesied and preached God's Word. Luke 6v22,23. This was certainly fulfilled; the Jewish Christians knew what it was to suffer the temporary and permanent cutting off of religious and social privileges (the "Niddui" and "herem,") and even the solemn handing over, with fearful curses, to God for judgement and final perdition, (the "shammata.")

Religion that rejects God's workings, loves to act as if it was acting on His behalf, many solemn excommunications done in the great name of God, have really been the workings of Satan. The true Christian must expect to be slandered, opposed, criticised and persecuted by religious people, just as the Lord Jesus was. **If there is no Satanic opposition we should really doubt if we are really serving the Lord as we should.** Luke 6v26. When the Church of Christ acts as His body and ministers His life and love, there is an inevitable response from the dark powers that control the minds of men. Let us go forward in the steps of our crucified and risen Lord, in Heaven it will all seem such a small sacrifice for what He has done for us.

Christ Ordained Local, Self-Governing Churches

1) The local Church is not a building, it is a group of born-again Christians

The early Church had no external visible organisation in the form of buildings; there was not even an official meeting place for Christians. **Christian believers gathered for fellowship at any place or hour that was suitable.** These meetings usually took place in homes, the open-air, or even in the catacombs, the place and time being decided at the convenience of each group of Christians. There was liberty as to where and when Christians could worship. Christ

stated in Matt 18v20, that two or three Christians gathered together in His name could know His blessing and presence. In John 4v19-24, Jesus said that Christian believers can worship God anywhere and at any time, without a Temple, or any kind of building. Christ's Church organisation did not follow the empire building and power structures of men, or even of Old Testament Jewry. The Israelites spoke with great reverence of the Temple as, "The house of the Lord," and they had consecrated buildings for worship, yet in the New Testament, there is no mention of Christian church buildings, and no hint that they are thought to be desirable or necessary. Paul states that every Christian is a temple of God, and God's glory is going to be manifested through Christians, not in buildings made of bricks and mortar by human hands. Acts 7v46-50, 17v24, 1Cor 3v16,17, 2Cor 6v16, John 2v21.

A New Testament local church consisted of all the Christians in an area or locality. It was not a Gospel Hall, Mission, or any other kind of church building. All churches in the New Testament are local churches; there are no churches larger than a locality. The smallest part of a local church was the church in a house, but it was linked to the other Christians in that area, who met in other homes. If the locality was large and there were many thousands of converts, as at Jerusalem and Rome, there were many house fellowships. **Paul instructs these fellowships not to be cliquish, and so they gathered together for fellowship, and to discuss matters of importance, or to hear outstanding ministry.** The whole church in a locality made up the body of Christ in that area. **If a church is not as wide in its outlook as the body of Christ in a locality, it is sectarian.** We should recognise that every truly born-again Christian is part of the Church of Christ in that area. We should follow the divine pattern and wisdom of meeting together to hear outstanding ministry, and also gather in house meetings for fellowship, and sharing in order to develop ministry and spiritual growth. Acts 2v46, 4v31, 5v12,42, 6v2-7, 10v27,28,30, 15v4,12,22,23,30, 20v7,17-37. Evangelism can take place both in large meeting, or small house meeting. Acts 5v12,42, 28v23-30.

Quite a considerable part of the remarkable things that took place in the life and ministry of Christ, took place in homes. The worship of Christ by the wise men took place in a home. Matt 2v11. Christ healed Peter's wife's mother in Peter's home. Matt 8v14, Mark 1v29, Luke 4v38. Christ ate with, and ministered to, sin-sick, needy souls in Matthew's house. Mark 2v15, Luke 5v29. Jesus brought peace to a sinful woman in a home. Matt 7v36-49. Jesus had wonderful fellowship in the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus. Luke 10v38, John 11v5. Jesus and His apostles centred their operations around the homes of sympathetic friends and helpers. Matt 13v1, 17v25, Mark 2v1, 9v33, 10v10, Acts 10v6,17,32, 16v15, 18v7,8, 28v40, Matt 10v12,13,14, Mark 6v10, Luke 9v4, 10v4,5,7. Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead in a home. Matt 9v23, Luke 8v51. He healed the Syrophenician daughter lying sick and demon-possessed a distance away in her home. Mark 7v24-30. Christ healed a paralytic in a person's home. Mark 2v1-12. The Lord's supper took place in a home. Matt 26v3, Luke 22v10.

The early Church carried on Christ's practice of ministering in homes. It was in a house that the Holy Spirit fell on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2v2. The disciples who were converted on the day of Pentecost used their homes for fellowship and the Lord's Supper. Acts 2v46. The risen Christ sent Ananias to help Paul in a house, and Paul was healed and filled with the Holy Spirit as a result. Acts 9v11,17. God instructed Cornelius to ask Peter to come to his house to preach the truth; the result was a glorious revival. Acts 10v2,22, 30,44-48, 11v12-14. The disciples had a prayer meeting in Mark's house for Peter's deliverance, and God answered their prayers. Acts 12v12-19. **The early Church fellowship meetings were centred around homes, this is an indisputable fact of Scripture as well as of Church history.** Acts 2v2,46, 5v12, 12v12, 20v7-9, 21v8-12, Rom 16v3-5,23, 1Cor 16v19, Col 4v15, Philemon v2. Paul persecuted the Christians who were meeting in homes, before he himself became a Christian. Acts 8v3.

The fellowship between Christian groups was wisely limited in times of severe persecution, to protect the Christians in these groups. When the Prefect Rusticus examined Justin Martyr (scourged and beheaded for Christ in approx. 166 AD), and asked him, "Where do you assemble?" Justin answered, "wherever it suits each one's PREFERENCE and ABILITY. You take it for granted we all meet in the same place; but this is not so, for the God of the Christians is not circumscribed by place, but being invisible fills heaven and earth and is everywhere worshipped and glorified by the faithful." Rusticus then asked, "Tell me where you meet together, or in what place you collect your disciples?" Justin answered, "I am staying at the house of one Martinus, and I know no other place of meeting besides this, and if one wished to come to me I communicated to him the words of truth." A quote of Neander from Justin Martyr.

We can see, then, that when Paul speaks of there being divisions at Corinth, in 1Cor 1v10-14, 3v1-9, he is not speaking of the Christians in Corinth dividing up into separate groups for fellowship; in a city of 100,000, as at Corinth, and many converts, the division into smaller groups for close fellowship was essential. Acts 18v9-11. The thing that Paul is condemning is the lack of recognition, love and fellowship between these groups, it appears some refused to fellowship in larger groups with the whole local church in that area, or when they did they were full of pride, criticism, and a sense of superiority. This kind of attitude made profitable Christian fellowship quite impossible, and Paul tells them that while they persisted in this attitude, they were carnal and immature babies, and could not hope to progress spiritually. 1Cor 1v2,12, 3v4. This same condemnation applies today to those who will not recognise other truly converted Christians.

A.T. Robertson says the Greek "hairesis," our "heresy," means simply a choosing, from "haireomai," to choose, to take for oneself, and then a chosen opinion, then in a bad sense as a party or faction. Gal 5v20, 1Cor 11v19. It is used to describe a school of thought, like that of the Sadducees in Acts 5v17; of the Pharisees in Acts 15v5; and in Acts 24v5, Paul uses it of Christians. Christianity was a sect everywhere spoken against. Acts 28v22. **In Gal 5v20, "haireseis" means "choosings," or "preferences," and is division on the grounds of doctrinal belief.**

Vincent says "haireseis" means 'parties', into which divisions crystallise." The word occurs in Acts 5v17, 15v5, 24v5,14, 26v5, 28v22, 1Cor 11v19, Gal 5v20, 2Pet 2v1. **Paul tells us that if we make emphasis upon certain nonessential doctrines and Christian teachers a cause of division, we are working after the flesh.** Damnable heresies will of necessity produce division, 2Pet 2v1, Titus 3v10, 1John 4v1-5, **but there should be no antagonism or division between local leaders or Christians, on the grounds of human personality, doctrinal preference, race, politics, social standing, denominational affiliation, or like or dislike of various ministries. The body is one.** However, we see in Acts 13v42-48, 14v19 and 19v8-10, how Paul could no longer have fellowship with the Jews because they contradicted Paul and blasphemed the truth that he taught, and persecuted him. One can well understand how very upset the Jews were when they saw their members accepting Paul's teaching and leaving their fellowship, but what alternative was there when they were so hard-hearted, stubborn, malicious and unbelieving. When the Jews spoke against Paul's doctrine and refused to believe, he had no other alternative but depart from them and separate the disciples from the corrupting influence of these Jews. The same thing can happen today between Christians experiencing revival, and those who are content with their church tradition, and reject the Holy Spirit's ministries, and so separation may be unavoidable. However, bitterness should be avoided like the plague, we may like the Lord Jesus speak the truth with feeling, but not in a bad temper. Matt 23v1-39, Acts 28v23-30.

Churches can vary a great deal in their spiritual condition. Having local churches and house fellowships does not automatically solve every problem, there has to be wise leadership and permanent abiding in Christ for spiritual progress. Some churches and house fellowships are centres of revival, Bible teaching, fellowship, and manifest God's power and love through spiritual gifts. Others churches, like some of the churches in Revelation, have serious problems, and even grave sin in them. Some are self-centred, religious clubs with no evangelistic emphasis. Some have merely transferred one-man ministry and formality from the church building to the home, and the same cast iron bondage with it.

2) There is no Church federation seen in the New Testament

The New Testament local church was a voluntary, self-supporting, self-propagating society, with no subordination to outside ecclesiastical centres or civil authority. There is certainly no church federation seen in the New Testament, we read that all the believers in a city were a church, 1Cor 1v2; there are the churches of a district or an area. 2Cor 8v1, Gal 1v2, Acts 9v31. **The smallest expression of the universal Church was the church in a house.** Meetings in various homes or other suitable places soon replaced the meetings in Temple or synagogue. Acts 2v2,46, 5v12,42, 10v2,22,30,44-48, 12v12-19, 20v7-9, 21v8-12, Rom 16v3-5,23, 1Cor 16v19, Col 4v15, Philemon v2. **Each local church was made up of all the Christians in an area, and each house fellowship had to answer to its spiritual oversight.**

The ministries that founded infant churches, obviously had a real interest in the spiritual welfare of those that they had brought to Christ, and nourished in the faith, they did, however, leave the oversight of the local church in the hands of local men as soon as possible. Paul exercised a loving apostolic oversight, but it was not just an official position, it was a divine ministry gift and the superintendence of love. **No apostle had the right to found a private church or denomination; the authority of an apostle was moral and spiritual not official.**

Apostles have a very real and definite delegated spiritual authority from God, not only to be a channel of blessing, but also to act in spiritual discipline and judgement. This was not just mere talk, but a very real operation of the power of God in judgement. Acts 5v1-11, 13v9-12, 1Cor 5v1-5, 4v21, 2Cor 1v23, 13v10, 1Tim 1v20. The leaders of Bethlehem trembled when Samuel came to them, because of his ministry and authority from God, they realised that you could not play the fool with someone who manifested mighty spiritual gifts and acted on God's behalf. For the same reason there was a very healthy respect for apostles in the New Testament, and great fear fell on all the Church and the outsiders, when Ananias and Sapphira died through Peter's authority in God. 1Sam 15v1-5, Acts 5v1-13.

NB: People joined the New Testament Church by baptism in Water

Baptism in water proclaims to all that we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and demonstrates our faith in Jesus, and identifies us with Him in His death and resurrection. It is a public witness to all that Jesus not only died but rose again, and that we are now dead to the old life and walk a new life in Christ. Rom 6v3-5,11, Gal 2v20, 1Cor 15v1-4, 2Cor 5v17. In Rom 6v4, "buried," "sunthapto," does not mean, to put down under the ground and cover up, it speaks of the performing of burial rites, and the disposing of a dead body, by either burial or burning. However, though Christ was not buried under ground, He was entombed, which for all practical purposes had the same effect. Our old life has been disposed of, for we account ourselves as dead with Christ to the

old life, and publicly witness to our determination to follow our risen Lord. **It is not just adults, but believers who are to be baptised, that is, people who are old enough to believe and receive the Gospel truth.** Acts 2v37-42, 8v12,13,36-3, 9v17,18, 10v44-48, 16v14,15,31-33, 18v8, 19v1-7, 22v16, Matt 28v19, 3v2,3,6.

In the New Testament baptism is always linked with repentance and faith, and people should be baptised almost immediately after conversion. **Baptism followed repentance and faith in Jesus, it did not precede it, only those who believe in Jesus should be baptised.** Any believer, not only New Testament leaders, could baptise a convert. Acts 8v12,13, 1Cor 1v13-17. Every believer should be baptised, but unbaptised believers should not be excluded from the Lord's Supper or Christian fellowship. **In the New Testament there is no other kind of church membership recorded other than baptism in water.** In 1Cor 12v13, we see **the Holy Spirit was the agent of regeneration, baptism in water was the outward sign of regeneration,** no other act of church membership was necessary. **It is a remarkable thing that Christ took the sinners place, not only on the cross, and in Hades, He identified Himself with us in baptism.** Mark 1v11, Luke 3v21, Matt 3v15.

The Greek word "baptizo" is used for both baptism in water and baptism in the Spirit. "Bapto," "to dip," only occurs three times in the New Testament, in Luke 16v24, John 13v26 and Rev 19v13. In Rev 19v13, "bapto" is used in its secondary sense to dye or stain. The primary meaning of "baptizo," is "to immerse," or "to submerge," but in its secondary meaning, which is developed from its primary meaning, refers to the influence which one thing exercises over another. "Baptizo," then, can speak not only of an immersion, but also of an impregnation, and infusion of the element in which it is baptised, as in dyeing or staining, it speaks of a bringing into complete subjection to an influence, and an imbibing of the virtues and nature of that influence. We should also note that in many cases, though not in every case, the same distinction occurs between the Greek words "bapto" and "baptizo," as between the English equivalents, "to dip" and "to immerse," the one being a momentary or temporary covering, the other usually implying a prolonged or permanent covering.

In reference to baptism in water "baptizo" is used in the weaker sense of "bapto," to dip, otherwise all those who are baptised would be drowned. "Baptizo" is used in the New Testament in its sense of permanent immersion and infusion, in regard to baptism unto repentance and remission of sins, and in baptism in the name of the Trinity, and baptism into the body of Christ, and baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire. Matt 3v11, Mark 1v4, Luke 3v16, Matt 28v19, 1Cor 12v13. These baptisms do not speak of a temporary dipping in an element; they speak of being permanently and abidingly under the influence of the thing suggested. To be baptised unto repentance and remission of sins, means being brought under the power and influence of repentance and remission of sins, not for a moment, but for all time. To be baptised into Christ's death and resurrection, as Paul states in Rom 6v3-11, is to be permanently identified with Christ in them, and receive all the benefits and influences of them, not for a moment, but for ever. To be baptised with the Holy Spirit and fire, means that our whole personality is permanently impregnated with and under the influence of the presence, power and sanctifying purity of the Holy Spirit. To be baptised into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is not just a mere baptismal formula, it is to come under the power and influence of the Trinity, not for a moment but permanently and eternally. To be baptised into the body of Christ, is the permanent placing of ourselves under the influence and power of Christ and His body, the Church. Baptism, then, is more than an outward sign; it is the placing of oneself, under the headship of Christ. The important thing is not just to go through the form of water baptism, but also to have the whole personality imbued, stained, impregnated, and influenced, abidingly and permanently with Christ's death and resurrection life, and all their accompanying benefits.

Scholars admit with Dean Stanley, that baptism means "a plunge, an entire submersion in deep water," and say it was the universal form of baptism until the 13th Century. The Greek word for "sprinkle," "rhantizo," is used in Heb 12v24 and 1Pet 1v2, but it is not used in relation to Christian baptism. The words for "pour," such as "ballo," John 13v5 and "katacheo," Matt 26v7, and "ekcheo" Rev 16v1-4,8,10,12,17, "ekchuno" Luke 22v20, and "epicheo" Luke 10v34, are not used in relation to Christian baptism. **It is a monstrous lie to say that infants who die unsprinkled or unbaptised are lost eternally, it can be said to those who say such things, "in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines, the precepts of men."** Matt 15v7-9.

Though we see infant churches being helped by the leading ministries of other churches, Acts 13v1-4, there is no trace in the New Testament of any church being directed by another church, the unity of Christ's Church was a spiritual fellowship and unity, not an organisational unity. Churches could give "the right hand of fellowship" to visiting Christians or Christian ministries, or give "letters of recommendation" to well-respected Christians who had ministry gifts, but there was no central government by men. Gal 2v9, Acts 15v25, 18v27, 1Cor 16v10, Col 4v10, 2Cor 8v22. The right hand of fellowship was not church membership, it was recognising a person as a fellow Christian. In Gal 2v9, we see the right hand of fellowship pushed to one side the accusing Judaizers, and united Paul with the apostles as an equal in God's work. In the New Testament, there was a lovely spiritual fellowship, not a formal membership; a formal membership, which has no spiritual fellowship and unity, is like a skeleton without flesh and life. The New Testament Church had a recognised doctrinal standard, but it was the simple and lovely bond of love for Christ and each other that was the basis of New Testament membership. In Acts 2v42-46, we see a truly lovely fellowship of saints, a mutual love of indescribable beauty. The blessing of God upon

their informal, spiritual, friendly gatherings, not only made them enjoyable, but spiritually enriching and heavenly, so different from so many of today's formal and dry meetings, that have to be endured rather than enjoyed.

Even as late as the middle of the third century, the independence of each local church was still insisted upon; Cyprian, martyred 258 AD, was probably one of the strongest advocates of Church unity, but he insisted that in each community each shepherd was only responsible to God. Christ is the Head of a body united by love, and Church unity is built upon mutual love, not upon ecclesiastical discipline and authority. **To the outsider, the early Church looked very fragile and easy to destroy, but actually it was very strong and grew with incredible speed.** There is no stronger bond than that of fervent Christian love, and no organisation and direction better than that received from Christ. The early Church enjoyed the loving superintendence of apostolic and other leading ministries, and recognition of other churches and their ministries, but there was no domination of the local church by people outside of the local church.

3) How the departure from the early Church organisation took place

The first things to go were the leadership of Christ and the Holy Spirit, and a Christ-directed body ministry. Then elders, plural, were replaced by a presiding elder, who later took over the rule of the whole local church. The second stage was an affiliation of churches in conference, whose decisions, though at first advisory, became more and more binding upon the churches, and power became concentrated into the hands of the representatives of these churches. The representative's authority then came to depend, not upon his spirituality, but on the size and importance of the population of the area that he represented. The third stage of church federation was the upholding of ecclesiastical traditions and decisions by civil power. Those who desire a much more complete study upon this can read Dr. Hatch's (The Organization Of The Early Christian Churches) outstanding book on this subject.

We need to remember our Lord's anger at the unscriptural traditions of the religious leaders of His day, when we reject the Word of God and replace it with the traditions of men. Matt 15v1-13, 23v1-39, Mark 7v1-23, Luke 11v37-54. God is just as unhappy today with traditions that make void His Word, and frustrate His will and purposes.

Religious leaders, who cling to men's traditions and reject Gods truth, will never have a revival. They invariably reject Christians who have been given ministry gifts by Christ, just as the religious leaders of Christ's day rejected Christ and the ministries that He had appointed, and hindered the workings of the Spirit of God. 1Pet 2v4. Christ called Israel's religious leaders "hypocrites," and He said that their worship was vain. Christ told His disciples to leave these blind leaders of the blind alone, for God was going to root them up and deal with them, this is good advice for us to follow. Matt 15v1-14.

4) The great evils that Church federation can lead to

I again want to make it quite clear that I am not against denominational churches. I certainly do not want to censure and destroy the beautiful, inspiring and beneficial acts of worship that take place in denominational buildings, but I do want to see an end to denominational bigotry, unscriptural tradition, and resistance to the Holy Spirit's workings.

Denominational buildings can, like the school of Tyrannus, be centres of evangelism, teaching, fellowship and revival, if godly men lead them.

We must above all remember that love suffers long and is kind; we must speak the truth in love and not in condemnation. Let us exercise patience and Christian love with those who are seeking God, but find it difficult to break from the mental prisons of their own traditions. Jesus has been so loving, patient and kind to us in our stupidity, slothfulness, waywardness and pride. Let us forgive one another as Christ has forgiven us. Eph 4v31,32.

The way to break down the barriers between churches is for Christians to have fellowship and prolonged prayer together, in Christ's presence barriers disappear and love and mercy triumph. Let us now go on to consider the dangers of denominationalism.

a) Church federation almost invariably leads to a sectarian bigotry that shocks the world

The unbeliever will accept the fact that when there are many Christians, they will need to meet in different places, but they are greatly hindered from becoming Christians by denominational bigotry and the consequent bitter spirit and rivalry that many Christians manifest to each other. Christ said, "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, and by your love to one another." John 13v34,35, 15v10-14. **A false imitation unity and love and denominational mergers will not deceive the world, they want to see genuine Christian love between Christians, then, and not before, the world will believe.** John 17v20-23.

The beloved Grimshaw, though a Church of England minister himself, built three churches for other denominations when they moved into his area, he was not going to have competitive division in Christ's body, we need to imitate his magnanimous spirit. Organic unity into one massive ecclesiastical system is entirely unscriptural and undesirable, we do not want one great denomination governed by men, we need one body united under the Lordship of Christ.

Indeed, ecclesiastical central government by men, in reality usurps Christ's prerogative of guiding His local and universal Church, as He thinks best, and shows a real unbelief in the fact that Christ is personally guiding His local and universal Church.

Denominationalism and church federation produce and perpetuate division in Christ's Church. It is a striking fact that in a few years after 1848, the Wesleyan Methodists lost about one hundred thousand members, because they insisted on the supremacy of the Methodist Conference, instead of the independence of the local church fellowships like those of the early Church. Churches whose basis of fellowship is mutual love springing from recognition of Christ as Saviour and Lord, give a real testimony to the world. Many Christians have restricted their view of the Church and Christian fellowship to one denomination, instead of recognising, embracing, and fellowshipping with all true believers in Christ. Indeed, Christians who have this wider New Testament view of Christ's Church, are looked upon as "unfaithful to our movement," or as "unreliable rolling stones," if they do not restrict their ministry and fellowship to one denomination. Whatever a person's denomination, if they are "born again," and know Christ and the Father in a living way, they are our brother or sister in Christ. **Paul tells us that if we perpetuate these man-made divisions and do not recognise other Christian believers, we are carnal and immature spiritual babies.** 1Cor 3v1. Those who say "I am holier than thou" are a smoke in God's nostrils. Isaiah 65v5.

A denominational spirit narrows a Christian's outlook and limits a proper vision of Christ's Church. The early Christians called themselves believers, brethren, disciples, saints, followers of the way, and Christ's Church, they did not recognise any need for an organisational name, or man-made ecclesiastical structure. Faith, fellowship and love were the uniting bonds of the early Church. It is possible that the name of "Christian" has been given divine approval, for in Acts 11v26, "called," is "chrematisai," the aorist infinitive of "chrematizo." For Peter uses it in 1Pet 4v16, to describe believers in Jesus. "Chrematizo," is also used in the sense of a Divine command in Matt 2v12,22, Luke 2v26 and Acts 10v22, and in Rom 7v3 for "called." See also Matt 2v12,22, Luke 2v26, Acts 10v22, Rom 7v3 Heb 8v5, 11v7, 12v25, for "chrematizo." Some think the Gentiles gave this name to the Christians to distinguish them from the Jews. Acts 11v26, 26v28, 1Pet 4v16. It is only used once to describe Christians in the apostolic writings, by Peter in 1Pet 4v16, the more tender and intimate words of "beloved," "believer," "sister," "brethren," "disciple" and "saint" are the words that are used to describe Christians and their relationship to each other and to Christ. **Jesus is the Head of a remarkable family, linked together by our love for Him and each other. It is love that binds the Church together and gives a testimony to the world, not constitutions or ecclesiastical machinery.**

b) Church federation usurps Christ's authority and usually frustrates His plans and ministries

Christ is the head of the Church, but men love to usurp His authority and to take the power into their own hands. Even church affiliation is very dangerous if it results in power being concentrated into the hands of a very few representatives, for this inevitably leads to Christ's Lordship over His flocks being replaced by men's rule. When Christian leaders become spiritual dictators and are touchy about their position and authority, they have never partaken of the Spirit of Christ, and lost the view of Christ's Lordship over His Church. The rule of men nearly always results in the rejection and isolation of the ministries that Christ has set in the Church, and they are not able to minister in churches because of denominational closed-shop attitudes.

Though the New Testament apostles are universally praised by today's modern churches, it is very doubtful if any of them would be accepted by the vast majority of today's churches. Healings, tongues, miracles, and hot sermons, are certainly not wanted, and are often opposed by most of today's church leaders. Most of the religious leaders of Christ's day opposed Him, and in the end succeeded in killing Him. **We need "the authority from Heaven" that Jesus and John Baptist experienced.**

Jesus did not desire or seek position in men's organisations, or their approval, authority and backing, He was content to do His Father's will, and be a blessing. Jesus never tried to join or start a religious hierarchy, He bypassed the religious leaders of His day and chose simple, unlearned men, of poor education, to be His apostles and lead His Church. God chose men who had a burning love for Jesus, and whose limitations made them depend on Him. **Paul said that Christ chooses nobodies to lead in His Church, and said that he gloried in everything that made him Christ-dependent, so that Christ's power would rest upon him.** 1Cor 1v26-32, 2Cor 12v7-10. The idea that a person should not be allowed to minister unless they have high academic and intellectual qualifications is completely foreign to the New Testament.

c) Church federation usually replaces body ministry with one-man ministry

When divine ordination is replaced with human ordination, and one-man ministry replaces body ministry, the effect upon the spiritual life of a church is disastrous. Paul tells us that Christians should minister to each other as a body works together, often the least talented, naturally speaking, being the greatest blessing because of the manifestation of God's "charismata" through them. 1Cor 12v4-7,21-25, Rom 12v4-13. This was a fundamental principal of New Testament ministry and fellowship. The churches recognised teachers should not monopolise ministry, all have a part to play in the local church. Eph 4v1-16.

There was also a very definite place for an evangelistic mission in the New Testament, with one person having the leading part in debate, as in Paul's missions. Acts 14v12, 19v8-10. However, if we are to completely follow the New Testament, dialogue and reasoning should take place in both local church fellowship and evangelistic mission.

"Dialegomai," occurs in Acts 17v2,17, 18v4,19, 19v8,9, 20v7,9, 24v12,25. "Reasoning," "suzeeto," occurs in Acts 6v9, 9v29. Some church buildings fulfil well the purpose of missions, even if they do not permit New Testament dialogue. We must also remember that Paul did not found missions buildings, he founded local churches with body ministry. **It is quite Scriptural and correct to rent a building for evangelistic purposes, as it appears Paul did at Ephesus, but it is wrong only to have an evangelistic mission, missions should found churches with New Testament body ministry.** The problem with buying and building consecrated buildings, is that it is so financially demanding and time consuming, that it can seriously restrict the practical helping of the poor and needy, which was the main use of New Testament church finances.

The Old Testament guild of priests, which left God's people in a state of permanent dependence and religious pupilage, has no place in Christianity. There is a change from the Old Testament prophetic and priestly offices, which had a mediating and exclusive ministry, to the New Testament priesthood and ministry of all believers. 1Pet 2v5,9, Rev 1v6. **All Christians can minister, as God illuminates and leads.** 1Cor 12v7. The Old Testament priestly and prophetic offices were imperfect, because by being mediatory, they excluded God's people from close fellowship with God. **In this age of grace, only Christ, the High Priest, has a ministry of mediation between the Father and Christians. Though the Church has important and leading ministries, they do not mediate between Christians and their God.**

The guidance of a local church was not placed in the hands of one person; the local church was to be centred on God, not on any human leader. The domination of a church by even a gracious person can check the development of ministry in the church and hinder the movings of the Holy Spirit. Many modern church leaders resist the New Testament pattern of body ministry, and follow the Old Testament idea of exclusive priestly office, and desire their congregations to remain babies forever. This denies the New Testament principle of body ministry, and keeps Christians in a state of permanent pupilage and dependence on their religious leaders. It is a tragedy that the training of many modern clergy is aimed at producing priest-dependence. Denominations usually choose leaders who have the intellectual and academic qualifications and ability to lead churches, without any help from their congregations.

We do not place a premium upon ignorance, but we must note that Jesus chose unlearned men of poor education to be His apostles; they had to depend on God or fail. Natural ability can be a hindrance instead of a help in God's work, if we depend on it instead of God. In 1Cor 1v26-31, we read that God's choice of leaders humbles human pride and brings greater glory to God. What was true in New Testament times is often true today, a person ordained by men, and given a religious status, is not necessarily ordained by God, and a person who is ordained by God, is often not recognised by religious denominations.

d) Church federation usually leads to self-dependence and pride

Denominationalism encourages a false feeling of power, pride and self-sufficiency. A large or growing organisation can give a completely false sense of achievement, and lead to something even worse, a reliance in a denomination's resources instead of God. When churches or denominations feel that they can say, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing," or "Is not this great Babylon that I have built," they are in a very dangerous spiritually bankrupt condition. Pride of denomination and reliance on human resources, should be seen for the serious sins that they are. Dan 4v28-37, Rev.3v17. Uzziah was marvellously helped by God until he was strong, then his heart was lifted up and he did corruptly. 2Chron 26v1-21. The same feeling of security and worldly influence has often had the identical effect upon churches and denominations. **When a denomination directs and supplies every material need, church leaders feel very little need to seek, trust, or wait on God for His guidance and power, and so churches become spiritually dead and lifeless.** It is a tragedy when church leaders equate worldly influence and power, with spiritual power and spiritual success, they usually mean the very reverse.

Many churches that manifest spiritual gifts can suffer from the same spiritual complacency and self-sufficiency as the church at Laodicea. Many churches seldom, or never, experience any spiritual gifts other than tongues, interpretation of tongues, and prophecy, yet it is the other six gifts that make all the difference between victory and defeat for churches. People come into most of today's churches, with deep spiritual, physical and emotional burdens and other great problems, and yet there is no real attempt to meet these poor people's heart-cries to God for help. Teaching or tradition is looked upon as sufficient, and leaders are content with the superficial, and people never have their deep needs met, year in and year out. The churches that do this are in the same condition as the church at Laodicea, and like that church, they do not know, or will not admit their need, as Christ said, **"Thou knowest not,** that thou art wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked."

In many churches, Jesus is longing to meet the heart-broken needs of people, but is firmly excluded from doing so by the arrogant self-satisfaction, stubborn self-will, and crippling traditions of these churches. Even though the Lord Jesus looks upon even Laodicean churches with His great and wonderful compassion, He can only look upon such a state of affairs, as criminal negligence, and on the day when He judges His Church He will certainly say so. Rev 3v19-22.

Paul did not depend on oratory or excellency of speech, when he came to Corinth, he relied on the demonstration and power of the Spirit. 1Cor 2v1-5. This is just the opposite of most churches today, who imitate David's great sin of numbering Israel, and so prove that they are relying on, and glorying in, their numbers, worldly possessions and influence. 1Chron 21v1-30. God reprov'd David, and started to destroy the thing that David gloried in, He can do the same with us, let us "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God." Micah 6v8. **Let us make sure that we are Christ-dependent, not self-dependent, or denomination-dependent, and let us carefully watch our traditions.** Church tradition, like the tradition of the Jews, can replace the desires, commands, doctrines and workings of God, with men's teaching and practice, and a form can be perpetuated that hinders, or even excludes, the mighty workings of the Holy Spirit.

e) Church federation usually leads to unscriptural and worldly power structures

As we have already seen, all Christians in local churches took part in important local decisions; but in modern denominations, the power usually resides in the hands of a few ordained representatives. Men usually ordain those who will do the will of their denomination, and so they perpetuate their own kind of power structure and make the ministry a closed shop, and only those who conform can join. The Lordship of Christ over the Church's ministries is replaced by the rule of men. Denominations can get to the place where they have enough financial wealth and ecclesiastical machinery to perpetuate their own type of power structure and standards without any help from God. Church history has proved that denominations, like the world, will fight to obtain and retain, power, wealth, prestige, influence and position. **Satan fell through this same love of power, he lusted after God's position and for adulation and power, and proud men have done exactly the same thing in the Church.**

The struggle for power

It is a striking fact that Jesus was totally financially destitute, and came to preach His Gospel to the poor, and that the early Church consisted mainly of people of little political power, wealth and influence. 2Cor 8v9, Luke 4v18, 1Cor 1v26-31. Constantine used the Church as a means of exercising political power and control, and many others followed his example, until church organisations became an instrument of power and influence in the hands of the powerful and wealthy. Love of power has pervaded all denominations and has destroyed their spiritual vitality and effectiveness. It is a great tragedy that most denominations and churches, large and small, have become largely concerned with upholding their power structure, prestige and worldly influence. Some denominations have great worldly wealth and influence, but they are lacking in spiritual power. **The spiritual power a church possesses is nearly always inversely proportional to its worldly wealth, influence, and ecclesiastical complexity.** Men love to pass minutes, resolutions, and constitutions, and these man-made traditions, like the traditions of Judaism, often replace the truth of the Holy Scriptures. Matt 15v1-9, Mark 7v1-13. How easily the precepts of men can replace and frustrate the will and Word of God. Some conference resolutions and church minutes have made many churches and denominations secure against revival. Every church minute that narrows the fellowship of the local church is not of God, and will have to be answered for at the judgement seat of Christ.

The resistance to the Holy Spirit. Acts 7v51-53

It is a striking fact of Church History, that churches or denominations, which have lost God's blessing, use their worldly power and influence to resist a move of the Holy Spirit. Genuine revivals of religion have always been violently opposed by unspiritual religious leaders, who have been determined to preserve their power structures. **Churches and denominations, which have been formed out of the fruits of a spiritual revival, and have lost the revival fire, are often the bitter opponents of a new revival, because it exposes their own spiritual need, and threatens their power structure and their position as spiritual leaders.** The Jews murdered Christ because they were envious of His spiritual power, and because they thought that He was threatening their power structure. John 11v47,48, Acts 13v44-47, Matt 27v17,18.

The fear of the Ephesian idol makers, of losing their prestige, position, and wealth, caused them to violently oppose Paul, and the same base reasons have always moved men to oppose genuine revival. Men love to have despotic power, and try to make people conform to their standards and system. Acts 19v23-28. It becomes obvious from a study of Church history, that Satan has often used federated churches, and state controlled church systems, to kill and persecute the true children of God. **Suppression of truly spiritual Christians has always followed church federation and organic church unity, as surely as night follows day.** Church history proves that federated churches have often proved as good an instrument of Satan for persecution, as the pagan Roman Empire. However, persecution of true Christians in a genuine move of God, is by no means limited to state churches or older denominations, the last move of God that has dried up and lost God's power and become an denomination, has often been a great hindrance, and the most bitter opponent, of God's new move of the Holy Spirit.

As denominations, fellowships and churches begin to get away from God and lose the blessing of God, they try to preserve their structure by emphasising faithfulness to that organisation and subservience to its leaders, regardless of whether they are fulfilling a spiritual ministry from Christ or not. Ministers often spend much of their time praising and uplifting their denomination, and emphasise faithfulness to their denomination and its ordained ministers, and there is often little reference to faithfulness to Christ and His New Testament standards. The glorious loving leadership and

true fellowship of the early Church cannot be compared to this denominational bondage.

In John 13, Jesus washed His disciples feet to show them that Christian leaders are to serve God's people in love, not to lord it over them. **The love of power in the apostles had blinded their eyes; they were fighting for position and power a few hours before the Cross.** Jesus clearly demonstrated to them, by washing their feet, that they should serve each other in genuine humility and love. In Matt 20v20-28, James and John asked for position and power in the kingdom, but Jesus told them that the leading positions in His kingdom were for the most humble, sacrificial and loving, and that leaders in His Church were to be servants not overbearing lords. Jesus said that Christians can be "great," "megaloi," but warned us that true greatness is manifested in genuine humility and humble service. Mark 10v43,44, Luke 9v46-48, 14v11. Great Christians never "lord it over" others, "katakurieuousin," or exercise authority as a tyrant, "katexousiazousin." Jesus said the way to be first, "protos," and "great," in God's eyes, is to minister as a bond slave, "doulos," and a menial servant, "diakonos," even as He had done. Matt 20v20-28.

In 1Pet 5v1-5, Peter tells us the very same thing, pastor-elders are not to lord it over their flocks, but are to lead by example. Church history shows us how little heed has been taken to these words of Jesus and Peter. Men have so loved their religious power structures and their position in them, that they have resisted the Holy Spirit, lied, deceived, tortured, murdered, and pillaged, to uphold and preserve their religious power structure, and they have usually done it in the name of God. John 16v1. The Scripture tells us that those who hate and kill in the name of God, are not God's children, they partake of the spirit of Satan, who was a liar and murderer from the beginning. John 8v44, 1John 2v7-11, 3v10-17, 4v20 to 5v3. When Christ's disciples wanted to call fire down from heaven upon the hostile Samaritans, Jesus rebuked them and told them that their attitude was evil, and that they should seek to save and bless, not destroy. Luke 9v51-56. **True Christians are not concerned with power structures or fighting to uphold them, they are concerned with doing the will of God, and being a channel of God's blessing.**

f) Church federation makes it easy for Satan to corrupt and persecute the Church

If one person, or a group of ministers governs a denomination, Satan has only to influence these ministers to affect all their flocks. If a local church is ruled by one person, and has a one-man ministry, the same is true; Satan has only to influence one person to make it difficult for all. One minister, even if he is kind, moral and good, can bring a church into bondage, if he is lacking in spiritual anointing, devotion and prayer. **A minister can be a good intelligent Christian, but if he is not used to the movings of the Holy Spirit and His gifts, and body ministry, he will be a hindrance to revival.** It is also true that one can have a gracious veneer and yet determinedly resist the movings of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual gifts and spiritual ministries cannot be received by intellectual training at theological college; they are received through communion with Christ. **Indeed, many theological colleges have been corrupted by Satan, and systematically train students in unbelief, not in vital New Testament Christianity, and so a whole denomination is affected and corrupted.**

When Christians are organised into denominations, they are more easily controlled, captured, killed and persecuted, by antichristian forces, a thing that we need to take note of in these evil last days. The New Testament house fellowship is the only way that Christians can have fellowship in some countries today. The Church in Communist countries survived spiritually, because it followed the pattern of independent local churches gathered in house fellowships. The fine buildings, organs, choirs, and singing, can fulfil a useful function in our present circumstances in Western countries, but they are a burden in periods of militant persecution, and can be closed in hours, as events in many countries have proved. Men's insistence upon church federation, really prepares the Church for destruction in times of persecution. **Only a love dominated church, which fervently seeks and waits upon God in prolonged prayer, can ensure the spiritual glow that will preserve the church in persecution, and deliver the church, local and universal, from spiritual death and corruption.**

When churches tried to make a powerful system to save themselves from heresy, they brought greater evils upon their churches than they cured. The man-made form that was instituted to preserve the Church has really produced and perpetuated many forms devoid of the Holy Spirit. The form that was produced to preserve from heresy, has often produced and perpetuated that very thing. The edict of toleration of Constantine in 313 AD, and the consequent enforcement of orthodoxy by the state, was an unparalleled disaster for the Church. **The union of the state with the Church did not save the world, the world's wealth corrupted and defiled the Church and rendered it spiritually powerless. The Church exchanged worldly power, prestige, buildings and gold for true spiritual wealth, and authority.** God will not manifest His power to uphold the traditions of men. The dangerous and powerful wolves that Paul warns us of in Acts 20v29, have often been church organisations, and they have also spoken "crooked, perverted doctrines," which have greatly damaged the churches. 1Cor 1v11-13, 3John v9, 1Tim 1v20, 2Tim 1v15.

When denominations evangelise other nations, they try to impose on these nations, not a New Testament form, but their own tradition and form of worship, and these traditions and forms are often quite unacceptable to the people of the nations that they are evangelising, and they hinder the evangelistic success and spirituality of the Church. **The simple organisation of the early Church appeals to every nation.** False tradition is disastrous for evangelistic

success, and Satan is happy if he can keep people conformed to these traditions. How often churches expect the unconverted to conform to their method of evangelism, without any thought of whether it is Scriptural or not. **The New Testament forms of evangelism were completely successful, Gospel preaching, either by discussion or heralding, in street, home, open-air, as well as consecrated building, such as a synagogue or Temple, brought tremendous results, because it was not only attractive and interesting, but also because it was anointed by the Holy Spirit and confirmed by mighty signs, wonders and miracles.**

Conclusion

One of the greatest evangelistic forces in the New Testament Church was its practical love and care for people; indeed, the majority of its finances went for caring for people in need. Church buildings and ecclesiastical systems consume the vast majority of the finances that Christians can give, and often little is left for the needy, and so one of the most powerful evangelistic appeals of the Church is lost. The early Church appointed deacons in every church to do works of charity; some modern churches have followed this practice and have brought great relief and blessing to the needy. Large building projects and complex organisations are very expensive and time consuming, and hinder rapid growth; the early Church grew very rapidly by following God's simple pattern. Samuel G. Green, on page 55 of his, "A Handbook of Church History," states that Justin Martyr wrote about 140 AD, "There is not one single race of men, whether Barbarians or Greeks, or what ever they may be called, nomads or vagrants, or herdsmen living in tents; among whom prayers and giving of thanks are not offered through the name of the crucified Jesus."

Samuel Green continues, on page 56: "Gibbon and Milman estimate the population of Rome at the beginning of the third century as one million two hundred thousand, and the calculation of the former that a twentieth were nominal Christians may be adopted as a minimum." This means that there were at least 60,000 Christians in Rome at this time. The spread of the Gospel and the conversion of tens of thousands of people, had taken place without any external form of buildings or denominational organisation. If we follow Christ's New Testament pattern we shall also be amazed at the results. **There is a vital connection between following the simplicity and spirituality of the early Church organisation, and revival.**

New Testament ministries are intended to bring people into a living experimental knowledge of God and His truth. Why, then, are there so few of the higher ministries in operation? The following answers suggest themselves. Much of the fog of the dark ages of the Church is still with us, even in evangelical circles. Ministers are often conformed to the denominational mould, and anything outside this mould is viewed with suspicion and opposed. Authoritative decrees from federated church leaders has forced those under them to resist the desires and movings of the Holy Spirit, and Satan has used this to keep churches from New Testament principles and practices. Acts 7v51-53. In Church history this has resulted in Christians with God's anointing upon them being rejected, opposed and even murdered. There are few who are willing to stand the sacrifice, suffering and poverty involved in following their Lord in this way. We have to very definitely take up our cross and follow Jesus, if we are to sustain His ministry gifts to us. A divinely directed New Testament ministry gift is almost certain to involve personal Calvaries in manifesting and ministering Christ's resurrection life. Many preachers are unwilling to walk this way, preferring to preach and believe in a spiritually sapping and worldly "prosperity gospel." The cry from God's longing, loving, tender heart is still the same, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Let us hear His call and obey His commands, and then we shall not only see Him in glory, but also hear His "Well done." Let us say, "Here I am. Send me!" Isaiah 6v8.

Appendix H: Looking For And Hastening The Coming Of The Day Of God

It has been the consensus amongst Christians for many centuries that they individually or collectively can do absolutely nothing to hasten the coming of the day of God. However, it is the complete opposite that is true, 2Peter 3v12 states:

"Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?" (NKJV)

"Hastening" is in Greek, "speúdontas," the present active participle (accusative also) of "speúdo" (Strong's NT:4692), which means "to speed" i.e. urge on (diligently or earnestly); by implication, to await eagerly, (make, with) haste unto, to cause something to happen soon, to hurry up. Archbishop Trench, in his work "The Authorized Version of the New Testament" makes the following comment:

"..."Hastening on;" i.e. "causing the day of the Lord to come more quickly by helping to fulfil those conditions without which it cannot come; that day being no day inexorably fixed, but one the arrival of which it is free to the church to hasten on by faith and by prayer."

Both "looking for" and "hastening" in the Greek are in the present continuous tense (active voice), which shows that each individual believer **MUST** keep praying (**Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336) and "entunchano"**

(Strong's NT:1793), both of which have the meaning, "to make "interventions" (with power) so as to affect a change in the circumstances.") and watching for the signs of the Lord's Second Coming to appear and to keep it up until He actually comes in great power and glory to destroy the wicked and to take His people home. Luke v17v20-18v8 (esp. 18v1), Luke 21v36 (RSV), Rev 5v1-14 (esp. v8), 8v2-6 (esp. v3,4).

With this in mind, each individual believer can by praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336) and "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783), which mean, "to make "interventions" (with power) so as to affect a change in the circumstances.") hasten the coming day of God. The following seven **NBs** contain the thoughts and great desires that are upon God's heart at this present time that He is seeking His Church to pray ("proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336) and "entunchano" (Strong's NT:1793)) into being and so to quicken the coming of the day of God.

NB1 As the last seven years (the 70th week of Daniel's 70 week prophecy, Daniel 9v20-27) of this Age (the Age of Grace) rapidly approaches, especially the last three and a half years of this Age (the period known as The Great Tribulation, Dan 9v27, Matt 24v15-28, Rev 7v9-17), the Devil is busy endeavouring to put his evil servants into positions of power and authority; wicked people who will put the Devil's and Antichrist's evil plans into operation (which is to kill as many people (both believers and non-believers) and destroy as much as possible, before they themselves are destroyed at Christ's Second Coming by being consumed by the breath of His mouth, 2Thess 2v8). It is during the last three and a half years of this Age, that the Mystery of Lawlessness (the Devil's evil plan) will work fully; which will be the result of the Devil and his evil Angels being expelled from the Heavenly places by Michael and his Angels into the Earth, and God's restraint upon the Devil and the powers of darkness being completely removed, hence The Great Tribulation will begin, which should be pointed out is due to the "great wrath of the Devil, because he knows that he has a short time," and **NOT** the wrath of God. Rev 12v7-17 (esp. v 12), 2Thess 2v1-12.

The Devil will then proceed to put his evil plan (the Mystery of Lawlessness) into operation through Antichrist and other evil persons, whom he has put into positions of power and authority (Matt 4v8-10, Rev 13v1-10, 16v12-16), so it is **NOW** most vital, that we, the believers, are obedient to this most important injunction made by Paul in 1Timothy 2v1-8 (with Rom 13v1-7), to make "interventions" (with power) ("proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336) and "entunchano" (Strong's NT:1793), 1Tim 2v1), (for and against) "for all men, for kings and all who are in authority," that God will put honest, upright, wise, godly and compassionate persons into places of power and authority, and thwart the Devil's attempts to put his own evil servants into these places; for it is the Most High Who rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomsoever He wishes, and sets over it the lowest of men. Daniel 4v17.

NB2 Rev 12v6,14 states:

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where **she hath a place prepared of God**, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days...And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that **she might fly into the wilderness, into her place**, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."

This group of specially prepared Christians (that flee from Antichrist in Jerusalem and the surrounding area) is definitely said to have a place prepared by God for them to escape to at the beginning of the Great Tribulation; it is **MOST** important that Christians should pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) **NOW**, for God to prepare the areas of Edom, Moab and Ammon ("the wilderness" that is referred to in Rev 12v14 and which are situated in the eastern part of modern day Jordan) to be ready to receive this "glorious woman" at the beginning of the Great Tribulation. Christians firstly should invoke the following covenant names in the heavenly places over these three areas (and modern day Jordan), Yahweh Tsabaoth, the Lord of Hosts (1Sam 17v45, Psalm 46v7,11), and Yahweh Jireh, the Lord Who See and Provides (Gen 22v14), that these areas will know continuous angelic protection from this time forth, right up until the second coming of the Lord Jesus, but especially during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation, and that **ALL** things will be **FULLY** "prepared" by "the Lord Who Sees and Provides" for His people. Secondly, Christians should also impart the divine benediction by using the priestly blessing of Numbers 6v22-27 upon Edom, Moab, Ammon and modern day Jordan. If Christians pray like this **NOW**, these areas of Edom, Moab and Ammon, will most certainly be **FULLY** prepared and protected by God, to receive His people at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, so that they are fed, kept, guarded and protected right up until the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus. **NOTE:** Rev 5v8, "...which are the prayers (Greek "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335), "to make interventions with power so as to affect a change in circumstances.") of saints." 2Pet 3v12. (We see in Rev 4 and 5, the preliminaries in Heaven just before the seals are opened, that is, before the events of the last seven years of this Age start to come to pass (Daniel's Seventieth prophetic week, Dan 9v27). The seven seals reveal Satan's evil plans for the world during the last seven years of this age. Paul calls Satan's plans "the mystery of iniquity." 2Thess 2v7. The seals reveal the major catastrophic stages of the career of Antichrist from the time when he makes the covenant, until the great day of the wrath of the Lamb brings his evil career to a close. It is the "prayers of the saints" (Rev 5v7,8) that precipitates God the Father to invite the Lord Jesus to take the Book out of His right hand so as to loose the seven seals thereof to bring to pass the last seven years of this age. Dan 9v27, 6v1-17, 8v1)

NB3 We read in Matt 9v37,38:

"Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, **but the labourers are few**; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, **that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.**"

It is also most essential for Christians (especially those Christians in Israel) to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)), "to make interventions with power so as to affect a change in circumstances.") **NOW** for God to raise up the Two Witnesses, and other Christians whom He will set in the Body of Christ with the same level of power and authority as the Two Witnesses. We **MUST** also pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) for God to give these "labourers" the same kind of power and authority that He gave unto the prophet Elijah (1Kings 17v1-21v29, 2Kings 1v1-2v11 Dan 11v32, Rev 11v3-6), and then to "send them forth into His harvest." It is also a necessity for us to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) for God to fulfil such prophecies and promises, as those stated in Rev 11v3-6 and Zech chapter 4, but especially the wonderful promise and prophecy that He spoke through His servant Malachi in Mal 4v5,6 (with Luke 1v17 and Matt 17v11):

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Christians **MUST** pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) **NOW** for "last day Elijah ministries" to be set in the Body of Christ by God! Rev 5v8.

The number of "last day Elijah ministries" that God will be able to set in the Church will be directly proportional to the amount of praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) performed by the Church for God to set such ministries in it; i.e. the more the Body of Christ prays (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) for God to set such ministries in the church, the **MORE** "last day Elijah ministries" will **actually be set in it by God!**

Behind every great prophet and prophetess, there has **ALWAYS** been someone behind the scenes, who has earnestly sought the Lord and prayed (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) them into their ministry. Very often this is the result of the prayers (Greek "proseuche" (NT:4335)) of a godly loving mother or aunt; as in the case of Jeremiah, when his aunt, the great Old Testament prophetess, Huldah, was the person responsible for praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) him into his prophetic ministry as a young man. We can gauge the depth of her spirituality and prophetic ministry from the incident when King Josiah asked Hilkiah, the high priest, to inquire of the Lord as what should be done at that time, Hilkiah promptly went and sought out Huldah, and as soon as he had asked for the word of the Lord, Huldah was able to give it too him straight away. However, when the remnant of those left in the southern kingdom came and asked Jeremiah to seek the word of the Lord for them, it was ten days before the reply came from the Lord for them (which they didn't heed anyway); and so from this, we can see just how in touch with the Lord Huldah was and the depth of her spirituality and prophetic ministry! 2Kings 22v3-20 (esp. v14), Jer 1v1-19 (esp. v6), 32v7, Jer 42v1-22 (esp. v7).

NB4 Rev 12v1 (with Rev 12v2-17) states:

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars."

The vision of this glorious woman reveals to us one of God's major purposes for the last days. She represents a group of people, who are foreknown, designed, specially created and empowered by God for the Great Tribulation. It is a group of praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) people, with prepared hearts and special ministries for the last days, who will operate with awesome power as a prayer-warrior group behind the scenes. God also gives a definite promise that He will protect, provide and empower the seeking hearts in His Church in a new and special way in the last days, and will not leave His Church defenceless in the Great Tribulation. This glorious woman reveals that part of the Church will be clothed with the fullness of God's power, and will be transported, protected and fed by God. **This group is a major part of God's answer to the mystery of iniquity, and it is one of many such groups, who operate in Israel and other parts of the world.**

Another of the desires upon the great loving Heart of our Heavenly Father, is the necessity for His people to get ready and prepared for the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation; however at the present moment in time, very few, if any, Teachers or Preachers in the Church are talking about these vital Truths, and when they do mention it, it is nearly always to state that the Christian does not need to be concerned about the Great Tribulation, because they will miss it, having been raptured before it starts. **I wish to state here and now, that those (so called) preachers and teachers who propagate such lies, the Lord Jesus plainly states are amongst the false prophets and teachers of the last days, and a severe judgement awaits them!** The Lord Jesus clearly states that His Second Coming will be visible to every eye, and will be with great power and glory, the elements melting with fervent heat,

which will be accompanied by the greatest earthquake that the earth has ever known! It is **NOW** vital for **EVERY** Christian (especially those Christians in Israel) to get close to the Lord Jesus, and pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) that He will prepare His people into such groups (as represented by the glorious woman in Rev 12v1) in every country around the world, but **ESPECIALLY** in Israel! Dan 11v32, Joel 2v28-32, Zech 12v8, Matt 24v21-30,48-51, 28v20, Luke 18v1-8, 2Pet 3v10, James 3v1, Rev 1v7, 12v1-17, 16v18.

NB5 Psalm 2v8 and Rev 5v7 reads:

"**Ask of me**, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession...**And he came and took the book** out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne."

The "He came and took the book," is the fulfilment of the "ask of me" of Psalm 2v8, it is when God brings to pass the prophetic events that will close the Age, and bring in Christ's kingdom. Psalm 2v8, Dan 2v44,45, 7v13.

It is most important for **ALL** believers to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336), "to make interventions with power so as to affect a change in circumstances.") **NOW** that God will invite the Lord Jesus to come and ask Him for His inheritance and possession, so that He takes the Book out of His Father's right hand, so as to open the seven seals thereof to bring to pass the last seven years of this Age, so that the Father can then, at the end of these seven years, send the Lord Jesus to come and deal with the wicked once and for all, to take His people home and bring in everlasting righteousness by sealing up vision and prophecy and setting up the Millennium Kingdom. **NOTE:** Rev 5v8, "...which are the prayers (Greek "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) of the saints..." with Matt 6v9,10, "After this manner therefore pray (Greek "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) ye...**Thy kingdom come.**" (It is the "prayers of the saints" (Rev 5v7,8) that precipitates God the Father to invite the Lord Jesus to take the Book out of His right hand so as to loose the seven seals thereof to bring to pass the last seven years of this age. Dan 9v27, 6v1-17, 8v1) Dan 9v27, Matt 6v5-15, Luke 11v1-13 (esp. 11v2), 2Pet 3v12, Rev 11v15-19.

(The seven seals show the major stages in the career of Antichrist, from the covenant, to seven years later, when he and his evil system is destroyed on the great day of the Lamb's wrath. An angel asks who is worthy to rule the world after Antichrist has brought the world to almost complete ruin; the answer is only Christ and His faithful brethren. Rev 5v5,9,10, Rom 8v19. This age will close when Jesus has enough brethren to rule the Millennial kingdom with Him. Rev 14v1-5, 17v14, 2Pet 3v12. John's vision in Rev 4 and 5, was not a revelation of events in Heaven in the time of John, it was a vision of events in Heaven just prior to the last seven years of this age. When Jesus opens the seven seals, it starts the last 7 years of this age, and the mystery of iniquity. Dan 9v20-27.

Satan's plans are restrained by God, and even when the mystery of iniquity is allowed to have its final fling, God reigns and His kingdom will surely come quickly. All of Heaven's inhabitants are perfectly satisfied at Christ's worthiness to open the seals and receive the kingdom, and they rejoice that divine love will rule the nations, after the evil rule of men. John was heartbroken and wept because no one could open the book and loose the seals, but one of the elders comforted John and said, "Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and loose the seals thereof." As God, Jesus was the source of David's family and the means of its sustenance, anchorage and strength; as a man He was the offspring of David. Isaiah 11v1,10, Rom 1v3,4, Rev 22v16. John looks for this Lion of Judah, but sees a Lamb as it had been slain. The most courageous act of the Lion of Judah was His death as the Lamb of God, this shows His courage and love more than all else. The title "Lamb" occurs 29 times in Revelation, but it is only applied to Jesus 4 times in the rest of the New Testament. John 1v29,36, Acts 8v32, 1Pet 1v19. Men often use mighty beasts and birds of prey as symbols of power, but God uses a Lamb to show the greatest act of courage, strength and love the world has even known; Calvary is the ultimate act of power and love. The Lamb of God is worthy to reign because of the sacrificial love revealed in His death upon Calvary.

The Lamb of God has not only redeemed sinners, but has made them kings and priests unto God as well, and the faithful saints will reign with Christ in the Millennium and eternity. Rev 5v10, 20v4-6, 22v3-5. Christ has won the right to reign, the Father has no favourites, He has "no jobs for the boys," those who rule will have to prove their worthiness to rule, even as Jesus has proved His worthiness to reign. Rev 3v21, 5v5, Phil 2v6-11, Rom 2v11, Acts 10v34, Heb 5v5-10, Dan 7v13,14. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!)

NB6 On the day of Pentecost, Peter stood up and said in Acts 2v16-21 (with Joel 2v28-32):

"...This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; **And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh:** and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, **before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.**"

The Lord Jesus, during the His Post-Resurrection ministry to the Apostles, had told them "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," when He (the Holy Spirit) that was with them, would then enter them, which was the Baptism in the Holy Spirit that they would receive. Luke 24v49, John 7v39, 14v17, Acts 2v4,38. It was during the Post-Resurrection ministry that the Lord Jesus had instructed them regarding Joel's prophecy, that this was the glorious prophecy which referred to the "Promise of the Father" (i.e. power from on high), and that it was **vital** for them to tarry in the Upper Room, and pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336), "to make interventions with power so as to affect a change in circumstances.") this great prophecy and promise into reality. The Lord Jesus did not tell them the precise timing of when they would receive the Promise of the Father (this was because that if they had known, some of them might have just sat back and said, "well I don't need to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)), God is going to do it anyway"), but simply said, "ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Acts 1v5. The Apostles were obedient to His command, and with other disciples (one hundred and twenty of them in all), they prayed (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) Joel's wonderful great prophecy and promise into reality. Acts 1v14,15, 2v1-4. The great outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was only a partial fulfilment of Joel's prophecy, which also had a fulfilment throughout the whole of the Age of Grace to encourage the Church to pray for revival, blessing, spiritual gifts and ministries from their risen Lord. 1Cor 12v7-11, Eph 4v7-16. Joel's great prophecy and promise has a final and complete fulfilment at the end of the Age of Grace, for it specifically says, "**it shall come to pass in the last days...I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh...before that great and notable day of the Lord come.**" Even as the one hundred and twenty disciples in the Upper Room prayed (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) Joel's wonderful prophecy and promise into reality on the Day of Pentecost, it is also **VITAL** for the Church to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) **NOW** for God to pour out of His Spirit upon the Church and the world...i.e. "**upon ALL flesh.**" God's people need to claim the complete fulfilment of Joel's great prophecy and promise **NOW**, and **MUST** continue to claim the complete fulfilment of it right up until the Lord's Second Coming. There will certainly be a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit when Daniel's Seventieth week starts, when Antichrist "confirms a covenant with many (including Israel) for one week," which also refers to the opening of the First Seal. Dan 9v27, Rev 6v1,2. Another and even greater outpouring will occur, when Antichrist breaks the covenant, and sets up his image in the Temple in Jerusalem (at the beginning of the Great Tribulation). During the last seven years of the Age of Grace, the Church and the world will know a time of the greatest worldwide revival that has ever been experienced, and **NOW** is the time for the Body of Christ to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (NT:4336)) so that this great outpouring becomes a reality very soon, and also is **FULLY** experienced during the last seven years of this Age. Acts 2v16-21, Rev 5v8, 11v3-6, 12v1.

NB7 With the Devil and his evil angels being cast out of the heavenlies into the earth, and God's restraining hand being removed from them, the Great Tribulation then ensues. The responsibility for the restraint upon the powers of darkness and the wicked upon the earth, during the Great Tribulation, will be the Church's, and it will be through each individual believer's prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power), (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783), both of which mean, "to make interventions with power so as to affect a change in circumstances."), that this restraint will occur. The amount of evil and wickedness that will be found in any society around the world during the Great Tribulation, will be inversely proportional to the amount of prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power) (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783)) that the believers of that society will make, in other words, the more prayer and "interventions" (with power) that the believers make for their society in which they live, the less evil and wickedness will be manifested in it. Hence, as soon as Antichrist sets up his image in the Temple in Jerusalem and breaks the peace treaty with Israel, the Great Tribulation then ensues and these are the signs that the Christian should be earnestly watching for, so that as soon as they appear, the responsibility for restraint upon the powers of darkness, wicked persons and wickedness in the world will lie solely with the Church. It is at this time that each individual believer **MUST** start making prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power) (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783)) against the evil angels and wicked people upon earth to restrain their activities. When the wicked see Divine judgement falling upon other evil persons (which will be via the believer's prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power) (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783))), many (although not all) will think twice before putting their evil desires into practice to hurt, harm or kill God's dear children, hence, the believer's prayers and "interventions" (with power) will actively restrain the wicked. It will be during the Great Tribulation that the last World War will occur (before the 2nd coming of Christ), and the desire of the Devil (through Antichrist) will be to smash the world completely, which Antichrist will do with vast conventional armies and limited exchanges of nuclear weapons. So, it is vital for Christians to exercise prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power) (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783)) **NOW**, so that they will be spiritually prepared for those terrible dark evil days, and can act as an effective restraint upon the powers of darkness and the wicked during the last three and half years of this Age, so that the country and society in which they live is not completely destroyed by Antichrist's armies and followers. Isaiah 26v9, Dan 9v27, 11v32,41, Zech 12v8, Luke 18v1-8, 2Thess 2v1-12, 1Tim 2v1-8, Rev 6v7,8, 9v13-21, 11v3-6,18, 12v13-17.

(Also NOTE: Another reason why God cannot let the last seven years of this Age (of Grace) begin to come to pass is

that the required number of overcoming Sons, who will replace the present world rulers (the Devil and the evil angels) in the heavenly places during the Millennium, must first be begotten, educated and tested; and so when God knows that this number is at hand, He will then invite the Lord Jesus to take the Book out of His right hand, so that He might loose the Seven Seals thereof; which will then bring to pass Daniel's 70th (prophetic) week, which will end with the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus when He comes in great power and glory (so that **EVERY** eye will see Him), to deal with the wicked once and for all, to take His people home and bring in everlasting righteousness by sealing up vision and prophecy. It will be when the six and seventh seals are opened and the seventh Trumpet sounds (these all occur on the last day of this age (the Age of Grace) at the Second Coming of Christ) that the "mystery of God" will be completed. (The "mystery of God" is God's plan to put both Heaven and Earth under the rule of His Son Jesus and His bride (i.e. the Church), and to fulfil upon the earth the promise made to Abraham and his seed, Israel, that they should inherit the earth. The inhabited earth to come is not again to be put under angels, but under Christ and His brethren who overcame.) The believer who accepts the call of their Lord, to rise up with Him into the heavenly places, to conquer and defeat the Devil and powers of darkness, so as to enter into and inhabit their Heavenly Canaan, will be exercising a priestly ministry of the Melchizedek Priesthood (by manifesting God's great power and love to the worlding and Church through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, upon earth and the heavenly places), with Jesus as their Great High Priest (after the Order of Melchizedek). It is the Christians who are exercising a priestly ministry of the Melchizedek Priesthood who will be praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336) and "entunchano" (Strong's NT:1793), which mean "to make interventions with power so as to effect a change in circumstances.") for the Lord Jesus to take the Book out of the Father's Right Hand and so bring to pass the last seven years of this age. These Christians will also be praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336) and "entunchano" (Strong's NT:1793)) for God to bring judgement upon the wicked who are persecuting and killing Christians during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation. These Christians are a group of people, who are foreknown, designed, specially created and empowered by God for the Great Tribulation; a group of praying people, with prepared hearts and special ministries for the last days, who will operate with awesome power as a prayer-warrior group behind the scenes. God also gives a definite promise that He will protect, provide and empower the seeking hearts in His Church in a new and special way in the last days, and will not leave His Church defenceless in the Great Tribulation. Some of these Christians will belong to a group of believers in Israel during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation, who are represented by the glorious woman of Rev 12v1 (already mentioned in **NB2** and **NB4**), which reveals that part of the Church will be clothed with the fullness of God's power, and will be transported, protected and fed by God. This group is a major part of God's answer to the "mystery of iniquity," and it is one of many such groups, who operate in other parts of the world. It is these Christians who will be exercising a priestly ministry of the Melchizedek Priesthood during the last seven years of this age (and even more so during the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation) and who will be amongst those who will rule with Christ during the Millennium. (Rev 5v10, "...and hast made them kings and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.") Dan 9v20-27 (esp. v27), 10v13-21, 11v32, Matt 25v41, Mark 16v15-18, Luke 17v20-18v8, 19v11-27, 24v46-49, John 3v13, 7v37-39, 12v40, 17v24, Acts 1v4-8, 2v16-21, Rom 1v17, 4v1-25, 8v12-39, 1Cor 9v24-27, 12v1-14v40, 12v31, 15v50-54, Eph 6v12, Col 3v1,2, 1Thess 4v13-18, 2Thess 2v1-12 (esp. v8), 1Tim 2v1-8, 2Tim 4v8, Heb 2v4,5-13, 3v1-4v16, 7v25, James 1v12, 1Pet 2v1-9, 5v1-4, Rev 1v7, 4v1-5v14, 6v12-17, 7v1-8, 8v1,2-6, 10v1-11 (esp. v7), 11v15-19, 12v1,6,7-9,14-16, 14v1-5, 21v7.)

The believer, by praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) and making "interventions" (with power) (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783)) as indicated in these seven NBs ("nota benes"), will surely "hasten the coming of the Day of God." 2Pet 3v12.

Appendix I: In Gen 3v16, God Did Not Curse Women

Several mistranslations of Gen 3v15,16, twist and distort God's statement about women.

The First Mistranslation. "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow." Gen 3v16.

According to Katherine Bushnell, an outstanding Hebrew scholar, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow," in Gen 3v16, is incorrectly translated, she writes in paragraph 117 of her book, "God's Word To Women:" "We hold that verse 16 should have been rendered, "Unto the woman He said, A snare hath increased thy sorrow," - the word "snare" being, literally rendered, "a lying-in-wait." Instead, it is rendered, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow." The difference between the two in Hebrew lies wholly in the interlinear vowel-signs of comparatively recent invention. (Footnote) The difference is between HaRBeh, AaRBeh, "multiplying I will multiply," and HiRBah AoReB, "hath caused to multiply, (or made great), a lying in wait." - the verb, as usual preceding its nominative. The capital letters, alike in both phrases, alone constitute the original text. This participle form, ARB, occurs fourteen times in Joshua and Judges. It is translated "ambush," and "liers-in-wait," or "in ambush." It is possible that we should read here, "A lier-in-wait (the subtle serpent) hath increased thy sorrow."

Bushnell informs us why the Jews added the vowel letters to the Hebrew text, in paragraph 6 of her book, she writes: "Hebrew ceased to be spoken by the common people during the Babylonian captivity. It was practically a "dead language" as early as 250 BC. In the absence of expressed vowels, its pronunciation was likely to become

lost. So the Scribes took four consonants, "a h v and j," and inserted them into the text to indicate the vowel sounds. While this device helped to some extent, in the end it led to confusion, often raising the question: "Is this letter a consonant, belonging to the original, or is it a vowel-letter, added by the Scribes?" Moreover the insertion of these vowel-letters did not prove sufficient; then, as late as 600-800 AD, a whole system of vowel-signs was added, most elaborately indicating the vowels of each word as tradition had preserved it. These vowel-signs were interlinear, and therefore did not confuse the text, as did the vowel-letters." End of quote.

The rendering in Gen 3v16, "Unto the woman He said, I have greatly increased thy sorrow," is against both the context and character of God, it should be translated, "Unto the woman He said, A snare hath increased thy sorrow," the word snare being literally, "a lying in wait," Satan, in the form of a serpent. Rev 12v9.

Where Did This Attack On Woman And The Character Of God Come From? From "The Days Of Mingling."

The time between the Old Testament and the New Testament has been called "the days of mingling." The Jews tried to adopt Hellenistic ideas from the Greek cities which surrounded Palestine. Greek kings were in control in Syria and Egypt so the Jews decided to obliterate the ideas of Jewish life and religion which were offensive to these Greeks. F. W. Farrar, and others say, "This semi-faithless epoch was described as the days of mingling." This was the time when the Jews mingled freely with the heathen population, F. W. Farrar says that they were "fascinated by the attractions of Greek life and literature, they wished to adopt Hellenistic ideas and to obliterate the most essential distinctions of Jewish life and religion."

Some think that it was during this time that women were given the badge of inferiority and servility. Before this the woman had a place in the tabernacle services as priestesses and Levites, and this is proved by the technical term used in Exodus 33v38 and 1Sam 2v22, which is translated as "serving women." It was during those days that the blame was shifted from Adam to Eve, she was linked with the heathen teaching of Pandora (Greek mythology), and Eve was blamed as the one who opened Pandora's box on the world. The city of Alexandria led the way in reconciling the Scriptures with pagan Greek teachings.

From The Talmudic Teaching.

This taught, "From a woman a beginning of sin and because of her all die." Ecclesiasticus 25v24. The wisdom of Ben Sira, and many others, said the same dreadful theology, and greatly disparaged women.

The Ten Curses of Eve in a Talmudic commentary on Genesis.

In Lesson 13 of her book, "God's Word To Woman," Katherine C Bushnell quotes the outrageous and disgusting 10 curses of Eve, from Dr. Hershon's, "Genesis With A Talmudic Commentary." (Bagster London). Bushnell states that some of the details were so obscene and filthy that she was unwilling to print them.

"Greatly multiply" refers to catamenia, etc.

"Thy sorrow" in rearing children.

"Thy conception."

"In sorrow shall thou bring forth children."

"Thy desire shall be unto thy husband." (This is followed by language too coarse and vulgar for reproduction leaving no doubt of the Rabbinical interpretation of desire: it was gross physical lust).

"He shall rule over thee." (More, and even fouler language)

She is wrapped up like a mourner, that is.

Dares not appear in public with her head uncovered.

Is restricted to one husband, while he may have many wives.

Is confined to the house as to a prison.

NB1 Those who teach that woman is under a curse like this, are really putting themselves under a curse for misinterpreting the Scriptures in this fraudulent, contemptible, and insulting way. Those who believe, teach and practice these outrageous and evil doctrines can expect severe censure on judgement day. James 3v1.

NB2 God certainly did not ordain women's servitude to man. We read in Gen 21v12, that God told Abraham to obey Sarah. See 1Cor 7v4, where Paul states, "The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. (NIV)

From Church Leaders Who Were Influenced By The Talmud.

Many Church leaders have been influenced by the Talmud, and by heathen ideas about women.

Tertullian twisted the Scriptures when he said that God visited Eve's sin and guilt on all women.

He stated, "Do you not know that you are an Eve? God's verdict on the sex still holds good, and the sex's guilt must still hold also. YOU ARE THE DEVIL'S GATEWAY, you are the avenue of the forbidden tree. You are the first deserter from the Law divine. It was you who persuaded him (Adam), whom the devil himself had not strength to assail. So lightly did you esteem God's image. For your deceit, for death, the very Son of God had to perish." End of quote.

What a male chauvinist twisting of the facts, and perversion of the truth! Tertullian fails to mention that Jesus was born of a woman and that the Scriptures ascribe the transgression to Adam. Adam is mentioned in Job 31v33 and Hosea 6v7 ("men" can be translated as Adam), and he is the one who gets the blame. Paul also states that Adam is to blame for the fall, in 1Cor 15v22, and seven times in Rom 5v12-19. In 1Tim 2v14, Paul says that the woman was completely deceived, "exapatetheisa," the aorist passive indicative of, "exapatao," "to deceive completely," or "to deceive successfully," and states that Adam was the one "who stepped over the boundary," "parabasis," and transgressed.

In 2Cor 11v3, "beguiled," is "exepatesen," the aorist indicative active of "exapatao," the preposition "ex" in the compound is perfective, and so means to completely deceive. Here we see Satan as the active agent in deception, in 1Tim 2v14, we see Eve as the passive deceived one. God says in Ezek 18v1-32 (NB v2,20), that guilt cannot be transferred from parent to child.

Calvin said that God cast Eve into servitude to men.

This is the same as saying that God made men a curse to women, but God has decreed the very opposite, for the husband who does not treat his wife properly will have his prayers "cut off" by God. In 1Pet.3v7, "egkoptesthai" the present passive indicative of "egkopto," means, to cut in on, and so to hinder, to impede, to detain. Christian men are commanded, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." Eph 5v25.

The Second Mistranslation About "Conception."

In the Hebrew of Gen 3v16, the word translated as "conception," is HRN, but this not the correct Hebrew for "conception," which is correctly spelt as HRJWN in Ruth 4v13 and Hosea 9v11, it occurs nowhere else in the Hebrew Old Testament. Even though some Hebrew scholars say HRN is "an abnormal formation which occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament," and the lexical authorities Brown, Briggs, and Driver say that it is a "contraction or erroneous," the Septuagint translators, who were outstanding Hebrew scholars, decided that the correct translation of HRN was, "thy sighing." The sentence means, then, "a snare hath increased thy sorrow and thy sighing." Many ancient authorities agree with the Septuagint.

The Third Mistranslation "Desire." "Teshuwqah" or "Teshuqa." (Strong's OT:8669).

"Teshuqa," only occurs 3 times in the Old Testament, in Gen 3v16, 4v7 and The Song of Solomon 7v10. In paragraphs 124 and 127, of her book "God's Word To Women," K. Bushnell states: "The correct rendering of Gen 3v16 is this: 'Thou art turning away to thy husband, and he will rule over thee,' - not as it has been rendered, 'Thy desire shall be to thy husband.' This assertion, as to the correct meaning of the phrase we shall now prove. As we have said before, a misinterpretation of Scripture can be proved by the misfit. The usual construction put upon the language of this verse fits accurately nowhere, the correct interpretation fits all around."

Bushnell continues, "Thus we see that the context does not prove that this 'shall be' of the sentence translated, 'thy desire shall be to thy husband' is imperative. We can assert positively that this sentence is a simple future or present, warning woman of the consequences of her action. So it is rendered in all the ancient versions; never as an imperative. As a prophecy it has been abundantly fulfilled in the manner which man rules over woman, especially in heathen lands." End of quote.

According to Bushnell, "teshuqa" is derived from the verb "shuwq," its simplest meaning is, "to run," the prefix "te," "gives "teshuqa" an abstract meaning and corresponds to our termination "ness," as in "goodness," or "kindness," etc.. The ending "a," is added to give the feminine form (of the verb), it can mean, "to run repeatedly," that is to run back and forth," and so have the derived sense of "turning," which most ancient versions give it. In Gen 3v16, Eve's turning. In Gen 4v7, Cain's turning, or sins turning, or crouching ready to pounce like an animal. In Song of Solomon 7v10, the woman states she is her beloved's, and his turning is towards her. Bushnell says, (para. 126): "No verbs are expressed. The conjunction is one for all and also the preposition. This is true of the Hebrew original also. In fact there is no variety in the three sentences, excepting in the proper nouns implied in the pronouns used. The sense of the three passages must be similar."

The Translation Of "Teshuqa" In The Most Ancient Versions.

The Septuagint. Translates "teshuqa," as "turning" in the three places where it occurs; as "apostrophe," "turning away," in Gen 3v16, and 4v7, and as "epistrophe," "turning to," in Song of Solomon 7v10. God said that the consequence of Eve turning away from God to her husband, was that her husband would rule her. Nearly every quotation of the Old Testament in the New Testament follows the Septuagint, which tradition says was a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek by 72 Jewish scholars in Alexandria that was started about 285 BC. The Septuagint was much favoured by the Jews until Christians used the translations of its prophecies to prove that Jesus was the Messiah.

The Syriac Peshitto. Which some say was translated from Greek manuscripts as early as 100 to 200 AD, renders Gen 3v16, as "thou wilt turn;" and Gen 4v7, as "will turn;" and the Song of Sol 7v10 as "turning."

The Samaritan Pentateuch. About 100 AD. Only has Gen 3v16 and 4v7 readings and translates both as "turning."

The Old Latin. About 200 AD, reads "turning" in all three places, in Gen 3v16, 4v7, and Song of Sol 7v10.

The Coptic Sahidic. About 300 AD, translates "teshuqa," as "turning," in Gen 3v16 and 4v7, but being fragmentary it lacks any reading of the Song of Sol 7v10.

The Coptic Bohairic. About 350 AD, is more reliable than the Coptic Sahidic, but being fragmentary it lacks Song of Sol 7v10, but translates Gen 3v16 and 4v7 as "turning."

The Ethiopic. About 500 AD, renders all three passages by words meaning "turning".

These ancient versions deny that Eve was under a curse from God, and was driven by lust after her husband.

The reason for the mistranslations of "teshuqa" in Jerome's Vulgate.

The Vulgate is a translation from the Greek Scriptures into Latin made by Jerome in about 382 AD. Jerome went to Palestine and studied Hebrew under Jewish rabbis and appears to have been to some extent poisoned by their Talmudic traditions. He translated Gen 3v16, "Thou shalt be under the power of a husband and he will rule over thee;" which is in no way a correct translation of the original. In Gen 4v7, Jerome translates "teshuqa," as "his appetite," which is another strange translation. In Song of Sol 7v10, Jerome gets to the truth when he translates "teshuqa," as "his turning."

Wycliffe's Version. Made in 1380 AD was translated from the Vulgate not the Hebrew, Wycliffe followed the Vulgate in all three places as did the Douay Version of 1609.

NB1 The disproportionate unscholarly influence of the Italian Dominican Monk Pagnino.

Bushnell records in paragraph 142: "After Wycliffe's version, and before any other English Bible appeared, an Italian Dominican monk, named Pagnino, translated the Hebrew Bible. The "Biographie Universelle," quotes the following criticism of his work, **in the language of Richard Simon: "Pagnino has too much neglected the ancient versions of Scripture to attain himself to the teaching of the rabbis."** What would we naturally expect, therefore? That he would render this word "lust," - and that is precisely what he does in the first (Gen 3v16) and third place (Song of Sol 7v10); in the second (Gen 4v7), he translates, "appetite."

Pagnino published his translation of the Hebrew Bible in 1528, and it influenced every older English version in their translation of Gen 3v16, for they render "teshuqa," as "lust," or "desire." What would we expect from the polluted Babylonian Talmud, and those who follow it, but the word "lust;" it is sad that this source and Pagnino had such a bad influence on the English translations of Gen 3v16. Cranmer's Bible of 1539 first translated "teshuqa" as "lust" in Gen 3v16, and the Geneva Bible and the Authorised Version and the Revised Version softened the idea to "desire."

Bushnell states in paragraph 145: "Following him (Pagnino), to the neglect of ancient versions, the English translators have not, in regard to Gen 3v16, set forth the proper sense of "teshuqa." Lewis in "Lang's Commentary," states, "The sense of this word (teshuqa) is not "libido," or sensual desire." It is a striking fact, that Tyndale, Coverdale, Matthew, (John Rogers) and Cranmer all translated "teshuqa " in Song of Sol 7v10 as "turning."

NB2 The influence of some Church Fathers.

Bushnell states that Church Fathers translate "teshuqa," as "turning." Clement of Rome who died 100 AD. Irenaeus who died 202 AD. Tertullian who was born 160 AD. Origen who was born 186 AD. Epiphanius who was born 310 AD in

Palestine. Ambrose who was born 340 AD. Augustus who was born 354 AD. Theodoret who was born 386 AD. All translate "teshuqa" as "turning," in one, two or all three passages. The famous Philo, a Jew of Alexandria who died in 50 AD also translates "teshuqa," as "turning."

There can be little doubt that Gen 3v16 should be translated; "You are turning away to thy husband and he will rule over thee." This was not a curse, but a prophecy of the domination of women by men, something which has, tragically, been fulfilled not only among the Heathen, but also, all too often, in the Church as well.

"Rule," is "mashal," to rule, to reign, to have dominion, to manage, to rule over. It occurs 83 times in the Hebrew Old Testament, God uses "mashal," to tell Cain that he could rule over and master the sin that was taking hold of him. It is used of Eliezer managing all of Abraham's house, Gen 15v2, 24v2. It is used of Joseph's brothers not entertaining the thought of Joseph ruling over them, Gen 37v2, (44v8,26). It is used of the rule of an oppressive king, as in Isaiah 19v4. Of higher justice in Exodus 21v8, Deut 15v6. Of the powerful ruling rich, Prov 22v7. Of political leadership, 1Kings 4v4-21, (Rom.13v1-7). Of self rule and self control, Prov 16v32. And of God's overruling providence, Psalm 89v10.

The Fourth Mistranslation, "Bruise," "Shuph." "Shuph," occurs 3 times in the Old Testament, in Gen 3v15, it is translated as "bruise," in Job 9v17 as "breaking," and in Psalm 139v11. as "cover." "Shuph," is used to mean "bite" (serpent bite), crush, break, and cover." The serpent will bite the heel, and the seed of the woman will crush the serpent's head. Psalm 72v9, Rom 16v20, Gal 3v16, Eph 2v14-18, Col 2v15, Heb 2v14, 1John 3v8, 5v18, Rev 12v7-12, 19v11, 20v1-3,10. Some think that "shuph" means the seed will be in wait for the serpent's head, for some of the ancient versions translate "shuph" as "lying in wait," or a kindred idea, and the Revised Version gives this as an alternative meaning in the margin. This could mean that God, in Christ, would be "lying in wait" for the serpent to crush his head, just as the serpent had lay in wait for Eve and Adam to deceive and destroy them.

The Woman And Her Seed Has Always Been A Threat To Satan.

This prophecy has been like a sword over Satan's head from the day that it was uttered. Christ partly fulfilled this in His life and atoning death, and will fulfil it in great measure, when Satan is cast into the Abyss at our Lord's second coming. It will finally be completely fulfilled, when Satan is cast into the lake of fire, at the end of the Millennium. Heb 2v14, Rev 20v1-10.

The Lessons We Can Learn From The Temptation And Fall In Eden.

Trust God and obey His word. Adam and Eve failed to trust God, and believed Satan's lies. They failed to be open with God, and refused to admit sin and failure, and so missed forgiveness and restoration.

God can still bring our marriage partners to us; "He who finds a wife finds what is good, and receives favour from the hand of the Lord." Prov 18v22. "A prudent wife is from the Lord." Prov 19v1. God provided a helper suitable for Adam. Gen 2v18. God's unsearchable wisdom can direct us in marriage. Rom 11v33-36. However, don't leave it all to God, the decision is yours. In Psalm 32v8-11, God tells us to use sanctified common sense, and not to be like a horse or mule which have no understanding; He wants to throw away the reins, He does not want to dominate our choices. Be glad and rejoice in the guiding mercy of God, He will guide us with His eye, and warn us, where necessary, of possible dangers. God can make our marriages a new creation in Christ. 2Cor 5v17. As Paul states, "Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always endures, love never fails." 1Cor 13v7,8.

Another Mistranslation, "Rib."

We read in the Authorised Version of Gen 2v21 that God took a rib out of Adam and made Eve, however, "rib" is not the correct translation. The Hebrew word translated as "rib," in Gen 2v21 (OT:6763), occurs forty-two times in the Old Testament, in most cases it is translated as "side," or "sides," and elsewhere as "corners," or "chambers," but the only place where it is translated as "rib," is in Gen 2v21,22, which describes the creation of Eve from Adam. If the Lord had meant "rib," He would have used the word for "rib" that He uses in Dan 7v5, (OT:5967), which means "rib," and nothing else. In the Septuagint version, the word is "pleura," which is invariably translated as "side" in the New Testament, where it is used of the side of Jesus into which the spear was thrust, John 19v34 and 20v20,25,27, and of the angels smiting Peter on the side to wake him up, when he was asleep in prison, in Acts 2v7. "Pleura is also used to speak of a person's side in the Greek of Homer and Herodotus. Adam stated, "she is flesh of my flesh," not just, "she is bone of my bone." God made a female clone out of the flesh and bone of the side of Adam, a truly remarkable miracle.

In Gen 3v16, God Did Not Curse Woman.

This is a summary of the teaching of the Scriptures that we have just considered.

Some use a mistranslation of Gen 3v16, which twists and distorts God's attitude to women, to justify the domination of women by men. It was not God, but Satan "the liar in wait," who increased the sorrow and pain of women.

According to the outstanding Hebrew scholar Katherine Bushnell, the translation, "Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow," in Gen 3v16, is incorrect. Bushnell states in her book, "God's Word To Women," that it should have been translated, "Unto the woman He said, A snare (literally, "a liar-in wait) hath increased thy sorrow." The participle form, ARB, occurs fourteen times in Joshua and Judges, and is translated as "ambush," and "liars-in-wait," or "in ambush," so Gen 3v16, could be translated, "A liar-in-wait (Satan in the form of a serpent) hath increased thy sorrow."

The Hebrew HRN has also been incorrectly translated in Gen 3v16, as "conception."

However, HRN is not the correct Hebrew for "conception," which is correctly spelt as HRJWN in Ruth 4v13 and Hosea 9v11. HRN occurs nowhere else in the Hebrew Old Testament, however, the Septuagint translators, who were outstanding Hebrew scholars, decided that the correct translation of HRN was, "thy sighing," "tou stenagmos autes." "Stenagmos," means "groanings," or "sighings," and is so translated in Exodus 2v24, 6v5, Job 3v24, etc. Many ancient authorities agree with the Septuagint. The A.V. rendering in Gen 3v16, "Unto the woman He said, I have greatly increased thy sorrow and thy conception," is against both the context and character of God, it should be translated, "Unto the woman He said, A snare (literally "a liar-in-wait") hath increased thy sorrow and thy sighing." That ancient serpent, Satan, being "the liar-in wait." Rev 12v9.

The Hebrew "teshuqa," in Gen 3v16, has also been incorrectly translated, as "desire," or "lust."

In paragraphs 124, 127, of her book "God's Word To Women," Bushnell states: "The correct rendering of Gen 3v16 is; "Thou art turning away to thy husband, and he will rule over thee," not as it has been rendered, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband."

Bushnell later continues, "Thus we see that the context does not prove that this "shall be" of the sentence translated, "thy desire shall be to thy husband" is imperative. We can assert positively that this sentence is a simple future or present, warning woman of the consequences of her action. So it is rendered in all the ancient versions; never as an imperative. As a prophecy it has been abundantly fulfilled in the manner which man rules over woman, especially in heathen lands." End of quote.

Lewis in "Lang's Commentary," states, "The sense of this word "teshuqa" is not "libido," or sensual desire." "Teshuqa," occurs 3 times in the Old Testament, in Gen 3v16, 4v7 and The Song 7v10. Bushnell states that the Church Fathers translate "teshuqa," as "turning." Clement of Rome (died 100 AD). Irenaeus (died 202 AD). Tertullian (born 160 AD). Origen (born 186 AD). Epiphanius (born 310 AD in Palestine). Ambrose (born 340 AD). Augustus (born 354 AD). Theodoret (born 386 AD). All translate "teshuqa" as "turning," in one, two or all three passages. The famous Jew, Philo of Alexandria (died 50 AD) also translates "teshuqa," as "turning."

Tertullian twisted the Scriptures when he said that God visited Eve's sin and guilt on all women. He stated, "Do you not know that you are an Eve? God's verdict on the sex still holds good, and the sex's guilt must still hold also. You are the Devil's gateway, you are the avenue of the forbidden tree. You are the first deserter from the Law divine. It was you who persuaded him (Adam), whom the devil himself had not strength to assail. So lightly did you esteem God's image. For your deceit, for death, the very Son of God had to perish." End of quote.

What a perversion of the truth! Paul states seven times in Rom 5v12-19, and once in 1Cor 15v22, that Adam is to blame for the fall. In 1Tim 2v14, we see Satan as the active agent in deception, and Eve as the passive deceived one. Paul says that the woman was completely deceived, "exapatetheisa," the aorist passive indicative of, "exapatao," "to deceive completely," or "to deceive successfully," and states that Adam was the one "who stepped over the boundary," "parabasis," and transgressed. In 2Cor 11v3, "beguiled," is "exepatesen," the aorist indicative active of "exapatao," the preposition "ex" in the compound is perfective, and so means to completely deceive. God says in Ezek 18v1-32 (NB v2,20), that guilt cannot be transferred from parent to child.

Calvin said that God cast Eve into servitude to men. However, God has decreed the very opposite, for husbands who do not treat their wives properly will have their prayers "cut off" by God. In 1Pet 3v7 "egkoptesthai" the present passive indicative of "egkopto," means, to cut in on, and so to hinder, to impede. In Eph 5v25, Paul commands Christian men, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." God certainly did not ordain that women should be in servitude to men.

It is a great pity that some theologians and translators have too been influenced by the perverted ideas of the Babylonian Talmud, and the Italian Dominican monk Pagnino, (who published his translation of the Hebrew Bible in

1528), and as a result have translated "teshuqa," as "lust," or "desire." The "Biographie Universelle," quotes the following criticism of Pagnino's work, in the language of Richard Simon: "Pagnino has too much neglected the ancient versions of Scripture to attain himself to the teaching of the rabbis." The Samaritan Pentateuch, the Old Latin, the Coptic Sahidic and Bohairic, and Ethiopic, translate "teshuqa," by words meaning "turning". The Syriac Peshitto, renders Gen 3v16, as "thou wilt turn;" and Gen 4v7 as "will turn;" and the Song of Sol 7v10 as "turning." The Septuagint, translates "teshuqa," as "turning" in the three places where it occurs; as "apostrophe," "turning away," in Gen 3v16 and 4v7, and as "epistrophe," "turning to," in Song 7v10. Nearly every quotation of the Old Testament in the New Testament follows the Septuagint, which tradition says was a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek by 72 Jewish scholars in Alexandria started in about 285 BC. The Septuagint was much favoured by the Jews until Christians used the translations of its prophecies to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. These ancient versions deny that Eve was under a curse from God, and was driven by lust after her husband.

In Gen 3v16, "Your desire will be to your husband, and he will rule over you," should be translated; "You are turning away to your husband and he will rule ("rule," is "mashal," to rule, to reign, to have dominion) over you." This was not a curse, but a prophecy of the domination of women by men, something which has, tragically, been fulfilled not only among the Heathen, but also, sadly, in the Church as well.

The glorious Gospel of Jesus reinstates women to a position of equality with men, as Paul states in Gal 3v26-28, "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." (KJV)

Appendix J: The Gift of Tongues

This is spoken of in the New Testament as "new tongues," "other tongues," "divers kinds of tongues," and even as "the tongues of men and angels." Mark 16v17, Acts 2v4, 1Cor 12v10,28, 13v1. It is a precious gift from God.

1) The gift of tongues is certainly not gibberish

To say that speaking with tongues by a blood-washed, Spirit-filled Christian is "gibberish," or "of the Devil," is to come very close to blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Nothing could be further from the truth than to call speaking with tongues, "gibberish," for those who have been able to understand the languages that Christians have spoken while speaking with tongues, have said that they are perfect. For example, a ten-year-old girl named Irene Piper was enabled by the Holy Spirit to speak to a Chinese man in his own language. He was told that he was to come to church and accept salvation. The Chinese man said that "her accent was perfect, and her forms of speech were so exact that ten years study would not give the average Occidental such knowledge of the language." This is confirmed by Acts 2v6,8, where it is said that the 120 disciples spoke in not only different languages but in different dialects. These believers were mainly illiterate people who knew only one dialect of one language, yet they were speaking in different languages and different dialects of the same language. We are told that the Medes and Elamites (Persians), spoke the same language but with different dialects. "Dialektos" occurs only in the book of Acts, Acts 1v19, 2v6,8, 21v40, 22v2, 26v14, the other word for language is "glossa," i.e. "tongue," and is used for the organ of the body known as the tongue, the tongues of fire, as well as a language. Mark 7v33,35, 16v17, Acts 2v3,4,11,26, 10v46, 19v6, 1Cor 12v10,28,30, 13v1,8, 14v2,4,5,6,9,13,14,18,19,22,23,26,27,39, Rev 7v9 etc.

"Glossolalia," speaking with tongues, is certainly not like the incoherent, unmeaning, broken ramblings of some wild false religions. It is the intelligent speaking of God's mysteries, i.e. God's hidden secrets and purposes. The disciples at Pentecost spoke fluently and powerfully of God's wonderful works, it was only those who did not understand the language who said that it was drunken gibberish, those who did understand it said it was perfect and inspiring language and were converted as a result. It was the hearers of tongues who were "beside themselves," amazed and "ecstatic," not the speakers in tongues, "existemi," Acts 2v7,12, 10v45; "ekstasis," Acts 3v10, Mark 5v42, 16v8, Luke 5v26, Acts 10v10, 11v5, 22v17. The person who is worshipping God in tongues will sometimes have real depths of feeling, but the Holy Spirit will never cause them to lose control of themselves, He is a perfect gentleman.

Sometimes even Christians who have been filled with the Spirit and spoken in tongues doubt their experience because they seem to repeat again and again certain sentences or phrases in their unknown tongue. These Christians should realise that in their native tongue they do not use an extensive vocabulary when they are praising the Lord. Many Christians just say, "Praise the Lord," "Wonderful Jesus," etc., they do not use a great many words to express their worship and praise.

Here is an extract from page 32 and 33 of W.F.P. Burton's book "Signs following:" This extract shows that on occasions the Holy Spirit may inspire us to speak only a few words, but that these words can reach the very highest levels of praise and express the very deepest love and devotion for God.

"In 1921 the Pastor of a meeting in Toronto, Canada, confided in me, "Brother Burton, there is something I do not understand in our assembly. When the meeting is warmed up into a real fervency of spirit a woman bursts out into an ejaculation. It never varies, and it seems to me like nonsense. She says in a kind of intonation 'Kalombooo Vidye. Vidyeeeee Kalombo.' I don't like to stop her. What would you do about it?" I said, 'Oh, do let me hear it, brother. That is an expression used by our natives in the highest respect to their big chiefs.' On my return to Lubaland I was much struck by the monotonous regularity with which the village counsellors keep up an excited 'Kalombo Vidye,' in reverence to their chiefs during sessions of the court, and one can well understand both what an ejaculation of loving worship it was on the woman's part and also how it might have puzzled her Pastor." End of quote.

This shows how careful we have to be in judging utterances in tongues that seem repetitive and sound very peculiar. Many languages sound like utter nonsense to those who do not understand them, indeed, some sound so primitive, that even the best and most intelligent linguist might doubt the genuineness of what is in reality a complicated, beautiful and meaningful language. Even the very greatest linguist knows but a fraction of the world's languages. "World Digest" informs us that there have existed at least 6,760 languages, and only 2,296 are still spoken. There are, then, 4,464 dead languages on earth, which one could speak in other tongues, besides the tongues of angels of which we are told nothing except that there are obviously many of them as Paul speaks of them in the plural in 1Cor 13v1. It is a fact that children of God have spoken by the Holy Spirit's inspiration, both modern and ancient languages, and linguists have understood them. However, we need to remember that God does not cast His pearls before swine; such manifestations like this are usually for the sincere and seeking heart. The gift of tongues was not given to enable people to preach in languages that they did not know, in Christ's time Greek was known throughout the Roman Empire, but it has always had a great effect as a sign to confirm the Gospel. The gift of tongues is certainly not gibberish; it is a lovely and precious manifestation of God the Holy Spirit.

2) The gift of tongues is certainly not a useless, unprofitable, and unimportant gift

Every gift of God is precious and good, and the gift of tongues is certainly no exception, it can bring great blessing to us.

a) Diligently used the gift of tongues transforms our ability to pray and worship

The gift of tongues enables the Christian to utter and fully express the otherwise indescribable longings of their soul and their unspeakable feelings of love for God. It gives the Christian the ability to pray to God and worship God as we ought, it frees us from the limits of human speech and knowledge, for the Holy Spirit Himself gives us the vocabulary and blessing to fully express the needs, feelings and desires of the soul. The gift of tongues enables the Christian to pray on a new level of prayer, for it is God praying through us to perform things exceeding more abundantly than we can ask or think.

b) Diligently used the gift of tongues transforms our appreciation of spiritual things

It brings a new realisation of the value and power of the Scriptures, and a new insight into their meaning; indeed, it is only the Spirit-filled Christian who can really understand much of the experience of the New Testament early Church. The diligent use of the gift of tongues enables us to have a deeper level of fellowship with Christ and His Father, and to see and worship them in a new and deeper way. Through the use of this gift God the Holy Spirit edifies the soul and spirit and makes spiritual things real to the soul. Which brings us to our next point.

c) Diligently used the gift of tongues transforms the character and blesses the whole personality

It is given to build faith and love in the soul and edify, bless and transform the character and life of the believer, as Paul said the person who speaks in tongues "edifies himself." 1Cor 14v14. **It has the same effect in the prayer life and devotional life that prophecy has in the church.** In blessing the soul and spirit it can have the most beneficial effect on the body, it can throw off conscious and subconscious worries, and can relax and refresh a tired body and mind as well as bless the soul. Isaiah 28v11,12 with 1Cor 14v21 and Rom 8v11. The gift of tongues can defend us from spiritual foes and give us the victory over them, for through this gift the Holy Spirit Himself comes to our aid and ministers to our spiritual needs and makes the soul strong, i.e. edifies the soul.

d) Diligently and properly used it can transform a Christian meeting

A powerful, love-laden tongue can greatly bless the church even before it is interpreted, and if the interpretation carries the same benediction, it can bring showers of blessing.

So we can clearly see that God intended the gift of tongues to be an immense aid to the devotional life and prayer life, and it is also very profitable in the church when it is correctly used. This explains why Paul used the gift of tongues more than any of the Corinthians. 1Cor 14v18. We will consider the value and use of the gift of tongues at greater length later; this will involve some repetition, but it will serve to impress upon our minds, the great blessing and benefits that the Holy Spirit can bestow upon us through the use of His precious gift.

3) The apostle Paul certainly did not reject, despise, or belittle the gift of tongues, and neither should we

The apostle Paul spoke in tongues more than any of the Corinthians, he obviously looked upon it as absolutely

indispensable and necessary for his spiritual welfare. 1Cor 14v18. Paul criticises the Corinthians selfish and noisy misuse of tongues in their public meetings, not the gift of tongues, and he instructs them to use the gift in the correct way. Paul certainly does not say in 1Cor 13v1, that the gift of tongues is unprofitable, he says that the selfish and noisy use of the gift of tongues in public does not profit the church. "The more excellent way" that 1Cor 12v31 tells us to walk in, is not the way of love severed from, or separate and distinct from all the other gifts, graces, attributes and talents; it is love as the motivating force and guiding principal of all these lovely and desirable things. It is certainly not, as some would have us to think, love in opposition to the gifts, or love without the gifts. It is the gifts of the Holy Spirit being sought and used out of the love of God and others.

It is very foolish to say, "You can seek the gifts, but I am going to seek for love." Those who seek for love from the God of love will also seek HIS gifts. The fact that a Christian lacks spiritual gifts does not mean that they possess love, indeed it may mean the very opposite, for it is impossible to follow after love and despise or criticise our heavenly Father's spiritual gifts. If we really desire and follow after love, we shall desire, follow after, and encourage spiritual gifts. We are not glorifying God by extolling love at the expense of the gifts that He has given. Paul does not say in 1Cor 13 that the gifts are "nothing" without love, for they are given by the God of love and are wonderful, it is the possessor that is "nothing." 1Cor 13v1-3. Spiritual gifts manifested in love profit both the recipient of the gift and others who are ministered to. It must be remembered that Paul said that without love, not only spiritual gifts, but also knowledge of sacred things, gifts to the needy, and even martyrdom for Christ's sake, are profitless to us without love. **Though spiritual gifts lose some of their value without love, love is helpless without them. Love needs God's power to meet the needs of the broken in heart, the sick in body and the oppressed, and in the ministry of Jesus we see the lovely co-ordination of divine love and divine power meeting the needs of suffering humanity.**

Paul does not say that the gift of tongues and other spiritual gifts are of little consequence because they are only temporary. In Heb 6v5 the baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit are spoken of as "the powers of the age to come," so we can see that the gifts of the Spirit are a temporary and partial use of the powers of the eternal kingdom. The gifts of the Holy Spirit do not cease in the sense that there will never again be any miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit; the temporary manifestations of the Holy Spirit and the partial manifestations and revelations of God are swallowed up in the continuous and eternal enjoyment of the supernatural power and blessing of God. The part is swallowed up in the whole. The same way our present knowledge will come to nought, or vanish away, in the sense that our limited knowledge will be swallowed up in the infinite knowledge of God. Paul is telling us that the temporary and occasional manifestations of divine power through the gifts will be swallowed up in the continual, permanent and eternal manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Paul emphasises the need for gifts as well as love until the Lord Jesus comes and the kingdom of God is set upon earth. The temporary gifts help to produce eternal love and when they give way to the eternal and permanent manifestations of divine love power and wisdom. The gift of tongues is important because Paul says that it is given to produce love and faith in the soul, it is given to edify the believer, it is only like "roaring brass and clashing cymbal" when it is used in a selfish way by an unconsecrated and loveless Christian.

When Paul speaks in 1Cor 12v31 of prophecy and the other gifts as being "greater gifts" than the gift of tongues, he is speaking in the context of public meetings of Christians. For **Paul makes it quite clear that the greatest gift in the devotional life of the believer is the gift of tongues. The diligent, devotional and loving use of the gift of tongues in the secret place will result in other gifts being manifested in public.** 1Cor 14v2,4,18 with 2Cor 12v12. Paul spoke more in tongues than any of the verbose Corinthians so that he might edify his fellow-Christians in public; this was one of the secrets of Paul's spiritual power and godly character. From his own experience Paul tells us that the gift of tongues will build love, faith and spiritual strength in the possessor of the gift, if it is used diligently and devotionally. Indeed, **Paul states that it is the one gift whose primary aim is the spiritual well being of the possessor.** A Christian cannot manifest the other gifts of the Spirit when he desires, and when they are manifested they are nearly always for the benefit of others, but he can speak in tongues when he desires and be spiritually edified as a result. Paul certainly did not disparage or belittle the gift of tongues; he used it very diligently and was greatly edified and spiritually blessed as a result.

It is a great tragedy that many Christians do not appreciate their heavenly Father's provision for them in His gift of speaking with tongues, indeed, it is a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to many Christians. Here are some of the reasons why they do not want to speak in tongues.

a) Some Christians are ignorant of the great blessing that this gift can bring

They say, "What is the good of speaking with tongues? It is the least of the gifts." they feel that it is of no real benefit. This attitude shows that a person is ignorant of the Scriptures upon the subject, for the great benefits of this gift are shown in the New Testament. However, even if a Christian does not know the benefits of this gift as revealed in the Scriptures, they should not question the wisdom of God in giving this gift. They should say, "My heavenly Father has given this gift, so there must be some very good reason for it and some very profitable results of its manifestation, for God only gives good and perfect gifts." James 1v17. **The gift of tongues may be the least important gift as regards to public ministry, but it is the greatest gift in relation to the devotional life and prayer life, which**

is the source of an anointed public ministry, so we can see that there is certainly nothing little about the gift of tongues.

b) Some Christians love the praise of men more than the praise of God: John 12v42,43

Some Christians count the cost of losing friends who reject the Pentecostal experience, and so they also reject the lovely gift of tongues. Two young men who had dictated to the Lord, "We want the baptism in the Holy Spirit without speaking in tongues, were asked why they prayed in this manner, they replied that it was because speaking in tongues was unpopular. It is a sad thing that many more Christians are choosing to please men rather than God by criticising, avoiding and condemning the gift of tongues given by their Saviour and heavenly Father. Acts 2v4,33.

c) Some Christians have a fear of the supernatural

Some Christians are frightened by the operation of spiritual forces, and they cannot trust God to give them "good gifts," to preserve them from dangers in the spiritual realm, so they prefer to stop in the wilderness instead of conquering their spiritual Canaan. The Lord Jesus stated that this attitude is due to a lack of faith in our heavenly Father's love and power. Matt 7v7-11, Luke 11v9-13. Comp. Heb 3 and 4. Paul certainly never belittled speaking with tongues, and neither should we, he said that the gift of tongues, like any other gift, should be correctly used by Christians, and this brings us to our next point.

4) The gift of tongues should certainly not be misused

Paul tells us that we should take special notice of the following.

a) We should not monopolise church meetings with speaking in tongues

The aim in the church should be public and not private edification; therefore, we should curtail noisy or excessive speaking in tongues and seek God for a prophecy. 1Cor 14v5,18,19. We can use the gift of tongues in the church, but Paul says that we should usually speak quietly to ourselves and God. A background murmur of praise or speaking in tongues is quite all right as long as it does not hinder others praying or prophesying. 1Cor 14v40. Though the whole church may on occasions burst out in praise and worship and sing and speak in tongues; in a church meeting, speaking with tongues should generally be quietly spoken between ourselves and God. 1Cor 14v28. A Scriptural order will result in a greater measure of blessing on the church.

b) We should exercise special restraint when the unconverted or unlearned are present

When the unconverted or people who are unlearned in spiritual gifts come into a Pentecostal meeting, the Pentecostal believers must act wisely and restrain themselves from any loud outbursts in tongues, otherwise the visitor will say that everybody is mad. 1Cor 14v23. If there is to be any public manifestation of the gift of tongues in such circumstances it must be by tongues and interpretation, however, Paul makes it quite clear in 1Cor 14v24,25, that prophecy is by far the best gift to manifest under such circumstances. The noisy use of the gift of tongues is particularly wrong when an outsider is in a meeting, and it will invariably produce consternation and criticism whereas, the use of the gift of prophecy may well result in the conviction and conversion of the "outsider." The gift of tongues is only a sign to the unbeliever when he can understand the language spoken in tongues.

c) We should set a definite limit to the number of tongues for interpretation

Utterances in a tongue in the church that are for interpretation should be limited to three utterances, and if there is no interpreter in the church there must be no public utterances, the person must speak quietly to themselves and to God. 1Cor 14v27,28. Only one person should interpret each utterance even though several might be able to do so. It also definitely seems from 1Cor 14v16, "everyone hath a tongue," that Paul said that one person should only give one tongue; it is certainly a good thing to share the ministry of spiritual gifts. We should not speak an utterance for interpretation at all unless the Holy Spirit moves us in a very definite way, those who do insist on speaking without the Holy Spirit's direction, will find that there is very limited blessing on it.

Paul had several reasons for limiting tongues for interpretation to three. Paul did not want the Corinthians to have an excessive emphasis upon utterances in tongues; he desired them to have a correct and sensible balance, and to seek after prophecy and the other gifts. Paul also knew that three tongues for interpretation was as much as the Christians could remember, weigh and profit from. It is certainly a very sensible limitation, and if we observe this and the other limitations that Paul lays down, we will be preserved from fanaticism, selfishness and disorder, and we will enjoy a profitable manifestation of speaking with tongues.

5) We must not confuse devotional tongues with tongues given for a ministry to the Church

It is a proven fact that only a small percentage of Christians, who speak with tongues, have a ministry in the church of "divers kinds of tongues." 1Cor 12v10. Only a small percentage of Christians who speak in tongues, speak out a tongue that is interpreted in the church. This is what Paul is speaking about in 1Cor 12v30, when he asks, "Do all speak with tongues?" The failure to distinguish between tongues that are for private edification, and tongues that are interpreted as a ministry to the church, has caused some critics of the Pentecostal experience to seize upon 1Cor 12v30, as an excuse for not speaking with tongues. However, Paul in 1Cor 12v27-31 is speaking of ministries that

God has set in the church to build up the church, people with God-given gifts for public ministry, and the ministry of speaking tongues for interpretation is mentioned amongst them. There are Christians who have been given outstanding ministries of speaking with tongues, Christians whose utterances in tongues are of such great beauty and carry such a divine benediction that one feels that they are upon holy ground, even before there is any interpretation. The gift of tongues that is interpreted and ministers to the needs of the church is an enlargement of the ability to speak in a tongue, or tongues, that a Christian receives when they receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. However, all are not given this ministry, some quite properly, only use their tongue for private prayer and devotion, while others have in addition to this ministry for the church.

Definition: The gift of tongues is the supernatural ability given by the Holy Spirit to speak in a tongue that is unknown to the speaker. The primary purpose of this gift is devotional; it is intended to be a divine aid to the prayer life. For though this gift can be used by God to speak to people in their own language, and when interpreted it can speak to the church; the person who speaks in an unknown tongue almost always, "Speaks not to men, but to God; for no man understands him." 1Cor 14v2.

The Value and Use of the Gift of Tongues

Let us now consider the great blessing that come through the correct manifestation of this gift of the Holy Spirit, these will clearly show why every Christian should desire to speak in tongues, and why God desires every Christian to speak with tongues.

1) Speaking with tongues brings into play the highest faculty of the Christian, the spirit

Christ said that we must worship God with our spirit if we are to worship Him acceptably, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." John 4v23,24. The most elaborate and highly organised worship is only a dead form if the spiritual worship that Christ spoke of is missing. However, by the simple act of speaking with tongues we are enabled by the Holy Spirit to worship God on the very highest level, it is truly acceptable worship if we let love for God and others direct our lives. When the Holy Spirit enables us by this gift to magnify and bless God and to give God the love and worship of our hearts, He enables us to do the greatest thing that the Christian can do, for worship of God is the greatest act of the creature. Acts 10v46, Matt 22v35-40, Mark 12v28-34. The use of the gift of tongues lifts the Christian into a new realm of worship; it enables us to worship God to the limit of our capacity. Eph 4v18, Rom 8v26,27. We can also pray with our spirit, "If I pray in an unknown tongue my spirit prays." 1Cor 14v14. We can sing with the spirit, "I will sing with the spirit." 1Cor 14v16. So that we can see that the gift of tongues enables us to reach the highest levels of worship in spirit and truth, the very thing that Jesus said God desires. John 4v23,24. Spirit and truth worship is the most important act of the Christian life. How then, can some despise the gift of tongues and call it "The least of the gifts?"

2) The gift of tongues brings into the personal prayer life the ability of the Holy Spirit

When you speak in tongues you are not limited by your own ability, God the Holy Spirit takes our needs, prayer, praise and desires, and the needs of other people and brings them to the Father. When we pray in tongues we can pray for deep needs that we do not know, and the burdens that would be too big for us and would shatter or overwhelm us if we knew them, we can bring them to God and have complete assurance of victory through the Holy Spirit's aid.

The gift of tongues is as important in the personal prayer life as prophecy is in the church. In the secret place the gift of tongues is the most important gift for personal deification, and the youngest convert and most mature Christian can build themselves up in their most holy faith by the use of this lovely gift. Jude v20,21, 1Cor 14v4,18. A diligent use of the gift of tongues in the private prayer life will result in a very blessed and fluent use of this gift. On occasions a completely new language will be given by the Holy Spirit, which possesses all the phonetics and rhythm of a perfect and complete language. However, whether the Holy Spirit gives us many or few words to express our praise or prayer, the exercises of the gift of tongues will bring great blessing and mighty power in prayer. When we use the gift of tongues our devotional life, we pray or praise as the Holy Spirit directs and in the way that He thinks best. We always pray for the right things in tongues, because we pray as the Holy Spirit directs, whereas, in our own tongue we can pray selfishly, ignorantly, incorrectly, and even with unsanctified ambition and denominational pride. When a Christian prays in tongues, it is prayer and worship on the very highest level. **The balanced prayer-life demands praying and singing in tongues, as well as prayer and singing in one's own language.** 1Cor 14v15.

In 1Cor 13v1, Paul implies that the Holy Spirit may cause us to speak in the tongues of angels. If an angelic tongue can express the praise of a great angelic being living in the eternal and uncreated glory and splendour of God's majestic presence, it can surely express the praise of the redeemed children of God living in this dark and sinful world. How wonderful it is to be freed from the limits of our own small vocabulary and limited eloquence, into the excellence and eloquence of earthly and even heavenly languages by the aid of the Holy Spirit. How wonderful to speak our praise on such a high plane. A gift that is of such importance in the prayer-life of the Christian should not be disparaged or termed little, least, or unimportant; such talk is a slight upon God, who is the giver of this good gift.

3 Speaking in tongues brings into operation the other gifts of the Spirit

Prayer and praise builds up the spiritual life of the Christian to the place where they are able to manifest the other gifts of the Holy Spirit. **The greater a person's ministry is, the more they need to speak in other tongues.** One well known evangelist found that miracles were ceasing in his services because he had been neglecting speaking in tongues. Another well-known evangelist tells us that he does not expect much to happen unless he prays for several hours in tongues before he goes to the services. **The Holy Spirit's ministrations through this gift in the secret place of prayer will result in a blessing upon one's public ministry.** Matt 6v5,6 with 1Cor 14v4,18.

4) Speaking with tongues makes the Lord Jesus and God our Father very real to us

Those who use this gift of tongues diligently in the secret place can testify that speaking with tongues really brings one close to our heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus, and it really deepens our love for them. What a precious gift this is! This alone would be a more than sufficient reason for desiring this gift. John 16v13-15. A gift that makes God the Father and God the Son more real and precious to the Christian should never be disparaged or belittled.

5) Speaking with tongues edifies the church when it is interpreted: 1Cor 14v5

An anointed message in tongues can be a really wonderful blessing, and the interpretation can bring great comfort, solace and needful instruction. God has set this gift in the church as a valuable means of public as well as private edification.

6) The gift of tongues nourishes the spirit with divine truth

Some people have said that the gift of tongues is the least of the gifts, or that it was "infant prattling" and not for mature Christians. However, the apostle Paul 24 years after his conversion was speaking in tongues more than the verbose Christians at Corinth and he was certainly not immature. 1Cor 14v18. Paul tells us that when we speak in tongues we speak "mysteries," i.e. the hidden counsels and secrets of God, which were once hidden, but are now revealed to the children of God. Matt 13v11, Luke 8v10, Rom 11v25, 16v25, 1Cor 2v1,7, 4v1, 14v2, 15v51, Eph 1v9, 3v3,4,9, 5v32, 6v19, Col 1v26,27, 4v3, 2Thess 2v7, 1Tim 3v9, Rev 10v7, Psalm 25v14. When we speak in tongues, we speak hidden and exalted spiritual truths; this is an exalted sphere of utterance. The hearers at Pentecost called these "mysteries," "The wonderful works of God;" they looked upon the utterances of the disciples as anything but "infant prattling," those who understood the languages were so awed and moved by the sublime words that they heard, that they became Christians. In 1Cor 13v11,12, Paul speaks of our present limited knowledge of the future heavenly "mysteries" as "infant prattling," but he never refers to speaking in tongues in this way.

Our minds are limited in their ability to absorb and appreciate heavenly realities, our spirits are not limited in this way. Speaking in tongues enables our spirits to appreciate and feed on spiritual realities and Divine mysteries, and our spirits grow through the spiritual truths and blessings that come through speaking with tongues. This by-passes and rests the mind, so that even when we are too tired to think upon truth with our minds, our spirits and souls are nourished by the use of this gift. Isaiah 28v11,12, 1Cor 14v21. However, we cannot grow in God if we neglect the Scripture, its truth feeds our minds; so we should. "As new-born babes, for the pure milk that is for the mind eagerly crave, that thereby ye may grow unto salvation." 1Pet 2v2. Rotherham.

We will now give two instances where people have actually heard Christians speaking of the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" as they spoke in other tongues.

H. Horton writes on page 160 of his book, "The Gifts of the Spirit," what a missionary in the Congo heard when he was present at the baptism in the Spirit of a young coloured man. The missionary was amazed to hear the young man speaking in perfect English and repeating Old Testament instances of creation and history. The young man did not know a word of English and what is more, nothing of the accounts of Scripture that he was repeating. The missionary left the hut to search for his wife so that she could witness this remarkable manifestation of the Spirit. When he returned with his wife the young man was still speaking in English, and was speaking of the New Testament revelation concerning the second coming of Christ.

W.F.P. Burton gives an account of another inspiring incident that occurred at Mwanza in the Congo, on page 30 and 31 of "Signs following." When the churches were getting spiritually cold it was their practice to gather the believers together for several days of prayer, ministry of the Word and waiting upon God. During one such occasion Mr. Burton was keeping "a quiet eye" on the meeting to make sure that there was no "undue excitement or extravagance," when he was struck by the earnest expression of a young man named Ziba, who was obviously being deeply affected by the real power of the Holy Spirit which was moving upon the men gathered there. Mr. Burton quietly moved around to where the young man sat and was surprised and moved to hear Ziba speaking in absolutely perfect English of Christ's second coming to earth to reign and the glories of His millennial kingdom. Ziba was a simple village lad without any knowledge of the English language, but here he was speaking in perfect English without any ungrammatical expressions or any trace of foreign accent, and what he said was absolutely true to the Scriptures.

So we can see that when the Holy Spirit enables a Christian to speak in tongues it nourishes their spirit with divine truths and builds them up spiritually. It is foolish and wrong to forbid Christians to speak with other tongues, for this is a good and lovely gift of God the Holy Spirit, and God ordained that we should have this gift and use it for our spiritual benefit.

7) Speaking with tongues is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Spirit

At the outpourings of the Spirit mentioned in Acts 2v4, 10v45,46, 11v17 and 19v6, when the Christians received the baptism of the Spirit, they spoke with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. **They received one common evidence that they had been baptised in the Spirit, speaking in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.** With the exception of the outpouring at Ephesus, we do not read of any other manifestations of the gifts, and there they prophesied after speaking with tongues.

Aaron Linford writes on the outpouring of the Spirit at Ephesus on page 55 of his book, "The Baptism in the Holy Spirit." "Again the construction of the Greek (in Acts 19v6.) determines the fact that they all spoke in tongues. The expression is 'elaloun te glossais kai epropheteuon.' When 'te' is followed by 'kai' it may be rendered 'both,' or 'not only... but also.' Closest union is expressed by 'te kai.' We could translate thus: 'The Holy Spirit came at once upon them, and they began not only to speak with tongues but also to prophesy.'.... sliding joyously and naturally from inspired language they did not know to inspired language they did know- but speaking by the same Spirit." End of quote.

From humble housewives to mighty apostles the initial evidence of the baptism in the Spirit was speaking with tongues. At the baptism in the Spirit of these believers the Holy Spirit did not give various gifts as the evidence of the baptism in the Spirit He gave the gift of tongues to all. If the Holy Spirit had decreed that the manifestation of any Spiritual gift indicated that a Christian was baptised in the Spirit, then He would certainly have manifested them all on the day of Pentecost, but tongues was the only initial evidence of the Spirit's baptism at Pentecost. When Paul speaks in 1Cor 12v11 of the gifts being given "severally as He will," he is referring to the manifestations of the Spirit in a church meeting or to the other activities of the church. He is not speaking of the baptism in the Spirit, for at Pentecost, the house of Cornelius, and Ephesus, the gift that was given to all was the gift of tongues. In the other two cases in the Acts where it is stated that Christians received the baptism in the Spirit, even non-Pentecostal commentators agree that what Simon saw in Acts 8v18, was the Samaritan Christians speaking in tongues, and we know that Paul spoke in tongues from 1Cor 14v18, Acts 8v14-20, 9v17.

To those who question that tongues is the initial evidence of the baptism in the Spirit, we would ask, "What other evidence can you supply from the Scriptures that will prove that a person is baptised in the Spirit?" All the other gifts, except the gift of interpretation of tongues, were used by the Old Testament prophets and the disciples of Christ before Pentecost. If a great ministry or many conversions were to be used as a claim for the possession of the baptism of the Spirit, John the Baptist and the apostles could have claimed that they were baptised in the Spirit before Pentecost, however, John 7v39 assures us that this was not so. The Holy Spirit was **WITH** them but **not IN** them with His permanently abiding presence, they had not received the baptism of the Spirit, as the Lord Jesus states in John 14v16,17.

The Holy Spirit has even given revelations to the unconverted, e.g. Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, and Cornelius. Cornelius received words of wisdom and knowledge, and a discerning of spirits, before he was converted or baptised in the Spirit. Peter did not say that the household of Cornelius had received the Spirit because they were filled with joy, or were living sanctified lives, desirable as these are; Peter said that they were unmistakably filled with the Spirit because they had spoken in tongues like the 120 on the day of Pentecost. Acts 10v1-6,43-48, 11v17,18. Joy, peace, sanctification, or love for the brethren cannot be looked upon as a claim for being filled with the Spirit; these are a result of abiding in Christ and being led of the Spirit.

The baptism of the Spirit is a conscious experience and should be an overwhelming experience; to be immersed in the mighty power of God the Holy Spirit is just as real an experience and spiritually more uplifting than being baptised in water. The book of Acts shows us that meeting and being baptised with the gracious and mighty Holy Spirit is a great and overwhelming experience. Some Christians think that they have received the baptism of the Spirit when they have received a temporary anointing of the Holy Spirit. However, the Old Testament saints had this experience, and the apostles too, before the baptism of the Holy Spirit was given. Ezek 2v2, 3v24, Judges 14v6, 15v14, Numb 11v25, Luke 1v67, 2v27, 2Pet 1v21 with John 7v37-39. The gift of speaking with tongues is the evidence that we have received the New Testament experience of the baptism of the Spirit. Speaking with tongues gives the Christian undeniable and unmistakable evidence that they are filled with the Holy Spirit, and it also enables them to express the "unutterable gushings" of praise, and worship and adoration that fill the soul when a Christian receives the mighty baptism in the Holy Spirit. The other spiritual gifts and graces do not certify that a Christian has received a Pentecostal experience of the baptism in the Spirit, the only certain Scriptural proof of a Pentecostal gift of tongues.

We do not always need a word of wisdom or a gift of healing, or some of the other gifts, however, we always need to

build up ourselves in our most holy faith, and this is why after the baptism in the Spirit, God enables us to manifest this gift whenever we desire to do so. The apostolic band did not quibble about the gifts of tongues, or God's choice of it as the initial evidence of the baptism of the Spirit, they accepted it and rejoiced in the use of it, and all Christians should do the same. The only safe pattern of Christian experience is that written in the New Testament, the good and best can lead us far astray, the Word of God alone can lead us safely on.

Some Christians teach that the Christian receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit at conversion; however, this can be shown to be incorrect by many passages of the New Testament Scriptures. The apostles were converted before Pentecost, their names were written in heaven, Luke 10v20; they were "clean," John 15v3; they were Christ's flock and Christ's brethren, Luke 12v32, John 20v17; they belonged to God, John 17v6,9,23, but it was after Calvary that these disciples received the baptism in the Spirit that had been promised to them. Acts 1v5-8. Pentecost was not the time when the apostles were saved, they were rejoicing in their salvation before Pentecost. Luke 24v52,53. They received Christ and believed in His name and so they were saved, John 1v12, even though it was not until the resurrection that they understood the atoning work of the Lord Jesus. Luke 24v44-49.

Paul was saved when he met the Lord Jesus on the Damascus road, he owned the Lordship of Christ, he said, "Lord, what will thou have me to do?" Acts 9v6. Ananias was able to call him "Brother Saul," and he was sent that Paul might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit; this was three days after Paul's conversion. Acts 9v9,17. At Samaria the people accepted Philip's message of salvation and became joyful believers; it was several, or many days later that Peter and John came to Samaria to lay hands on the converts so that they might receive the baptism in the Spirit. Acts 8v5-18.

Even if, as some say, the "disciples" at Ephesus in Acts 19v1-6, were disciples of John Baptist, who became Christians when Paul spoke to them, (a thing that I do not myself believe,) it still follows that they were baptised in the Holy Spirit some time after their conversion. For it would take some time to find a suitable place where they could baptise the disciples, and some time must have elapsed between this and the baptism in the Spirit, even if it were only a matter of minutes or hours. Their baptism in the Spirit occurred, therefore, some time after their conversion, when the apostle Paul laid hands upon them. The apostle Peter tells us in Acts 2v38,39, that as a general rule, the baptism in the Spirit takes place after repentance and faith in Christ. The exceptions to this rule are found in Acts 10v44-48, and possibly Acts 9v18.

We see in John 1v29,33, that the experience of salvation is looked upon as a quite distinct experience from the baptism of the Holy Spirit, a fact confirmed by Eph 1v13, where it states that "after ye had believed (in Christ,) ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." This promise of the Spirit was not the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, which all Christians enjoy before the baptism in the Spirit as a result of salvation and the new birth; it was the promise of the baptism of the Spirit, the promise of the Father, the endowment of power from on high. Luke 24v49. The baptism in the Spirit can occur a few seconds after conversion, as at the house of Cornelius, or many years after conversion, as was probably the case of the Ephesian believers of Acts 19v1-6. There are thousands, indeed, millions of Christians today who have proved the truth of the Scriptures, that after conversion a Christian can experience the mighty baptism of the Holy Spirit. Paul desired every one of the Corinthians to experience their personal Pentecost and speak with other tongues. 1Cor 14v5. This must have been the will of God or Paul would not have dared to say such a thing. Paul was not content until Christians had received their personal Pentecost and spoken with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. It is very sad that many Christians are as ignorant today of their Pentecostal heritage as the Ephesian believers of Acts 19v1-6, they do not know Christ as the baptiser in the Holy Spirit. John 1v33, Acts 2v32,33. However, those of us who are filled with the Holy Spirit can rejoice in this precious experience and rejoice in the gift of tongues, which is the initial evidence of the baptism in the Spirit.

8) Speaking with tongues can be a powerful sign to people when they understand the language

Though this is not the normal use of the gift, the gift of tongues is predominantly devotional; it can produce remarkable results when God manifests this gift as a sign as He did on the day of Pentecost. It can convict and convert the sinner, and be a great encouragement to the believer. 1Cor 14v22, Acts 2v4-12, Mark 16v17-20. The gift of tongues is not intended to replace the preaching of the Gospel however, on rare occasions God does use the gift of tongues to confirm the Gospel message by speaking in a language that the listener understands. This sign is intended to prepare the listeners for the preaching of the Gospel. The disciples at Pentecost spoke in tongues that were unknown to them, but many listeners recognised the languages and were captivated and amazed at hearing the rapturous praise of God and His wonderful works in their own language. The listeners at Pentecost knew that these disciples did not know their language, and so when Peter explained what had happened they were instantly willing to accept the Gospel Peter preached. The tongues gained the attention of the people and prepared them for the preaching of Peter. We will now give some well-documented modern instances where the Lord has used the gift of tongues as a sign to convert the unbeliever and encourage the believer.

W.F.P. Burton gives the following testimony:

"We used to hold gospel services beside Lytham lifeboat house on Sunday evenings. One Sunday when a big crowd

was listening to the preaching, the power of God fell on a Mrs. Whiteside, and she began to speak in a strange language. This dear sister would certainly not mind my stating that under ordinary circumstances she was far from grammatical, even in her own language, and she never learned any other. As she spoke I found that I could understand all that she was saying. A solemn silence fell on the crowd as Mrs. Whiteside spoke in tongues, and I gave the interpretation in English. As soon as we had finished a big, middle-aged man stepped into the ring of listeners and, falling on his knees cried to God to save his soul. He had been a prominent tailor in Lytham, with a big business, but had lost practically everything through his craving for liquor. He was more often inebriated than sober, but he was as sober as a judge and declared that every word of that message in tongues and interpretation went straight to his heart.

Now it happened that a young Japanese man, who was studying shipbuilding in Lytham shipbuilding yard, had stood listening among the crowd outside the lifeboat house. He went home and asked his landlady, 'Who are those people who preach and sing on Lytham beach?' She replied, 'They are a lot of fanatical, religious enthusiasts. Some say that they are religion mad,' he remarked, 'but I heard a most remarkable thing. One spoke in perfect Japanese, while another gave the exact equivalent in English.'

There one had both the tongue and the interpretation corroborated, while the result, in a soul won for the Lord Jesus, was ample evidence that the thing was from God." End of quote.

Another account of this same incident is given in Mr. Burton's book "Signs following," on pages 28 and 29: The writer recommends all readers of this book to obtain this excellent booklet. This booklet gives the additional information that Mrs. Whitehouse spoke in tongues about the death of Christ on the Cross for us. Mr. Burton goes on to tell on page 29 and 30 of his book, of a highly respected Methodist minister who heard Pentecostal Christians speaking in praise and adoration to God in seven languages which he knew, they were speaking about the death, resurrection and second coming of Christ, and extolling Christ's blood and His risen power. This so moved the minister that on his way home on the train he longed for the same experience, he through his pipe and tobacco out of the train window, he earnestly sought and received the baptism in the Spirit with speaking with tongues before the train reached his station.

We can clearly see that there are many reasons why every Christian should desire to speak with other tongues as the Holy Spirit gives them utterance, the gift of tongues is one of God's good, valuable and perfect gifts. God has given the gift of tongues to His Church because He considers it to be absolutely indispensable and necessary for the spiritual welfare of His Church. God does not give any gifts that are mean or paltry, they are all priceless, magnificent, good, beautiful and precious, and we should bow the knee at His wisdom, love and authority. Who are we to criticise the "good and perfect" gifts that our heavenly Father has given to us? He is the Lord, let us recognise the value and importance of what He has given. How dare we criticise His gifts, or neglect to seek them, when He has commanded us not only to pursue after love, but earnestly seek spiritual gifts as well? 1Cor 14v1. The gift of tongues is one of His gifts, let us recognise its value and use.

Appendix K: The Disastrous Effects Of Augustine's Doctrine Of 'Original Sin'

Introduction

The Harmful Life and Influence of Bishop Augustine Of Hippo

Bishop Augustine of Hippo (354 AD to 430 AD), put forward as divine "truth" his doctrine of "Original Sin;" in which he states that all humanity is "born in sin," and is born spiritually corrupt and depraved, and, sadly, many in the Church hold this doctrine today. The Devil used three things in Augustine's life, to mould and influence him to form the destructive heresy of "Original Sin," and through him to get it accepted by the Church; they are:

1) His full involvement and association for ten years with the Gnostic cult of Manicheism

This was from approximately 374 to 384 AD Manicheism is based upon cosmogony (an account of how the Universe came into being) and consists of Zoroastrian Dualism, Babylonian folklore, Buddhist ethics, and additions of Christian elements. **Its Christology was purely Docetic.**

2) The immoral life that Augustine had led

His doctrine of "Original Sin" appears to be an excuse for his former very immoral and profligate life. This made him very open to Satanically inspired doctrines, and the means of introducing them into the Church. This was the very opposite of the godly spiritual basis of the lives of Samuel, John the Baptist, and many other men and women of God in the Scriptures.

3) Augustine's Allegorical Interpretation of the Scriptures

(This rejects, refutes and distorts the literal meaning of Scripture). When you interpret the Scriptures by

allegorical explanations you can make them mean almost anything that you want to. The false cults of today employ this very same method to deceive their adherents into following their false theology.

When much of the Church embraced Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin, over a thousand years darkness descended upon it. The outstanding Theologian, Dean E H Plumptre, writes in, "The Spirits In Prison," page 152: "And so the dark shadow of Augustine fell on the theology of the Western church, and condemned its thoughts of the love of God to many centuries of disastrous twilight." End of quote.

During a period of over 1000 years, genuine revivals of the Holy Spirit only occurred very rarely in isolated areas, and they were often extinguished by murderous persecution, by the established Church. At the time of The Reformation, in the sixteenth century, Martin Luther, who was an Augustinian monk, brought Augustine's theology, including the doctrine of Original Sin, into the Protestant Church. This doctrine continued to create great darkness in the minds of God's people, and this is still the position today in much of the Body of Christ.

NB1 Augustine's monstrous doctrine that unbaptised babies will go to Hell, for ever

Many who believe in Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin" do not realise the disastrous effect that his doctrine has had on the Church. I am sure that most Christians will strongly disagree with Augustine's monstrous doctrine that every child is "born in sin" and spiritually depraved, and will go to Hell forever, like the very worst sinner, if they are not baptised. This contradicts the Scriptures, which state that God creates our souls and spirits.

NB2 Isaiah 57v16: "For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made." How could God create something sinful? In Heb 12v9, God is called **"the Father of our spirits."** (NIV and Robertson)

NB3 Augustine's theology also does away with free will

It can be briefly summed up as follows. We read on page 317, of "God's Strategy in Human History," by Paul Marston and Roger Forster. "Augustine taught that when Adam sinned, all his descendants sinned *"in"* him and so shared in and inherited the guilt of the act." End of quote.

Someone else has said: "The only way any are saved is by God intervening and choosing some, whom He calls His elect, to be saved. This choosing is totally arbitrary and independent of those chosen. Those thus chosen cannot ever be lost or fall from grace. To the converse, those not arbitrarily chosen before the foundation of the World to everlasting life, are irrevocably doomed to Hell, having absolutely no hope of salvation, regardless of what they do, or do not do." End of quote.

We read on page 307 of "God's Strategy in Human History by Paul Marston and Roger Forster. "Augustine also said that; "Faith itself was an irresistible gift given by God to a few people, whom he had selected on some basis known only to Himself. God could have given it to others had He so chosen. Without God's irresistible gift of faith, no man could perform any good, whether in thought, will, affection, or action." End of quote.

In asserting these appalling lies, Augustine denies the overwhelming evidence of the Scriptures, that mankind possesses a freewill, and that everyone is individually responsible for their own individual actions. His theology has the effect of removing personal responsibility for one's actions and sins.

In addition to all these terrible doctrines, Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin" has concealed from the Church, many essential truths concerning our Lord's life and ministry, and Christ's great sufferings for us. We will now go on to consider some of the serious, indeed, critical doctrinal errors, which have resulted from Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin."

Augustine's "Original Sin" has created several serious theological errors

1) Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin" directly contradicts the Biblical truth about repentance.

When God tells us to repent, it means that we are responsible, and can be blamed for the wrong that we do. The doctrine of "Original Sin" denies that people have the ability to repent, or that they possess free will. It has made people feel that they are not personally responsible for their sins, and that they cannot help sinning, because they are born sinners. They have been taught that they have inherited a sin nature from Adam, and cannot live right because of that. **However, this is not what God says; God commands us to repent of our sins, and tells us that we can help sinning, and need not have committed any sins.** God does not say that we cannot help sinning, He says that repentance that brings forth the fruit of a holy life, is the way to obtain forgiveness, and acceptance with Him. Those who hide behind the bush of "Original Sin" as an excuse for their sins, are in reality blaming God for making them so. **If we could not help sinning because of inherited sin, then we could not be blamed for our sins, or told to repent.** However, God does say that we can help sinning, and commands everyone everywhere to repent. Acts 17v30. The theme of repentance is seen in all the Scriptures. See Ezek 18v30. etc.

In Rom 1v18-32, Paul castigates the holding down the truth of the revelation of God through creation. This has resulted in the most deplorable wickedness and immorality. **In Rom 1v20, Paul states that mankind is "without an excuse," anapologetos," (Strong's NT:379), only here and Rom2v1, "inexcusable."** Mankind has rejected both the revelation of God's eternal power and deity in Creation, and the light of their own conscience. God has manifested Himself **"to and in mankind,"** but mankind's determined wickedness has meant that God has had to give them up to their evil ways. Mankind does not have any excuse for their sin, and that includes the excuse of the doctrine of "Original Sin." Rom 1v19,20,24,26,28.

Paul tells us in Acts 17v30,31, that God commands everyone to repent

This means that everyone could have lived righteous lives, even with the limited light that they have had. We read, "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but **now commands all men everywhere to repent,** because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." **See Acts 20v21. "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."** See also Acts 26v20.

In John 1v9, we read that Jesus illumines every child that is born. "Illumines," is "photizein" the present active indicative of "photizo" (Strong NT:5461); which means, to shed rays, to light up, to illumine. **Thayer** adds, "to enlighten, spiritually, to imbue with saving knowledge." The present tense shows that this is a continuous present tense action, and not a brief or temporary act. We should accept what Jesus said in Matt 18v1-10 and 19v14, that children are fit for Heaven, and are like the inhabitants of Heaven. God declares in Isaiah 53v6, that mankind is not "born astray," but has **"gone astray."** Paul confirms this in Rom 7v9, where he states that he was born spiritually alive to God, and that he died spiritually when he personally sinned. Paul again states this fact in Rom 3v12, **"They are all gone out of the way,** they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Note well. In Psalm 51v5, it is David's mother who is the sinner not David. "In sin did **my mother** conceive me."

Repentance was the theme of the preaching of John the Baptist: Mark 1v4 states: "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Matt 3v8: "Therefore produce fruits worthy of repentance." Matt 3v11: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Luke 3v3: "And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Acts 13v24: "When John had first preached before His coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel."

Repentance was a major theme of the preaching of our Lord Jesus

It was a vital part of the good news of the Gospel. Mark 1v14,15: Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: **repent ye,** and believe the gospel. See Luke 13v3,5: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Matt 9v13: "But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Luke 5v32: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." The risen Saviour states that repentance was to be preached to all nations. Luke 24v46,47: "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."**

The early Church preached repentance from dead works

The early Church preached that repentance was the essential prerequisite before people could experience forgiveness of sins. We read in Acts 2v38: "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."** See Acts 3v19,20: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you."

Both Jews and Gentiles must repent. Acts 5v31: "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for **to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."** **"Repentance unto life"** was also granted to the Gentiles, we read in Acts 11v18: "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath **God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."**

God desires to save all, we read in 2Pet 3v9: "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."**

Paul informs us in Acts 17v30,31, that God "commands all men everywhere to repent."

"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, **but now commands all men everywhere to repent,** because He

has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

See Acts 20v21: "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, **repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.**"

See Acts 26v19,20: "Therefore, King Agrippa, **I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.**"

See Rom 2v4: "Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, **not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?**"

We read in 2Cor 7v9,10: "Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For **godly sorrow produces repentance** leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death."

Note well 2Tim 2v25,26: "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; **if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;** And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." See Heb 6v1-9.

Mankind often despises and rejects God's great mercy with fearful consequences: Rom 2v3-6. "And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? **Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?** But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart, you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who "will render to each one according to his deeds."

Jesus told most of the churches in Revelation 2 and 3 that they needed to repent

The Church at Ephesus is told to repent. Rev 2v5: "Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place."

The Church at Pergamos is told to repent. Rev 2v16: "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth."

The Church at Sardis is told to repent. Rev 3v2,3: "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you."

The Church at Laodicea is told to repent. Rev 3v19,20: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore, be zealous and repent. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."

The Church at Thyatira is told to repent. This we will consider in more detail, as it is relevant to our study. Jesus gives the most solemn and serious warnings to the Church at Thyatira about their immorality and idolatry. **We read in Rev 2v18-29:** "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, 'These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: "I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first. Nevertheless, I have a few things against you, **because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.**" NKJV

"But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known **the deep things of Satan**, as they call them — I place no other burden on you. Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come. And **he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations;** and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." NASB

Adam Clark writes of Rev 2v20: "Instead of, that woman Jezebel, "ten gunaika Iezabel," many excellent MSS., and almost all the ancient versions, read "ten gunaika sou Iezabel," "THY WIFE Jezebel;" which intimates, indeed asserts, that this bad woman was the wife of the Bishop of the church, and his criminality in suffering her was therefore the greater. This reading Griesbach has received into the text." End of quote.

Hodges and Farstad, state that the Majority Text reads "ten gunaika sou," thy wife." The A.V. and T.R. reading of, "that woman," "ten gunaika," is based on Me, Aleph, C, the Critical Texts; the Old Latin; the Vulgate; the Coptic Sahidic and Bohairic; the Armenian and Ethiopic versions, the Church fathers, Tertullian, Ambrosiaster, Tyconius, Epiphanius, Haymo, and the bav commentary of Andrew. However, most manuscripts add "sou," and read, "ten gunaika sou," "thy wife;" the evidence for this is found in Hodges and Farstad, many miniscules (Mabcd), B,Q, the Syrian Philoxenian and Harklean; the Church fathers, Cyprian; Primasius; Andrew's a, c, and p commentaries; and Arethas; Codex A adds "sou ten." Jezebel was the wife of Ahab, Israel's king; this suggests that Jezebel was the pastor's wife.

The Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown's Commentary state, "That woman. So 'Aleph C, Vulgate; but A B, 'THY wife.' The symbolical, Jezebel was to Thyatira what Jezebel, Ahab's 'wife,' was to him."

The Expositor's Greek Testament states, "The well attested "sou" after "gunaika" (A,Q, miniscules, Syriac, Arethas, Primasius, etc., so Grot., Al., Zahn, and J.Weiss)." End of quote. Even though most manuscripts add "sou," and read, "ten gunaika sou," "thy wife;" Expositors says, "it is to be omitted," preferring the evidence I have just stated above for "ten gunaika," "that woman."

Bishop Christopher Wordsworth includes "ten gunaika sou," in his Greek text, and writes that "thy wife, is found in A, B, (not in Aleph), and many Cursives, and in the Syriac Version, and in Andreas and Arethas, Cyprian and Primasius, and is received by Scholz, Lachman, and Tischendorf." **End of quote.**

Being the wife of the leader of the Church, this Jezebel, like the wife of Ahab, exercised great influence over her husband. An influence which she consistently exercised for evil in the realm of false teaching and false prophecy, that seduced people into immorality and idolatry, these were the sins of the historical Jezebel. See 2Kings 9v22,30. This Jezebel called herself a prophetess, (the false apostles of Rev 2v2, likewise, were not what they claimed to be). Jezebel's claims that her teaching was from God, was totally false. **Jesus did not say that Jezebel was to be excused because she was "born in sin," and had "Original Sin."** Jesus gave this evil woman space to repent, but warned that without repentance He would execute Jezebel and her followers. Nor did Paul say that the Corinthians who lived bad lives could not help sinning because they had "Original Sin" and were "born in sin." Paul states that many of them were sick and many had died because of their sinfulness; being judged and chastened by Jesus, to save them from being condemned with the world. 1Cor 11v28-32. Solemn words indeed! Repent or else! However, even in this sinful Church, there is real hope for those who truly want to walk with God. Our dear Lord promises that those who overcome will reign with Him, and rule over the nations of the world in the Millennium.

A.T. Robertson writes on "Rev 2v24. "The deep things of Satan," "ta bathea tou Satana." The Ophites (worshippers of the serpent) and other later Gnostics (Cainires, Carpocratians, Naassenes) boasted of their knowledge of "the deep things," some claiming this very language about Satan (the serpent) as Paul did of God (1Cor 2v10.) Some even claimed that they could indulge in immorality without sinning (1John 1v10, 3v10.) **"As they say,"** "hos legousin." Probably referring to the heretics who ridicule the piety of the other Christians." End of quote.

Like the above Gnostics, Jezebel and her followers abandoned themselves to fleshly sins, and claimed a "divine revelation" for it, and indulged in "the deep things of Satan." The Gnostics boasted of a special knowledge of "the depths" of divine things. They perverted the truths of Paul. See Rom 11v33, 1Cor 2v10. Their arrogant title, "Gnostics," means "full of knowledge." God declares their so-called "depths of knowledge," are really "depths of Satan;" just as in Rev 2v9, God calls 'the synagogue of God,' which opposed and persecuted Christians, "the synagogue of Satan." Beware of the, "Know it Alls," who pervert the correct interpretation of Scripture, like Augustine did, with his doctrine of "Original Sin."

In James 5v14-18, we see that repentance and confession of sin and persistent prolonged prayer may often be necessary to experience Divine healing in the Churches. 'Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit." Elijah's persistent prolonged prayer is our example.

The second attack of the doctrine of "Original Sin" is even more serious than its twisted and evil view of

repentance, for it attacks the glorious character of God, and the person and humanity of Jesus.

2) Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin" attacks the character and justice of God

The teaching of "Original Sin" has turned the theology about God on its head. God is Love, and His first name is Compassion. 1John 4v8, Exodus 34v6,7. However, Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin" has made God to be an unjust evil Despot, who does Satanic-like acts; for Augustine said that God sends innocent babies, who have not been baptised, into Hell forever, to share the same fate as the very worst sinner. This terrible Satanically inspired lie has devastating effects on a Christian's perception of God, and their walk with God. Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin" is responsible for a great deal of the darkness in the minds of both believers and unbelievers about God, and has greatly hindered the knowledge of the truth about God's wonderful character. **When a Christian accepts Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin" as truth, it destroys their ability to perceive the truth about Jesus being a compassionate, sympathetic and faithful Great High Priest, who is the "Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith."** Heb 12v2.

In addition to the above appalling doctrine; the God who Augustine presents, is looked upon as a bundle of contradictions. This conclusion is arrived at in the mind of the believer in the following way: The believer thinks, "How can God ask me to live a righteous life, when I have been "born in sin," and can't help sinning, because I was created badly; and then He condemns me for my sins, which I cannot help doing." This seems, and is, both illogical and unjust. Thank God, this is not true! It is a lie of the Devil.

3) Augustine's "Original Sin" attacks Christ's humanity and brings Docetism into the Church

Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin" disastrously affects the doctrine of the person and humanity of Jesus Christ our Lord, and brings Docetic Gnosticism back into Church doctrine. The Docetic Gnostic heresy, which denied Christ's true humanity, is automatically generated in the minds of believers who accept and believe the doctrine of Original Sin, in the following way. Believers conclude that if we have been "born in sin," with sinful natures, which compel us to do evil; and since Jesus was without sin, He obviously did not possess this same sinful nature, so then He **MUST** have had a different kind of "humanity" to us. So the thought arises in the believer's mind, that the humanity of Jesus was different from theirs. Thus, in a very subtle and cunning disguise, the destructive heresy of Docetic Gnosticism has come into the Church, and has corrupted the theology about the humanity of Jesus.

I have heard preachers say, based on Acts 20v28, that the blood of Jesus was the blood of God and not human blood. This is a total denial of the humanity of Christ, and in a very subtle and cunning disguise, is the destructive heresy of Docetic Gnosticism. This heresy arose in the Church in the later half of the First Century AD, and Paul, in his letters to the Philippians, Colossians and 1Timothy, and John, in his Gospel, and First and Second Epistles, write very strongly against this heresy. The doctrine of "Original Sin," revives, in a cunning way, the Docetic Gnostic heresy of the early Church. And from Augustine's time, many Christians have not recognised the doctrine of "Original Sin" for what it is, a destructive Satan inspired heresy! John says that those who deny the true humanity of Jesus are, "Not of God."

In 1John 4v2, "That Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," "come," is "eleluthota," (Strong's NT:2046), the perfect active participle of "erchomai," (Strong's NT:2064), to come; to appear. The perfect tense indicates that Christ's coming in the flesh was a well-known established fact, and that the effects of Christ's incarnation are an abiding reality. Jesus was not a Docetic phantom, He had a human body, and as Paul states in Rom 1v3, "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh."

The same words, "en" (Strong's NT:1722), "sarki" (Strong's NT:4561), "eleluthota" (Strong's NT:2064), "is come in the flesh," occur again, in 1John 4v3, and the apostle **John declares that everyone who states that Jesus has not come in the flesh, "is not of God," "ek tou Theou ouk estin," literally, "is not out of God."** The apostle **John goes on to state that those who deny the humanity of Jesus have the spirit of Antichrist, and are influenced by super-human evil angelic spirits.** (Some reject the reading, "is come in the flesh," here in 1John 4v3, because these words are omitted by A, B, and a few cursives, **However they are included** in Aleph, G, K, Phi, and most cursives, and the following versions, the Syriac, the Polyglot Arabic, Aethiopic, Coptic, Armenian, and Vulgate; and are recognised by Polycarp, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Ambrose, Ps-Oecumenius, Theophylact, and Augustine.) The opponents of Christ's incarnation, and his passion, would be delighted to see these words omitted from the Scriptures.

Those who believe in "Original Sin" will find many of the truths contained in two of the most important books of the New Testament, Romans and Hebrews, impossible to comprehend. Understanding Paul's letter to the Hebrews in based upon a correct knowledge of our Lord's true humanity, and that Jesus and the believer share exactly the same kind of humanity. Failure to grasp this, means that the believer cannot comprehend our Lord as their sympathetic Great High Priest. This truth is a part of the doctrine of "repentance from dead works," etc., in Heb 5v12 to 6v12, which is "the doctrine of the first principles of Christ," ASV, "the basic teaching about Christ," Heb 6v1, NRSV, "the first principles of the oracles of God." Heb 5v12. KJV. To get the doctrine about Jesus wrong destroys the Christian's foundation.

A correct knowledge of the truth of our Lord's humanity, and other vital truths about Him, is essential for Christians in the last days of this age, the Age of Grace. We will need to know our Lord as our Great High Priest as well as our Saviour, to enable us to overcome the appalling evil conditions that will come upon the world during the last three and a half years of this age, known as "The Great Tribulation." **We need to know that Jesus was indeed, "tempted in ALL points like as we are, yet without sin" during His hidden years at Nazareth, and during His Ministry, in a humanity exactly like our own.** The knowledge of His tried humanity will strengthen and equip us for the evil last days. This is vital truth. Through His Intercessions and High Priestly ministry, Jesus will keep, guard, protect and strengthen us "in soul," and give us victory and bring us through this terrible time. At the sounding of the last trumpet, we shall rise to meet Him in the air at His Second Advent, immediately after the tribulation of those days.

It is certainly not without reason that Paul, in writing to Timothy in 1Timothy 3v16, states the vital truth that, "God was manifest in the flesh," and then immediately in the next verse, 1Timothy 4v1, goes on to state; "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils!" Paul knew that the destructive heresy of Docetic Gnosticism would still be in the Church in the last days and so he warns us against it, by stating that our Lord Jesus did indeed, "come in the flesh," and had a humanity like our own. The doctrine of "Original Sin" attacks the humanity of Christ, and the end result of this attack will be apostasy, Paul says, the effect will be that "some will depart from the faith."

4) Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin" attacks Christ's High Priestly Ministry

This Docetic heresy attacks both the earthly ministry of Jesus, and His High Priestly Ministry, for if the humanity of Jesus was not exactly like ours, how can He really be our compassionate, sympathetic and faithful Great High Priest. We cannot know Jesus as our perfect example, because the doctrine of "Original Sin" has created the following mindset in Christians; that if we are "born in sin," then our Lord **MUST** have had a different humanity from us, because He was sinless. **So Augustine's theology largely veils Christ's sympathetic, compassionate and faithful Great High Priestly ministry.** The doctrine of "Original Sin" has resulted in many of the great truths in the book of Hebrews being "hidden" from the minds of Christians, because of the failure to understand the true humanity of Jesus. It is also essential for Christians to grasp and understand Paul's doctrine of "dead sin in the flesh," **(Please see Appendix L: Paul's Doctrine Of 'Dead Sin In The Flesh')** which is part of the first foundation truth, "repentance from dead works," which is found in Heb 5v12-6v3, "the first principles of the oracles of God," the principles of the doctrine of Christ." See also, Rom 7v8-8v3. **(Please also see Appendix P: Foundation Truths)**

NB1 If we fail to know Jesus as our Great High Priest, we remain spiritually immature

This can affect the whole of our lives. It is **only** by going through temptation, trials and testing with our Lord that godly "character" is produced in us, and through trials God brings our faith to Christian "perfection," or better, Christian maturity. Heb 6v1. However, if we do not know Him as High Priest, He is hindered from taking us through the trials and tests that He desires to take us through, to give us a vital experimental knowledge of His High Priestly Ministry. Always remember, God will not try and tempt us beyond what we can bear. James 1v2-4,12, Rom.5v1-5, 1Cor 10v13, Heb 12v2.

NB2 If our "house" is not built upon truth as revealed in the Scripture, it will fall

If we do not have the correct, soul-nourishing doctrine about Jesus, when times of temptation, testing and trial come along, our house will "fall." Matt 7v24-27. We will also fail to come through our stormy times of life victoriously, and will fall by the wayside. Luke 8v5-8,11-15. Jesus emphasised that we have to eat His flesh and drink His blood, or we have no life in us, this is again emphasised in Hebrews 2, which emphasises, the need to realise the true humanity of Christ. See John 6v51-58.

NB3 Many of the vital truths in the book of Romans will not be fully understood

We will badly fail to understand Rom 7v7 to 8v4 (esp. Rom 7v14-25) if we interpret it as Paul's **POST-conversion** experience, instead of his **PRE-conversion** experience. Paul states that he was "carnal, sold under sin". Rom 7v14. However, Paul has just written in Rom 6v6, where he categorically states, "knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin." **NB Rom 8v1-4.**

In Rom 7v7 to 8v4, Paul teaches that he, like his Lord, were both born with, "dead sin in the flesh;" however, unlike his Lord, Paul, like everybody else, had yielded to this temptation from sin in the flesh, (from the sinful desires of the flesh), and Paul, like everyone else, had died spiritually as a result of yielding to this temptation. Whereas his Lord had resisted every temptation and conquered them, and thus had "condemned sin in the flesh." Rom 8v3. This vital truth of the Lord's true humanity is also clearly stated by Paul in Heb 2v17,18. and 4v14-16, where he states that Jesus was **"made like unto His brethren in ALL THINGS," and was, as a result, "tempted in ALL points tempted like we are."**

Pre-Augustinian Teaching.

NB4 The pre-Augustinian theological tradition is practically of one voice AGAINST Augustine's theology, they assert the freedom of the human will. Three recurrent ideas are in their teaching:

- 1) They say that freewill is a gift given to man by God – for nothing can be independent of God.
- 2) They say that the rejection of freewill is the view of heretics.
- 3) They say that man possesses freewill, because he is made in God's image, and God has freewill.

However Augustine saw fit to introduce the doctrine of the "Irresistible Gift of Faith," (or irresistible gift of grace), this false doctrine of Augustine, conquered and corrupted much of the Church.

5) Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin" attacks Christ's remarkable Faith and Ministry. Jesus did all His miracles by believing what the Father revealed to Him, and He did them at the Father's direction and with the Father's power. Another terrible consequence of believing the doctrine of "Original Sin" and "Born in Sin" theories, is that many Christians have come to believe that the signs, wonders and miracles, that the Lord Jesus did during His earthly ministry were done by Him turning on His Divine power, and simply doing them at his own desire. However, nothing could be further from the truth.

Our Lord states in John 5v19,20,30, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. " **I can do nothing on My own initiative.** As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." See John.14v10., "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but **the Father who dwells in Me does the works.**"

Paul tells us in Phil 2v7, that at the Incarnation, Jesus, "made Himself of no reputation." (NKJV)

Other translations are as follows:- **Revised Standard Version:** "Emptied himself."

Amplified Bible: "Stripped Himself." **The Living Bible:** "Laid aside His mighty power and glory."

TEV: "He gave up all He had." **Lightfoot:** "He stripped Himself of the insignia of majesty,"

"Made Himself of no reputation" in the Greek is "heauton ekenosen", literally translated means, "emptied Himself" of His Omnipotence, Omniscience, Omnipresence, Transcendence and Immutability, i.e. His Divine abilities. But after the "emptying" He still continued to be God, as v 6 states, "being in the form of God," "huparchon en morphe Theou," "being" is "huparchon", the present active participle of "huparcho," ("existing" is a better translation of the Greek) which denotes that what He was before the Incarnation (i.e. God) He continued to be after it, God, but God "emptied."

So we see that it was impossible for the Lord Jesus to use His Divine abilities to do the miracles, because He "emptied Himself" of all His power and glory at the Incarnation. Paul then continues to tell us in Phil 2v7,8, that after Had "emptied" Himself, He then was: "taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man." (NKJV).

A.T. Robinson gives the following helpful comments on Christ's emptying in Phil 2v7,8:

"The form of a servant", Greek, 'morphēn doulou', He took the characteristic attributes ('morphēn' as in v6) of a slave. His humanity was as real as His Deity." End of quote

"In the likeness of men", Greek, en homoiomati anthropon", It was a likeness, but a real likeness (Kennedy), no mere phantom humanity as the Docetic Gnostics held. Note the difference in tense between 'huparchon' (eternal existence in the 'morphē' of God) and 'genomenos' (second aorist middle participle of 'ginomai,' becoming, definite entrance in time upon his humanity)." End of quote

"Being found in appearance as a man," Greek, "schemati heuretheis hos anthropos", "in appearance" is in Greek, "schemati", and refers to that which is purely outward and appeals to the senses, "the outward guise" as it appealed to the sense of mankind, His outward guise was altogether human.

In Phil 2v5-11, Paul refutes the Docetic Gnostic theory that Jesus had no human body and the Cerinthian Gnostic teaching that the aeon Christ came upon and used the man Jesus, and that they were two separate beings. In 1John 4v1-6, John states that the denial of the humanity of Jesus by the Gnostics was the spirit of antichrist. Jesus had a real humanity as well as a true deity.

The Lord Jesus came into the world like any other child; He spent 40 weeks in the womb of Mary, and then was born in Bethlehem. The Lord Jesus having "emptied Himself" of His wisdom and knowledge at the time of the Incarnation, had to then learn it all again, and this He did as Luke tells us in Luke 2v40,52: "And the Child grew and became strong in spirit (Majority Text), filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.... And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men." (NKJV)

Jesus had to learn, develop and become spiritually strong just like any other child. The phrase "became strong in spirit" is the exact phrase that is used of the spiritual development of John Baptist. Luke 1v80.

In John 2v1-11, we see an interesting insight into Christ's hidden years at Nazareth.

In v3, it states: "And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." (NKJV). ("They have no wine," in Greek is, "Oionon ouk echousin.") The reaction of Jesus shows that this was not just a statement of fact, and that Mary was in reality making a request for a miracle. Mary's statement speaks volumes, it reveals that she had not only treasured in her heart the wondrous events connected with the birth and childhood of Jesus, but that she had also personally witnessed miracles of provision for her family, (which had been hidden from the rest of the family). Luke 2v40,52. Mary remembered how miracles of provision had met their needs on many occasions, when they had no money to buy food or wine for the family. This poverty was not because Jesus neglected His work to pray, it was because people did not pay their bills, because of circumstances, or because Satan had inspired and provoked dishonest people not to pay their bills for work that Jesus had done.

Jesus was tempted in all points like us. Heb 4v15. He knew what it was to be under severe financial deprivation and constraint, when he had to feed the large family of Mary (at least seven children besides Himself, Mark 6v3.) after Joseph had died. Mary had come a long way in God from the time when Jesus, at twelve, said in Luke 2v42,49,50, to Mary and Joseph in the Temple, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them." NKJV. What had produced this change, and real and deep faith? Mary knew and believed, from a rich personal experience of acts of Divine provision by miracles through the prayers of Jesus in her home, that Jesus could do a miracle to meet the need for wine.

God did not leave Mary to fight the battle alone over the dishonour and criticism that came upon her over the birth of Jesus, God stood by her and gave her many infallible proofs of His caring love, through many acts of miraculous provision at Nazareth, through the developing prophetic ministry of Jesus. These demonstrated that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Holy One of God. Mary's command to the servants in John 2v5, "Do whatever He tells you," shows the living and deep faith of Mary in Jesus, and her faith in His ability to perform a miracle. It was not a first act of blind faith; Mary had proved that "whatever" Jesus told her to do, in the realm of miraculous provision, came to pass. Mary had a list in her mind of numerous "whatevers" that had come to pass and produced miracles of provision for her family, and probably others also. This, and this alone, can explain Mary's confident, "Do whatever he tells you."

Where do we find the source of the development of Christ's tremendous prophetic ministry?

We read the following in Psalm 69v8-12,19,20,21: "I have become a stranger to my brothers, and an alien to my mother's children; Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me. When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting, that became my reproach. I also made sackcloth my garment; I became a byword to them. Those who sit in the gate speak against me, and I am the song of the drunkards....You know my reproach, my shame, and my dishonour; my adversaries are all before You. Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness, (the Hebrew adds, "and distressingly sick") I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

This Scripture reveals both the source and reason for the violent opposition against Jesus, was the remarkable prayer life of Jesus at Nazareth, which brought rejection and ostracism from His brothers and sisters and the people of Nazareth. Satan saw to it that Christ's life of prayer and fasting, stirred up opposition against Jesus, and He was mocked and sent to Coventry because of it.

If we say that Jesus prayed during His life at Nazareth, and the above prophetic facts in Psalm 69v8-11, about His life of prayer and fasting, prove that He did, then we must acknowledge that He must have had power gifts to bring an answer to His prayers. Jesus lived in continuous communion with the Father, He, like Enoch, walked with God His Father. The love-dominated nature of Jesus desired and loved to walk in the Spirit, it was His very nature to dwell in the Father and the Father in Him, and prayer was as natural to Him as breathing. John 14v10,11, 1John 2v24. **Paul states in 1Cor 12v31, that spiritual gifts are automatically manifested if we walk and pray in the "more excellent way," ("kath huperbolon hodon") of "agape" love.** Jesus certainly prayed, lived, and walked in love at Nazareth, so God His Father gave Him the revelation and power gifts on their highest levels of manifestation. It is impossible to believe that the child Samuel had more and greater revelations from God the Father than God's pure and holy child Jesus, His only begotten Son. Jesus revealed Himself to Moses in the burning bush in the wilderness of

Sinai, to prepare Moses for his ministry, the bush burned daily for Jesus at Nazareth as the Father prepared Jesus for His ministry.

Our Lord was truly a prophet like unto Moses Acts 3v22,23. And just as Moses was prepared for his ministry through daily living, so God prepared Jesus for His ministry through His daily life at Nazareth. This not only involved revelation about truth, the Father also gave Jesus information about people's needs, and trained Him in the operation of the gifts of power and revelation. Christ's Divine love, mercy, and compassion drove, and irresistibly constrained Him to pray for people in need; He could not help Himself. His secret prayers and intercessory "sighs too deep for words, and inexpressible yearnings" ("stenagmois alaletos," Rom 8v26.), breathed out on the behalf of people's needs, could not help but operate spiritual gifts in delivering power, for Jesus lived and prayed perfectly on "the more excellent way" of perfect love. The operation of these gifts was mightily effective, but totally hidden from people, and no one knew of the source of their divine help. Isaiah 49v1,2, 50v3-7. The vision ministry and prayer life of Jesus was totally directed by God the Father, and the power and influence of His prayer life, has never been equalled, and cannot be overstated.

By the time the Lord Jesus was 30 years old He was "full of grace and truth", and had become the perfect Servant. As there had never been any sin in Him, the Father gave His Son, the Holy Spirit without measure at His baptism, at the River Jordan, to fulfil His Messianic Mission, of preaching the Gospel to the poor, healing the broken-hearted, the recovery of sight to the blind, to send forth the crushed in liberty, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. John 1v14, 3v34, Luke 4v18,19, Isaiah 35v5,6.

By saying that the Lord Jesus did His miracles by simply turning on His Divine power, we rob Him completely of His true glory. His unique glory was the beautiful sinless loving life that He had lived at Nazareth, during which time the Father had prepared Him for His ministry, which He accomplished by total reliance upon the Father, so that He could say: "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of me." John 6v57 (NKJV). **Christ said that He lived by faith in the Father and by the life of the Father, and He said that we are to depend on Him as He depended on the Father. Christ Jesus has given us the perfect example to follow in all things.**

The ancient origin and dreadful effect of the doctrine of "Original Sin"

NB1 The mindset behind "Original Sin" has been around since the days of Adam and Eve.

People have usually tried to deny their guilt, or "excuse" their actions, by blaming someone else for their own wilful individual personal sin, when they have been confronted with their sin! Eve blamed the Serpent; Adam blamed Eve, and suggested that it was even God's fault for giving him Eve. **Gen 3v12,13.**

In the account of Cain's murder of his brother Abel, **God said in Gen 4v7.**, "If you do well, will you not be accepted? **And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.**" God told Cain to follow his brother Abel's example of "faith" and godly living, and then, by God's grace, Cain would be able to resist and "overcome" the temptation to wilfully sin. **Heb 11v4.** It is quite clear that God did **NOT** consider either Cain or Abel as being "born in sin," and incapable of living right, (as most Theologians incorrectly state!), for **God very clearly tells Cain that he "should rule over sin."** The word for "rule" is "mashal" (Strong's NT:4910), which means, to master, to have dominion, to reign, to rule.

However, we know that Cain rejected God's instruction on this issue and murdered his brother Abel. When God asked Cain where his brother was, Cain replied, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Gen 4v9. This was a vain attempt to deny his guilt. No doubt, like many today, Cain tried to excuse his evil actions to himself, with the excuse that he could not be blamed for his sin, for how could he be expected to lead a righteous life, when his father and mother had set him such a bad example, and sinned so grievously. **So we see that in the first family the foundation for the mindset of the "born in sin" doctrine was clearly laid down, they all desired to evade personal responsibility for their sin, and this was the bush to hide behind.**

The Exodus Of Israel From Egypt

By the time of The Exodus of Israel, in the 15th Century BC, from Egypt, Israel had been in Egypt for 400 plus years, during which time many had forgotten "the way of the Lord," and had worshipped the idols of Egypt. We read in Ezek 20v7,8: "Then I said to them, 'Each of you, throw away the abominations which are before his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.' "But they rebelled against Me and would not obey Me. They did not all cast away the abominations, which were before their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said, 'I will pour out My fury on them and fulfil My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.'" (NKJ)

We read in Exodus 20v5: "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." The Lord was informing the Israelites that if the children followed and continued in the sins of their father's,

then, **and ONLY then**, would they share in their punishment. God refuted their belief that they were compelled to sin, because their father's had sinned, and that they would share in their father's punishment. The Lord was clearly stating that each person would die for their own sin, and **NOT** for their father's or Adam's sin. This statement of a person's own personal responsibility for their own individual sin is also clearly stated again to the second generation by Moses in Deut 24v16, where it states: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin."

The second generation were still harbouring thoughts that they sinned because their fathers had sinned, and so would share in the father's punishment, but the Lord tells them that, **"the soul that sinneth it shall die."** God emphasises that each person is responsible for their own individual sin, and will be individually punished for it; clearly teaching the personal responsibility for one's own actions! A thought strongly reiterated by God again in Ezek 18v20, which we will now consider in more detail.

NB2 In Ezek 18, God strongly teaches against, and rejects, the doctrine of Original sin

The doctrine of "Original Sin," that is, "Born in Sin" theories, had been around for many centuries before Our Lord's first Advent, indeed, it was still held by the Jews at the time of the Babylonian Captivity. We read (in about the year 590/589 BC), in **Ezek 18v1,2**, that, "the word of the Lord" came to Ezekiel, "saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?" God strongly refutes Israel's wrong perception of the cause of their sin, which they believed was because they had been "born in sin," for we read in Ezek 18v4, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." God states that their sin was **THEIR** own individual responsibility, **NOT** the result of their father's, or Adam's sin. The Jews, by claiming that they had been "born in sin," endeavoured to remove their **OWN** personal responsibility for their own sin to somebody other than themselves, that is their fathers.

In Ezek 18v4,20, God censures and rejects the belief of the Jews, that they were "born in sin"

To emphasise this point in Ezek 18v4,20, God **TWICE** repeats, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die," to really bring home to the Jews their **OWN** personal responsibility for their **OWN** sins! God also gives several telling examples of how a father's sin is **NOT** imputed to the son, nor a son's sin imputed to the father. This statement by Almighty God destroyed their excuse that a family ancestor was responsible, and really to blame, for their own personal sin. God clearly states the truth of a person's own personal responsibility a person's own individual actions and sins.

This same mindset was not only in the Jews who had been carried off into captivity to Babylon, it had also gripped and darkened the minds of the Jews still in Israel. It is written in Jer 31v29,30, "In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge." Here again, in a very clear and unequivocal way, God affirms the truth that "every one shall die for his own iniquity," or as it is stated in Ezek 18v4,20, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." God again makes it very clear that each individual is responsible for their own sin; He rejects the excuse that their fathers, or Adam, were not responsible for their own personal sin.

This truth is also stated in Jer 18v1-11, when the Lord sent Jeremiah down to the potter's house to give this same important truth to the Jews in Israel, that He would deal with them according to their own individual sinful actions, **NOT** according to their father's sinful actions. God implores them in Jer 18v11, **"return you now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good"**.

The tragic consequences of the rejection of the Divine warnings

It is quite clear that the Jews did not listen to God's warnings through Jeremiah or Ezekiel, regarding the terrible consequences of their wilful sin, which were produced by their false "born in sin" theories. **For we read in 2Chron 36v15-17:** "And the LORD God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, **till there was no remedy. v17** Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak; He gave them all into his hand." (NKJ) **God held them personally responsible for their sins, and brought them to account for them; He did not blame Adam for them.**

The great darkness that this destructive mindset brought upon the minds of **ALL** the people can be seen from their incredible wilful stubbornness, even after Nebuchadnezzar had come up against Jerusalem for a second time, and had set Zedekiah upon the throne of Judah (he reigned from 599 BC-588 BC), we read in 2Chron 36v12-14: "He (Zedekiah) 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.** 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. Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem."

In Acts 7v51, Stephen castigates the Jewish religious leaders of his day; **"Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."** This shows that the wilful "stubbornness and rebellion" of the Jewish nation was a well-established fact going back many generations!

It is not surprising to find that this destructive heresy of "Original Sin" was also still around and taught by the religious leaders of Israel at the time of Christ's first Advent. In John 9v34, Israel's religious leaders interrogated and excommunicated the man who had been born blind, whose sight had been restored by Jesus: "They answered and said to him, **"You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out.**" (NKJ) Just before this incident, even the Apostles asked Jesus in John 9v2,3, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

Jesus And Paul Taught That Children Are Born Spiritually Alive To God

NB1 Jesus states that children are alive to God, and are NOT "born in sin," and spiritually dead

Jesus states that the truth is the very opposite to the doctrine of Original sin, and that a child is born spiritually alive to God, and in receipt of God's grace, having a pure soul and spirit. Matt 18v1-10, 19v14.

Jesus states in Matt 18v1-4,10: "At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven." (NKJ)

Note well: Jesus said that little children are looked upon as the officially authorized inhabitants of the kingdom of heaven, and we have to become like them, or we will not enter heaven. Jesus totally refutes Augustine's doctrine that children are born depraved and polluted by sin, and if they are not baptised, will go to Hell like the very worst sinner. Jesus said that the angels of a little child have unrestricted access to God. **God commands and forbids Satan to hinder the ministries of God's angels to little children.**

Matt 19v13-15 also states: "Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; **for of such is the kingdom of heaven.**" And He laid His hands on them and departed from there."(NKJ)

Note well: Jesus said of little children, **"for of such is the kingdom of heaven."** Jesus declares that children have the spiritual purity of the inhabitants of the kingdom of heaven; this again totally refutes Augustine's doctrine that children are "born in sin," and are depraved and polluted by sin.

NB2 Paul tells us that children are born spiritually alive to God

Paul informs us in Rom 7v9-12. **"I was once alive** ("ezon pote") without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died; the very commandment which promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and by it killed me. So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good."

In Rom 7v9: "I was alive," is the imperfect active, "ezon" (Strong's NT:2198). Paul is speaking of the time, when as an infant, he did not know the difference between right and wrong; this was before his conscience awoke and he became morally responsible for his actions. ("Without," is "choris" (Strong's NT:5565), an adverb meaning without, apart, separate). Paul says he was alive to God in his period of childlike innocence, until God's Law revealed right and wrong to him, and he did the wrong, and died spiritually.

NB3 Rom 5v13-14: "For until the law sin was in the world: **but sin is not imputed when there is no law.** Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over **them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression**, who is the figure of him that was to come." See **Rom 4v15:** "For the law brings wrath, **but where there is no law there is no transgression.**"

When "the commandment came," and was applied to Paul's heart and conscience, and Paul knew right from wrong, "sin revived, ("he" 3588, "hamartia" 266, "anezesen" 326). Sin came to life; the period of innocence was over, and because Paul had broken the Law, he died spiritually. The word "anazao" (Strong's NT:326), means to live again, it is usually applied to a renewal of life, Rom 14v19, Luke 15v24,32, but here it means sin, which was before dormant, was now quickened into life. The Jews thought that the Law would sanctify and give comfort to the soul, but both Jesus and Paul say that the broken law produced guilt, woe, and a bad conscience. "And I died," Paul had become

conscious of his sin through his violation of The Law, and realised that it brought about his spiritual death.

Paul here talks about his own consciousness of sin. As a child, he did not really understand the Law, or God's purpose in giving the Law. The failure to understand the demands of the Law is not confined to children. The young adult, the rich young ruler, mistakenly asserted, "I have observed all these things from my youth." Mark 10v20, Matt 19v20, Luke 18v21. There came a day in Paul's life when God's command, "Thou shalt not covet," condemned him, and revealed that he was not living according to that command. Through the commandment, Paul realised that sin had first deceived him, and then had brought about his spiritual death. Satan had been behind this, and his objective was the eternal ruin of all humanity.

Paul states in Rom 3v10-24, The tragic truth of man's fall into sin from the innocence of God's creation
 "As it is written, None is righteous, just and truthful and upright and conscientious, no, not one. [Ps.14v3.] No one understands [no one intelligently discerns or comprehends]; no one seeks out God. [Ps.14v2.] **All have turned aside; together they have gone wrong and have become unprofitable and worthless; no one does right, not even one!** Their throat is a yawning grave; they use their tongues to deceive (to mislead and to deal treacherously). The venom of asps is beneath their lips. [Ps.5v9. 140v3.] Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. [Ps.10v7.] Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery mark their ways. And they have no experience of the way of peace [they know nothing about peace, for a peaceful way they do not even recognize]. [Isa.59v7,8.] There is no [reverential] fear of God before their eyes. [Ps.36v1.] Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that [the murmurs and excuses of] every mouth may be hushed and all the world may be held accountable to God. For no person will be justified (made righteous, acquitted, and judged acceptable) in His sight by observing the works prescribed by the Law. For [the real function of] the Law is to make men recognize and be conscious of sin But now the righteousness of God has been revealed independently and altogether apart from the Law, although actually it is attested by the Law and the Prophets, Namely, the righteousness of God which comes by believing with personal trust and confident reliance on Jesus Christ (the Messiah). [And it is meant] for all who believe. For there is no distinction, Since all have sinned and are falling short of the honor and glory, which God bestows and receives. [All] are justified and made upright and in right standing with God, freely and gratuitously by His grace (His unmerited favour and mercy), through the redemption, which is [provided] in Christ Jesus. AMP

In these Old Testament quotations in Rom 3v10-24, Paul teaches and brings out the truth that "each individual person sins because they WANT to, NOT because they HAVE to." Their own wilful individual personal sin being the result of their own freewill choice, as Isaiah 53v6, states, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." Augustine interpreted Rom 7v14-25, as being Paul's POST-conversion Christian experience, which is certainly not true.

NB4 Paul's Teaching on "Sin in the flesh." Rom 7v8-8v4. NB3

Paul received his doctrine of "sin in the flesh" directly and personally from the Lord Jesus. Gal 1v11,12. Paul teaches that it was not corruption in the soul from Adam that led him astray, but rather the temptations that come from the body, from the flesh, **in Rom 8v3 , Paul calls this, "sin in the flesh."**

In Rom 7v18 to 8v4, Paul graphically describes his bondage to the flesh in his pre-Christian days, and then in Rom 8v2, describes how "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made him free from the law of sin and death." Paul informs us in Rom 8v3,4, "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." (NKJV) **The glorious victory of Jesus over "sin in the flesh," and His awesome enabling presence and power, gives us victory over sin.**

In Rom 8v12-16, Paul tells of the contrasting ends of those who walk in the flesh and Spirit. "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors; not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together."

The Christian will experience conflict with the flesh and its biological machinery and desires

We read in Gal 5v16-17: "And I say: In the Spirit walk ye, and the desire of the flesh ye may not complete; for the flesh doth desire contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit contrary to the flesh, and these are opposed one to another, that the things that ye may will — these ye may not do." YLT.

"Are opposed the one to the other," is "allelouis" 240, "antikeitai" 480, and it means that they are lined up in face-

to-face conflict [anti], a spiritual duel with the flesh and the Devil. ("Antikeitai," is the present indicative of the verb "antikeimai." The verb means, "to lie opposite to;" hence, "to oppose, withstand." **Vine** says that the present participle of the verb with the article, is equivalent to a noun, and signifies, "an adversary," e.g., Luke 13v17, 21v15, 1Cor 16v9, Phil 1v28, 1Tim 5v14. In 2Thess 2v4, this same construction is used to describe the Man of Sin, and is translated "He that opposeth." It is used in 1Tim 1v10, of anything, or anyone, that is opposed to the truth in Jesus. Here in Gal 5v17, it describes the conflict between the believer's spirit and flesh. In Sept. see Zech 3v1, Isaiah 66v6, and Job 13v24.

Barnes writes, of Gal 5v17, "And these are contrary. They are opposite in their nature. They never can harmonize; see Rom 8v6v7, compare Gal 5:19-23. The contrariety Paul has illustrated by showing what each produces; and they are as opposite as adultery, wrath, strife, murders, drunkenness, etc., are to love, joy, goodness, gentleness, and temperance." End of quote.

Walking in the Spirit, and crucifying the flesh, are absolute necessities for the Christian. We read in **Gal 5v16,24-26**, "I say then: walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another."

Paul warns us in Gal 6v7-9: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." NKJV

We have a demanding and exhausting spiritual warfare against powerful evil angels

Paul warns us in Eph 6v10-20, that we have great evil spiritual forces opposing us. They attack our thoughts, and try to inflame the desires of the flesh, and corrupt us through worldly things. They try to take away our anointing with their energy lines. The fiery darts of Satan and the powers of darkness are a reality, but through Jesus' Name, God's power and armoury, we can quench them all, and cause Satan and his evil allies to flee. They were totally defeated by Jesus at the Cross. Col 2v14,15, Heb 2v14.

However, if we want to make Satan flee from us, the breastplate of righteousness (a holy life) is vital part of the Christian's armour. **James makes this clear in James 4v4-10**, "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? **But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." Therefore submit to God. Resist ("antistete") the devil and he will flee ("feuxetai, future of feugo") from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up." In 1Peter 5v9**, "Whom withstand," is also "antistete," the imperative aorist active of "anthistemi," "take a stand against." the same form and instruction as James 4v7.

In Prov 7v2-27, we read that God's Word and a holy life will keep us from being defeated, and led into sin by the strong desires of the flesh. "Keep my commands and live, And my law as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart. Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," And call understanding your nearest kin, That they may keep you from the immoral woman, From the seductress who flatters with her words." NKJV

David, in Psalm 17v8,9, asked God to; "Keep me as the apple of Your eye; Hide me under the shadow of Your wings, From the wicked who oppress me, From my deadly enemies who surround me." NKJV. **Particularly note, Zech 2v8:** "The Lord of Glory has sent me against the nations that oppressed you, **for he who harms you sticks his finger in Jehovah's eye!**" TLB. We read in Deut 32v10, that God kept Israel "as the apple of his eye." Those who attack godly Jews and godly Christians are in serious trouble. It is very dangerous to poke God in the eye! Judgement and eternal judgement awaits those who do it.

When our Lord Jesus had His conflicts with the Devil and his evil angels; He became so physically weak that had to be strengthened by angels. We too will find that it will take God's aid and presence, and His spiritual gifts, to defeat the Wicked One. We read in 2Cor 10v3-5, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

"Bringing every thought into captivity," is "aichmalotizontes pan noema." "Aichmalotizontes," is the present

active participle of "aichmalotizo" 163, from "aichmalotos" 164, a captive taken at spear point in war. See Luke 4v18. Jesus came to release Satan's prisoners of war. We can defeat all Satan's lies and bring them at spear point to Jesus. "To the obedience of Christ," is the objective genitive, "to the obedience unto Christ." Paul states that laying all our thoughts at the feet of Jesus brings true liberty, and freedom. Contrast Luke 21v24. This describes Jerusalem being sacked and devastated by Satan, at the spear point of Rome, and Antichrist, because of their refusal to listen to Jesus.

Peter writes in 2Peter 2v1,2: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who secretly shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And **many** shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." The word "secretly," is the Greek, "pareisaxousin", the future active of "pareisago" 3919, which means, to introduce surreptitiously, to bring in secretly or craftily. This is exactly what Augustine did when he introduced the destructive heresy of Docetic Gnosticism through his abominable doctrine of "Original Sin."

The Glorious Victory of Jesus over the world, the flesh, and the Devil

NB All through His life Jesus had conflict with His flesh, and with the Devil, just as we do.

We read in **Heb 4v15**. "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, **but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.**" (NKJ) Jesus had a nature like ours, with all the propensities and passions of a man. Jesus was subjected to all the kinds of temptation and trial that come against us; He is, therefore, able to sympathize with us and to aid us.

"Being tempted, or tried," in Heb 4v15, is "pepeirasmenon," the perfect passive participle of "peirazo," (Strong's NT:3985), as in Heb 2v17. It means, to tempt, to test, and to try the nature or character. The perfect tense emphasises the completed state and permanent nature of the tests that Jesus went through, and the compassion and sympathy graced to us by Jesus through the trials and temptations He suffered on our behalf. Jesus is our brother, and He "is not ashamed to call us brethren."

"Yet without sin." See 1Pet 2v22, "Who did no sin;" and Isaiah 53v9, "He had done no violence, neither was there any deceit in his mouth." See Heb 7v26, "Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Our Great High Priest was "without sin," and is able to assist sinners who put their trust in Him.

We read in Heb 2v18., that Jesus having been tempted, ("peirastheis" the first aorist passive participle of "peirazo" 3985), is able to succour those who are now being tempted, ("peirazomenois" the present passive of "peirazo" Strong's NT:3985). As He was tempted and tried in all points, He is able to succour ("run to the cry of," ("boethesai," the first aorist active infinitive of the compound verb "boetheo" (Strong's NT:997), to run at a cry or call for help). In Matt 15v25, the Syrophenician uses this very same word.

The Expositor's Greek Testament gives light on Rom 8v3, "In the likeness of sinful flesh."

It states: "But the emphasis in "homoioima" is on Christ's likeness to us, not His unlikeness; "flesh of sin" is one idea to the Apostle, and what he means by it is that God sent His Son in that nature which in us is identified with sin. This was the "form" (and "form" rather than "likeness" is what "homoioima" signifies) in which Christ appeared amongst men. It does not prejudice Christ's sinlessness, which is a fixed point with the Apostle 'ab initio'; and if anyone says it involves a contradiction to maintain that Christ was sinless, and that He came in a nature which with us is identified with sin, it may be pointed out that this identification does not belong to the essence of our nature, but to its corruption, and that **the uniform teaching of the New Testament is that Christ is one with us-short of sin.** The likeness and the limitation of it (though the former is the point here urged) are equally essential in the Redeemer." End of quote.

Vincent writes on Rom 8v3, "In the likeness of sinful flesh." "Literally, "of the flesh of sin." The choice of words is especially noteworthy. Paul does not say simply, "He came in flesh" (1John 4v2; 1Tim 3v16), for this would not have expressed the bond between Christ's manhood and sin. Not "in the flesh of sin," which would have represented Him as partaking of sin. Not "in the likeness of flesh," since He was really and entirely human; but, "in the likeness of the flesh of sin:" **really human, conformed in appearance to the flesh whose characteristic is sin, yet sinless.**" End of quote.

Alford writes on Rom 8v3: "'in the likeness of the flesh of sin' (the flesh 'whose attribute and character was sin'). The genitive is not 'hamartolou,' but implies far more-[not merely the contamination by, but] the belonging to and being possessed by."---**He had a nature 'like sinful human nature'- but had not Himself 'a sinful nature.'** Compare Heb 4v15...**He was able to be tempted, i.e. subjected to sensuous incitements, e.g. of pain, which in other men break out into sin, but in Him did not.**" End of quote.

We read in Rom 8v3, that Jesus totally conquered the temptations from His flesh, and so condemned sin in the

flesh, "katekrinen" 2632, "ten" 3588, "hamartian" 266, "en" 1722, "te" 3588, "sarki" 4561." **"Katekrinen,"** is the aorist active indicative of "katakrino" (Strong's NT:2632), **to judge against, to condemn.** Jesus condemned men's sins by His victory over the desires of the flesh, **"the condemnation took place in the flesh of Jesus."** **"Likeness,"** in "the likeness of sinful flesh," is "homoiomati" 3667, "sarkos" 4561, "hamartias" 266." **It means that Jesus was a real man, and not a phantom as the Docetic Gnostics held.** For "likeness," see Phil 2v7, "In the likeness of men, "en homoiomati anthropon." Jesus conquered the flesh that had corrupted and led all mankind into sin. In Rom 8v1-4, Paul informs us that Christ's victory over sin, not only condemned sin in the flesh, but also enables us to live in victory over sin, through the law of the spirit and life in Christ. Jesus partook of human flesh, but did not partake of the sins of the flesh; His holy life condemned sin in the flesh and showed that it was possible to live in victory over it.

In Heb 2v16-18, we read that Jesus took on Him the seed of Abraham, and that it was a moral duty and obligation, "opheilen," the imperfect active indicative of "opheilo," to be obligated, a debt to be paid. Before the foundation of the world, Jesus had obligated Himself to be made in all points like unto His brethren, and experience the same temptations, so that He could be our sympathetic High Priest. The Trinity bound themselves by this selfless obligation, gigantic commitment, and solemn promise, for Jesus to come in flesh and die for us. Titus 1v2, Rev 13v8. To be tempted in all points as we are, He had to be made in all points as we are. Heb 2v17 with 4v15. **From the level of our humanity, Jesus conquered the world, the flesh, and the Devil.** Blessed be His Name!

We read in Heb 2v17, "Because" he has suffered being tempted, he is able to sympathize with sufferers. Jesus knows all about our temptations and trials, not only as God, but also as man, through experiencing them Himself. Heb 5v2,8. **Jesus has suffered more, infinitely more, than we can ever know, and in all our trials, temptations and sorrows, we shall never reach the ghastly depths of temptation and trial that He endured.** There is no trial that we experience, which He has not experienced far worse than we have.

Jesus has won the most wonderful deliverance for us. Blessed be His Name!

We read in Eph 2v1-10: "And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. **But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,** even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." NKJV

See Col 2v11, "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, **in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh** by the circumcision of Christ." See 1Pet 4v1-4, 1John 2v16. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." In the last days, there will be a great eruption of sexual sin. Jude v7,8.

James learned his doctrine of "sin in the flesh" from Jesus, by living with Him for about 30 years

He writes in James 1v13-16: "Let no one say when he is tempted, I am tempted from God; for God is incapable of being tempted by [what is] evil and He Himself tempts no one. But **every person is tempted when he is drawn away, enticed and baited by his own evil desire (lust, passions).** Then the evil desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is fully matured, brings forth death. Do not be misled, my beloved brethren." Amplified Version.

It is the matured and determined attitude to sin that brings about the spiritual death of the soul. When does this occur in a child? Paul says that it is when they fully comprehend right from wrong, and this may vary in children. Children certainly differ a great deal, you have the godly child Samuel, and in contrast, you have wicked Pharaoh, who was opposed to God for most of his life.

We also see this mature and determined attitude to sin demonstrated in the incredible stubbornness of the people that Jesus preached to during His ministry, for only a small percentage repented at His preaching, even though it was confirmed by mighty signs, wonders, and miracles; the like of which had never been seen before. Jesus was broken hearted over this terrible rejection of God's love and forgiveness; we see Him weeping uncontrollably over Jerusalem and an apostate nation, for He saw in prophetic vision, what was going to happen to them in the not too distant future.

We read in Luke 19v41-44: "Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept, saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now, they are hidden from your eyes. "For days

will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, "and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."(NKJ)

The words "but now they are hid from thine eyes" speak volumes! We see that the end result of the spiritual blindness generated by their unrepentant attitudes, is apostasy, death and destruction. In 66 AD, the Jews in their blind pride and arrogance rose up in rebellion against the Romans in an attempt to throw off their yoke. The result was that in 70 AD, Jerusalem was absolutely destroyed, even as the Lord had seen in vision, and 1,100,000 Jews were killed, with many being crucified, or impaled upon stakes, upon the hills surrounding the city, as witnessed and written about by Titus Flavius Josephus.

In Luke 19v41, "wept," is "eklausen," the aorist active indicative of "klaio" (Strong's NT:2799), to sob, i.e. wail aloud, which Mary did in John 11v33. In John 11v35, "Jesus wept," "wept," is "edakrusen," the aorist active indicative of "dakruo," from "dakru," a tear. The verb "dakruo" (Strong's NT:1145), only occurs here in John 11v35 in the New Testament, it never means to wail as "klaio" 2799 does, but rather to shed tears, it can mean to cry silently. Jesus was deeply moved with the grief of Mary and Martha and burst into tears. It was a grief too deep for words. Jesus understood, and still understands our grief. This shortest verse in the Bible, tells us that Jesus really feels for us, and suffers with us in our times of deepest need and inner pain. See Heb 4v15. God really understands and cares. Those who mourn can always come to God for His amazing comfort. Matt 5v4, Mark 16v10, Luke 6v21, 2Cor 1v3-10. (In Acts 20v19, we read that Paul prayed with moving compassion and tears for the Christians at Ephesus, "with tears," is "dakruon.")

Our Lord's great inner conflict and pain in Gethsemane is seen in Heb 5v7, where we read that Jesus prayed, "with strong crying and tears," "meta krauges kai dakruon," as He fought to win our salvation. It was a selfless, and most agonising and painful battle, and He won it for us. Blessed be His Name!

How did Jesus overcome temptation from the world, the flesh and the Devil?

We read in the Scriptures that Jesus was in all things made like us, Heb 2v17, and "was in all points tempted as we are," Heb 4v15, in order to be our sympathetic, merciful and faithful great High Priest.

We read in Rom 8v3: that Jesus was made "in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." "Likeness," is "homoiomati" (Strong NT:3667)," **exactly as in Phil 2v7, Jesus had, "a real and exact likeness of our humanity, Jesus was not a Docetic phantom."** Jesus condemned the sin of men by overcoming the temptations from the flesh, which had corrupted the rest of mankind. Jesus had the flesh, which led all the rest of mankind into sin, but His glory is that He overcame it, and was sinless. Paul affirms that Jesus possessed a human nature like that of all mankind; but that He remained sinless, because he never yielded to the impulses of His fleshly nature.

Jesus was certainly tempted for we read in Heb 2v18. "For in that He Himself has **suffered, being tempted**, He is able to succour ("boethesai," the aorist active infinitive of "boetheo," to run at a cry or call for help, to those who are tempted. See Matt 15v25.) Again, we read in **Heb 4v15,16**, "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but **was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin**. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

How did Jesus overcome sin? If we say that He turned on His deity, then He was not tempted in all points as we are. We find the secret in Psalm 69v8-12: "I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children. For **the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up**; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me. **When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting**, that was to my reproach. I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them. They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards."

This Scripture states that Jesus disciplined His flesh with fasting and prayer, and He was consumed with zeal to save us and do His Father's will. This brought horrific opposition and terrible inner pain, but communion with His Father brought Him through. If we want to win the battle with the flesh, we have to follow our Lord's example. Paul certainly did, he writes in **1Cor 9v26,27**, Therefore, I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; but I pommel and discipline my body and subdue it and make it my slave, lest after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified." Let us follow the example of our Lord and Paul, and exercise self-discipline through communion with God.

In Rom 7v7 to 8v4 Paul teaches that he, like his Lord, was born with, "dead sin in the flesh," however, unlike his Lord, Paul, like everybody else, yielded to this temptation from the sinful desires of the flesh. As a result, Paul, like everyone else, died spiritually as a result of yielding to this temptation. Whereas the Lord Jesus resisted every

temptation and conquered them, and thus He “condemned sin in the flesh.” Rom 8v3. This vital truth of our Lord’s true humanity is also clearly stated by Paul in Heb 2v17,18 and 4v14-16, where he states that Jesus was not only **“made like unto His brethren in ALL THINGS,” but that Jesus was also “in ALL points tempted like as we are.” Positive proof of His humanity.**

The Great Tribulation

Satan is allowed to run riot at the end of this age; “the mystery of lawlessness.” 2Thess 2v7.

At the end of this Age, the Age of Grace, immediately before our Lord’s Second Coming, there will be a time of great trouble of three and a half years duration, the like of which has never been seen since the beginning of the world, this period of time is called, “The Great Tribulation.” We are told in Rev 12v7-12, that this tribulation occurs, because Satan and his evil angels, now in the heavenly places, are cast out of them into the earth, and Satan begins his plan, called, “the Mystery of Iniquity” (“Iniquity,” is “anomias,” (Strong’s NT:458), lawlessness). God has up to this time restrained Satan’s plans, however, during The Great Tribulation God allows Satan to put his plans into operation, to expose Satan’s great wickedness. See 2Thess 2v3-12, **NB v7,8:** “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.” NKJV. “Kai katargesei te epiphaneia tes parousias autou,” The commanding word and outshining, splendour and glory of Jesus at His second coming destroys his enemies. Rev 19v15,19-21, Zech 14v12.

“Restrains” in Greek is, “katechon” (Strong’s NT:2722), to hold fast or down, to restrain. There will be a sudden deluge of evil into the world, which will produce conditions like those experienced by Noah before the Flood, and Lot, when he fled from Sodom. During this time because “iniquity shall abound (literally, has come to the full) the “agape” love of many (Christians) will wax cold,” these believers will be overwhelmed by the evil in the world, because they have failed to prepare themselves for this terrible time. Rev 7v14, 12v9,12,14, Matt 24v12,21, Eph 6v12, 2Thess 2v1-12, NB: v7, Luke 17v26-37, 18v1-8, Dan 8v23.

John writes in 1John.4v1-6: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”

The danger of a renewed upsurge of Docetic Gnosticism in the last days

The apostle John states very strongly that the person who “confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh **is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist.**” He is referring here to the destructive heresy of Docetic Gnosticism, which many Christians today hold and believe, because of their acceptance of the doctrine of “Original Sin.” When John stated that the person who does not believe that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is “not of God,” and has “he spirit of antichrist,” he clearly had in mind also, not just his own time, but also the time of The Great Tribulation. During which the final and most evil Antichrist sets up his image in the Temple in Jerusalem, from where he reigns. **John states that we can only overcome Antichrist,** the false prophets and teachers, of the evil days of The Great Tribulation, **if** we believe “that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh”, that is if we recognise that Jesus had a real humanity exactly like our own, and NOT as the false prophets and teachers teach, that He was Docetic phantom. 2Thess 2v4.

The believer will only overcome in these dark evil days if their mind is filled with truth, as John writes in 1John 5v4, “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

The truth that we believe in these evil dark days that are coming is vital for our eternal salvation, because, as our Lord stated in Matt 24v12,13, “And because iniquity shall abound, the “agape” love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” It is quite clear that it is those who have their minds filled with the Truth, and have prayed and not fainted, who will be saved, the others will have backslidden and gone into apostasy, so it is vital for us as believers to “love” the truth. **Luke 18v1. See 2Thess 2v10.** “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”

Paul, in writing to Timothy in 1Timothy 3v16, states the vital truth that, “God was manifest in the flesh” and then immediately in the next verse, **1Timothy 4v1,** goes on to state; “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils!” Paul, like John, knew

that the destructive heresy of Docetic Gnosticism would still be in the Church in the last days, and so he warns us against believing it, by stating that our Lord did, indeed, come in the flesh, and had a humanity like our own. Paul states that the denial of the humanity of Christ in the days of The Great Tribulation will mean that "some will depart from the faith."

Peter writes to the Christians of the five Roman provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, in Asia Minor, to warn them about and against the development of the Docetic and Cerinthian Gnostic heresies, which also greatly disturbed Paul, and he wrote against it in Colossians, Ephesians, and Pastoral Epistles, and John also attacks this mindset in his Gospel, Epistles, and the Apocalypse.

Peter states in 2Pet 1v16 to 2v3: "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And we heard this voice, which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

2Pet 2v1-3: "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber." NKJV

Peter saw the terrible effects of the evil doctrine of Docetic Gnosticism in the Church in the last days of this Age, especially in the last three and a half years of this Age (The Great Tribulation) and the end of the false teachers, and those who believe them. These apostates will deny the Lord who bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction, and go into eternal punishment. The doctrine of "Original Sin," craftily and secretly brings this very doctrine of Docetic Gnosticism into the Church, and in The Great Tribulation it will produce spiritual confusion, bewilderment, havoc and apostasy in the Church.

In 2Pet 1v16, Peter uses the phrase, "cunningly devised fables", "sesophismenois" (Strong's NT:4679), "muthois" (Strong's NT:3454). "Sesophismenois," is the perfect passive participle of "sophizo," to invent cleverly (as used here) or to play the sophist. "Muthois," is an old term for word, narrative, story, fiction, fable, and falsehood. Peter states that the false doctrine of the Docetic Gnostics is "cleverly invented fiction, fables and falsehoods."

Peter states that the false teachers and those who accept and believe the evil doctrine of Docetism from them, will lead a "pernicious" life. "Pernicious ways" is the Greek "aselgeiais" (Strong's NT:766), the associative instrumental case of "aselgeia," which means, unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, shamelessness, and insolence. **In 2Pet 2v3-22,** he goes on to give Old Testament examples of the character of these evil people and their final end.

In Matt 24v45-25v13, Jesus gives two examples of those who come through The Great Tribulation victoriously, in the "faithful and wise servant" and the "five wise virgins," and two examples of those who do not, in the "evil servant" and the "five foolish virgins,"

NB1 "The Contrast Between Adam and Christ in Their Effect Upon Humanity: Rom 5v12-21

Some interpret these verses in Romans to mean that men are forced into sin, and they cannot help sinning, because of the sin of Adam. Those who insist that these verses teach that all humanity is forced into evil by Adam's sin, must accept that this would make these verses teach ultimate reconciliation for all mankind. The key verses are verses 17,18, and 19; Adam's sin did not force men to be sinners, no more than Christ's atonement forces men to be justified; **in both cases, the free will of man is the determining factor!** Rom 5v12,17. The result of following Adam is spiritual death; whereas the result of following Christ is justification and spiritual life. Isaiah 53v6. Paul compares the severity of God in condemning Adam after one sin, with God's mercy to the Christian after a multitude of sins. Rom 5v16, James 5v19,20. Adam's first sin, the first step away from God, was the beginning of many steps away from God. God dealt immediately with Adam's sin, both for Adam's and the Creation's sake, lest he continued to live forever by partaking continually of the tree of life. Notice the kind and gentle attempts to make Adam and Eve confess their sin, and the thoughtful provision of God, even after their rebellion. **The physical death which fell upon the human race after Adam's sin, is not the result of any person's sin, for children still die who have not sinned, Rom 5v14, physical death is the result of the withdrawal of the tree of life.** Had not this been done, Adam would have lived in sin forever. Gen 3v22-24.

NB2 The secret of Paul's prayer life and spiritual victory. Rom 8v26

Paul states that the Holy Spirit always makes His unlimited abilities available to us when we pray.

Paul writes in Rom 8v26: "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (NKJ) In, "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought," "as we ought," is "kathō dei," "as it is necessary." Rom 8v26. After about 25 years of Christian experience, Paul states that it was only the Holy Spirit's help and gifts that prevented him from making mistakes over what to pray for, and enabled him to intercede effectively for God's saints. **NB:** John 14v16,17,26, 15v26,27, 16v6,16,17.

In the light of this intercession by the Holy Spirit, we can well understand why Paul thanked God in **1Cor 14v18**, that he spoke in tongues more than any of the verbose tongue speaking Corinthians. Praying in tongues releases the Holy Spirit's power gifts, and prayer for the saints according to the will and desires of God. **We do not know how to pray "as we ought," "kathō dei," "as it is necessary," but the Holy Spirit, "maketh intercession for us;"** "huperentungchanei," (Strong's NT:5241), which only occurs here in the New Testament. It is derived from the verb "entungchano," (Strong's NT:1793), "which means "to light upon or fall in with; to go to meet," and signifies to intercede or negotiate for another. **A. T. Robertson** says "It is a picturesque word of rescue by one who "happens on," "entungchanei" 1793, one who is in trouble and "in his behalf," "huper," 5228, pleads "with unuttered groanings" (instrumental case) or with "sighs that baffle words" (Denney)." **End of quote.** Compare Acts 25v24, Rom 8v34, 11v2, Heb 7v25.

Paul tells us in Rom 8v26,27, that the Holy Spirit is always available to us, to take hold with us against our infirmities, weakness, and limitations. "Helps," poorly expresses the thought in "sunantilambanetai," the present indicative of "sunantilambanomai," (Strong's NT:4878), "to lend a hand together with, at the same time with one." It is a compound of "sun," (Strong's NT:4862), "with," or "together;" and "anti," (Strong's NT:473), "against;" and "lambanomai," (Strong's NT:2983), "to take and get hold of," and so, "to actively support and help." The Holy Spirit comes to enable us to pray, and mightily supplement our weakness and limitations with His infinite abilities, grace and love. The Holy Spirit comes to make the promise real to us that, "by Christ's bruise we are healed," and to reveal to us the ghastly bruising of our Lord's emotions, body, soul, and spirit, during his life, ministry and atonement, that have bought healing for our body soul and spirit. By His bruise, we are healed!

Final Conclusion

The heart-felt warnings of the New Testament Apostles and Holy Spirit inspired writers could not be any clearer, they warn us of the dire consequences of accepting the damnable heresy of Docetic Gnosticism. Christians do not realise that this can definitely come about as a result of holding and believing Augustine's false doctrine of "Original Sin," and his "born in sin" theories. **God states in Hosea 4v6, "My people are destroyed (perish) for lack of the knowledge (of ME)." They lack of the correct knowledge about Jesus and the Father.** It is vitally important to have a correct interpretation of the Scriptures about the true humanity of Jesus, or we fail to have the true and deep relationship with Jesus and the Father that they, and we, desire. If we fail to understand our Lord's humanity, we will not realise the extent of the sufferings of Jesus for us. A correct knowledge about Christ's humanity sets us spiritually free.

John 17v17: "Sanctify them through ("en" (Strong's NT:1722), in, by, with, through) Your truth. Your word is truth."

John 8v31,32: "Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (NKJ)

Appendix L: Paul's Doctrine Of 'Dead Sin In The Flesh'

1) Children are the result of a combination of Divine and human activity: the parts which God alone can give, soul and spirit, are of course perfect, and only the part which comes from man is imperfect owing to inherited, but dead, sin in the flesh. "For without the law sin was dead", "Now then it is no more I that do it. but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." Rom 7v8,17. What a joy then to realise that in every birth The Lord Himself has taken a hand and given spirit to the helpless babes of even the wickedest parents! (Zech 12v1) The illegitimate offspring of sexual irregularity are accepted by God and even at times form rungs in the Royal Ladder that led to The Messiah. Judges 11v1, Matt 1v3,5,6.

2) All children are therefore, through their living spirit, alive to God and capable of knowing God, having the further grace of a personal Angel with instant access to the Almighty.

3) When, however, moral law enters a child's heart sin revives, for the strength of sin is the law: where there is no law there is no transgression and God is not angry until Law has been broken. Rom 4v15, 5v13, 1Cor 15v56. At this

point both sin and soul are alive, and temptation begins; for the now-living "sin in the flesh" proceeds to tempt the soul, and as in Eve's case by deceit enters it, and kills it. For this the soul is justly to blame, as were Adam and Eve, for rejecting the Knowledge of God which would have kept it pure, and doing that for which it would have blamed another. "Therefore thou art inexcusable O man, whosoever thou art that judgest, for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things" (Rom 2v1-3).

4) All passages alike stress the fact that the soul only dies when it commits sin, up to that point being alive to God, and by His grace able to resist temptation, and therefore justly under His wrath when it deliberately and unnecessarily chooses to do that for which it would blame another.

5) Temptation is a blessing allowed by God to strengthen our moral nature and give the soul victory over the flesh, the inevitable point of weakness. "The spirit truly is ready but the flesh is weak" (Mark 14v38). Thus it was the Holy Spirit who led Christ into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, and into the Garden of Gethsemane. Mark 1v12, 14v32-38, Heb 4v15, 5v7. Temptation, though the pathway to victory and honour, is not rashly to be approached in one's own strength, but only at the direct leading of the Holy Spirit and at God's time, as in the case of Abraham at Mt. Moriah (Gen 22,1-14). The temptation of a fool leads to disgrace and failure, for pride goeth before a fall: only the wise are blessed thereby and promoted to honour, as were Daniel and the three Children. Luke 22v28, Phil 2v7-11, Heb 2v18, James 1v4,12, 1Pet 4v12,13, Rev 2v10.

6) It is not always realised that temptation to be disobedient to the Law of Love is inevitable to the purest soul. Both Lucifer and his Angels, and Adam and Eve, were all created perfect and lived in perfect surroundings; yet all fell to a temptation which derived its strength from the natural desire to please themselves and have their own way, rather than obey someone else. It is inevitable that we should desire happiness but we are not to purchase it at another's expense. The safety of the soul lies, not in the absence of temptation but in immunity to its blandishments, won as the result of experience. Adam and Eve were meant to know good and evil not by eating of the tree and thus committing evil, but by resisting the lies of Satan and driving him from the garden by continuous resistance and refusal. The fight, though not the defeat, of Adam and Eve and Everyman (Rom 7v7-25), is inevitable, and is the only path to victory and final perfection of character, and security against any possibility of failure in the future.

7) Sin has no existence by itself, and was not created by God, who created all things. It is simply a possible attitude of soul, and its existence depends solely upon the will of the sinner. If all sinners repented all sin would disappear: it is only the eternal refusal of sinners to repent which will keep sin in eternal existence. God is in no way responsible for it: He has created free wills, but not evil wills, as some theologians have stated, thus making God the Author of evil. Sin was the child of the first Will which chose evil, although the possibility, but not the actuality of it, lay dormant in the freedom of the will: but sin has no separate existence by itself: it is only a possible attitude of will, leading to sinful actions of body.

Appendix M: Studies On The Greek Words Used For Prayer In The Scriptures

"Interventions," Greek, "Entugchano." (Strong's NT:1793)

The words "I pray" (more strictly, "I make request," the "I" is emphatic) are used 4 times by the Lord Jesus in John Chapter 17 (v9,15,20), in all 4 cases it is the same Greek word, "erootó," the present active indicative of "erotao" (Strong's NT:2065), and it means to interrogate; by implication, to request, ask, beseech, desire, entreat.

The Greek phrase used of our Lord's intercessions (Heb 7v25) in His High priestly ministry is, "eis tó entungchánein", ("to make intercession"), "entungchánein" is the articular infinitive of "entugchano" (Strong's NT:1793), and means, to deal with, "to light upon or fall in with; to go to meet" for consultation, conversation, or supplication, and it speaks of active intervention (with power) rather than merely intercession, (see Vincent's (New testament Word Studies) comments on Heb 7v25). This Greek word, "entugchano" Strong's NT:1793, is also used in Acts 25v24, Rom 8v27,34, 11v2, but it does not occur in the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament).

This Greek word "entugchano" (Strong's NT:1793), also occurs in Rom 8v26 in relation to the Holy Spirit, it is prefixed by "huper," "huperentungchánei" (maketh intercession), the present active indicative of "huperentugchano" (Strong's NT:5241). It is a picturesque word of rescue by one who 'happens on' (entugchanœ) one who is in trouble, and 'in his behalf' (huper) actively intervenes (with power) 'with unuttered groanings' (instrumental case) or with 'sighs that baffle words,' to effect a change.

The noun, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783), from "entugchano" (Strong's NT:1793), occurs in 1Tim 2v1 ("enteúxeis", feminine plural accusative), and 1Tim 4v5., "enteúxeos," feminine singular genitive, and means, a falling in with, meeting with, an interview, a coming together, that for which an interview is held, a conference or conversation. Like

"entugchano" (Strong's NT:1793), and "huperentugchano," (Strong's NT:5241); "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783), also has the meaning of "an intervention (with power) to effect a change". It also does not occur in the Septuagint.

In our Lord's earthly life, during the hidden years at Nazareth, Jesus learned how to intercede "entugchano" (Strong's NT:1793), Isaiah 50v3-7, and in His ministry, this was the method He used in His intercessions, He actively intervened in situations by manifesting God's power in the Heavenly places through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit to change the situations and circumstances that were before Him.

The Lord Jesus makes the following very instructive statement in Mark 10v27, Matt 19v26, Luke 18v27: "And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for **with God** all things are possible." "...for with God **all** things are possible" is a general statement and applies to **ALL** situations and circumstances!

"With God", is in Greek "παρά τοῦ Θεοῦ," "παρά" (Strong's NT:3844), is a primary preposition; properly, near, it is in the dative case, which means, at (or in) the vicinity of (objectively or subjectively), beside, by the side of, **alongside**, in the presence of. When we humble ourselves, submit and draw near to **alongside God**, we are able to take His great power and change situations and circumstances by making "interventions," even making the Devil himself flee. Eph 3v20, James 4v5-7

Such were the "interventions" (with power) made by the Lord Jesus during His earthly life, that He was able to say in Matt 17v20 (with 21v21, Luke 17v6): "...Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to **you**, if **you** have faith as a mustard seed, **you** will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and **nothing** will be impossible for **you**."

The Lord Jesus followed the example of the OT prophets, who also "actively intervened" (with power) to change circumstances, we read in 2Kings 13v14-19, the following about Elisha (the prophet): "Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O **my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof** (the very words that Elisha had spoken about Elijah when he was to be taken away from him, 2Kings 2v12). And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows. And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand upon it: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands. And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed them. And he said, Take the arrows. And he took them. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed. And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice."

Even King Joash realised that it was not he, but Elisha (by his interventions with Divine power) who had been the real Defence of Israel, so much so that King Joash called him, "**the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof**." King Joash knew that with the death of Elisha, the real defence of Israel would disappear, as there was not another great prophet, who stood before the Throne of God (in spirit), and who had the "double portion" of the anointing of the Holy Spirit that Elijah, and Elisha experienced. 2Kings 2v9.

Note: When Elisha asked Elijah for a "double portion" of his spirit, he did not mean that he wanted twice the anointing that Elijah had, but this phrase refers to the "double portion" which the first-born received of the father's inheritance (Deut 21v17); Elisha wanted the same anointing that Elijah had, so that ALL Israel would know that he was Elijah's successor, the first prophet in Israel, who, like Elijah was Israel's defence, i.e. "the horsemen and chariots of Israel." 2 Kings 2v12.

Elisha then performed (possibly) his last "intervention" on behalf and for Israel, however, King Joash, having little faith only struck the ground three times, when he should have struck it at least five or six times, which would have seen Syria destroyed for good. Certainly the words of the Lord Jesus in Matt 9v29 aptly apply to King Joash: "...According to your faith be it unto you." And in 2Kings 13v20 we read: "Then Elisha died, and they buried him. And the raiding bands from Moab invaded the land in the spring of the year." The (spiritual) defence (and protection) of Israel had completely disappeared with the death of the great prophet Elisha ("the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof"), and the result was the immediate inrush of Israel's enemies into the land.

Although the Greek word "entugchano" (Strong's NT:1793) does not occur in the Septuagint, Paul uses it in Rom 11v2 of Elijah, Rom 11v2-4 (with 1Kings 19v1-18) states: "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he **maketh intercession to God against Israel**, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." In this passage of Scripture, "entugchano" (Strong's NT:1793) is used with "katá," (against) in the following way: "entugchánei toῦ Θεοῦ katá toῦ Israeél." Which means, "he maketh intercession to God **against** Israel." Elijah

was "intervening", to bring God's judgement down on Israel, however, because of the seven thousand men, who had not bowed the knee to Baal, God did not let this occur, because The Judge of all the earth will do right, and will not slay the righteous with the wicked. Gen 18v16-33.

However, in Rom 8v26, "entugchano" (Strong's NT:1793) is used with "huper," for, or on behalf of, to speak of an operation of Divine power in mercy for anyone. (See Rom 8v27,34, Heb 7v25). In 1Kings 18v1-46 (esp. 30-20) we see Elijah doing just that: The fire of God that fell and consumed the sacrifice fell in "mercy," to open the people's eyes to the true God.

"Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name." Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood, and said, "Fill four water pots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood." Then he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time; and he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time. So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water. 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 Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again. Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!" And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there." (NKJV)

We also see Elijah "intervening" to bring God's judgement down on the wicked, 2Kings 1v1-18 (esp. 9-16.):

"Then the king sent to him a captain of fifty with his fifty men. He went up to Elijah, who was sitting on the top of a hill, and said to him, "O man of God, the king says, 'Come down.'" But Elijah answered the captain of fifty, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty." Then fire came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. Again the king sent to him another captain of fifty with his fifty. He went up and said to him, "O man of God, this is the king's order: Come down quickly!" But Elijah answered them, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty." Then the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty. Again the king sent the captain of a third fifty with his fifty. So the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and entreated him, "O man of God, please let my life, and the life of these fifty servants of yours, be precious in your sight. Look, fire came down from heaven and consumed the two former captains of fifty men with their fifties; but now let my life be precious in your sight." Then the angel of the LORD said to Elijah, "Go down with him; do not be afraid of him." So he set out and went down with him to the king, and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: Because you have sent messengers to inquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, — is it because there is no God in Israel to inquire of his word? — therefore you shall not leave the bed to which you have gone, but you shall surely die." (NRSV)

This time the fire that fell from Heaven, did **not** fall in "mercy" **but** fell in "judgement".

In Numbers 16v1-50. (esp. v28-34), we also see Moses "intervening" to bring judgement down on Korah and those with him who rebelled against the Lord, with the ground splitting apart under them and swallowing them and everything of theirs up:

"And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. **And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods.** They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also."

It was also through "interventions" (with power) by Deborah (the prophetess) that gave the land of Israel rest for forty years; it was she who was Israel's chariots and horsemen, not Barak! **Judges chapters 4 & 5.**

So we see that “interventions” (with power) made by the believer, can either be in “mercy” or in “judgement.” **Any believer can (and most definitely should) exercise this great authority of “interventions” (with God’s power).** In one of his hymns, William Cowper penned the following words: “Satan trembles when he sees, the weakest saint upon their knees”

In the 1870s, an elderly woman in England who was in a wheelchair and didn’t get out, had read about D. L. Moody and his gifts as an evangelist, she had begun to pray that one day he would come from America to visit her little church. Sure enough after praying for twenty years, God answered her earnest prevailing prayer and he came to her small church, however, she did not know that he actually had come. When he preached his first sermon, at the end of it, he asked all those who wanted to receive the Lord Jesus as their Saviour to stand up, and everybody stood up. He thought they had misunderstood him, so he told them to sit down, and he then asked again that whoever wanted to be saved should stand up, and once again they ALL stood up. **This went on for a number of weeks, and then on one occasion, the congregation in the Sunday morning service was the coldest and most apathetic he had ever seen.** He was glad when the service was over, and he dreaded going back that evening, but it had already been advertised. When he went back, Moody found that everything was different. There was a little warmth in the crowd, then a lot of warmth, and then revival broke out so dramatically that Moody promised to come back in a few days. **When he returned, he learned what really happened on that unusual Sunday.** The elderly woman in the wheelchair had heard sarcastic and accusing thoughts in her mind in the following manner, **“what can your prayers achieve” etc, so she didn’t pray for that morning service. It was only in the afternoon of the Sunday when D L Moody had had such a bad experience in the morning service, that a relative came to her home and reported that Moody had been in the pulpit.** When she heard that, the lady skipped lunch and went to her bedroom and began to pray that God would send his Spirit upon that church and fill the people with a desire for new life in Christ. She prayed all afternoon, and what happened that evening, Moody said, was not his doing, but it was the work of the little woman in her wheelchair and her prevailing prayer that had brought about revival and a powerful move of the Spirit of God which swept over the congregation and changed their hearts. **It was the dear elderly woman, who, through her earnest prevailing prayer, was the powerhouse and cause of the revival that broke out, NOT D L Moody.** Eph 6v18-20.

The Lord Jesus states in **Mark 10v31**, “But many (or “the most”) that are first (in leadership within the church upon earth) shall be last (in the eternal kingdom); and the last (those who are looked upon as least in the church upon earth) first (in the eternal kingdom).” This dear godly woman will occupy a position of great authority in the eternal kingdom, and will always see the face of her Heavenly Father. Rev 22v4.

This authority and ministry is available to **every** believer; the believer does not have to have an apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, or pastoring ministry to exercise it. As already stated this was the Lord Jesus’ practice, and indeed the early Church followed our Lord’s example in this most important ministry (of making “interventions,” (with power) Greek, “enteuxis” (NT:1783)). Matt 6v6,9-13, James 4v6-8, Eph 4v7-16.

And so in **1Tim 2v1-8**, Paul gives the following exhortation:

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, **intercessions**, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who 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; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”

Every believer is to make their top priority, “...supplications, prayers, **intercessions** (Greek, “enteúxeis,” feminine plural accusative of “enteuxis” (Strong’s NT:1783) which means, “an intervention (with power) to effect a change”), and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority.” Paul is teaching here, that the individual believer can change the whole atmosphere of the country, society and community that they live in, from one of great hostility and unrest, to one of peace and quietness. Paul wrote 1Timothy in 67 AD, and at this time the great persecution of Christians, started by the Emperor Nero in 64 AD, was at its height, and from this exhortation it is clear that the Christians, living at this time, were **NOT** fulfilling this very important injunction. It is also interesting to note, that Nero died by committing suicide in the thirty-second year of his life, on 9th June 68 AD (although a few authorities say he died in July 68 AD), a month after Paul had been beheaded, which would seem to indicate that the believers in the Roman Empire took this exhortation of Paul, made in 67 AD, very seriously, and started to intervene with Divine power,” so that they might experience rest from the persecutions started by Nero, and experience peace and quietness in their societies.

By these “interventions” (with power) the believer is actively restraining the Devil and his evil angels from putting their evil plans and purposes into operation through evil worldly rulers and leaders, and this becomes immensely

important in the last three and a half years of this Age of Grace, (the period known as The Great Tribulation), when God completely removes His restraint upon the Devil and the powers of darkness, so that the "Mystery of Iniquity" (or better "Lawlessness") will begin to work fully.

It will be through these "interventions," during "The Great Tribulation", that believers will manifest great power and authority to bring Divine judgement, by Angelic ministry and through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, upon the powers of darkness and the wicked upon earth, who are, persecuting and killing God's children and destroying and wrecking the earth. Rev.11v18,19. These evil people are destroyed at Christ's Second Coming, and are consumed by the breath of His mouth. These Divine judgements will have a restraining effect upon the wicked, and will make them think twice before they carry out their evil deeds. So, after Michael and his angels have cast the Devil and his evil angels out of the Heavenlies into the earth, and God has removed His restraining hand upon the Devil and the powers of darkness, which results in the Mystery of Iniquity working fully, the Church will have the responsibility, to be an active restraint upon the powers of darkness, and wicked people in the world through their "interventions with Divine power." Isaiah 26v9, Daniel 12v1, 11v32, Luke 18v1-8, 2Thess 2v1-12, Rev 7v9-17, 11v3-6, 12v1-17.

In Acts chapter 12 (v1-25), 44 AD, we see what happened when **the whole Church** at Jerusalem (v5 "but fervent prayer for him was persistently made to God **by the church** (assembly)" Amplified Bible) got down to persistent "interventions" (with power) for the release of Peter from prison, who had been arrested by Herod Agrippa I (the grandson of Herod the Great), because after he had killed James (the elder brother of the apostle John), he saw that it pleased the Jews. An Angel of the Lord came and got Peter out of prison, in a most miraculous fashion, who then went promptly to John Mark's mother's (Mary) house. Having knocked on the door, Rhoda, the servant girl heard his voice, and was so overcome with joy that she forgot to let him in, but went and told everybody that Peter was alive, which they ALL promptly refused to believe, saying that she was mad (a case of persons praying in unbelief, for when the answer came they wouldn't (at first) believe and accept the report of it). After letting Peter into the house, he explained how the Lord had freed him from prison, he then left that house and went to another place (for safety).

Immediately after this Herod went down to Caesarea, and during a festival in honour of the Emperor Claudius (possibly his birthday), Herod was sat upon his throne (arrayed in royal apparel), giving an oration before the crowd, which then started to hail him as a god, at which point an Angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God, with the result, he was eaten by worms and died.

It was the result of the "interventions" (with power) of the Church at Jerusalem which brought about Divine judgement upon Herod, for this ruler refused to let the believers have a quiet and peaceable life in the society that they lived in. 1Tim 2v1-8.

Through the "interventions" (with power) of God's people not so many years ago (in the early 1990s), we saw the collapse of Communism in the USSR and Albania, and also a softening in the attitude of the hard-line Communist rulers of China.

Paul states in 1Tim 2v3 that these "interventions" (with power) are **"good and acceptable"** in the sight of God our Saviour." "Good and acceptable" is in Greek, "kalón kaí apódektos", "kalón" is singular nominative of "kalos" (Strong's NT:2570), which denotes, that which is intrinsically "good," beautiful, fair, excellent. "Apódektos" is the singular nominative of "apodektos" (Strong's NT:587), "acceptable," in the sense of what is pleasing and welcome. So God welcomes our "interventions" (with power) and finds them beautiful and pleasing.

We should remember that officers of the state are God's ministers, appointed by Him to deal with earthly matters. Rom 13v1-7. See Dan 4v17,25,35, Isaiah 44v28 to 45 v7, Ezra 1v2. They are, therefore, to be obeyed conscientiously as of Divine authority. If, however, these rulers step beyond their authority and impinge on spiritual matters, then God is to be obeyed rather than men. Acts 4v19. The help of rulers is legitimately to be sought in worldly matters, Paul appealed to them for help. Acts 16v37,38, 22v25, 23v11 with 25v11. Ester relied on Divine help, but did not neglect to do her best in influencing the king. Ester 4v1-17, 6v1-3, 7v1 to 8v17.

In 1Tim 2v8, Paul states the following: "I will therefore that men pray every where, **lifting up holy hands**, without wrath and doubting." The "lifting up holy hands" is not only an act of adoration and worship to God, but also has the effect of directing the power of God against the powers of darkness, which removes their ability to use their evil power, and causes them to flee. James 4v5-7. When it says, "that men pray every where..." it does **NOT** mean that women are not also to pray everywhere "lifting up holy hands" as well. This is seen by the Scripture references giving clear instructions for woman (and for **ALL** believers) to pray. Matt 5v44, 6v5-13, 7v7-11, Luke 11v1-13, Acts 16v11-15, 1Cor 11v5, 14v26-31 1Thess 5v17 etc.

We read in Exodus 17v8-16 the following: "Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and

Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, **when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.** But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and **Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.** And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi: For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

The only thing that gave Israel victory, was the "interventions" (with power) of Moses (which included invoking the Covenant Names of God, especially Yahweh Tsabaoth, "The Lord of Hosts," and Yahweh Nissi, "The Lord our Banner and Conqueror"), combined with his hands being held up and supported until the sun went down. **NOTE:** it was the raised hands that made **ALL** the difference between victory and defeat.

The "interventions" (with power) of the believer become more effective, when they also follow the example of Moses and lift up their hands as well! The subject of uplifted hands occurs in the following places, Exodus 9v29,33, 1Kings 8v22, Ezra 9v5, Neh 8v6, Psalm 63v4, 88v9, 143v6, Lam 2v19, Isaiah 1v15.

"Interventions with Divine power," In The Last Days

As the last seven years (the 70th week of Daniel's 70 week prophecy, Dan.9v20-27) of this Age of Grace rapidly approaches, especially the last three and a half years of this Age (the period known as, "The Great Tribulation," Dan 9v27, Matt 24v15-28, Rev 7v9-17), the Devil is busy endeavouring to put his evil servants into positions of power and authority, wicked people who will put the Devil's and Antichrist's evil plans into operation, (which is to kill as many people and destroy as much of God's Creation as he can before he and his followers are destroyed by Jesus at His Second Coming, by being consumed by the breath of His mouth. 2Thess 2v8). It is during the last three and a half years of this Age, that the Mystery of Lawlessness (the Devil's evil plan) will work fully, which starts with the Devil and his evil Angels being expelled from the Heavenly places by Michael and his Angels into the Earth, and God's restraint upon the Devil and the powers of darkness being removed. This starts The Great Tribulation, which is due to the "great wrath of the Devil, because he knows that he has a short time," and NOT the wrath of God. Rev 12v7-17 (esp. v12), 2Thess 2v1-12.

The Devil will then proceed to put his evil plans (the Mystery of Lawlessness) into operation through Antichrist and other evil persons, whom he has put into positions of power and authority. (Matt 4v8-10, Rev 13v1-10, 16v12-16). It is **NOW** most vital, that we, the believers, are obedient to this most important injunction made by Paul in 1Timothy 2v1-8, to make "interventions," (with God's power "for all men, for kings and all who are in authority," that God will put honest, upright, wise and compassionate persons into places of power and authority, and thwart the Devil's attempts to put his own evil servants into these places, for it is the Most High Who rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomsoever He wishes, and sets over it the lowest of men. Dan 4v17.

In Revelation 12v1-17, the glorious woman of v1-2, at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, is given wings (which could well be the kind of supernatural transport that Elijah and Philip enjoyed) by God to escape from Antichrist, and she flees into "the wilderness" where she has a place prepared for her by God. This seems to be an obvious fulfilment of the prophetic warning in Matt 24v15-20, other Christians in and around Jerusalem, who are not supernaturally transported, will make their own way to "the wilderness") where she is protected and fed by God for three and a half years. "The wilderness" that is referred to here (Rev 12v6,14) is in all probability the wilderness area in the region of Edom, Moab and Ammon (present day Jordan), which, according to Dan 11v41, never falls into the hands of Antichrist. All the countries round about Israel, at this time, fall under the control and dominion of Antichrist, except Edom, Moab and Ammon; the question therefore arises, why do these three countries escape and are never occupied by Antichrist? The answer is quite simply, because of the great "interventions" (with power) exercised by this glorious woman (who flees there at the start of the Great Tribulation), who represents a group of people, who are foreknown, designed, specially created and empowered by God for the Great Tribulation. **It is a group of praying people, with prepared hearts and special ministries for the last days, who will operate with awesome power as a prayer-warrior group behind the scenes.** The effect of their "interventions" with Divine power, will be felt and seen around the whole world, and not just locally in the Middle East, even as the "interventions" (with power) of the Lord Jesus, during His earthly life, were seen and felt around the whole world, and not just around the rim of the Mediterranean sea. Their "interventions" (with power) will not only bring judgment upon the wicked, but also through vision ministry, they will protect other groups of Christians and form the character of Christ in these same believers, even as Paul made "interventions" (with power) for the believers at Colossae and Laodicea. The Christians who have escaped to "the wilderness", are said to be fed by God (the "they" of v 6, are most probably Angels); they will have miraculous provision of food stuffs through their "interventions," (with power) and will be cared for in the same manner as Yahweh cared and fed the Israelites in the Wilderness for forty years. Their provision will also be similar to that of the feeding of the four and five thousand during the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus, which were the result

of His great "interventions" (with power) beforehand, for having seen in vision what the Father was going to do, He then prayed it into reality. Neh 9v15, Daniel 11v32, Matt 14v13-21, 15v32-39, Luke 18v1-8, John 5v19-20,30, Col 2v1-5, Rev 11v1-6.

This ministry will be most vital if the individual believer is to come through the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation victoriously (and not to lose heart and faint) and stand before the Lord Jesus at His Second coming, and be granted to wear white garments in the Eternal Kingdom. Luke 18v1-8, 2Cor 5v1-10, Rev 3v1-5, 12v1-6, 19v7-9.

With all these things in mind, the Believer should endeavour to imitate the Lord Jesus, Who, in all things is their example, in this most important ministry (of making "interventions" with power, Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT1783)). 1Cor 11v1.

"Interventions," Greek "Proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)

Another important Greek word (in reference to making "prayer") that is used in 1Tim 2v1-8 (see v1), is the noun "proseuchás" the accusative of "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335), which means to pray earnestly, prayer, a request for help, made by speaking to God, the verb is the Greek word, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336). The English translation ("prayer") that is used in the Bible in any of the different versions, of this Greek word, is an extremely poor one, because on further investigation it actually means much more, and indeed it can have the same meaning as the Greek word "enteuxis," (Strong's NT:1783), which means "an intervention (with power) to effect a change)." Although it can have the same meaning as "enteuxis," (Strong's NT:1783), it is also clear it has another meaning, because it is used by Paul in 1Tim 2v1 with "enteuxis," (Strong's NT:1783). So the verb "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336) more fully means "to make active intervention (with power) to change circumstances."

We read in James 5v13-18: "Is any among you afflicted? let him **pray** (Strong's NT:4336), Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them **pray** (Strong's NT:4336), over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. 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. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he **prayed** (Strong's NT:4336), **earnestly** (Strong's NT:4335), ("he prayed earnestly" literally means "he prayed with prayer") that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he **prayed** (Strong's NT:4336), again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." The verb "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336), is used four times and the noun "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335), is used once.

In the first instance of its use, an injunction is given by James, that the person who is "afflicted" should "pray." "Afflicted" is in Greek "kakopatheí" the present active indicative of "kakopatheo" (Strong's NT:2553), which means to be afflicted, endure afflictions (hardness), suffer trouble, to suffer (endure) evils (hardship, troubles), the present tense indicates continuous action, i.e. continuous affliction, not just a single incident. James tells us that the remedy for this continuous affliction is that the person suffering should "pray." "Pray" in Greek is "proseuchésthoo" the present middle imperative of "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336), the present tense once again indicates continuous action, i.e. "let him keep on praying" until the affliction ceases. This continuous praying and seeking of God has the effect of perfecting faith, character and patience. There will have been Divine purpose in the actual affliction that the individual has suffered, and will have been permitted by the Lord for the very purpose of perfecting the individual. James 1v2-4,12, 5v10,11, 1Pet 1v3-12.

The second instance of its use is given for a sick person to call for the elders (who are also the Pastors Teachers and Overseers of a local Church) **to "pray" over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord (i.e. calling upon the Lord Jesus, and invoking the covenant name of Yahweh Rophi (the Lord our Healer),** Exodus 15v26, Isaiah 53v4, Matt 8v16,17), and the prayer of faith (of the elders) will heal them. Acts 20v17-38 (esp. v17,28), Eph 4v7-16, Titus 1v5-9. "Pray" is in Greek, "proseuxásthooan," the first aorist middle imperative of "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336), to pray to God, i.e. supplicate.

James then gives in 5v17,18, the example of how the elders should pray over the sick for their healing, as that of Elijah's persistent praying (shameless persistence, Greek "anaídeian" the accusative of "anaideia" (Strong's NT:335), which means literally shamelessness in Luke 11v8) until the answers came for both making the rain (and dew) to cease and then for bringing it again, both events being fully manifested for ALL to see and experience. 1Kings 17v1, 18v41-45, Luke 11v1-13.

The third and fourth occurrences are linked together in James 5v17, where it is stated about Elijah that, "he prayed earnestly." "He prayed earnestly" is in Greek, "proseuchéé proseúxato" (which means literally, "he prayed with prayer") where both "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335) and "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336) are used together to emphasize the intensity that Elijah exercised in prayer to cause the rain and dew to cease. A similar mode of

expression can be found in Gen 2v17 (Septuagint), "ye shall surely die" "thanatoo apothaneisthe"; literally, "ye shall die with death." Compare Luke 22v15, John 3v29, Acts 4v17 (Majority Text). The addition of the cognate noun (in imitation of the Hebrew infinitive absolute, see also Gen 31v30) gives intenseness to the verb.

Elijah started "praying with prayer" sometime before he went and spoke to Ahab in 1Kings 17v1, as God had given him the vision of what He was going to do (which God knew in His foreknowledge would bring Israel to repentance)...that the Heavens would be shut so that no rain fell, neither would there be any dew produced. Elijah then commenced his "praying with prayer" to bring the vision that God had given him into reality. It should also be noted that once the rain stopped and the dew ceased, Elijah did not sit back and stop "praying with prayer," BUT continued the whole of the three and a half years, so that no weather systems were able to bring any conditions into the area over Israel, that would either produce rain or dew. Also to be noted, it took greater effort in prayer by Elijah to initially cause the rain and dew to cease, than it took for him to cause it too start again (compare 5v17, "he prayed with prayer" with 5v18, "he prayed")....this is because judgment is difficult to the God of Love (it is "His strange act"), Who's great Heart was overwhelmed with sorrow and grief at having to bring such judgment upon His people Israel. God is full of mercy and compassion and longs to forgive, restore and heal. Exodus 34v6,7, Psalm 86v5, Isaiah 28v21, Hosea 11v1-12, 1John 4v8.

The last occurrence is in James 5v18, where "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336) is used of Elijah praying the vision that God had given Him (1Kings 18v41, "...there is a sound of abundance of rain") into reality, so that "a great rain" fell, with the result that "the earth brought forth her fruit." 1Kings 18v41-45 states: "And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. **And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees**, And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. **And he said, Go again seven times.** And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel."

Notice how Elijah, having been given the vision that it was going to rain, did **NOT** stop praying **UNTIL** the vision was completely fulfilled, i.e., "that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain." This is the example that we as believers should follow, even as the Lord Jesus also followed Elijah's example. The vast majority of Christians today simply "say" prayers, but do NOT pray in the Biblical sense, i.e., like the examples of Elijah, Paul, James and the Elders and believers of the early Church. Simply "saying" a prayer will NOT really achieve anything, and will bring little or no results, but only disappointment. Mt.6v5, James 3v1, 5v13-18.

Paul gives us the perfect example that we, the New Testament believers, should follow when praying in 1Cor 14v15:

"What is it then? **I will pray** (Greek, "proseúxomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) **with the spirit, and I will pray** (Greek, "proseúxomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) **with the understanding also**: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." When Paul says, "I will pray (Greek, "proseúxomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) with the spirit" this is a reference to how he used the gift of tongues in his private prayer life, for this is the primary use of this most precious gift. When we pray in tongues, it is not our minds that are being exercised but out spirits, the Holy Spirit being the One Who prays through us. As it is the Holy Spirit Who is inspiring the prayer and praying through us, when we exercise this wonderful gift, we shall always pray aright. Praying and praising in tongues also has the effect of building up and edifying our faith and spirits, producing love in us, and resting and refreshing our minds, souls and bodies. Rom 8v26,27, 1Cor 14v4,5,21 (with Isaiah 28v11,12),39, Jude v20,21.

Paul looked upon the gift of tongues as the most important of all the nine spiritual gifts that are mentioned in 1Cor 12v7-11 to be used in private prayer and devotion, for he says in 1Cor 14v18: "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all." Paul's devotional and loving use of the gift of tongues in the secret place resulted in the other gifts being manifested in public, and if the New Testament believer imitates Paul, they can expect the same results. Matt 6v6, 1Cor 11v1, 14v2,4,18, with 2Cor12v12.

The other two uses of the gift of tongues are when a tongue is uttered in an informal fellowship meeting for someone to interpret, and when a tongue is spoken as a known language to a person as a sign to them that God is speaking to them, as on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2v1-13, 1Cor 14v5,13,22,27.

This Greek word, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336) is also used of our Lord's private devotional praying, Luke 5v16,17, states: "And **he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed** ("proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)). And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem: **and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.**"

"Withdrew" is in Greek, "eén hupochooroón," the present active participle of "hupochoreo" (Strong's NT:5298), the present participle indicates "continuous or repeated action," the literal translation of the Greek from "...withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed" (Greek, "...eén hupochooroón en taís ereémois kaí proseuchómenos," periphrastic imperfects) is "...kept retiring in the desert places and praying." This continual retiring into the wilderness to pray was because the impartation of spirit through the "laying on of hands" (one of the seven Foundation Truths of Christianity, Heb 6v1,2) means that the blesser is the poorer and the blessed the richer for the transaction (Luke 5v17, 6v12-19, 8v46), and therefore the blesser needs a continual refilling if he is to continue imparting. Hence, the Lord's habit of retiring for prayer in the midst of such ministry, e.g., Luke 5v16.

It was during one of these private devotional prayer sessions, that inspired one of His disciples, having watched Him during His time of prayer, to ask Him (Luke 11v1-13 esp. v1), after He had finished praying, "Lord, teach us to pray (Greek, "proseúchesthai" (Strong's NT:4336)), as John also taught his disciples." It would also appear that the disciple was not just asking for himself, but for all the disciples present, because he asks "teach **us**." What inspired the disciple to ask the Lord Jesus this question? It could only have been the great power that was released by His praying, which emanated out from Him and was felt by all His disciples in His immediate vicinity. By the end of the Lord's prayer session, He had become filled again with the power of the Lord (Luke 5v17, "the power of the Lord was present to heal them"), which by then was crackling round about Him. The effect of the Lord's praying on His disciples must have been very great, even as those persons who were in the same room with Smith Wigglesworth when he was praying had to leave it shortly after he had started praying, simply because they could not bear the overwhelming sense of the presence of God, and would break down into tears and sobbing.

We read in Luke 11v1-13:

"And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his **importunity** (Greek, "anaídeian," the accusative of "anaideia" (Strong's NT:335)) "shameless persistence" he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

We get a wonderful insight into just how the Lord Jesus was praying in Luke 5v16,17, it was with "shameless persistence" (Luke 11v8, Greek, "anaídeian," the accusative of "anaideia" (NT:335)) that He sought His Father for His power and guidance (bread from Heaven) so that **ALL** who came to Him would be healed of whatever sickness or disease they had (Matt 12v15 etc, "...and he healed them **all**"), for so the Old Testament prophecies spoke concerning "The Coming One" (Messiah), which the Lord Jesus wonderfully fulfilled (Matt 11v3 (NKJV), Isaiah 35v5,6, with Matt 11v5; 61v1,2 and 58v6, with Luke 4v18,19; Isaiah 53v4 with Matt 8v16,17).

It should be noted that Peter, James, John and Paul, followed their Lord's example of prayer that is recorded in Luke 11v1-13, because we read in Acts 5v12-16:

"And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: **and they were healed every one.**"

(See also Rom 15v18,19, 1Cor 11v1, 2Cor 12v11,12, 1Tim 1v16)

Such was the anointing (the power of the Lord (Yahweh)) upon Peter, that even if the sick and diseased had his shadow falling upon them and these persons were healed. This kind of anointing was not unique to Peter, but James, John and Paul (and others), experienced this level of spiritual power upon them as well, we read in 2Cor 12v11,12: "I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: **for in nothing**

am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."

Notice also the great humility of Paul, "though I be nothing" (see also Matt 11v28-30, 1Cor 1v26-31, 15v9, Eph 3v8), a humble attitude and spirit is essential if a person desires a great anointing from the Lord.

The Lord also did special miracles through Paul at Ephesus, Acts 19v11,12:

"And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them."

The early Church certainly believed wholeheartedly what the Lord had told His Apostles on the night that He ate His last Passover meal with them (John 14v12-14 states):

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, **He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do;** because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."

There has also been many other of God's dear children, down through the centuries, who have also believed the words of their Lord in John 14v12-14, and done mighty signs, wonder and miracles, by the Holy Spirit's power upon them. Persons of note in the last couple of hundred years, have been, Maria Woodworth-Etter, Smith Wigglesworth, William Branham, Kathryn Kuhlman and William F P Burton.

One of the things (amongst others) that the Lord Jesus, Peter, James, John and Paul (and the persons of note of the last two centuries, that are mentioned above), had in common, was that **ALL** of them had a tremendous prayer life (especially our Lord), and lived in constant communion with God, for such communion with God the Father is required so that they operate completely under His guidance. Psalm 69v7-12, Mark 1v35, Luke 6v12, Acts 1v14, 3v1, 6v4.

The Humanity Of Christ

Another point that John 14v12-14 clearly highlights, is that the Lord Jesus COULD NOT have said that those believing in Him would be able to do the same works (and greater ones) that He had done, unless those whom He was speaking of (and to) had EXACTLY the same humanity as Himself! How could He be an example to His people UNLESS, their humanity was exactly like His, and His like theirs.

The following Scriptures **ALL** clearly teach in **NO** uncertain terms Our Lord's true humanity, i.e. The humanity He came into this world with, was the exact same as the humanity that every other human being came (and comes) into the world with, and **NOTHING** different!

"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him (Maj Text)... And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." Luke 2v40,52.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1v14.

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.." Rom 8v3.

"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." Phil 2v7,8.

"Made himself of no reputation" is in Greek, "heautón ekénoosen," "ekénoosen" is the aorist active indicative of "kenoo," which means "to make empty," thus "heautón ekénoosen" literally means "emptied Himself." The question must be asked, "what did He empty Himself off?" The answer is that He emptied Himself of His power and glory, i.e. His omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, transcendence, and immutability. It **MUST** also be noted, He did **NOT** empty Himself of His deity (essence/substance), He, at no point in time, stopped being God. **What He was before the incarnation, He continued to be after the incarnation.... God!** (The true force of the participle "hupárchoon" ("being" Phil 2v6) is well expressed by Dean Gwynn in his interpretation of the epistle in the "Speaker's Commentary": "Its tense (Imperfect) contrasted with the following Aorists points to indefinite *continuance* of being"). Isaiah 7v14, 9v6, John 8v58 with Exodus 3v14, Rom 9v5.

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (Maj Texts) 1Tim 3v16.

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil...Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." Heb 2v14,17,18.

"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." Heb 4v15.

"Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me" (with Luke 3v23-38, which is the Lord's lineage through Mary down to Adam). Heb 10v5.

"Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God..." 1John 4v2.

"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and **the offspring of David**, and the bright and morning star." Rev 22v16. **With:** 2Sam 7v12,13, "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." **And: Isaiah 11v1,10**, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.....And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious."

Note 1John 4v1-6, which states the following: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And **every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist**, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."

Note also 2John v7, "**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.**"

These Scriptures clearly teach that the person who believes and teaches that Christ was **NOT** born with a humanity like their own, is **NOT** of God (in their thought and doctrine regarding this issue), but inspired by the Devil, **being of the spirit of Antichrist! It is nothing less than the destructive heresy of Docetic and Cerinthian Gnosticism!**

The Docetic Gnostic heresy, which denies Christ's true humanity, is automatically generated in the minds of believers who accept and believe Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin, in the following way: Believers conclude that if we have been "born in sin," with sinful natures, which compel us to do evil; and since Jesus was without sin, He obviously did not possess this same sinful nature, so then He **MUST** have had a different kind of "humanity" to us. So the thought arises in the believer's mind, that the humanity of Jesus was different from theirs. Thus, in a very subtle and cunning disguise, the destructive heresy of Docetic Gnosticism has come into the Church, and has corrupted the theology about the humanity of Jesus.

Those who accept and believe Augustine's doctrine of "Original Sin," will find many of the truths contained in two of the most important books of the New Testament, Romans and Hebrews, impossible to comprehend. Understanding Paul's letter to the Hebrews in based upon a correct knowledge of our Lord's true humanity, and that the Lord Jesus and the believer share exactly the same kind of humanity. Failure to grasp this means that the believer cannot comprehend our Lord as their sympathetic Great High Priest. This truth (the Lord's True humanity) is a part of the doctrine of "repentance from dead works," etc., in Heb 5v12-6v12, which is "the doctrine of the first principles of Christ," ASV, "the basic teaching about Christ," Heb 6v1, NRSV, "the first principles of the oracles of God." Heb 5v12, KJV. To get the doctrine about the Lord Jesus wrong destroys the Christian's foundation.

A correct knowledge of the truth of our Lord's humanity, and other vital truths about Him, is essential for Christians in the last days of this age, the Age of Grace. We will need to know our Lord as our Great High Priest as well as our Saviour, to enable us to overcome the appalling evil conditions that will come upon the world during the last three and a half years of this age, known as "The Great Tribulation." **We need to know that Jesus was indeed, "tempted in**

ALL points like as we are, yet without sin” during His hidden years at Nazareth, and during His Ministry, in a humanity exactly like our own. The knowledge of His tried humanity will strengthen and equip us for the evil last days. This is vital truth. Through His “interventions” (with power) and High Priestly ministry, Jesus will keep, guard, protect and strengthen us “in soul,” and give us victory and bring us through this terrible evil time. At the sounding of the last trumpet, we shall rise to meet Him in the air at His Second Advent, immediately after the tribulation of those days. 1Thess 4v13-18, Heb 7v25.

It is certainly not without reason that Paul, in writing to Timothy in 1Tim 3v16, states the vital truth that, “God was manifest in the flesh,” and then immediately in the next verse, 1Tim 4v1, goes on to state; “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils!” Paul knew that the destructive heresy of Docetic Gnosticism would still be in the Church in the last days and so he warns us against it, by stating that our Lord Jesus did indeed, “come in the flesh,” and had a humanity like our own. The doctrine of “Original Sin” attacks the humanity of Christ, and the end result of this attack will be apostasy, Paul says, the effect will be that “some will depart from the faith.”

Augustine’s doctrine of “Original Sin” also has catastrophic effects on the mind of the Christian that accepts and believes it, in that “Light and Truth” are unable to penetrate their mind on these most important and crucial doctrines, their minds having become reprobate, Romans 1v28 states: “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.” “A reprobate mind” is in Greek, “adókimon nóún,” “adókimon” is the accusative of “adokimos” (Strong NT:96), and means literally “unapproved”, and so an “unapproved” mind regarding the Truth of Christ’s real humanity and High Priestly Ministry, which has become imprisoned by false unscriptural traditions handed down by their blind (spiritual) father and teachers. Matt 15v1-20, 1Pet 1v18.

The doctrine of “Original Sin” is “another” Gospel (Greek “héteron,” another of a different kind). Gal 1v6. It is certainly not what the Lord Jesus, Paul, or the Apostles in the early Church taught, who taught that children come into the world spiritually alive to God, with a pure spirit and soul, which God Himself created at conception, the child taking its flesh from their parents. It is in the flesh, and flesh alone where the result of Adam’s sin is felt, which Paul refers to as “dead sin in the flesh.” Rom 7v7-8v4 (esp. 7v9,18).

The Lord Jesus stated of little children in Matt 18v1-10 (esp. v3), 19v14: “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....But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

Paul speaks **VERY** strongly against the false apostles who taught a different Gospel from that which he had preached, he states in Gal 1v6-9:

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto **another** (Greek “héteron,” another of a different kind) **gospel: Which is not another** (Greek, “állo,” another of the same sort) ; 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.**”

This should be a real warning to those preachers and teachers, who hold, teach and preach Augustine’s evil doctrine of “Original Sin.” They should re-examine what they believe in this area of their faith, taking to heart and making a full note of the words in Acts 17v11: “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.**”

“Searched” is in Greek, “anakrínontes,” the present active participle of “anakrino,” which means to scrutinize, i.e. (by implication) investigate, interrogate, determine, to sift up and down, make careful and exact research as in legal processes as in Acts 4v9, 12v19. The present participle expresses repeated or continuous action, which indicates that they kept up their research on a daily basis until they came to a firm conclusion that what Paul was speaking was indeed the Truth as stated in the Scriptures and became believers. The Jews at Berea were more “noble” (i.e. open minded) than the Jews at Thessalonica, and by searching the Scriptures, they found and took their doctrine from them. They did **NOT** come to the Scriptures with prejudiced preconceived ideas and then try and make the Scriptures fit they unscriptural traditions by twisting them. This kind of evil and dishonest interpretation of the Scriptures can lead to the destruction of those who practice it, especially during the last seven years of this Age of Grace.

Peter states in 2Pet 3v15,16: “And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, **which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.**”

It is a correct interpretation of the (prophetic) Scriptures that will fill our minds with Truth, and give us light in the great darkness during the last seven years of this Age, especially during the last three and a half, which is the period known as the Great Tribulation. Jer 30v7, Matt 24v21, 2Pet 1v16-21, Rev 7v14.

In Luke 11v1, a certain disciple asks the Lord Jesus the following: "...Lord, teach us to pray (Greek, "proseúchesthai," present middle infinitive of "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT4336)), as John also taught his disciples."

This Greek word, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336), is also used of the fervent prayer life of John the Baptist. The thirty years that he was in the wilderness preparing for his ministry, were spent praying, John's great ministry was birthed through those thirty years of prayer, so that when he was revealed by God to Israel, he went before the Lord Jesus "in the spirit and power of Elijah, 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." The start of John's ministry in the early part of 26 AD, heralded the beginning of a great revival, multitudes flocked out to the wilderness to hear him, even the Pharisees and Sadducees came out to hear him, and to question whom he was. It should also be stated that the reason generally why the Pharisees and Sadducees came out to him, was not because they wanted to repent of their sin (although some did do so), but simply because the religious leaders of Israel felt greatly threatened by him, because of the great multitudes that were going out to him in the wilderness. The Scribes and Pharisees challenged both John Baptist and Christ as to the source of their authority; they looked upon them as insubordinate rebels, and divisive troublemakers.

The Church of Jesus has always had the same problem; Christ's heaven-sent ministries have always been looked upon as "insubordinate" and "divisive," by people who are determined to preserve their religious power structure and position. The apostles were insubordinate to men, but obedient to God; the Scribes and Pharisees were obedient to men but insubordinate to God. Dissension always comes between those who seek influence from men, and those who seek authority from heaven. Authority from Heaven is not decided by human opinion; it is proved by Divine gifting and conformity to Biblical teaching and experience. The people who murdered Jesus claimed that they had been given authority from God to kill Him; this false claim to Divine authority has been repeated again and again in Church history, by those who have murdered many dear children of God, who had received a definite authority from God. Indeed, it almost seems impossible not to be called a heretic by men, when you have God's authority, and we should certainly doubt if our calling and ministry is from God, when all men speak well of us. Mal 4v5,6, Matt 3v1-12, 5v10-12, 17v12, 23v19-39, Luke 1v17, 6v26, John 1v19-28.

John taught his disciples by example how to pray. (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)).

It is also worth noting that the great revival that started at the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry was not only the result of his praying, but was also the result of the great "interventions" (with power) of the One Whom he went before, the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus, during His hidden years at Nazareth, was not only being prepared for His own Earthly and Heavenly High Priestly ministries, but also prayed John the Baptist through into power and revelation. If Paul was able to watch the Christians at Colossi and Laodicea by revelation ministry in vision, "intervening" (with power) for them that Christ may be formed in them, then it is certain that the Lord Jesus (who was a Prophet like unto Moses), exercised the same kind of prophetic revelation ministry towards John the Baptist (and others, i.e. the apostles and seventy evangelists, Matt 10v1-8, Luke 10v1-9), to ensure that he (and they) was **FULLY** prepared and equipped for his great ministry to prepare the way before Him. Psalm 69v10, Isaiah 40v1-5, Luke 3v1-6, Acts 7v37, 1Cor 5v1-5, Col 2v1-5.

The great anointing that John the Baptist experienced, was the same level of anointing that Elijah had known, the words that he spoke to the people of Israel were filled with life and power. He preached a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, which brought many people to repentance and to the Lord. Unfortunately however, very often the repentance among the people of Israel, was very shallow, so that they quickly fell away when temptation came (Luke 8v4-8,11-15). We read in Luke 3v7-9:

"Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, **O generation of vipers**, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? **Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance**, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."

John the Baptist addressed the following phrase, "O generation of vipers" to ALL the multitude (not just the Pharisees and Sadducees) that came out to him, and although there was a very shallow degree of repentance among many in Israel at his preaching, a number of his disciples became the disciples and then Apostles of the Lord Jesus, Andrew, Simon Peter, James, John, Philip and Nathanael (and possibly one or two others) all had a deep spiritual experience

under John the Baptist. John 1v36-51. It is interesting to note how many brothers were in the twelve, Simon Peter and his brother Andrew; James and his brother John; Philip seems to have been Bartholomew's brother, otherwise known as Nathanael, Luke 6v14 with John 1v43-51; James the son of Alphaeus could have been the brother of Matthew as well as the brother of Judas, not Iscariot. Tradition says that James the son of Alphaeus was brother to Matthew, Simon Zealotes, and Judas, not Iscariot. Luke 6v16. Families, who have learned to live together and love one another, can be really used by God; they are a strong unit for God, if they keep close to Him.

In answer to the request of the disciple in Luke 11v1, in Luke 11v2-4, the Lord Jesus then gives them a "pattern" of how to pray (i.e. this is the "pattern" He had used during the first thirty years of His life at Nazareth and in His Earthly ministry, except He had NO sin to confess in connection with the phrase "and forgive us our sins/debts, Matt 6v12, Luke 11v4). This "pattern" is commonly referred to as "The Lord's Prayer," however, it is not an actual prayer, but the "pattern" of how we should pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT4336), which is used in both Matt 6v9 and Luke 11v2). This is the 2nd place in the New Testament where this "pattern" has been recorded, the first being in Matt 6v5-15 (esp. v9-13).

Matt 6v9-13 states:

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 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."

Luke 11v2-4 reads:

"And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil."

The Essential Attitudes Of Heart And Mind In Prayer

Jesus tells us the attitudes of heart and mind that bring a knowledge of God, a fullness of the Spirit and answered prayer.

We must realise our position in Christ, we are sons of God:

"When you pray, say, Father." In Jesus we have a new and blessed relationship with the Father; we are brethren of Christ, joint heirs with Christ, and God's own beloved children. 1John 3v1, John 15v9, 17v23, Rom 8v17, Heb 2v10-20, 6v13-20. Hallelujah!

We must have a continual spirit of worship:

"Hallowed, revered, and honoured, be thy name." God is seeking worshippers, not empty flattery, which God deplores. True worship recognises with sincere gratitude and deep love that we owe everything we are, have and will have to our Creator and Redeemer. John 4v23,24, Matt 15v7-9, Mark 7v6-9, God is worthy of all our respect, adoration, love and esteem. Rev 5v11-14.

We must desire to see God's kingdom and will to be manifested on earth:

"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." There is not only desire and longing; there is positive action and costly sacrifice, under God's direction, to see His kingdom extended. This is a personal matter between ourselves and God, we must always be very careful to distinguish between people who put pressure upon us to build up their personal kingdoms, or other human pressure groups, and the will of God. John 21v19-22, Matt 10v37-42, Acts 15v25,26.

We must be free from anxiety over material needs:

"Give us this day our daily bread." We must believe, as it is absolutely true, that our heavenly Father loves us intensely and will meet all our needs. Phil 4v19, Matt 6v25-34. A spirit of materialism and worldly anxiety will effectively incapacitate us from useful service for the kingdom of God. 1John 2v15-17. This does not mean, of course, that we have to neglect our families, those who do this "have denied the faith," and are "worse than unbelieving heathen." 1Tim 5v8.

We must have a tender conscience and repentance from any known sin:

"Forgive us our sins." In Luke 11v4, Luke uses the word "hamartia," "sins;" whereas, Matt 6v12 uses "opheilemata;" a word that Paul uses in Rom 4v4 to speak of legal debts. Christ obviously used both; He taught that our sins are debts to God and others. Wilful sin closes our hearts to the blessing and love of God. Heb 10v19-39, 1John 1v5 to 2v6.

We must have a forgiving spirit towards those who have sinned against us:

We must beware of roots of bitterness and an unforgiving spirit, for Jesus warns us that we can only ask for forgiveness "in proportion as, or like as," "hos," we forgive others, a truly solemn warning, which is reiterated by Christ elsewhere. Matt 6v12,14,15, Mark 11v25,26. Jesus tells us to rebuke Christians who sin against us, and IF they repent, we must forgive them. Luke 17v3,4. Let us make every effort to achieve reconciliation and forgiveness with Christians, and make it easy for those who have offended us to repent, and exercise a forgiving spirit to them. However, Jesus said that repentance is necessary before fellowship can be restored, and failure to repent after the procedure laid down in Matt 18v15-17, means that a person loses their rights to be treated as a Christian. Let us remember that God's forgiveness is always conditional upon repentance. Matt 5v23,24, 18v20-35, Mark 11v22-26, Luke 6v37, 23v34, Eph 4v30-32, Gal 6v1-3, 1John 4v20,21.

Jesus certainly did not try to be reconciled with Israel's religious leaders; His attacks upon them were extremely contentious. Matt 23v13-39, Luke 11v39-54. Christ asked the Father to forgive the soldiers who were crucifying Him, they really did not know what they were doing; however, there was no such prayer for the religious leaders of Israel, who knew full well what they were doing, Jesus said they had seen God and hated Him. Luke 23v34, John 15v22-25. Stephen manifested a forgiving spirit to his implacable enemies, and asked God not to lay his murder to their charge; however, God could not forgive them, for He cannot forgive unrepentant sin, even though He may long to restore and pardon. Acts 7v59,60, Matt 23v37-39, Luke 19v41-44. Christians who hurt and offend others, and do not repent, face an inevitable discipline from their heavenly Father, and so do those who fail to forgive others, when those who offend them repent. We know that we have a genuine revival when Christians get right with each other and fervently love each other. Rom 12v14-21, 2Cor 13v1, Gal 6v1. Our enormous debt to God should keep us from fighting over our comparatively trifling debts to each other. Matt 18v21-35, Heb 12v14,15.

We must allow God to lead us from dangerous paths:

Christians should have a fear of sin, and a fear of getting out of the will of God. As someone has said, "lead us not into temptation," is an Eastern way of saying, "Father, please keep us from going out of your will, into paths that lead to spiritual danger or sin." God can, by various means, stop us from going into spiritual danger, if we are prayerful and willing to be led by Him. Psalm 141v4, 1Cor 10v13, Acts 16v6-9. We should always be prepared for our heavenly Father's stops or diversions.

We must trust God to deliver us from evil, and the Evil One:

In the phrase, "lead us not into temptation," Jesus was speaking of dangers and temptations that can be avoided by prayerful living. See Luke 22v40. Here He speaks of conflicts with evil that we cannot avoid and must face. These conflicts demand a prayerful life and a real faith in God, for we cannot defeat Satan on our own, we must draw near to God before we can effectively resist the Devil. James 4v6-8. Persecution or opposition of some kind or other will always come against the consecrated child of God, and supernatural opposition from Satan is often channelled through his earthly friends. Matt 4v1-11, Acts 13v50-52, 2Cor 1v8-10, Eph 1v2, 6v10-20, 2Thes 3v1-3, 2Tim 2v12, 3v12. We must believe that God will deliver us, and will answer our prayers, as we follow and obey our Lord's pattern of prayer, and if our prayers accomplish anything, we must remember that His power has brought it to pass, and we must give Him all the glory.

The Transfiguration

Another interesting place where this Greek word "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336), to pray, occurs, is in Luke's version of the account of the Transfiguration of the Lord Jesus on Mount Hermon, Luke 9v27-36 reads:

"But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God. And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain **to pray** (Greek, "proseúxasthai," aorist middle infinitive of "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)). And as he **prayed** ("proseúchesthai," present middle infinitive of "proseuchomai," Strong's NT:4336)), the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for

Elias: not knowing what he said. While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen."

See also Matt 17v1-13, Mark 9v1-13, Heb 2v9, 2Pet 1v16-21.

It should be noted that from before creation, God had planned the Transfiguration (for the purpose of strengthening the Beloved One), for He knew by His foreknowledge the great pressure that His Beloved Son would be under at that particular time, with the Cross looming before Him but even more terrifying to Him, was His descent into Hades, where His soul would be made an offering for sin. And so, we see from Psalm 8v4,5 (with Heb 2v6,7) that the Lord Jesus (during His earthly lifetime) had known for some time that He would be Transfigured, and from Luke 9v29 we understand that He knew that it was going to occur at that time upon Mount Hermon.

At this particular time in the ministry of the Lord Jesus, His impending death upon the Cross was looming ever greater before Him, and He was really feeling this burden greatly upon Himself. It was shortly before the Transfiguration, that He revealed (and made it most plain) to the Apostles that He would suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day (Matt 16v21). However, none of His Apostles either received it or believed it, and just didn't want to know about it, indeed, Peter tried to put His Lord "right" regarding this issue, which earned Him a stiff rebuke from the Lord, in that He said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offence to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." (Matt 16v23). Because He was getting no succour or any kind of help or support from the Apostles, this was making the burden almost intolerable to bear, and so He takes, Peter, James and John up onto Mount Hermon to pray that He may receive strength through earnest seeking of His Father. It was while He was praying (Greek, "proseuchomai") that He experienced the Transfiguration: He was "crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Heb 2v9, KJV). It was His Father's way of strengthening, encouraging and imparting His grace, so that "His hands would not hang down, nor His knees become feeble." (Heb 12v12).

It should also be understood that the Transfiguration was NOT for any of the following reasons:

It was **NOT** for the Saviour to find out the will of God, for He already knew the will of His Father. Neither was it just a spiritual experience for the enjoyment of the Lord Jesus, He didn't go up the slopes of Mount Hermon to, "have a good time with God." And neither was it primarily for the sake of the three Apostles, Peter, James and John.)

The words of the Lord in Mark 9v1, which He had spoken 6 days before He went up the slopes of Mount Hermon (with 1Pet 2v16-18):

"And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power...(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.)"

Were about to come to pass!

It is also important to understand what actually happened to Our Lord during the Transfiguration, Matt 17v2, states:

"And **He was transfigured** before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light."

"He was transfigured" is in Greek, "metemorphoóthee," the aorist passive indicative of "metamorphoo," (Strong's NT:3339), and means to transform (literally or figuratively, "metamorphose"), change, transfigure, "to change into another form" (meta, implying change, and morphé, "form:"). The word is the same as the metamorphoses (cf. Ovid) of pagan mythology. "Morphe" is properly the nature or essence, not in the abstract, but as actually subsisting in the individual, and retained as long as the individual itself exists. The usual outward expression of our Lord in His humiliation was that of the Man Christ Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, the One acquainted with grief. He, to the world, was the travel-stained, itinerant preacher, the claimant to the Jewish Messiahship. What the world saw was a peasant from Galilee, clad in homespun, the son of the carpenter of Nazareth. But now, that outward expression was changed. Out from within the inmost being of the Son of God, there shone that dazzling glory of the essence of Deity which He possesses co-eternally with God the Father and God the Spirit. His human body was changed into another form ("metemorphoóthee" (Strong's NT:3339)), into the Glorious body that was His immediately before He "emptied" ("ekénoosen" aorist active indicative of "kenoo" (Strong NT:2758) Phil 2v7) Himself (of His glory and power) at the

time of the incarnation (Phil 2v5-11). It was that same dazzling radiance which the angels saw in His preincarnate state (Phil 2v6).

Mark says, "His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them;" and Matthew adds "His face did shine." Here was no borrowed radiance, even from the skies, which might shine on the Lord Jesus. **This effulgence of glory came from within, and was an inherent possession of the Lord of Glory.** The Greek word for "shining" in Mark 9v3 is "stilbonta" (the present active participle of "stilbo" (Strong's NT:4774) and being a participle, it indicates that the shining was active. The word is used of a flashing sword and of sunshine on shields. This is what occurred at His Transfiguration, and how He appeared to the Old Testament saints as Yahweh Malak, Yahweh Messenger. In The Angel (of) The Lord, there is no "of" in the Hebrew). Jesus is the Great "I Am," and this is how He will appear to the whole world on the last day of this Age (the Age of Grace), when He comes in great glory to destroy the wicked. At this time Jesus will raise the saints (both Old and New Testament) from the dead, and Rapture both the resurrected saints and the Christians who are living, so that we will always be with Him. It is also how He will appear during the Millennium and the Ages of Ages. Exodus 3v1-15, 33v18-34v8, Isaiah 24v23, 63v1-6, Matt 24v29-31, John 8v58, 1Thess 4v13-18, Heb 1v1-3, Rev 1v7, 11v18, 19v11-21, 21v1-22v21.

When the transfiguration occurred, and He entered into His pre-incarnate glory, this entailed entering into and experiencing fully the unlimited (divine) abilities of the Godhead ("Godhead" in Greek is "theóteetos," from "theotes," (Strong's NT:2320), and means the essential and personal deity as belonging to and subsisting in the Lord Jesus, Greek, "deitas" Col 2v9,10), i.e. He entered into the Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Omniscience, Transcendence and Immutability, that He had (voluntarily) emptied Himself off at the Incarnation. Phil 2v7.

The experience of having partaken fully of His pre-incarnate glory caused Him to remark in **Luke 12v50** the following: "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and **how am I straitened** till it be accomplished!"

The words "how am I straitened" is a reference to how greatly he felt constrained by the limitations of His human body (after having entered into His pre-incarnate glory at the Transfiguration) and how (in one sense) He was longing to complete the work of the Cross (but in another sense dreading it), descend into Hades (the Abyss), and having made atonement for the sin of the world, and being quickened in spirit, preach the Gospel to the inhabitants of that place, lead ALL those who received the Truth of His preaching out of Hades, be raised from the dead, and thus have the glory that He had with the Father (and the Holy Spirit) before the foundation of the world restored to Him, and then lead the waiting saints into Heaven, at which time He received "power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Matt 26v36-46, Acts 2v22-31, Heb 5v7, 1Pet 3v18-22, 4v6, Rev 5v12.

A couple of other points brought out by the Transfiguration is that, whereas our present earthly bodies may entirely mislead our neighbours about the state of our souls, our resurrection bodies will correspond to our souls, and so will differ in glory. 1Cor 15v25-50. That recognition, therefore, will be not solely of the body but more essentially of the personality, e.g., the distorted body of a hunchback will give way to the glorious form of a Son of God. Peter knew that he had been with Moses and Elijah, but he had not recognised their bodies! Luke 9v33.

The appearing of Moses and Elijah (in glory) with the Lord Jesus to talk about "His decease" (Greek, "éxodon" from "exodos" (Strong's NT:1841) which means "an exit," and is a reference to not only His death, **BUT** especially to the Lord Jesus leading the Old Testament saints (and all the other inhabitants of Hades who accepted and received the Truth that He preached) out of Hades into Heaven, after He had preached the Gospel to ALL the occupants of that dark place, Eph 4v8-10) which He should accomplish at Jerusalem;" (Luke 9v31) was made possible by His Father, by allowing Moses to be given a special resurrection, at which the Devil contended with Michael, the Archangel, over Moses' body (Deut 34v5,6, Jude v9), and Elijah, who never tasted off death, but was taken up into Heaven by a whirlwind (2Kings 2v11), to both now come and succour their Lord at this critical time in His Life and Ministry, so that He could then set His face as a flint to complete the work which His Father had given Him to accomplish (Isaiah 50v3-8, Luke 9v51). Apart from the purpose of encouraging the Lord Jesus, they also greatly stressed to Him the vital importance of the necessity of His going through with His death upon the Cross, descent into Hades etc. to make Atonement for the sin of the world, otherwise, the rest of the Old Testament saints, would be left for eternity in the darkness of Hades, Heaven would remain shut to them, neither would there be any eternal Kingdom and the creation would end in failure. Job 10v21,22, Psalm 16v8-11, Luke 16v19-31, Heb 2v9.

Also notice, that during the ministries of both Moses and Elijah, the Lord Jesus, in His pre-incarnate state had encouraged both of them in no small way, Elijah in the cave at Horeb, the mountain of God (1Kings 19v8-18), and Moses in the cleft of the rock, also at Horeb. (Exodus 33v1-34v7), so now, at the Transfiguration, they come to minister, strengthen and encourage their Lord! Another interesting fact is that the height of ministry of **BOTH** Moses and Elijah was reached **AFTER** death and when taken to Heaven, and **NOT** during their lifetime!

A Brief Explanation Of The "Apparent" Appearance Of Samuel To Saul

In 1Sam 28v1-25, it “appears” that Samuel (the prophet) comes out of Hades in response to Saul’s request for one that had a “familiar spirit” to “divine unto him by the familiar spirit” and bring him up. However, this is certainly not the case, because 1Chron 10v13,14, states: “So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, **and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it; And inquired not of the Lord:** therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.”

It states here quite plainly that he asked counsel of one that had “a familiar spirit, to **inquire of it, and inquired NOT of the Lord.**”

The “form” that was seen ascending out of the earth, was **NOT** Samuel, but simply a demon impersonating him (as is indeed always the case when an individual tries to communicate with the dead, which God has strictly and repeatedly forbidden, Lev 19v31, 20v6,27, Deut 18v1-22, Isaiah 8v18,19). **Something else that is worthy of note, is that the demon, impersonating Saul, knew more about Saul, than Saul knew about himself.**

We read in 1Sam 28v15-19 the following:

“And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? And the Lord hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David: Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.”

The reason for this is because God had already decreed and made it known to **ALL** in Heaven (including the Devil and the evil angels), what was going to happen to Saul, Israel, and Israel’s army, even as He had decreed and made known to **ALL** in Heaven what was going to happen to Ahab. 1Kings 22v1-40. 1Kings 22v20,22,34,37 states the following:

“And the LORD said, 'Who will persuade Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?' So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner... So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And the LORD said, 'You shall persuade him, and also prevail. Go out and do so.'... Now a certain man drew a bow at random, and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armour. So he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am wounded.".. So the king died, and was brought to Samaria. And they buried the king in Samaria.”

It is the Most High [God] that rules in the kingdom of mankind and gives it to whomever He will and sets over it the humblest and lowliest of men. Dan 4v17.

Another interesting fact is (seen in 1Sam 28v1-25), that as soon as Samuel had died, the Philistines came up against Israel with a great army (1Sam 28v4,5), this was simply because Samuel, like Elijah, Elisha, and the rest of the Old Testament prophets in different generations, was the real defence of Israel (he was “the chariots of Israel and its horsemen,” it was certainly **NOT** Saul and the army that was Israel’s defence, 2Kings 2v12, 13v14), for it was his practice to pray (the Greek word, “proseuchomai” (Strong’s NT:4336) is used in the Septuagint for Samuel’s act of praying for Israel), by “making interventions with power” for **ALL** the people of Israel including Saul, and all it’s rulers. 1Samuel 7v5, 12v19,23 states:

“And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and **I will pray** (“proseuchomai” (Strong’s NT:4336)) for you unto the Lord...And all the people said unto Samuel, **Pray** (“proseuchomai” (Strong’s NT:4336)) **for thy servants** unto the Lord thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king...Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing **to pray** (“proseuchomai” (Strong’s NT:4336)) **for you:** but I will teach you the good and the right way.”

Notice that the great prophet Samuel considered it a sin **NOT** to pray (“proseuchomai” (Strong’s NT:4336)) for **ALL** the people of Israel, including, the King (Saul, whom he still prayed for, even after having gone into apostasy) and all the rulers of it, so it is not without reason that Paul wrote to Timothy in **1Tim 2v1,2:**

“I exhort therefore, that, **first of all** (i.e. the first priority for **ALL** Christians), supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.” Let us follow the great example set by the godly prophet Samuel and

make "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority"!

It is hard for us to grasp, just how the Lord Jesus felt when He entered back into His pre-incarnate glory, He certainly would have thought that He was "back home." He also would have had a very difficult decision to make, and that was whether He simply walked back into Heaven, and forgot about His Cross, or walk back down the slopes of Mount Hermon, to face rejection, a scourging, crucifixion, and descent into the Abyss, where He would suffer the pangs of death. However, what certainly removed any fleeting thought of walking back into Heaven was that when he entered back into His glory (at the Transfiguration), He also saw the results of His Cross, descent into the Abyss (where His soul was made an offering for the sin of the world) and His Resurrection; which were that the Creation would not end in failure, but would be eternally established, culminating in the Ages of Ages, when billions of His redeemed creatures would enjoy the riches and treasures of His mind for all eternity! In His foreknowledge He saw ALL the redeemed (and each one individually); and it was His Great Love for each one of all the redeemed that He saw, which was His motivation to turn around and walk back down the slopes of Mount Hermon. Isaiah 6v3, 2Tim 1v10, 1John 4v8,16, Rev 4v8, 21v1-22v21.

When Moses and Elijah departed from the Lord Jesus, the divine glory, which He had had with the Father before the foundation of the world, departed from Him, and His glorified spiritual body was replaced with His own human body again. However, although He received back His human body again, the effects of the divine glory that He had entered into still lingered on, even as the face of Moses glowed after having spent forty days and forty nights on Mount Horeb in the presence of the Lord of Glory, Who was the preincarnate Christ (Exodus 34v30-35, 2Cor 3v13 Heb 11v26), for we read in Mark 9v15:

"And immediately all the crowd, when they saw Jesus [returning from the holy mount, His face and person yet glistening], they were greatly amazed and ran up to Him [and] greeted Him." (Amplified Bible)

After having come down from Mount Hermon, the Lord Jesus, (with Peter, James and John), is greeted by a crowd, and it soon came to light that the Apostles had been unable to cast out a demon from a man's only son. The Lord's opinion of His Apostles inability to do so is given in Matt 17v17:

"Then Jesus answered and said, **O faithless and perverse generation**, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me."

"O faithless and perverse generation" is in Greek, "Oo geneá ápistos kaí diestramménee."

"Ápistos" is from "a" (a negative participle) and "pistos" (faith), and so means, "without faith," (actively) disbelieving, i.e. without Christian faith (specially, a heathen); (passively) untrustworthy (person), or incredible (thing), that believeth not, faithless, infidel, unbeliever (-ing).

"Diestramménee" is the perfect passive participle of "diastrepho" (Strong NT:1294), and means, to distort, i.e. (figuratively) misinterpret, or (morally) corrupt, perverse (-rt), turn away, to turn aside from the right path, in the perfect participle, passive voice, it is translated "perverse," lit., "turned aside, corrupted."

These are strong words from the lips of the Lord Jesus, to the Apostles of the Church, and are undoubtedly a reference to how their minds had become corrupted and darkened, by imbibing the unscriptural traditions of the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees. We have already seen an example of this in Matt 16v21-23, when the Lord had made known to them how He would suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day, at which point Peter thought he knew better than His Lord, and tried to "put Him right," which brought this reply for His Lord, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offence to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." The teaching (which the Apostles had received and believed) from the Scribes and Pharisees regarding Messiah, was that of a great leader and soldier who would rise up and throw off the yoke of the Romans from off Israel's neck, which was the complete opposite of the Truth, which was that the Messiah was meek and lowly, full of mercy, compassion and love, and had come to die upon the Cross, to make Atonement, by the shedding of His blood, for the sin off the world, He was the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world! Matt 11v28-30, 15v1-20, 23v1-39, John 1v29, Acts 20v28, Eph 2v1-10, Rev 13v8.

And it was because that their minds were so darkened and devoid of the Truth, that they were faithless. How binding are the unscriptural traditions of men, which shackle in chains the minds and spirits of God's dearly beloved children! 1Pet 1v18, 2Pet 2v1-3, 3v14-18. The Lord Jesus then proceeds to heal the man's son, by casting the demon out of him.

When the Lord Jesus and the Apostles had gone into the house, the Apostles ask him privately why they could not cast it out, his reply was (Matt 17v20,21):

"And Jesus said unto them, **Because of your unbelief:** for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. **Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer** (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) **and fasting.**"

The Lord is really telling them how He did it, and obviously the Apostles had not been exercising prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong NT:4335)) and fasting, for if they had, they would have been able to heal the boy by casting out the demon, because they had already been given that authority previously by the Lord, see Matt 10v1-15 (esp., v8).

Another interesting fact is that a number of the Apostles (Andrew, Simon Peter, James, John, Philip and Nathanael, John 1v36-51) had also been disciples of John the Baptist, and we know from Luke 11v1, that he had taught his disciples (and that includes also those Apostles of the Lord Jesus that had been with him) how to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)), and yet even now (Matt 17v14-21), in late 29 AD, when they had been with the Lord Jesus well over two years, they still were not exercising such prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)).

Even when the Lord Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane and was in great agony from the tremendous temptation He was suffering under, due to the Devil's final attempt to thwart Him from going to the Cross, Peter, James and John (and the other eight Apostles) were still not exercising "prayer" (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)), for Matt 26v40,41 reads:

"Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, **"What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray** (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)), **lest you enter into temptation.** The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

The first time we read of the Apostles exercising "prayer" (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) is after the Lord's Ascension, which had been preceded by His 40 day post resurrection ministry to them, Acts 1v14:

"These all continued with one accord in prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."

And from that time forward, this is how they "prayed," and the same kind of praying that they lead their converts into. Acts 2v41-47:

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. **And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers** (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)). And fear came upon every soul: **and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.** And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Notice how that after the Apostles started praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)), "many wonders and signs were done by" them. Acts 1v14, 2v43.

We now see the fulfilment of the Lord's words in John 14v12-14, because they had started "praying" (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)). This type of praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) is essential to sustain an Apostolic and Prophetic ministry (and indeed any of the ministries listed in Eph 4v7-16) at a level of spiritual power so that ALL the needy of the Church and world are healed and delivered from their sicknesses, diseases and great burdens, through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, when they come for healing from the Lord Jesus through His ministries. 1Cor 12v7-11, 14v15,18.

Also notice that by praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)), a wonderful unity of purpose, soul and mind was achieved in the Church at Jerusalem amongst ALL, "And they continued steadfastly.... in prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)).... continuing daily **with one accord** in the temple" Acts 2v42,46.

"With one accord" is in Greek, "homothumadón," an old adverb in -don from the adjective homothumos and that from homos, "same," and thumos, "mind or spirit, with the same mind or spirit. This beautiful unity of mind, soul and purpose is the fulfilment of John 17v11,21,22,23.

The 2nd Cleansing Of The Temple.

Another significant place where the Greek word (for "prayer"), "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335) is used is in the passage of the 2nd cleansing of the Temple at Jerusalem (the first being at the beginning of His ministry, John 2v13-22), Matt 21v12-17 (v13), Mark 11v15-19 (v17), and Luke 19v45-48 (v46), Mark 11v17 states:

"And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335))? but ye have made it a den of thieves."

The word "thieves" is in Greek "leestoón" which is from "leistes" (Strong's NT:3027) (which in turn is from leizomai (to plunder); and means a brigand, robber, "one who plunders openly and by violence" (in contrast to kleptes (Strong's NT:2812), "a thief," one who takes property by stealth), to practice robbery, piracy, one who robs by force and violence, a highwayman. So "a den of thieves" would be better translated "a cave of robbers," The Lord Jesus alludes here to those dens and caves in Judea, in which robbers either hid or kept themselves fortified. The phrase "den of robbers" comes from Jeremiah 7v11 and is part of a long sermon that Jeremiah delivered in the gate of the Temple, rebuking the people for the same sins that Jesus saw and judged in His day. Jeremiah, in Jeremiah chapter 7, is challenging ALL of Judah, who felt so secure because of the presence of God's Temple that she believed it was safe to do all kinds of detestable things. Her vileness had actually turned the Temple into a den of robbers (cf. Matt 21v12-13). What she failed to realize was that God had been watching and was aware of her deeds. Jer 7v9-15.

Jeremiah pointed to Israel's past to expose the fallacy of believing that the mere presence of God's Temple would avert disaster. He asked the crowd to remember the place in Shiloh where the tabernacle of God had first dwelt (Josh 18v1, Jud 18v31, 1Sam 1v3, 4v3-4). They were to observe what God did to it because of Israel's wickedness. The Bible is silent on the fate of Shiloh; but after the Philistines captured the ark of the covenant (1Sam 4v10-11) the priests evidently fled to Nob (1Sam 22v11) and Shiloh was abandoned as Israel's central worship centre (cf. Psalm 78v56-61). Archaeological studies also indicate that the village of Shiloh was destroyed about 1050 BC, probably by the Philistines. The point of Jeremiah's message was that what God did to Shiloh He would also do to the Temple. If Judah did not change her ways God would thrust her from His presence just as He had done with the Northern Kingdom (Ephraim) in 722 BC (2Kings 17v5-20, esp. v 20).

The false prophets in the time of Hosea (when Israel was about to be carried off into captivity by the Assyrians, Hosea 1 to 14, and in the time of Jeremiah (when God was about to have Judah carried off into captivity by the Babylonians, 2Chron 36v1-21), ALL prophesied of "**peace and safety**" when the true prophets of God were prophesying that there was only impending destruction around the corner (i.e. "sudden destruction"), and the blind false teachers in our Lord's day also were saying the same thing (Matt 15v1-20, 23 all), when destruction was also looming again for Jerusalem, its inhabitants and the Temple, even as the Lord Jesus prophesied in Luke 19v41-44. Today we have the exact same situation, with false prophets and teachers. Matt 24v23-31,48-51. ALL saying the there will be "**peace and safety**" for the Church because it will be removed from the earth by a secret Advent and Rapture, just before the Great Tribulation starts. However, this evil seed that the Devil put into the Church in the 1830s (see "The Hope Of Christ's Second Coming" by S. P. Tregelles, for an account how this occurred) will be the reason why so many Christians will be so overwhelmed by the great deluge of evil coming into the world at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, so it is **VITAL** that Christians fill their minds **NOW** with the Truth on this **MOST** important subject, so that they will have **LIGHT** in the darkness of those evil days, to be able to come through the Great Tribulation victoriously. 1Thess 5v3, 2Thess 2v1-12, 1Pet 1v19-21.)

It should also be noted that the account of the cleansing of the Temple in Luke 19v45-48., happened on Monday, 3rd April 30 AD, and is preceded by Luke 19v41-44, (by the following words on Sunday 2nd April 30 AD):

"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. **For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another;** because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

The Lord Jesus had seen in vision what was soon going to happen to Jerusalem, the Temple and the Jewish people **IF** that did not repent (for if they had repented, the vision would not have been fulfilled, nor would Jerusalem and the Temple been destroyed, or the Jewish people slaughtered and dispersed amongst the nations, for God is abundantly rich in mercy and has **NO** pleasure in the death of the wicked, One who relents from doing harm. Jonah 3v10-4v2, Eph 2v1-10, 1Tim 2v4, 2Pet 3v9), and one of the reasons for the cleansing of the Temple by the Lord Jesus, was to try and bring them to a realization of the great peril Israel was in because of their gross moral and spiritual depravity, and that the same conditions that prevailed in the days of Jeremiah (which ended with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and the carrying away into captivity of the Jews to Babylon, 2Chron 36v15-21) were at that present time prevailing with them, and that their (Israel's) end would be the same as that which happened to their forefathers in Jeremiah's day. All the mighty signs, wonders and miracles, which the Lord Jesus had done during the three years of His ministry (including the raising of Lazarus from the dead, who had been in the tomb for 4 days) had failed to

bring Israel to repentance. And so, after He had seen the vision of what was going to happen to Israel on Sunday, 2nd April (as Jerusalem came into view, and spread out before Him, from the Mount of Olives), having entered Jerusalem and looked around, He then left it and went to Bethany, where He lodged for the night. It was during His time of prayer at Bethany, that His Father directed Him once again to go into His Temple, and cleanse it, in a last ditch attempt to try and bring those in the Temple and Jerusalem to their senses, and a realisation of the terrible danger that Israel was in because of their moral and spiritual depravity. It was the tremendous frustration in the great heart and mind of the Father (which was also shared by the other two members of the Trinity), that drove Him to direct the Lord Jesus to carry out the second cleansing of His Temple, in a last and final attempt to bring Israel to repentance. John 5v19,30, 12v37-41, Acts 7v51-53.

The Greek word "leistes" (Strong's NT:3027) is also used in Matt 27v38 of the two robbers who were crucified on either side of the Lord Jesus.

"Then **two robbers** (Greek, "leestaí" (Strong's NT:3027)) were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left." (NKJV).

The "Judge of all the Earth" at this 2nd cleansing of the Temple, expressly states that the religious leaders of the Temple were "robbers who plundered openly, with violence," and thus, by the sentence of the law, these evil religious leaders had committed crimes which were punishable by crucifixion, even as the two robbers had been crucified on either side of the Lord. Gen 18v25. This Greek word, "leistes" (Strong's NT:3027), is also used of Barabbas in Jn.18v40:

"Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber ("leesteés" (Strong's NT:3027))."

So we can see exactly what the Lord Jesus thought of the religious leaders of Israel and the Temple, and just how evil they were! Matt 23v1-39.

The circumstances that brought these stinging words for the lips of the Lord Jesus, was that the area of the Temple, that God had set aside for the Gentiles to come and worship and pray to Him (and get their needs met), had been turned into a bazaar, where extortion on a vast scale was daily going on. In Matt 21v12, the tables of "the money-changers" "ton kollubistoon," from "kollubos," a small coin) were overturned. In John 2v15, the money-changers, (Greek, "kollubistoon" (Strong's NT:2855) from "kollubos," "the rate of exchange") sat in the Temple, in the court of the Gentiles, to change the foreign coins of pilgrims (Roman and Greek money, which had heathen markings on them) into the shekel of the sanctuary for payment of the annual tribute. It was in this transaction of currency change, that the money changers only gave a small fraction of the true value of the Roman and Greek money in exchange for the shekel of the sanctuary to the worshippers. Also, the religious leaders insisted that in the Temple the people could not use money that had been circulating in society, but had to change their money into Temple money first (for a fee and at extortionate exchange rates), and then use the Temple money to purchase animals for sacrifice, also at inflated prices. Even though the dealers charged exorbitant prices, no one could compete with them or oppose them, and Historians tell us that Annas, the High Priest, was the controller of this enterprise, assisted by his sons. It was into their pockets (and some of the priestly leaders) that the vast amount of this great wealth taken by extortion (under the guise of religion) went, the actual dealers and money changers getting only a very small fraction of what they actually charged (and extorted). All this was going on in the Outer Court, which God had specifically set aside for the Gentiles, so that they could come and make prayer ("proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and entreaty to Him so that they would get their needs met, and go away uplifted and energised by God's Presence and power. Isaiah 56v1-7.

Because all this was happening in the Temple "enclosure," not the "naos" (Strong's NT:3485), or "sanctuary," the people were carrying vessels, etc., through it, in order to save a long circuit, and this was because the court of the Gentiles, was not regarded by the Jews as entitled to the respect due to the other part of the enclosure. The Temple authorities had prohibited using the outer court of the Temple through the Precinct as a sort of short cut or by-path from the city to the Mount of Olives, but the rule was neglected and all sorts of irreverent conduct was going on. From Jewish writings we know that most improper transactions were carried on, to the taking undue advantage of the poor people who came to offer their sacrifices. It was by popular indignation, three years before the destruction of Jerusalem, that swept away the Bazaars of the family of Annas, and this, was on account of the sinful greed which characterized their dealings. Of the avarice and corruption of this High-Priestly family, Josephus and the Rabbis give a most terrible picture. Josephus describes Annas (or Ananus), the son of the Annas of the New Testament, as 'a great hoarder up of money.' The Talmud also records the curse which a distinguished Rabbi of Jerusalem (Abba Shaul) pronounced upon the High-Priestly families (including that of Annas), who were 'themselves High-Priests, their sons treasurers (Gizbarin), their sons-in-law assistant-treasurers (Ammarkalin), while their servants beat the people with sticks.' Josephus Antiquities 20:9. 2-4. (See Edersheim, "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," I, 367-372)

Tithes And Tithing

The tithe was the means of supporting the Levites and priests and for caring for the poor, fatherless, widow and stranger. Deut 10v18, 14v29, 16v11,14, 24v17,19,20,21, 26v12,13, 27v19. Levi was the third son of Jacob and Leah. Gen 29v34, 35v23, Exodus 1v2, 1Chron 2v1. The three sons of Levi, Gershom, Kohath, and Merari, were born before Israel's exodus from Egypt. The family of Levi had some nasty skeletons in their cupboard. When Dinah, the sister of Levi, was assaulted and violated by Shechem the Hivite, Levi and Simeon pillaged the city of Shechem and killed all the males there. Jacob condemned this evil act at the time, and in his final prophetic blessing and estimation of his sons, he pronounces God's curse upon Levi and Simeon for this cruel and evil act. Gen 34v1-31, 49v5-9. The priests in the Temple settled into a state of formal worship and hypocrisy, and became the opponents of true spirituality; the martyr Stephen said that they had always resisted the Spirit of God. Acts 7v51-53.

We read in Deut 14v28,29, and Numb 18v21-24,27, that the tithe was to be used to financially support the Levite, because the Levites had "no portion nor inheritance with you." In Numb 18v21, God states, "And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation." cf. Heb.7v5. **The Levites service included caring for the poor in Israel's welfare state, and they had more than enough for this, for Hooker says that the tithes given to the Levites meant that their worldly estate was four times as good as any of the other tribes of Israel.** Even if Hooker was speaking of a double tithe, then a single tithe meant that the Levites still had twice as much as the other tribes to service Israel's welfare state. The tithes were a tithe of the seed and crops of the land, the fruit of the trees, the oil and wine, and the herds and the flocks. Deut 14v22,23. As the herds and flocks passed under the rod, every tenth animal was taken. Lev 27v30-33, Jer 33v13, Ezek 20v37. The animals could not be redeemed, but the fruit and seed of the land could be for an extra fifth on the tithe price. In Numb 18v26-32, we read that the Levites were to take a "tithe of the tithe --- from all the best of them" and give it to the priests. Neh 10v39. Some have suggested that a second tithe of the remaining nine tenths of the tithe was given for the feast at Jerusalem, they feel that this would harmonise the accounts. But this is not necessary, **it seems clear enough that the Levites shared the tithe with the people who gave it, and with the poor, fatherless, stranger and widow, and saved the rest for themselves and the needy. God's laws are very thoughtful and kind.**

The place where tithes were taken to under the Law.

Tithes were to be brought once a year, "to the place which the Lord your God shall choose." However the tithes could be eaten and distributed locally, "within thy gates," if the Temple was too far away. Deut 14v22, 12v5,11,14,18,21. The tithes of corn, wine, oil and animals were to be eaten not only by the Levites, but also by the people who brought the tithe. Deut 12v17,18. Some think it better to distinguish between tithes and first fruits; however, Deut 26v1-15 mentions them together, which implies that they are the same, or that the first-fruits could be part of the tithe, they were given to the priests. Deut 18v4.

Every third year all who tithed were to give their tithes to the Levites and poor and needy from "within their gates." Deut 14v28,29. However, they still had to go to worship at Jerusalem after distributing their tithes in their local community, and there proclaim that they had given their tithes to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow. Deut 26v12-19.

We read in Deut 12v20,21, that if the distance to Jerusalem was too far to travel, the tithe was to be shared among the poor and the Levites and eaten "within the gates" of the person who tithed them, the tithe was to be used as a contingency fund for the poor.

NB Have you ever heard any Bible teachers tell you that you are to invite the poor and needy to your home and consume some of your tithe in a religious party of thanksgiving and worship, and the rest of your tithe is to be used as a contingency fund to provide for the poor? How different from the modern teaching and demands on tithing!

The tithe was also Israel's Income Tax to be used for Israel's welfare state.

In Deut 10v16-19, God commanded the Levites to administer justice for the stranger, fatherless and widow and feed and clothe them. We read, "Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer. For the Lord your God is a God of gods, and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in Egypt." These are strong words, and emphasise God's loving concern for the poor and needy. **This is why our Lord was so angry with the Jews in Mal 3v7-10, and said there would be a curse upon them, if they failed to bring the tithes into the storehouse. God said that they were robbing Him, when they robbed the Levite and the poor. The Levites and priests also came under a curse if they robbed the poor.**

In Deut 14v28,29, we read that our Lord gave the Law on tithing to Moses out of a concern for the poor, we read that the tithe was not only for the Levite, but also for “the stranger and the fatherless and the widow.” Our Lord castigated the Jews for their arrogant pride and self-deception over their tithing, and pointed out that it availed them nothing when they omitted and neglected the weightier matters of the Law, judgement, mercy, faith, and love of God. The judgement and mercy mentioned here is undoubtedly the ministry to the poor mentioned in the Scriptures. Matt 23v23, Luke 11v39-44. **Our Lord was very angry with Israel's religious leaders, because they devoured widow's houses, neglected the poor, and turned God's Temple into a “den of robbers,” and He warned them that they were bound for Hell because of it.** Matt 21v12,13, 23v13-39 (NB v14,33), Luke 20v46,47.

A House Of Prayer For All Nations

God had specifically decreed in the Scriptures that the Temple at Jerusalem should be a place where **ALL** the Gentile nations could come to worship Yahweh, the God of Israel, and to pray (Greek, “proseuchomai” (Strong’s NT:4336), Hebrew, “palal” (Strong’s OT:6419), to entreat), so that they would get **ALL** their needs met. God was clearly showing the Gentiles, that He loved and cared for them as well (as Israel), and greatly desired to meet **ALL** their needs and requirements, no matter what they were. His house was not just a place of worship, but a place where **ALL** peoples (Jew and Gentile alike) could come and get deliverance from all their problems, and be energised, empowered and filled with His joy from His Presence.

The quotes from Mark 11v17, “And he taught, and said unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? but ye have made it a den of robbers.” ASV (See also Matt 21v13 and Luke 19v46) are taken from Isaiah 56v7, “**for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.**” **Note Isaiah 56v1-8 which states:**

“Thus saith Jehovah, Keep ye justice, and do righteousness; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that holdeth it fast; that keepeth the Sabbath from profaning it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil. Neither let the foreigner, that hath joined himself to Jehovah, speak, saying, Jehovah will surely separate me from his people; neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith Jehovah of the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and hold fast my covenant: Unto them will I give in my house and within my walls a memorial and a name better than of sons and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. **Also the foreigners that join themselves to Jehovah, to minister unto him, and to love the name of Jehovah, to be his servants,** every one that keepeth the Sabbath from profaning it, and holdeth fast my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; **for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.** The Lord Jehovah, who gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith, Yet will I gather (others) to him, besides his own that are gathered.” **ASV.**

God had decreed that the Temple should be a place where the poor, the widow, the stranger and fatherless (who have a special place in God’s loving heart, because they cannot fend for themselves, and are so often downtrodden by the rich, James 2v6) could come and receive, not only spiritual refreshment, and healing for their spirit, soul and body, but to receive financial help so that they could feed and keep themselves and their families. The Temple was supposed to be a place that “gave”, and “gave” liberally to all in need, to reflect the wonderful selfless giving character of God, who gives liberally to ALL, indeed one of His names in Exodus 34v6, is “the bountiful Being”; He who is exuberant in His beneficence, Hebrew, “checed” (Strong’s OT:2617), Exodus 34v6,7 John 3v16, James 1v5,17.

However, by the time of the incarnation of the Lord Jesus’ and His earthly ministry, the Temple had become the exact opposite of what God had intended it to be. It had become a place, that instead of giving to ALL in need, it openly **plundered ALL** with violence, even the poor! The “character” of the Temple that should have reflected God’s giving nature, now reflected that of the Devil, being completely corrupt and evil (“poneros” (Strong’s NT:4190)), which means an active evil corrupting influence, that is not content until it has brought all down to the same level of depraved corruption as themselves. Matt 3v7, 16v6, 23v15, Acts 7v51-53.

Although God the Father had directed the Lord Jesus to cleanse the Temple this 2nd time in an attempt to convince those in the Temple and all of Israel of their dire moral and spiritual condition, (and consequently the great danger, of not only the destruction of Jerusalem, but also the strong possibility of eternal judgement). Great frustration filled Christ’s being, because of their rejection of His ministry and their deeply ingrained wilful stubbornness. The Trinity was also angered by the terrible treatment of the poor by the religious leaders, the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees. Matt 23v1-39.

After the Lord Jesus had finished turning over the tables of the money changers and putting out of the Temple those that bought and sold, He then demonstrates to ALL (once again), the true purpose that God had decreed for the Temple (which was healing for all), Matt 21v14, states: “And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.”

The signs, wonders and miracles Jesus did (in the healing of the blind and the lame), filled the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people with jealous fury, and they sought how they might kill Him, for they feared Him, because the ordinary people (made up mostly of the poor) were very attentive in listening to His teaching. The religious leaders were jealous of Him, because Christ's preaching, teaching and miracles exposed them truly as the frauds and charlatans that they were. Matt 27v18. The words that Jesus spoke were "spirit and life," and were delivered under a great anointing, so when the people heard them, they brought power, comfort, faith and hope to their spirits and inner beings from the God of Love. The words He spoke to them had come directly from the heart and mind of His Father, via the Holy Spirit. The mighty signs, wonders and miracles that the Lord Jesus did during His ministry, had either one of two effects upon the individual that heard and saw those things, it either produced repentance and faith, and therefore salvation, or they became irrevocably hardened in sin, and therefore perished, because when they saw God they hated Him. Matt 7v28,29, Luke 19v47, John 3v34, 6v63, 12v60, 15v22-25, 1Cor 1v18.

Because of the corruption of Israel's religious leaders, and the great evil that was taking place in the Temple at Jerusalem, the name of God was maligned and blasphemed amongst the Gentile nations. The same criticism of God and the Gospel still happens today, when so called Christian pastors, teachers and preachers make long appeals for money, sometimes with veiled threats, from the people that they are supposed to be pastoring and caring for, and the money goes to line their own pockets (or those of their denominations which they belong to), to give them a life of great wealth. These appeals and sometimes actual demands for money, are supported by false appeals to the Scriptures which they have twisted and wrenched out of context. When the worlding hears these appeals, they know straightaway that these so called Christian leaders care nothing for their flock, but are only coveting and strongly desiring people's money. The people who make such demands for money from God's dear children, have at the very least definitely lost their reward, and at the very worst won't even get into heaven, even as the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees coveted the people's money and put it into their own pockets, whom the Lord Jesus said concerning in Matt 23v33, "Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? (Greek, "geena" i.e. "the lake of fire" Rev 19v20.)" Isaiah 52v5, Ezek 36v20, Mal 3v5-12, Matt 7v15-23, 23v1-39, 24v48-51, Rom 2v24, 2Pet 2v1-3.

In Matt 21v15,16 we read: "And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, **Hosanna to the Son of David**; they were sore displeased, And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, **Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?**"

The Old Testament Scripture, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise" is taken from Psalm 8v2 (the Septuagint) and reads, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." From this Old Testament passage, we can see that extra information is given. The praise of these "babes and sucklings" was not only perfect, but it put strength into the Lord Jesus ("hast thou ordained strength"), and such praise will also put strength into the other ministries of His Church. This "perfect praise" of these children also shut down the powers of darkness completely and rendered them totally powerless, ("that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger"). 2Chron 20v1-30, Eph 4v11-16.

Also observe that these "babes and sucklings" knew full well who Jesus was, that He was the long promised Messiah, born of the seed of David, the Lord of Glory, whereas the religious leaders of Israel wilfully and stubbornly resisted the full light and revelation of the character and works of God revealed to them through the mighty signs, wonders and miracles that Jesus did during His ministry! John 12v37-41, Rom 1v3,4, Rev 22v16.

Cornelius, A Perfect Example!

In Acts 10v1-11v18, we have the amazing account of God's dealings with a Gentile (a Roman centurion of the Italian Cohort (see William M Ramsay's book, "Was Christ Born In Bethlehem" (Pages 260-269) for a discussion on the subject of the Italian Cohort). Cornelius had a living faith in the God of Israel, he had had a previous encounter with God, at which time his spirit had been born again. Ezek 18v21-23,31, John 3v1-8), Cornelius is derived from Latin "*cornu*", meaning "horn" (coloured), his meeting with Simon Peter, occurred in 40/41 AD, and marked a major turning point in world evangelism for the Church. Cornelius was a devout (Greek, "eusebes," (Strong's NT:2152) from "eu" (which means, good or well) and "sebamai" (which means, to worship or revere), so "eusebes" means literally, "to worship well." Here was a Gentile, who was NOT a Christian, but who "worshipped God well"! and was just (Greek, "dikaios" (Strong's NT:1342), he had been justified by faith, and so was saved on an Old Testament basis, just as Abraham and Job were. Job 1v8, Ezek 14v14, Hab 2v4, Rom 1v17, James 2v23. Cornelius feared God, with **ALL** his household (Although he was not a Christian, he still had evangelized ("euangelizo" Strong's NT:2097) his whole family, household and friends to a faith in God. Cornelius had a living faith, because he knew and had a relationship with the Living God, that was maintained and fortified by a continuous prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) life, his faith being fed with the Old Testament Scriptures. Cornelius not only had a living faith and prayed

continually, but his faith was demonstrated to be "living" because of his "works," in that (amongst other things) he gave alms generously to the poor, and such was his generosity to the poor, that he was well known throughout the whole of the Jewish nation for his alms giving, and was held in great esteem by **ALL**. Acts 10v1,2,22, James 1v27, 2v14-26.

NOTE: From the wonderful report that is given about Cornelius in Acts 10v1,2,4,22, it is very apparent that God also held him in very high esteem, indeed, it is clear that God's opinion of Cornelius was of a higher nature than the opinions that He had of the twelve Apostles or of the Elders of the Church at Jerusalem; for nowhere in the New Testament scriptures do we read of such a glowing report, that has come directly from God, or an angel about any of them!

On a particular day, Cornelius was fasting and praying ("proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)); earnestly seeking the Lord, that He would intervene and deal with the reluctance of the Apostles (and the leaders of the Church at Jerusalem) to fulfil the great commission, given by the Lord Jesus, to His Apostles, that the Gospel was to be preached to **ALL** the nations, and not just reserved for a "select" few (i.e. the Jews)! He knew from the Old Testament prophecies and the discourses of the Lord Jesus during His earthly ministry, repeated by others in his own hearing, and also Peter's own discourse on the day of Pentecost (which also would have been repeated to him); that the Coming One, (the Lord Jesus) would not only be a light to His people Israel, but would also be a light to the Gentiles and His Salvation for the whole world. Isaiah 42v1-9, 49v1-13, Jer 31v31-34, Ezek 36v25-27, Matt 28v16-20, Mark 16v14-18, Luke 24v44-49, John 10v1-30 (esp. v16), Acts 1v4-8, 2v16-40 (esp. v17-21,38,39), 10v30,31,36,37, 11v13,14.

However, although the Lord Jesus had given a definite command to the Apostles (on different occasions during the forty days of His Post Resurrection ministry), to preach the Gospel to every creature, this definite command also being His very last words to them before His Ascension into Heaven on Thursday 18th May 30 AD (Acts 1v6-9): "Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, **and to the end of the earth**. Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight."

The Apostles had stubbornly refused to preach the Gospel beyond the borders of Samaria (and that was done through Philip, NOT the Apostles, who refused to leave Jerusalem, but who did send Peter and John down to Samaria, AFTER the Samaritans had been converted, Acts 8v5-8,14-25), so that by 41 AD, the Gentiles, whom God was longing to bring into the Kingdom, still had not had the Gospel preached to them! The reason for this stubborn refusal of the Apostles to preach the Gospel to every nation was simply because of sectarian bigotry. Their minds were still in great darkness (and indeed, it was only when Jerusalem and the Temple was destroyed by Titus in 70 AD, that the light began to finally dawn upon the Jewish Christians, that the Jews were not held in a higher esteem than the Gentiles by God, who had made both Jew and Gentile one, through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus, Gal 3v28, Eph 2v11-22), because they were still filled with the unscriptural traditions (handed down from their spiritual fathers) of the Scribes and Pharisees, who taught every Jew that the Gentiles were fuel for the flames of Hell, and that the Jews were on a level with the angels of Heaven. Matt 15v1-20, 16v6, Rom 1v28, 1Pet 1v17-19.

And so, because of this terrible state of affairs, Cornelius fasts and earnestly "prays" ("proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)), seeking for God to intervene and change this situation, which brought about the divine "intervention" that he had been praying for. An angel appeared to him, and spoke the following words to him, Acts 10v4., "Thy prayers ("proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God." And Acts 10v2 states that Cornelius was: "A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always ("diapantos" (Strong's NT:1275))." (Majority Texts). "Always" is in Greek, "diapantos," and means literally, "through all the time," i.e. (adverbially) constantly, continually, the time throughout which a thing is done.

The spiritual walk of Cornelius was of the highest order, because he lived a life that was continually in communion with the Living God, he knew and lived in His presence, with the result that he had developed a beautiful Christ like character, even as the great Old Testament saint, Job, had. Cornelius really was meek and lowly, there was no pride in him at all. Notice, that when Peter comes into his house, he is overwhelmed (probably due to the report that had preceded Peter, of the great manifestation of signs, wonders and miracles that God had done through him, like the raising from the dead of Dorcas. Possibly also because the great anointing that was upon Peter was manifested as a glory on his countenance, even as Moses and the Lord Jesus had experienced. Mark 9v15, Acts 9v36-43, 2Cor 3v7. Cornelius starts to worship Peter, which Peter promptly refuses to accept, telling him to stand up as he was only a man as well. Acts 10v26. The extent of the great love that was part of the character of Cornelius was clearly revealed day by day, by the alms he continually gave to the poor, he really knew what the will of God was towards the poor,

which was the complete opposite of the religious leaders at Jerusalem, and in particular, in the Temple, who cared absolutely nothing about them, but indeed despised them and looked down upon them. Job 1v1,8, 16v17, 42v8, John 7v49.

The angel said to Cornelius that his prayers and alms came up for a memorial before God, the angel here is likening the prayers and acts of giving alms of Cornelius, to that of the burning of sweet smelling incense (upon the altar) that arise up to the nostrils of God, and which is very pleasing to Him. Lev 2v2, Psalm 141v2 (In Psalm 141v2, in the Septuagint, the Greek word for "prayer" that is used is, "proseuche" (NT:4335), Luke 1v9, Rev 5v8 (In Rev 5v8, the Greek word, "proseuche" is also used for "prayer").

The term "for a memorial" spoken by the angel to Cornelius in Acts 10v4, is only used in two other places in the New Testament (which reads, "as a memorial"), and that is in Matt 26v13 and Mark 14v9, which are both speaking of the same event, and that is the anointing of Jesus for His burial, by a woman who is not named. Robertson states that the anointing of Jesus with the precious ointment in Matt 26v6-13 and Mark 14v3-9 and John 12v1-8 was performed by Mary of Bethany. (The Greek word that is use for "memorial" in all three places is, "mnemosunon" (Strong's NT:3422), and means, a reminder (memorandum), i.e. record, that which keeps alive the memory of someone or something. The anointing of Jesus by the un-named woman was that of a single beautiful loving act, which being recorded in the Gospels is certainly a memorial to her. However, the angel said of Cornelius, that his life of continuous prayer and alms giving came up as a memorial before God, and so, it was not just one act (lovely as the un-named woman's acts was), **BUT** it was a life of **continual** prayer ("proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and alms giving. The word "memorial" (Greek, "mnemosunon" (Strong's NT:3422) is used in the Septuagint for all occurrences of the Hebrew words) is used 29 times in the Old Testament, but it is not used of anyone in the sense of which it is used of Cornelius, which really highlights just how much God thought of Cornelius and his walk of faith. Acts 10v2,4,35, Heb 11v6.

Cornelius was not only "acceptable" to God, but he pleased Him very much, even though Cornelius was not a Christian; the fact of the matter is, as pointed out by Peter in Acts 10v34,35: "...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."

And this was also the case with the Centurion of Matt 8v5-13 (with Luke 7v1-10) and the Greek (a Syro-Phoenician by birth) woman of Mark 7v24-30 (with Matt 15v21-28). In both of these encounters, the Lord Jesus was greatly surprised (and marvelled) by the great faith they displayed and also the great love that energised that faith in both of these individuals to seek Him for healing for those whom they were seeking it for (even when they knew that the Lord Jesus had only been sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Matt 10v6, 15v24). During His ministry, the Lord Jesus generally didn't find faith where He expected to find it (i.e. amongst the Jews), but found great faith where He least expected to find it (i.e. amongst the Gentiles)! Matt 11v20-24, Mar 6v1-6, John 12v37-41, Gal 5v6 (see also Jonah Chapters 1-4).

With the change of one word in Acts 10v34,35, the following is also very true: "...of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But **in every denomination** he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

In many countries around the world today, there is great sectarian bigotry in and between Christians of different denominations. The usual reason for this terrible state of affairs is generally over differences in non-essential doctrines, and very often the warring factions are **BOTH** wrong in the doctrines they hold! Doctrine should be used as a means to **UNITE** (and build up) Christians and **NOT** to divide them. Indeed, when Christians use differences in (non-essential) doctrine, as an excuse to separate themselves from having fellowship with Christians of another denomination (who don't believe exactly the same as themselves), it springs from those Christians (who are being sectarian) being spiritually immature and carnal in nature, and this can be seen by the fact that Paul includes "factions" ("Heresies" – KJV) in the list of the "works of the flesh." 1Cor 3v1-17, 11v19, Gal 5v16-26, Eph 4v7-16.

From the words that the angel spoke to Cornelius, he then knew that God was intervening in this matter in response to his "prayer" (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)), and was going to rectify the terrible failure by the Apostles of the Church (at Jerusalem), to fulfil the divine command given to them, immediately before the Ascension of the Lord Jesus into Heaven on Thursday 18th May 30 AD, to preach the Gospel to ALL the nations of the world. Acts 1v6-9, 10v31, 11v14.

Cornelius responded immediately to the command given by the angel, to send men to Joppa, to locate Peter (who was at the house of Simon the tanner), and bring him back with them. The Tanner's occupation was regarded as unclean by the Jews, and the tanners were commanded to dwell apart. Also, "If a tanner married without mentioning his trade, his wife was permitted to get a divorce. The law of levirate marriage might be set aside if the brother-in-law of the childless widow was a tanner. A tanner's yard must be at least fifty cubits from any town." (F. W. Farrar, "Life and

Work of Paul"). Peter, who was with Simon "many days" (which basically means a long time), saw the wonderful sacrificial character of this lovely godly generous man, and thus came to understand that the Jewish (unscriptural) tradition that a tanner was unclean was a complete fallacy. God, by having him stay with Simon for such a long time, had enabled Peter (who was so bound by the unscriptural traditions of the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees) to take a big step towards meeting Cornelius and interacting with him, his family and friends in his house, which was completely forbidden by Jewish tradition. Acts 9v43, 10v28. The angel said that Cornelius should send "men" (plural), not just one man, simply because the witness of two or more persons to a certain event is far more compelling than the actual event that is being reported actually happened, and this was very important indeed, because of the deeply ingrained sectarian bigotry in Peter, and indeed in ALL the Jews! Acts 10v28,45.

It was as the three men sent from Cornelius were drawing close to Joppa, that Peter experienced a "trance," (KJV) an "ekstasis" from God. The Greek word, "ekstasis," (Strong's NT:1611) literally means, "a standing out," and so it means a transportation out of a person's normal condition or state of mind. It is also used of people being carried out of themselves with extreme astonishment and amazement in Mark 5v42, 16v8, Luke 5v26 and Acts 3v10. God even spoke to the sorcerer Balaam in a trance. Numb 24v4,16. "Ekstasis," speaks of an elevated consciousness during which God suspends ordinary perceptions and the awareness of natural surroundings, and the person is only conscious of the vision imparted by God. On rare occasions children of God have become quite unconscious to their surroundings, and have been transported out of the natural world to behold the supernatural and spiritual. Paul said that on one occasion, when he was having visions of heaven, he did not know if he was in or out of the body. 2Cor 12v1-4. This does not mean, of course, that the intellectual powers of Paul were suspended, they were enlightened and carried to the greater heights of spiritual revelation. This is in direct contrast to the experience of mediums, who completely lose consciousness when they go into a trance. Raphael Gasson, in his book, "The Challenging Counterfeit;" tells us from his own pre-Christian experience as a medium, that he lost consciousness when he went into a trance, and had to be told what had taken place during a séance.

The Lord Jesus had said to the Apostles at the Last Supper in John 16v12-14 (with 1Cor 3v1-4):

"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 shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

It was therefore because of the Apostles' carnality and spiritual blindness, (due to having lived a life of imbibing the unscriptural false traditions of the Sadducees, Scribes and Pharisees), that the Lord Jesus was not able to teach them (either during the whole three and a half years of His ministry, or the discourses that He gave to them on His last night with them. He could not tell them the most important Truth; that the New Covenant (that He was then making with them, through the breaking and eating of the bread, and drinking of the wine), which He would purchase by the shedding of His own blood, and His descent into the Abyss, was not only for the Jews, but for every individual of every nation. And so, because of this, one of the Holy Spirit's functions, being, to the Apostles (and indeed to every child of God), when He came on the day of Pentecost, was to reveal vital Truth to the believer. And this is just what God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, were doing, they were dealing with Peter's (and indeed the whole (Jewish) Church at that time) sectarianism and bigotry towards the Gentiles. Matt 16v6, 26v26-30 (esp. v28, "For this is My blood of the new covenant, **which is shed for many** for the remission of sins."), 2Pet 3v9.

The emphasis within the communication of the Lord to Peter in the "trance" is actually missed in our English translations; Acts 10v13-15 reads the following: "And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

In the Greek, there is a strong emphasis on the word "thou" in Acts 10v15 ("make not **thou** common" is in Greek, "sú meé koinou"), we should note the emphatic position of "su" (Strong's NT:4771), "thou." "Do **THOU** stop making common what God cleansed," "Greek "ekatharisen" (Strong's NT:2511). The idiom of Greek, "mee" (Strong's NT:3361) with the present active imperative Greek, "koinou" (Strong's NT:2840) means precisely this. Peter had just called "common" what God had invited him to kill and eat.

This whole event, of the sheet (containing all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air) being let down from Heaven to Peter, and the command from the Lord for Peter to eat, and his refusal to do so, was done three times. Peter knew (full well) it was His Lord who was speaking to him and giving him a command to eat, but yet on the three occasions he was told to eat, he point blankly refused, and this really highlights to us, just how deeply ingrained the unscriptural traditions of the Sadducees, Scribes and Pharisees were rooted in Peter's (and indeed the whole of the Jewish nation, Christians included) mind, soul and being, chaining him (and the whole Jewish nation) with sectarian bigotry. This was not the first time that Peter had been told some great Truth by His Lord, and then blatantly refusing to accept that Truth.

Another instance of this wilful refusal to accept Truth for the lips of the Lord Jesus is given in Matt 16v21-27, which states the following:

"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. 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? 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."

Peter thought he knew better than His Lord, and taking Him aside began to rebuke Him and (supposedly) set Him right on this issue, however, we see in the reply of Jesus, just who was behind the words that Peter spoke, none other than the Devil, who was using Peter's fear of death and also (once again) the unscriptural traditions of the Sadducees, Scribes and Pharisees (whose teaching was that the Messiah would come in great glory and power and deliver Israel from the yoke of the Romans, and restore the kingdom to Israel), to try and turn the Lord Jesus out of the path that led to the Cross!

Immediately before this event, in Matt 16v13-20, Peter had been given a great revelation from God the Father, as to the identity of Whom the Son of Man was, that He was none other than the long promised Messiah. The Lord Jesus had called Peter "blessed" upon receiving this revelation from His Father, and it was this event and the words from the Lord Jesus, that made Peter think more highly of himself than he should have, and give him a wrong estimation of himself, in that he thought he knew better than His Lord as regards to important doctrinal truth. We need to make sure that we receive Truth and Revelation from God with humility of mind, and not get puffed up! As in all things the Lord Jesus is our example in this, He whose mind was filled with Truth, and indeed Who is The Truth, was also meek and lowly in heart and mind. Matt 11v28-30, John 1v14, 14v16.

Even though the vision had been repeated three times, to drive home to Peter the great Truth that was being conveyed to him through it, Peter still was completely ignorant as to the meaning of it, for Acts 10v17 states, "Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean..."

"Doubted" is in Greek, "dieepórei," the imperfect active indicative of "diaporeo" (Strong's NT:1280), and means to be thoroughly nonplussed, (be in) doubt, be (much) perplexed, to be entirely at a loss.

We get another fascinating insight here, into just how great a darkness had been created in Peter's mind through the unscriptural traditions of the Sadducees, Scribes and Pharisees, Peter was completely puzzled as to the meaning of the vision. Very often a vision can be given to a person, and the meaning is completely hidden from them, and it is only through real prolonged earnest seeking of God that the meaning is revealed to them by the Holy Spirit. This was how the Prophets of the Old Testament obtained the revelation and meaning of the visions that God had given them. In 1Pet 1v10-12, three very strong Greek words are used for the process by which the Old Testament Prophets earnestly sought God, for illumination on the meaning of the visions imparted to them by God:

"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.

"Have inquired" is in Greek, "exezeéteesan", the first aorist active indicative of "ekzeteo" (Strong's NT:1567), and means, to search out, i.e. (figuratively) investigate, enquire, seek after (carefully, diligently), to exert considerable effort and care in learning something - 'to make a careful search, to seek diligently to learn, to make an examination.'

"Searched diligently" in Greek is, "exeeraúneesan," the first aorist active indicative of "exeraunao" (NT:1830), which means, to explore, search diligently, to search anxiously and diligently.

"Searching" in Greek is "eraunoóntes" the present active participle of "eraunao" (Strong's NT:2045), meaning, to search, examine.

The two verbs ("exezeéteesan" and "exeeraúneesan") taken together give emphatic expression to the earnestness with which enlightenment was sought!

Dan 7v15,28 reads the following: "I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. Hitherto is the end of the matter....As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart."

Daniel (one of the greatest Old Testament Prophets) was completely mystified as to what the vision meant, and thus earnestly sought the Lord for illumination as to the meaning of it.

And so, Peter, between the end of the "ekstasis" and actually meeting Cornelius (which was a time period of 2 days), he sought the Lord earnestly in prayer (he followed the example of the Old Testament Prophets) until he got the full meaning of the Truth the vision was conveying to him. His task, of discovering the meaning of the vision, was also made easier by the circumstances, that being the timely arrival of the three men that Cornelius had sent to find him, and their account of the angelic visitation that Cornelius had experienced. Acts 10v17-23, 1Pet 1v10-12.

Peter, having lodged the three men who came from Cornelius, then set out the next day, with six of the brethren (Jewish Christians), arriving at the house of Cornelius the following day, making a total of four days from when Cornelius had originally seen the vision of the angel, until Peter actually met him. When Peter entered Cornelius's house, he found it packed with his relatives and close friends; we have here another insight into Cornelius's wonderful walk of faith. Such was his godly example that his whole family and many of his friends had also become to believe in the Living God. They saw in him a beautiful Christ like character, and recognised the genuineness of his living faith through his very generous alms giving and great needs being met, with "mountains" being completely removed through his wonderful prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) life, he was a real bright shining light for God. The knowledge of his great walk of faith had spread far and wide. Matt 5v14-16, Acts 10v22,24,27.

Cornelius then gives the account of the vision he had of the angel, and finished with the words in Acts 10v33, "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things **that are commanded thee** (Greek, "prostetagnéna soi" the perfect passive participle of "prostasso" (Strong's NT:4367), with the dative case "soi;" Cornelius being a military man employs a military term, "prostasso," meaning "to command") of God." Peter had received a definite command from God, to preach the Gospel to Cornelius, his family, household and friends, and thus to **ALL** the nations from that time forth, when the words of the Lord in Acts 1v8 would at long last begin to see complete fulfilment.

The full meaning of the Lord's last words (before His Ascension into Heaven) to Peter (and the rest the Apostles) in Acts 1v8, are now (after having been spoken eleven years before) beginning to fully dawn upon his mind and spirit, and thus the full meaning of the "ekstasis" that he had on the roof top of Simon the tanner's house, for he speaks the following words in Acts 10v34,35:

"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.**"

However, it is quite apparent that the six brethren that came with Peter, still were in complete darkness (and still thought that God **DID** show partiality to the Jews) as to God's plans and purposes for the Gentiles, for we read in Acts 10v45,46: "And they of the circumcision which believed **were astonished**, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God...." "Were astonished" is in Greek, "exésteesan," the second aorist active indicative, intransitive of "existemi" (strong NT:1839), and means "they stood out of themselves," to be amazed, thrown into wonderment.

Many Christians today think (because it is what they have been taught by their Pastors and Teachers) that if a person does not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they are bound for Hell and are completely unacceptable to God....But this is certainly **NOT** the case, because Peter clearly states the following (Acts 10v34,35): "...God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

And this is in complete harmony with Paul's teaching in Rom 2v1-16, in which he deals with "The Judgement By God Of The Gentiles." Paul clearly states in Rom 2v6-11,16 the following:

"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.... In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."

Other persons who have been fully accepted by the Lord (and indeed who are noted for their wonderful examples of a living faith in the Living God), and who were **NOT** belonging to the Old or New Testament Churches, are Abel, Enoch,

Noah, Job, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Joseph, the Ninevites (after their repentance), Lydia etc. Job 1v1,8, Jonah 3v10, Matt 12v41, Acts 16v14, Heb 11v1-22.

Peter then proceeds to preach the Gospel to Cornelius and those persons who were in his house, he states that Christ is, "Lord of all" i.e. Lord of both Jew and Gentile, another indication that the Truth about God's plan for the Gentiles was now starting to permeate into his mind and understanding!

A brief overview of Acts 10v38:

"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him."

In Acts 10v34-43, when Peter preached to Cornelius and his friends, he stated in Acts 10v38, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed of the Devil, for God was with Him." We see: **"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power."**

"Anointed," is "echrisen," the first aorist active of "chrio," "to anoint;" from which "Christos" is derived; Jesus was the Messiah, the promised "anointed one" of the prophecies. Acts 2v6, Isaiah 11v1-5. Jesus received this anointing for ministry at Jordan, when the Holy Spirit came upon Him. Matt 3v16,17, John 3v34, Luke 3v21,22, 4v1,2,14, Heb 1v8,9.

"Who went about doing good," "Hos dielthen euergeton"

"Dielthen," is the aorist active of "dierchomai," "to go through, or pass through, to go about from place to place." The travelling that our Lord did was truly amazing, and the pressure that this put upon Him was absolutely enormous. "Euergeton" is the present active participle of "euergeteo," "to do well, to do good;" it is from "eu," "well," and "ergon," "work." The substantive "euergetes," which means "benefactor," (see Luke 22v25), was used as a title of Ptolemy, "Ptolemy Euergetes," and it was used by other Hellenistic kings. The Lord Jesus was the only one who really deserved this title, it beautifully describes His totally sacrificial ministry. Christians, who have a ministry of healing to those who are oppressed by Satan, are doing good.

"And healing all who were oppressed by the Devil"

Vincent says, "The 'and,' 'kai,' has a particularising force: doing good, 'and in particular,' healing." Robertson says, "And healing (kai iomenos). And in particular healing." The main emphasis of our Lord's ministry was healing. The Lord Jesus healed, "all who were being oppressed;" "pantas tous katadunasteuomenous:" the present passive participle of "katadunasteuo," "to exercise power against someone, to oppress, to exploit, to dominate someone."

Satan uses his powers to dominate and oppress mankind with sickness and numerous other ills. 2Tim 2v26. Satan is the evil potentate, "dunastes," who dominated a dominion of death until Jesus destroyed Satan's power by His death on the cross. Heb 2v14. "Katadunasteuo" only occurs here and James 2v6, where it is used in the present active indicative of the rich oppressing the poor.

"For God was with Him" "Hoti ho theos en met autou." These words are used in John 3v2, by Nicodemus of the Lord Jesus; and by Gabriel of Mary, and of John Baptist in Luke 1v28,66, and of Joseph in Acts 7v9. This Scripture shows that Jesus did His miracles by the Holy Spirit's anointing, and not by His own power. Isaiah 11v1-15, 61v1 with Luke 4v18, John 5v18,19,30.

Peter uses "oppressed" to cover all of Satan's activities against mankind (it includes possession and all kinds of external "energising" by evil power, sickness, and his ruthless domination of mankind).

It has become common practice for Christians to use Peter's word "oppressed," in Acts 10v38, to speak of the attack of evil spirits from outside the body; however, Peter uses "oppressed" to speak of all of Satan's evil activities against mankind. The ministry of Jesus delivered all who were being oppressed by Satan, as John states; "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the Devil." Hallelujah! 1John 3v8.

Satan's attempts to corrupt, afflict, and cause pain to God's Creation

The Scriptures inform us that evil angels have the power and ability to create human and animal bodies. Exodus 7v8-13,22, 8v7, Gen 6v4, Jude v6. In Luke 10v19, Jesus links creatures, like snakes and scorpions, which cause pain and death, with the power of the enemy. Is our Lord saying that Satan has created some of these harmful animals? Satan is also called by the name "Beelzebub," "the lord of flies," or "lord of dung and filth;" one could easily believe that mosquitoes, which cause so much sickness and death, are a creation of the Evil One. Our Lord and His Church

rebuked sickness and disease in the same way that they rebuked demons, and they are certainly looked upon as enemies of the desire and will of God. Jesus indicates that many of the evil things in creation have been created by the malignant minds of evil angels. One cannot believe that a good God has created viruses, which cause (for example) the likes of German Measles (Rubella (Rubella virus)), which can cause deafness, heart defects, and mental retardation; and many other hurtful things, that cause pain and death to mankind. Some bacteria have a useful and essential function in nature, like those that take part in the nitrogen cycle; but others can be very definitely called evil, because of the great suffering they inflict upon the human race. It is quite conceivable that evil spirits, who delight in sadism, would desire to create evil things to cause mankind suffering and death, they certainly have both the desire and ability to do so. Heb 2v14.

Paul states in Rom 8v19-23, that the whole creation has been groaning in pain, and that it has been subject to "unreality." The word for "unreality," is "mataioteti," which means, aimlessness, futility, vanity, the inability to reach a goal, or achieve results. Eph 4v17, 2Pet 2v18. We see in Isaiah 11v5-9, that when Jesus returns the violence will go out of the creation; the wolf will lie down with the lamb, and the lion will eat straw like an ox, and the effect of God's blessing and presence will be health and blessing forever. Isaiah 65v17-25, Rev 21v1-8, 22v1-7.

The importance of having a correct terminology and genuine revelation gifts

If we use Paul's descriptions of the attacks of Satan and his angels upon us; and define them as "fiery darts" and "energising;" we shall have a greater precision in our terminology about spiritual realities, and this will aid us in our spiritual warfare, and save us from wrong diagnosis in spiritual matters. We need both a correct theology on spiritual warfare, and a genuine operation of the revelation gifts of the Holy Spirit, if we are to accurately discern those who are really possessed by evil spirits, from those who are being attacked by demons that are outside of them. Eph 2v1-10, 6v10-20.

As we can see from these verses (Acts 10v34-43), Peter gives his listeners the basic Truth of the Gospel, and it is during this very short time that they are "born again" and then immediately after their new birth (for a person must be "born again" first, before they can receive the Holy Spirit), the Lord Jesus baptises them (to the great amazement of the six (Jewish) brethren who came with Peter) in the Holy Spirit. Peter and the six Jewish brethren knew that Cornelius, his family and friends, had been "born again" and baptised with the Holy Spirit, **because** they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. They had received the same gift (of tongues) as the one hundred and twenty had received on the Day of Pentecost (Friday, 26th May 30 AD), when they received the promise of God the Father (being baptised in the Holy Spirit). Cornelius, his family and friends had the Holy Spirit "with" them, before they were "born again" but when they became Christians, and were baptised in the Holy Spirit, He Who was with them, then entered them, filling the Temple of the Living God, which is their body (soul and spirit). John 3v1-21, 7v37-39, 14v15-18, Acts 1v4-8, 2v1-47, 10v44-48, 11v17, 1Cor 6v19, 2Cor 6v16.

The Apostles (including the rest of the one hundred and twenty in the Upper Room) had been with the Lord Jesus for well over three years, having had close intimate fellowship and teaching from Him, then a period of forty days of His post resurrection ministry, and finally eight days (the Ascension of the Lord Jesus, having taken place on Thursday, 18th May 30 AD) in the Upper Room of seeking God in prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and supplication (Greek, "deesis" (Strong's NT:1162) in one accord (Greek, "homothumadon" (Strong's NT:3661)). This was the least amount of preparation that they ALL required, so that their heart, minds, souls and spirits were ready to receive the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, on the Day of Pentecost. This was in great contrast to Cornelius, his family, household and friends, who had never met the Lord Jesus (in the flesh), nor had the close intimate fellowship and teaching, or the forty days post resurrection ministry that the Apostles and the rest of the one hundred and twenty had enjoyed. This also is another wonderful insight into just how sanctified and godly Cornelius and those gathered in his house, to hear the Truth from Peter's lips, were, in that they were "born again" as soon as they heard the Gospel, and then immediately afterwards, they were baptised in the Holy Spirit. This is in tremendous contrast to the preparation that the Apostles and the rest of the one hundred and twenty required to receive the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. To say that God made His criteria lower (i.e. the spiritual condition of each individual), so that He could baptise Cornelius and those gathered in his house with the Holy Spirit, simply to demonstrate to Peter and the six brethren, that Gentiles were "acceptable" to Him as well as the Jews, is completely false. The fact of the matter is, that if Cornelius et al, had not been sanctified and spiritually prepared to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, God would **NOT** have done so, because their in absolutely **NO** partiality with God.

With this being the case, we need to ask ourselves, what made the difference between the length of time it took to prepare the Apostles and the rest of the one hundred and twenty and Cornelius and those gathered in his house? Well, it is quite simply this, the minds of the Apostles and the one hundred and twenty had been filled with such great darkness, because of the unscriptural traditions of the Sadducees, Scribes and Pharisees that they had imbibed during their lifetime up until the time they had met and believed in the Lord Jesus. And so, because their minds were reprobate on so many important spiritual Truths, it took such a long time to prepare them and get their hearts and minds into a correct spiritual state to receive the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus really had a very difficult time in

reversing the terrible effects upon His disciples' minds and spirits from the leaven of the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees that they had imbibed. We get a real glimpse of the darkness they were still in at the time of the Ascension of the Lord Jesus into heaven; Acts 1v4-8, states:

"And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. **For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.** When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, **Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?** And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and **ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.**"

The most important Truths regarding the Church, the New Covenant and everything pertaining to it, were still completely veiled to the minds and spirits of the Apostles (because of the great darkness still upon their minds). It is also necessary to understand that of all the many victories that the Lord Jesus won at Nazareth (during the thirty hidden years of His preparation), the one that is most outstanding and glorious is that which He won over the false unscriptural traditions of the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees...absolutely amazing! In a place of great moral and spiritual depravity (Nazareth), His Father taught Him day by day spiritual Truths (from the Scriptures) and important lessons that can only be learned from the experiences of life (so that He would be a perfect Saviour and High Priest for His people, being able to sympathise fully with them, Heb 2v10,17,18, 4v15), so that by the age of thirty His heart was filled with Grace and His mind with Truth. The written Word (of the Scriptures) had taken possession of His soul, mind and being, transforming the Babe of Bethlehem into the Christ of God, so that He could say to the Devil during His Temptation in the Wilderness that, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," (which Christ had done at Nazareth for 30 years, and would continue to do, right up until the His crucifixion). During the thirty years at Nazareth, the Lord Jesus, saw His past, present and future clearly laid out in the Scriptures, which He Himself had given to the Old Testament prophets. Exodus 3v1-15, Deut 8v3, Isaiah 49v1-13, 50v3-8, Matt 4v4,15,16, John 1v14,46,47, 8v58, Heb 11v26.

Another important fact worth noting is that many of the Lord's people today (and indeed since His Ascension), are no different than the Apostles, and the rest of the one hundred and twenty, for the Lord still has to deal with so much darkness in their minds and spirits (because of the unscriptural traditions that has filled them) before He can baptise them in the Holy Spirit and bring them onto perfection (of their faith and character), and indeed, far from "going onto maturity," many believers remain as "non speaking babes and sucklings" for the whole of their Christian life, which is a great tragedy! Matt 15v1-20, Luke 11v52, Eph 4v7-16, Heb 5v5-6v8.

With Cornelius and those with him in his house, being baptised in the Holy Spirit, Peter then makes the following statement (Acts 10v47): "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

This was levelled at the six Jewish brethren who came with him, who were at this point, bowled over completely with utter amazement at the fact that the Lord Jesus had baptised "these Gentiles" in the Holy Spirit, giving them the "same gift" as the one hundred and twenty had received on the Day of Pentecost (the lovely gift of tongues). With no reply coming from them, Peter then commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord, which is a reference to "baptism in water" (which is one of the first principles of the oracles of God listed in Hebrews 5v12-6v8 (esp. Heb 6v1,2, "Baptisms" (plural) which is a reference to "Baptism in Water" and "Baptism in the Holy Spirit")). The Holy Spirit is the agent of regeneration, "baptism in water" is the outward sign and ordinance of regeneration. Acts 2v38,39, Titus 3v5, 1Pet 3v18-22. **(Please see Appendix N: Baptism in Water)**

The news that Peter had preached the Gospel to the Gentiles (Cornelius et al) had reached Jerusalem by the time he had returned there, and as soon as Peter got there, "they that were of the circumcision contended with him." Acts 11v2. "They that were of the circumcision" in Greek is "hoi ek peritomeés" and means literally, "those of circumcision" (on the side of circumcision, of the circumcision party), and refers to the Judaizers within the Church, who furiously held that the individual (male) had to be circumcised and that all had to keep the Law of Moses to be saved. Acts 15v5. These are those of the sect of the Pharisees which "believed", and certainly NOT a reference to Jewish Christians in general. Note: In Acts 15v5, it says, "certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed," these people were still Pharisaic in word, thought and deed, and there had been no change of heart or mind, but only a mere lip service to Christ. Their minds were still filled with their unscriptural (oral) traditions, which meant that they were still filled with lawlessness and uncleanness, and the words of the Lord Jesus, "ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones" still held true for these evil persons. Matt 23v1-39.

The Judaizers blindly refused to see that Christ had fulfilled the Law with its types and prophecies, so the type was no longer necessary; they had Christ the living fulfilment of the type, not the shadow. Heb 8v1-13, 9v15,23,24, 10v8,9.

They caused great havoc within the whole Church, from this time (41 AD) onwards, right up until Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD by Titus. Acts 15v5, Gal 2v12. This is the first reference to this group of persons within the Church at Jerusalem, Paul says of them in 2Cor 11v13-15:

"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."

The people within this sect in the Church were under the control of the Devil, and were the tools which he was using to try and destroy the beautiful liberty, love, unity, and fellowship of Christ's Church, and bring them back under "law" again, into legalism and bondage. They would have fallen from Grace and been estranged from Christ, and the Presence and Power of God would have departed from the Church. If this had succeeded, the Church would just have become another "sect" within Judaism. Gal 5v1-6.

An important question to ask is; "why did the twelve apostles of the church at Jerusalem allow these persons to gain such authority, standing and foothold in the church?" After all it was the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees whom the Devil had used to crucify the Lord Jesus, and also who had persecuted the young church at Jerusalem so ruthlessly, immediately after the Ascension of the Lord Jesus, and the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. John.11v57, Acts 4v1-21, 5v17-42.

There are two reasons for the apostle's failure to deal with the great threat from the (supposedly converted) Sadducees and Pharisees who had infiltrated the church at Jerusalem:

NB The apostle's minds were still in darkness regarding all the Truth pertaining to the Church and the New Covenant, and those things associated with it (God's plan for the Gentiles etc). The Lord Jesus had said to them at the Last Supper, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." **John 16v12**. Jesus had also said of the twelve apostles in Matt 11v25, that they were spiritual "babes" (Greek, "neepíois," from "nepios" (Strong's NT:3516), which means literally, "without the power of speech," and refers to a little child or infant, immaturity is always associated with this word. When Peter wrote his second epistle in 68 AD, just before his death, he wrote in 2Pet 3v15,16: **"even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood,** which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

So we see that even in the closing months of Peter's life, he still did **NOT** have a full understanding of some of the vital truths that Paul taught, and still found some things difficult to understand. This was even **AFTER** all the Christians had heeded Christ's warning and departed from Jerusalem to Pella in Decapolis. This was before Vespasian and his son Titus surrounded and besieged Jerusalem, and fulfilled the prophecy that the Lord Jesus had spoken on Sunday, 2nd April 30 AD. The prophecy of Luke 19v41-44. was being fulfilled before their very eyes!

If this was the condition of Peter, who was, along with John, the most spiritually minded and "open" to the Truth, we can really see how entrenched the other ten apostles must have been by the end of their lives. And indeed we get a striking picture of the terrible blindness of the apostle James (the Lord's half brother) in Acts 22v18-27, who along with the elders of the Jerusalem church, suggested that Paul should undertake a Nazarite vow. This involved the sacrifice of burnt offerings, sin offerings and peace offerings, as well as a basket of unleavened cakes and a libation of wine. Num 6v1-21. While it is true that God had ordained the ceremonies of the Law, and the Jews had practised them in God's will for fifteen centuries, and the apostles had used the Temple for a period, Luke 24v53, Acts 3v1, there can be no doubt that the Old Covenant had passed away when Christ came and died. John 1v17, Matt 11v11-14, Heb 8v7-13, 10v1-9.

It is almost unbelievable to see Paul, the chief exponent of justification by faith, not only standing in the Temple and submitting himself to the Law, but also to the petty ceremonial additions of the Rabbis, and all this was **AFTER** God had told Paul **NOT** to go to Jerusalem. This disobedience of Paul brought about tragic results. Acts 20v22,23, 21v4,11-14. Why did Paul disobey the Lord and go to Jerusalem? **Paul's love for his people drove him to Jerusalem; he was willing to be accursed from Christ, if it could only have saved them.** Rom 9v1-5. It is very sad that the apostles and elders of the church at Jerusalem were the means of bringing the prophetic warnings to pass. They should have defended Paul's teaching of the New Covenant, but their appeal was based on an unscriptural expediency, and it nearly cost Paul his life. It all shows how difficult it is to break free of our (unscriptural manmade) traditions, and how the fear of man (which is the second reason why the apostles did not deal with the Sadducees and Pharisees in the church at Jerusalem) can hinder and harm the church of God. If we are not careful we can be as presumptions and disobedient as the Israelites, who disobeyed God's command to Moses that nothing was to be added or taken away from the pattern that He had given, Heb 8v5, they ignored this command and added thousands of their own traditions and rules and so made the Word of God of none effect. In the end they persuaded themselves

that their tradition was God's truth and rejected Christ in favour of their own tradition and murdered their Messiah. Matt 15v1-20, Luke 11v52.

This was the Devil's third (and most devastating to date) planned attack against the Church at Jerusalem, the first being that of the incident involving Ananias and Sapphira and the second was the great persecution that occurred after the stoning of Stephen, which lasted up until just after Paul left Jerusalem and went to Tarsus in 37 AD. When the Devil was not able to destroy the Church at Jerusalem through lust for money and great persecution, he then used the Pharisees (including the Scribes) and Sadducees (the majority of the "priests" mentioned in Acts 6v7 would have been Sadducees) in an attempt to try and bring destructive heresy into it. Acts 5v1-11, 6v1, 8v1, 9v31, Eph 6v10-20.

In the letters to the seven Churches in the book of Revelation, Jesus reveals the people and means by which Satan attacks these churches, and these "means" are still used by the Devil today. (Rev 2 & 3).

False Religion. This, rather than atheism, is Satan's objective, for by this means he can deceive more people, and his real aim is worship of himself. False religion is seen in the following ways in these churches.

Synagogue. Rev 2v9. Even the order laid down by God can become the instrument of Satan, if only the outward form is carried out, and truth and Christ are rejected in favour of man-made tradition. The Temple of God at Jerusalem became a den of thieves instead of the house of prayer for all nations, and Israel's religious leaders rejected and crucified their Christ. Many Churches today have a "form" (Greek, "mórfoosin" from "mórfosis" (Strong's NT:3446), which means "an outward form without any inner essential reality," 2Tim 3v5) of godliness, but denying its power. The persons in these Churches have filled their minds with the unscriptural traditions of men (which have been taught to them by their pastor teachers), which shuts out Truth completely from their beings, thus bringing great darkness upon them. Neither do they have any inner communion with the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus is firmly shut out of these Churches, the leaders of which seek only the glory and honour of men, and not that which comes from God alone. John 5v44, Rom 2v17-24.

Paganism. Rev 2v20. The gods of the heathen are really demons, or Satan, who desires to be like God and be worshipped, he is the god of this degenerate world. 1Cor 10v19-21, 2Tim 3v7,8, 2Cor 4v4, 2Thess 2v7,8, Rev 13.

False Doctrine. John 8v44. Satan had infiltrated several of the seven churches with deadly false doctrines that included immorality and idolatry. Sensuous evil teaching such as this was part of the teaching of the Nicolaitanes, Baalamites, and the followers of Jezebel, and this kind of lawless Antinomianism has been a bane of the Church throughout its history. The voice of God repeats again and again, "Be ye holy, as I am holy." 1Pet 1v15,16, Rev 3v7, 4v8, 15v4, 6v10, 22v11.

Martyrdom. Rev 2v10. What Satan cannot win by seduction he tries to destroy by persecution, he has often used those who have unscriptural traditions, or practice false religion, or have political power, to persecute God's dear children.

Worldly Interests. Rev 3v14-22. Satan once offered Christ the world in exchange for His cross and he still comes with the same offer to the brethren of Jesus. The church at Laodicea had succumbed to this temptation, and many others who resist Satan in other ways often fall prey to prosperity. We are urged to keep ourselves from the idols of the world and all worldliness. 1Tim 6v17-19, 1John 2v15-17, 4v4,5, 5v4. A struggle for power in the church is one of the most dangerous and sinful of the worldly attitudes that can attack the church, this sin cost Satan his place in Heaven, this struggle for power is sometimes disguised by a false claim to divine illumination and prophetic authority, we judge all such claims in the light of the Scriptures. God reveals the truth about the activities of seducing spirits to spiritually minded Christians. 1Cor 14v29, 1Thes 5v19-21. Godly spiritual elders can guide the flock of God out of spiritual danger and deliver the flock from ambitious persons. Heb 13v7,8,17, 1Tim 3v1-13, Titus 1v5-16.

An attack on their personal communion with God and their love for God. Rev 2v1-7. Our Lord's rebuke to Ephesus was absolutely necessary, for if a church is lacking in prayer and communion with God, it is totally defeated. If Satan can defeat us here, he has defeated us everywhere. A church can have a reputation for evangelism and spirituality, that is quite false, its inner communion with God can be almost non-existent, like Sardis it can be said of it, "thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead." Prolonged earnest seeking of God is essential, if we are to preserve the spiritual effectiveness of a church.

Satan's Throne. Rev 2v13. Satan follows God's pattern and puts angels in charge of the nations. Dan 10v13,20,21. It could be that Satan made himself personally responsible for Pergamos, but it could refer to the Caesar worship that was practised at Pergamos, Satan was certainly the power behind Caesar's throne. Rev 12v3,9, 17v10.

The Judaizers confronted Peter with the following accusation, Acts 11v3: "Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them."

Here we see very clearly just how "Pharisaic" in thinking these Judaizers were, this was the same kind of accusation that the Lord Jesus often had flung at Him from the Scribes and Pharisees. Matt 15v2, Luke 11v38. However, to deal with this (false) accusation, Peter then recounts the whole affair regarding the conversion of Cornelius, his family and friends to them. In Acts 11v16-18, Peter states the following:

"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. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

As the Holy Spirit fell upon **ALL** those in the house of Cornelius, the very last words that the Lord Jesus had spoken to Peter (and the rest of the apostles) immediately before His Ascension, were brought into Peter's mind by the Holy Spirit, Acts 1v5-8:

"And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but **ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.** When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. **But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."**

Peter had already "witnessed" in Jerusalem, Judea and (only after great persecution) Samaria, however it was only **NOW** that he began to see the light (and Truth) regarding "unto the uttermost part of the earth," as these born again, Holy Spirit filled Gentiles were speaking in tongues and magnifying God. We can only imagine how Peter must have felt now, after having lived the whole of his life, up to that time, thinking that the Gentiles were common and unclean, and only fit to be fuel for the fires of Hell! What a great blast of light must have penetrated the darkness in his mind on this most important subject, and this major turning point in world evangelism for the Church was brought about by the prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) of a godly Gentile called Cornelius and **NOT** by the twelve Apostles!

(This episode with Cornelius really highlights how the minds of the twelve Apostles had been completely darkened through imbibing the unscriptural traditions that had been handed down to them by their spiritual teachers, the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees. Because of the brainwashing by Israel's religious leaders, it took the apostles a long time to grasp and comprehend God's plans and purposes for the Gentiles, and many other important doctrines as well. The Lord Jesus had warned them on more than one occasion to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, Sadducees and Herod, however they did not listen to these warnings, but thought they knew better. Christians down through the centuries, since the Lord Jesus' Ascension, have also failed to listen to these warnings from the lips of the Lord Jesus, for today, the Church is full of "leaven" (even as Jesus said it would be), and it can be difficult to find Truth in it. It is VITAL, as the dark evil days of the Great Tribulation rapidly approach, that Christians seek to fill their minds with truth, even as the Jews at Berea did, and we know from Rev 12v1 that indeed many Christians around the world will indeed do this! Matt 16v6, Mark 8v15, Luke 13v20,21, Acts 17v10-12, 1Pet 1v18.)

To drive the point fully home to the Judaizers, Peter states: "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; **what was I, that I could withstand God?"**

"What was I, that I could withstand God?" in Greek is, "egoó tís eémeen dunatós koolúsai tón Theón." Note the order, "I, who was I," (egoó tís eémeen). "That I could withstand God," (dunatós koolúsai tón Theón), literally, "able to withstand or hinder God." It is a rhetorical question, really two questions. "Who was I? Was I able to hinder God?" Peter's statement of the facts made an unanswerable defence. Peter said much the same thing to the Judaizers in Acts 15v7-11, especially pertinent is v10, where he states, "Now therefore why tempt ye God...."

In Acts 15, Peter stands up and repeats how God directed him to preach the Gospel to Cornelius and his friends (about ten to twelve years before), all of whom were Gentiles. Peter then asks the telling question, "Why tempt ye God?" that is, how could they accuse God of making a mistake, or refuse to follow His guidance as the Israelites had done at Massah and Meribah. Exodus 17v7, Deut 6v16, 1Cor 10v9. Peter then says that the Christian Gentiles should not be compelled to carry a yoke, which they as Jews had never been able to bear. Matt 11v30, 23v4. Peter finishes by saying that salvation is by faith in Christ not in ceremony or ritual, and it is fitting that the last words of Peter in Acts are for forgiveness and liberty in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is, however, a great pity, that the directions that were given by the God, the Holy Spirit, the apostles, elders and church at Jerusalem, to the Gentiles believers (Acts 15v22-29), were not fully embraced by all the Jewish Christians. For if this had been the case, the terrible disaster of Paul

getting arrested (and almost killed) in the Temple at Jerusalem in 58 AD would not have occurred, and neither would have the disastrous consequences that followed after that in the Gentile churches (because with Paul being out of circulation, he was not able to guard and protect them), which was the rise of Docetic and Cerinthian Gnosticism. In 58 AD, all those in the church at Jerusalem (Jewish Christians, apostles, elders, etc.), to a great degree, still were bound by the unscriptural traditions of the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees, and desiring to please men rather than God! Acts 21v15-36 (esp., Acts 21v18,20,21,24,25).

If you shut God out of His Church with man-made structures and traditions you can't expect revival. Stephen said these man-made structures and traditions always resist the Holy Spirit and hinder revival. Acts 7v51-53.

When Peter had finished speaking the words, "what was I, that I could withstand God?" in Acts 11v17, the whole assembly (including the Judaizers) fell silent. ALL the persons that had been listening to Peter, when he had stopped speaking would have remembered the incident regarding Ananias and Sapphira, when through their covetous and lust for money almost destroyed the beautiful fervent love, unity and oneness of the church at Jerusalem, had God not stepped in and executed them. The two dead bodies of Ananias and Sapphira being carried out for burial, still haunted their minds and was a great deterrent against anyone attempting to destroy the unity and oneness of the church at Jerusalem again, which God was guarding and protecting. John 17v11,15,21,22,23, Acts 5v1-11, 1Cor 11v23-34.

There are many lessons to be learnt today from God's dealing with Cornelius, Peter, and the Church, as recorded in Acts 10v1-11v18, but the main ones are as follows:

- 1) Unscriptural tradition (that has been handed from our spiritual fathers and teachers) is a very real enemy of spiritual revival, as it shuts God firmly out of His Church, which He has purchased with His own blood. Acts 6v8 to 7v60.
- 2) The amazing extension of the Gospel through one person's prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)), in this case Cornelius, this changed the direction of the whole Church, worldwide. 1Kings 17v1-18,46 (esp. 18v39), James 5v17v18.
- 3) Sectarian bigotry shuts a person's mind and spirit to God's will and Truth, and completely hinders a Christian from going onto spiritual maturity. John 16v12, 1Cor 3v1-4, Heb 5v11-6v8.

May we, as Christians emulate, Cornelius's living faith and prayer life! ("proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)).

Praying, "proseuchómenoi," They Sang Hymns To God. (Acts 16v25)

We read in Acts 16v16-40, that when Paul and Silas went to Philippi, having been followed by a slave girl who had a "spirit of divination" (which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying, Deut 18v10-22, Isaiah 8v18-20), for many days, Paul getting very annoyed by this turned around, and cast the evil spirit (that was responsible for her possession) out of her, which resulted in her masters dragging Paul and Silas into the market place, to the authorities (because the girl would no longer be able to make them any money, having lost the ability to soothsay). They then proceeded to bring charges against both Paul and Silas about propagating "unlawful customs" amongst the people of Philippi, when the real reason of bringing Paul and Silas before the ruling authorities was simply because of the loss of money. The authorities then had their garments ripped off and beaten with rods, and then had them thrown into prison, with a charge to the jailor to keep them securely (which having received he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks).

Acts 16v23-25 states: "And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas **prayed, and sang praises unto God:** and the prisoners heard them."

Paul tells us that he was beaten by rods on three different occasions. 2Cor 11v25. However, Luke only records this incident. Paul and Silas, in excruciating pain through painful bruised and bleeding backs, were locked up in the inner prison with their feet securely fastened in wooden stocks. How did they react?

"They were praying and singing hymns to God," which in Greek is, "proseuchomenoi humnoun ton Theon." Literally, "praying, they sang hymns." "Proseuchomenoi humnoun," is the present participle (of "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) and imperfect active indicative (of "humneo" (Strong's NT:5214)): Praying they were singing, or singing they prayed. Their praying and the praise are not described as distinct acts. Their singing of hymns was their prayer, probably some Psalms, for "humnoun," is the very word that is used to describe the Paschal hymn sung by our Lord and His disciples after their last Passover. Matt 26v30. We know the Jews sang Psalms 113 to 118, at the Passover festival, and every devout Jew would certainly know them by heart. Like Job; Paul and Silas could say, "He

giveth songs in the night." Job 35v10. **This was powerful evangelism**, for the other prisoners heard them singing, and they were obviously amazed how people with bleeding backs, and tortured in the stocks, could make the prison resound with joyful song. The presence of their living God enabled them to joyfully sing, worship and pray even in their great suffering. Christians can have more true joy in tribulation and trials, than a worldly person can find in pleasure, prosperity and ease.

God answered their prayers in song with an earthquake, and released them from their chains. The jailor knew that this was an outstanding miracle, and he and his whole family accepted Jesus as their Saviour. Gospel singing and preaching that is confirmed by the acts and power of God, produces remarkable and lasting results. Rom 15v18-21.

In Mel Tari's, "Like A Mighty Wind," we read how the singing of sacred songs raised a man from the dead.

On pages 76 to 78 of "Like a Mighty Wind," (ISBN 0-89221-123-7) we read of a man, who had been dead for two days, being raised from the dead when Christians sang sacred songs around his corpse. God directed some Christians to stand around the dead body of the man, and sing hymns until he came back to life. The person had been dead for two days, and in the warm and humid atmosphere of Amfoang in Indonesia, the body had begun rapidly to decay, and it smelled so badly that the Christians found it difficult to stand around the body. However, they did as God commanded them, and after singing about six hymns the toes started to move on the dead body. After singing eight hymns, God raised the corpse to life, and the man sat up and was perfectly whole, and gave a forceful and eloquent testimony to his experience on the other side of death. He told of the reality of Heaven and Hell, and told people that only faith in Jesus could save them from going to Hell. Through his testimony and ministry, more than 21,000 people came to know Jesus as their Saviour in that area. Singing they prayed, and God answered their prayers in the most remarkable way. **God will do the same for us as well! Anointed singing is often the very best form of praying, and it can bring outstanding and mighty operations of the Holy Spirit, and a wave of Divine healing to the body of Christ.**

It is well known that the Welsh revival was birthed and sustained by God-anointed singing

It certainly was not due to the preaching, for preachers usually preached once in about six to nine months. They had the sense to get out of the way and let God the Holy Spirit work. Evan Roberts was hardly ever seen in the pulpit; he was crouched down behind the pulpit and was worshipping God in song with the congregation. The result of this worship and prayer in singing was a great revival that brought most of Wales in sincere repentance to God. There can be no doubt that singing hymns and sacred songs are often our very best way of praying, and it can bring genuine revival.

Thou Hidden Source of Calm Repose, (Charles Wesley, 1707-1788)

(Music: Warwick Gardens, T C Gregory)

1. Thou hidden source of calm repose,
Thou all-sufficient love divine,
My help and refuge from my foes,
Secure I am if thou art mine;
From sin and grief and shame
I hide me, Jesus, in thy name.
2. Thy mighty name salvation is,
And keeps my happy soul above,
Comfort it brings, and power and peace,
And joy and everlasting love;
To me with thy dear name are given
Pardon and holiness and heaven.
3. Jesus, my all in all thou art,
My rest in toil, my ease in pain,
The medicine of my broken heart,
In war my peace, in loss my gain,
My smile beneath the tyrant's frown,
In shame my glory and my crown.
4. In want my plentiful supply,
In weakness my almighty power,
In bonds my perfect liberty,

My light in Satan's darkest hour,
In grief my joy unspeakable,
My life in death, my heaven in hell.

Pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) And Not Faint. (Luke 17v20-18v8 (esp. 18v1) with Rev 8v2-6)

The parable that the Lord Jesus spoke to the Apostles in Luke 18v1-8, is connected with what He had just told them in Luke 17v20-37, which had arisen from a question asked by the Pharisees about when the Kingdom of God would appear. The vast majority of people look upon the following words in Luke 17v34-36: "I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left."

Some say that this is speaking of the Rapture, however, this is not the case. In Luke 17v31-37, Jesus warns us that Antichrist will send out his soldiers and secret police to seek out and murder those who have repented and turned to God in Jerusalem and Judea during the Great Tribulation (especially towards the end of it). The conversion of many thousands of people due to the remarkable happenings at that time (the resurrection of the Two Witnesses, the great earthquake etc. Rev 11v7-13), finally causes Antichrist to sack Jerusalem. Antichrist, Jerusalem's false ally, sends his armies to rend loot and burn Jerusalem with fire, as a punishment and warning. Rev 17v16,17, 18v2,14. Jesus tells us of this destruction of Jerusalem in Luke 17v37, and says that Jerusalem becomes like a carcass with the vultures of Antichrist's armies around it picking its bones.

Jesus said that the overall picture of the conditions in the world just prior to His coming will be as bad as they were in the days of Noah and Lot. Luke 17v26-31. The expulsion of evil angels from the heavenly places into the earth results in a great increase in wickedness, and a wilful ignorance of the promised judgement of God. Gen 6v1-13, 1Pet 3v19,20, Rev 12v7-12. The wicked despise the riches of God's goodness, forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God is trying to lead them to repentance and salvation. Rom 2v1-4,9, 2Pet 3v3-9, Jude v14-16. Many signs are now being fulfilled; they are a great warning to the Church that it is time to put on the armour of God, for no lukewarm Christian will stand in this evil day. Matt 24v12, Rom 13v11-14, Eph 6v10-20.

"As it was in the days of Noah." Luke 17v26

A major cause of lawlessness will be a greed, which results in escalating crime and violence on a world scale, just as in Noah's day, when every thought of men was only evil continually, and violence filled the whole earth. Gen 6v5-13. This moral degeneration was also caused by evil spirits infiltrating mankind by taking upon themselves fleshly bodies, which though outwardly similar to human bodies were basically different (genetically) from those of mankind. 1Pet 3v19,20, Jude v6. These were the "giants" of Scripture, these giants are called: The Nephilim, Gen 6v4, Numb 13v32,33. The Anakim, Deut 1v28, 2v10,11,21, 3v11,13, 9v2, Josh 11v21,22, 14v12-14. The Emims, Deut 2v10,11. The Zamzummins, Deut 2v19-21. The Rephaim, Deut 2v11,20, 3v11,13, Josh 12v4, 13v12, 15v8, 18v16, 2Sam 21v16,18,20,22, 1Chron 20v4,6,8. The valley of the giants, Josh 15v8, 18v16. etc. Goliath and his compatriots were evil angels in flesh, the sons of the giant. 2Sam 21v15-22. The children that were born to the giants did not have souls and spirits given to them by God, they became the abode of evil spirits, these products of Satan's biological engineering will not be resurrected, for in Isaiah 26v14, we read the "dead," who are "deceased" (Hebrew is "rephaim" (OT:7496) "giants") will not be resurrected by God. It is when Michael and his angels cast the Devil and his angels out of Heaven into the earth, and God's restraining hand is removed from the Devil and his evil hosts, that the Great Tribulation then ensues, with the result that these evil angels that have been cast down into the earth will again mingle with the seed of men, which will result in giants once again upon the earth. Dan 2v43, 2Thess 2v1-12, Rev 12v7-17.

It is of great importance to have the correct interpretation of the Typology of Noah and Lot. Some teach that Enoch, Elijah and Lot prove that the Church will be saved from the Great Tribulation. Our Lord clearly teaches the very opposite of this in Luke 17v26-30; the flood that destroyed the world and the fire that fell and consumed Sodom, are used as pictures, not of the tribulation, but of the day of the Lord that follows that great tribulation. Christ uses these Old Testament characters as illustrations of truth, not as types, they are used to illustrate known facts, not to produce supposed facts. Christ stresses in Luke 17v22-37, that the day the saints are raptured is the day of God's wrath on the wicked, "they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all...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." The day that shall burn as an oven is the day that the Son of righteousness shall rise with healing in His wings. Mal 4v1-3.

In Luke 18v1-8, Jesus informs us that persecuted Christians who are alive at this time (during the Great Tribulation) will pray that these evil people will be judged by God. It is also of great importance to understand and note, that the souls of the saints in heaven (who certainly cannot be out of the Spirit in the very Presence of God, (see Rev 6v9-11, the opening of the fifth seal)), who had been killed by Antichrist and his followers, and other evil people, cry to God for vengeance upon their murderers. These martyrs in Heaven are told to rest for a little while and wait until their fellow servants and brethren are also killed as they have been. Matt 24v9, Luke 21v16, Dan 11v32-35, Rev 12v11,17, 13v7, 17v6. These Christians overcome the terrible darkness of the last days and are faithful unto death, and pure in soul, for they are clothed with white garments. Rev 3v5, 16v15, 19v8. This vision proves that a great number of Christians will be martyred during the Great Tribulation. We need to remember that the key words for this time are "endure," "beware," and "watch and pray," for failure to pray through in these evil days will almost certainly result in backsliding or apostasy. Matt 10v17,22, Luke 21v36.

These Christian martyrs address God as "Ho Despotēs," which means one who exercises absolute authority, Lord, Master, Ruler; it is applied to God in Luke 2v29 and Acts 4v24, and to our Lord in 2Pet 2v1 and Jude v4. Though "Ho Despotēs," speaks of God being the ruler who has absolute power, there is no thought of tyranny here, for these martyrs also call God, "the holy and true," "ho hagios kai alethinos," that is, He rules with perfect dedicated love, and faultless truth and justice. The answer to the world's problems will never be found in human politics; it will only be found in the perfectly loving and selfless rule of the God of love. God's benevolent rule is infinitely superior to the rule of selfish and sinful men, whose desire to rule often springs out of a corrupt ambition for political, worldly and religious power and wealth.

The torture and murder of God's dear children produces tremendous anger in God, and He pours His judgement out on the wicked. Isaiah 42v13-17, 63v1-6, Rev 15 and 16. The souls that had been slain are spoken of as under the altar, because they had been slain for God's sake, their blood had been poured upon the altar and flowed down beneath it. Their blood will cry from the ground, like the blood of Abel, the first martyr. Gen 4v10, 9v4, Matt 23v35. The blood of the sacrificial animals was received by the Old Testament priests and poured out at the foot of the altar. Exodus 40v29, Lev 4v7, 8v15, Isaiah 29v1. The souls of the righteous receive white garments and rest in Paradise, but they are first seen under the altar, the place where righteousness, justice and the Law, as well as forgiveness, was established by Christ's shed blood. Rom 3v31. The place where mercy is bestowed is the place where justice is dispensed. Christ's atoning death established the Law and righteousness, and ensures pardon for every repentant sinner, but it also makes condemnation sure for every hardened impenitent sinner. Rom 3v21-31.

The Great Tribulation (which is the result of the Devil's great wrath, because he and his evil angels are cast out of Heaven into the earth, and God also removing His restraining hand from them at the same time, 2Thess 2v1-12, Rev 12v7-17) does not start gradually over a period of weeks, but rather starts with a bang overnight. On a particular day at the very end of the first three and a half years of Daniel's seventieth week, conditions on the earth will be quite bad, but still bearable, however, a day or two later (Satan and his evil angels having been cast into the earth), conditions will have got drastically worse, with evil and lawlessness greatly multiplied. The whole atmosphere of societies around the world will be one where an individual will be able to "feel" great evil all about them, it will in effect have a "smothering" effect on them. From the time of the start of Our Lord's earthly ministry, until the last few days of the first three and a half years of Daniel's seventieth week, the emphasis has been upon Grace, Mercy and Forgiveness (as illustrated by the Lord's words, regarding those who crucified Him, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," Luke 23v34), however, this will all change during the last few days at the end of the first three and a half years of Daniel's seventieth week and the start of the Great Tribulation. It is at this time that Christians (worldwide) will start praying for God to avenge them of their adversaries, the Two Witnesses (who will have power and authority "to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire," and shall be like God. Zech 12v8, Rev 11v6) having stated their ministry about 7-10 days before the start of the Great Tribulation. Matt 24v12, Mark 13v19, Luke 18v1,3,8.

The periods of time covered by the blowing of the Seven Trumpets (Rev 8v2-9v21, 11v15-19), and that referred to in Luke 17v20-8v8 are exactly the same, the period (of three and a half years) known as the Great Tribulation; and the parable that the Lord Jesus uses in Luke 18v1-8, is referring to the events in Rev 8v2-9v21 and 11v15-19, that is God's response to the prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) of the saints (Luke 8v1, Rev 8v3). The geographical area where the judgements of the Seven Trumpets fall is in the middle east (an area that is under the direct control of Antichrist, the Temple in Jerusalem being the place where he sets up his headquarters to rule from, 2Thess 2v1-12), especially Israel, and we see in Luke 18v1-8 an illustration of Truth, as to just how the Christians referred to in Rev 8v3 will be praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)), they will be asking God to avenge them of their adversaries (which God will do speedily, though He bears long with the wicked, Luke 18v7,8). It will not only be the Christians in the middle east who will be asking God to avenge them of their adversaries, but believers around the whole world will also be exercising this same kind of prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4435)), because the Great Tribulation will be worldwide as well. Matt 24v21,22.

The Seven Trumpets. (Rev 8v2 to 9v21, 11v15-19)

The seven trumpets are stated in Rev 8v2-6 to be the direct response of God to the prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) of His people on earth. From these verses we see the close link between the angels of God, and the Church of God and its prayers. Heb 1v14. Our heavenly Father and the heavenly hosts take very definite action on the behalf of the Church during the Great Tribulation, the world cannot do what it likes to the children of God and get away with it. The trumpets are judgements on the world for their evil treatment of God's saints; the wicked know this but do not repent. Rev 8v13, 9v20,21, Exodus 9v13-35. The seven trumpets do not come out of, or follow on, the seven seals, for the second coming of Christ and the end of the age occurs at the sixth and seventh seals and the seventh trumpet. The fifth and sixth trumpets themselves take over 18 months to run their course, so the trumpets must start several years before the sounding of the seventh trumpet and the sixth and seventh seals on the last day. This stepping back in time and viewing the events of the last few years of this age from various aspects, occurs several times in Revelation. The ministry of the two witnesses is shown to run at the same time as the seven trumpets by the account of the ministry of the two witnesses being placed between the sixth and seven trumpets. Rev 11v3-6.

When these trumpets are blown God intervenes in the affairs of men in the Great Tribulation in answer to the prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) of the saints. The first four are distinguished from the latter three by the fact that the first four deal with nature as it affects man, and the latter three with man himself, and they are particularly terrible and are called "woes." There is no reason why we should not interpret the effects of these trumpets literally, for the plagues of Egypt came true as Moses had promised and these plagues will too. Like the Egyptian plagues, the first four of the trumpet plagues and judgements will effect a limited area in the Middle East around Palestine, for, "the earth" can mean "the land," that is, the land of Palestine.

Luke 18v1-8 states the following:

"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, **that men ought always to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) and not to faint;** Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them (that is the wicked)? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth (or "in the land")?"

"That men ought always to pray" is in Greek, "prós tó deín pántote proseúchesthai," and means literally, "with reference to its being necessary always to pray." "And not to faint," is in Greek, "kaí meé engkakeín," and literally is, "and not to give in to evil" (en (Strong's NT:1722), kakeoo, from kakos (Strong's NT:2556), "bad or evil"), "to turn coward, lose heart, behave badly." The Amplified Bible renders it thus: "...that they ought always to pray and not to turn coward (faint, lose heart, and give up)."

Luke 21v38 is stating the same truth: "Be on watch and pray always that you will have the strength to go safely through all those things that will happen and to stand before the Son of Man." (Today's English Version)

The believer's prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) will accomplish different things for them during the Great Tribulation, it will be the means by which they will receive Grace, strength and blessing from the Lord to help them overcome the great evil that will be in the world at that time. Their prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) will also be the means by which God will bring judgement upon the wicked (amongst other things, the execution of the wicked) who are persecuting them. God's judgements upon the wicked will also have a restraining effect upon evil in the world. The prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) of the saints will also shut down the powers of darkness, with numbers of them being removed from the earth and put into the Abyss (This will occur from the beginning of the Great Tribulation up until the time of the blowing of the 5th Trumpet, which occurs twenty four months after the beginning of the Great Tribulation (The 5th Trumpet lasts for 5 months (Rev 9v1-12), the 6th Trumpet for 13 months (Rev 9v13-21), and the 7th Trumpet sounding on the last day of the Age of Grace, (Rev 11v15-19), so with the Great Tribulation lasting 42 months (Rev 12v6,14), this then shows that the 5th Trumpet is blown 24 months after the start of the Great Tribulation); for with the blowing of the 5th Trumpet, the Abyss will be emptied of evil spirits that had been imprisoned there, which are given authority to torment the wicked upon the earth). At the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus, all the evil angels (except the Devil, who is put into the Abyss) upon the earth will be cast into the Lake of Fire. Isaiah 24v21, Matt 25v41, 2Cor 12v9, Phil 4v19, James 4v6,7, 2Pet 2v4, Jude v6, Rev 9v1-12, 20v1-3,10.

Although the unjust judge would not, at first, avenge the widow of her adversary, because of her continual coming, and the judge's concern that she might "weary" him, he then gives her justice, and avenges her of her adversary. The English word "weary" that is used in Luke 18v5, is in Greek, "hupopoiázee," the present active subjunctive of "hupopiazō" (Strong's NT:5299), (from hupopion, "the part of the face below the eye"; hupo, "under," ops, "an eye"),

which means to hit under the eye and so to blacken it (buffet or disable an antagonist as a pugilist), i.e. (figuratively) to tease or annoy (into compliance), subdue (one's passions), keep under, weary. The unjust judge is actually afraid that the widow may come and assault him, literally "beat him under the eye," and so with this possibility of being injured (and that by a woman), the unjust judge gives the widow justice, by avenging her of her adversary. This word is only used once again in the New Testament, by Paul, in 1Cor 9v27, and in its literal sense, "I buffet my body;" (treat it as the boxer does his adversary). Paul says that he has to severely discipline his flesh, so that he would not become disqualified, and lose his heavenly reward. This was exactly how the Lord Jesus disciplined His flesh during His earthly life, and it was this example that Paul followed, which we should **ALSO** follow! Psalm 69v7-11, Isaiah 50v3-8, 1Cor 11v1.

Although the unjust judge lingered long before dispensing justice for the widow, God will certainly **NOT** procrastinate on this issue, but will avenge His elect speedily by bringing judgement upon the wicked for their evil treatment of His children. (**NOTE:** it is the Church, not Israel, that God looks upon as the "elect" during the Age of Grace, Rom 11v5,6, Gal 6v16). The Lord Jesus then ends this parable with the words: "...Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

The words "on the earth" can also be translated, "in the land" i.e. the land of Israel (Palestine), and of course it will be very hard to find many believers in the land of Palestine, at the time of the Lord's second coming, immediately after the days of the Great Tribulation, because of the following reasons:

Firstly, many believers will have lost their faith. By backsliding and going into apostasy, because they did **NOT** pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" Strong's NT:4336) through, but fainted, or because they were expecting a secret pre-tribulation Advent and Rapture, and when that did not happen, their faith waned (saying within themselves, "my Lord delayeth His coming," Matt 24v48, and not being spiritually prepared were overcome by the great inrush of evil into the world when the Great Tribulation starts. Matt 24v12, Rev 2v12.

Secondly, many believers will have been killed by Antichrist's security services and secret police. Matt 24v9, Luke 17v31-37, Rev 12v4,5,11,17, 20v4-6.

Thirdly, a large group of believers (the Glorious Woman of Rev 12v1) will have escaped from the land of Israel (Palestine) into neighbouring Edom, Ammon and Edom, ("the wilderness" of Rev 12v6,14), which is never overrun and taken by Antichrist and his armies. Believers escape from the Great Tribulation, when they see the image (the abomination of desolation) that Antichrist erects in the Temple in Jerusalem. Dan 9v27, 11v31,41, Matt 24v15,16, 2Thess 2v1-12, Rev 12v6,14-16, 13v1-18.

With the Devil and his evil angels being cast out of the heavenlies into the earth, and God's restraining hand being removed from them, the Great Tribulation then ensues. As already stated, the responsibility for the restraint upon the powers of darkness and the wicked on the earth, during the Great Tribulation, will be the Church's, and it will be through the believer's prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power), (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783)), that this restraint will occur. The amount of evil and wickedness that will be found in any society around the world, during the Great Tribulation, will be inversely proportional to the amount of prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power), (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783)), that the believers of that society will make, in other words, the more prayer and "interventions" (with power) that the believers make for their society in which they live, the less evil and wickedness will be manifested in it. When the wicked see Divine judgement falling upon other evil persons (which will be via the believer's prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power), (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783))), many (although not all) will think twice before putting their evil desires into practice to hurt, harm or kill God's dear children, hence, the believer's prayers and "interventions" (with power) will actively restrain the wicked. It will be during the Great Tribulation that the last World War will occur (before the 2nd coming of Christ), and the desire of the Devil (through Antichrist) will be to smash the world completely, which Antichrist will do with vast conventional armies and limited exchanges of nuclear weapons. So, it is vital for Christians to exercise prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power), (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783)) **NOW**, so that they are spiritually prepared for those terrible dark evil days, and can act as an effective restraint upon the powers of darkness and the wicked during the last three and half years of this Age, so that the country and society in which they live is not completely destroyed by Antichrist's armies and followers. Dan 11v32,41, Zech 12v8, Luke 18v1-8, 1Tim 2v1-8, Rev 9v13-21, 11v3-6,18, 12v13-17.

The parable told by the Lord Jesus in Luke 18v1-8, is to teach **ALL** believers that they can (and should) protect themselves (and others) during the Great Tribulation against the wicked; the means by which God will bring judgement (as a result of the believer's prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (NT:4335)) upon the wicked will be by angelic ministrations. Heb 1v14, Rev 8v2-6. However, God will also raise up and set full Apostolic and Prophetic ministries into the Church (with the same kind of power and authority that Elijah had) during the first three and a half years of Daniel's seventy weeks prophecy; persons with the same anointing, power and authority as the Two Witnesses will

have. However, it is of the utmost importance for the Body of Christ to understand, that these great ministries (including the Two Witnesses), will **ONLY** be set in the Church by the Lord, **IF** the Church prays (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) for God to fulfil His promises and prophetic Word to do so. **EVERY** believer should be praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) **NOW** for God to raise up and prepare the Two Witnesses (and other persons with the same level of power and authority), to take their place in the Church at the beginning of the Great Tribulation (so that they might act as an effective restraint upon the powers of darkness, the wicked and wickedness in the world), so that they might fulfil the ministries that the Trinity had prepared for them in Their foreknowledge before time began (Because this last point is so important I have repeated it again! 2Per 1v12,13). Dan 9v27, 11v32, Zech 12v8, Mal 4v5,6, Rev 11v3-6.

When Israel was carried off to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, and the Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, stating that Israel would be in captivity for seventy years (Jer chapter 29), when the seventy years was coming to an end, the prophet Daniel (who was probably only a teenager when he was carried off to Babylon in 606 BC) was reminded through the reading of Jeremiah chapter 29 (Dan 9v1,2), that the time of Israel's captivity was nearly at completion. But Daniel did not just say to himself, "well, I don't need to do anything, God's going to do it anyway, because He has promised it through the prophet Jeremiah." Dan 9v3, tells us what he did immediately when he found out and understood that the time of the seventy year captivity was almost at an end. Dan 9v3 (Septuagint) states: "And I set my face unto the Lord God, **to seek by prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335))** and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: **And I prayed (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336))** unto the Lord my God..."

He also wore the attire of deepest mourning, sackcloth and ashes, and fasted. Psalm 69v10,11, Rev 11v3. Believers really need to follow this example of Daniel's **NOW**, and earnestly seek the Lord for Him to set His Two Witness (and others with the same level of power and authority) into the Church, and to keep on praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) until they appear on the scene.

In the years preceding the birth of the Lord Jesus, spiritual Old Testament saints in Israel, like Simeon and Anna, saw that the time for the Coming of their promised Messiah was close at hand, by Daniel's Seventy Weeks prophecy. However, like Daniel, they did not just sit upon their laurels; saying that it was just going to happen, no, their diligently sought their Lord in prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)), for Him to fulfil His prophetic Truth and Promises to send forth the Beloved One into the world as the Saviour of both Jew and Gentile. Indeed, we get a wonderful glimpse of just how in touch with his Lord Simeon was, in that the Holy Spirit had promised him, that he would not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ. And Anna (who departed not from the Temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day), also being told by the Holy Spirit that the Promised One was in the Temple, went to gaze upon her Saviour, and "spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." Dan 9v20-27, Luke 2v25-38.

The Lord Jesus also followed the example of Daniel and the other Old Testament prophets, by seeking His Father, and praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) the prophecies regarding His forerunner (John Baptist) into being, these prophecies are as follows:

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." Mal 3v1 (with Matt 11v9-11)

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers..." Mal 4v5,6 (with Matt 11v14)

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isaiah 40v3-5 (with John 1v23)

The Lord Jesus, during His hidden years at Nazareth, watched John Baptist in the Wilderness by prophetic vision (even as Paul watched the believers at Colossi, Col 2v1-5), and prayed (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) him through during his years of preparation, so that he had reached the same spiritual condition that Elijah had experienced, standing before the Throne of God (in spirit), and going forth "in the spirit and power of Elijah." 1Kings 17v1, Mal 4v5,6, Luke 1v17.

It is **NOW** that **EVERY** believer needs to fulfil the command given by the Lord Jesus to His Church in Matt 9v37,38 (for it takes a considerable time to prepare someone to fulfil a full apostolic or prophetic ministry, i.e. Moses, 80 years, the Lord Jesus, 30 years): "Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers

are few; Pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."

Praying (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) that God will raise up His Two Witnesses (and other believers with the same level of power and authority) and set them into His Church, revealing them to the world just before the beginning of the Great Tribulation, so that they might fulfil their ministry. As the believer exercises this kind of prayer (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)), Peter tells us in 1Pet 3v12 that they are "hastening the coming of the day of God." (NKJV).

It is simply because the Church has **NOT** been fulfilling this great command for so many centuries, that only a very few true full apostolic and prophetic ministries have arisen since the end of the 3rd century! God finds it **VERY** difficult to locate persons who will let Him prepare them for these kinds of ministries, He still is saying to His Church, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" (Isaiah 6v8).

Each individual believer should also be seeking the Lord for a ministry for the last days, especially for the Great Tribulation, preparation now for those evil days will be vital!

Another ministry that will be vital for the Church during the Great Tribulation will be that of Pastor Teacher (also known in the New Testament Church as "Elder" and "Bishop" (Overseer)), for this ministry will either make or mar the local church over which they have spiritual oversight (in the early church it was the Deacons who had the financial oversight of a local church (which was basically looking after the poor), **NOT** the Pastor Teachers, Acts 6v1-7, 1Tim 3v8-13). The Pastor Teachers of a local church will need to guard and protect their flock from attacks inspired by the Devil through ungodly evil people and carnal worldly and unspiritual Christians. When the last great Divine visitation starts upon the earth (before the second coming of the Lord Jesus) in the not to distant future, with widespread revival, the ministry of Pastor Teachers will be vital in keeping it going on in the Lord, and not being hijacked by the Devil through his servants, and brought to a halt. We should also pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)), that God will prepare such persons, who fulfil the criteria laid down by Paul in 1Tim 3v1-7 and Titus 1v5-9, and James in James 5v13-18 (also see 1Pet 5v1-11 (esp., 1Pet 5v5 ("gird yourself with humility"), with John 13v4 ("and took a towel and girded Himself," the greatest example of "humility")), for this vital ministry. Acts 2v17-21, 20v17-38 (esp., v17,28), Eph 4v7-16.

How Britain was Delivered By God Through The Prayers ("proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) Of Its People

The catastrophic circumstances that Britain found itself in during 1940 are as follows: In May 1940, the political and military situation in Europe was catastrophic. Seven years earlier, Adolf Hitler had gained absolute power in Germany and immediately set about rearming his bellicose nation. On September 1st, 1939, he invaded Poland and then turned his fury on the nations of Western Europe. Hitler's "Lightning War" rumbled almost unopposed through Norway, Denmark, Holland, Luxembourg and Belgium. The French Army, which most military experts believed would hold its own against Germany, was humiliated in only 40 days. Nearly 500,000 British and French troops were trapped in a tiny coastal enclave called Dunkirk, where they faced certain annihilation. Hitler's armoured divisions, commanded by Generals Heinz Guderian and Karl von Rundstedt, were only 15 miles away, while Hermann Goering's air force (the Luftwaffe) bombed and strafed the hapless armies below. What a tragic moment that was in history.

It is difficult to comprehend the panic that gripped peace-loving nations at that time, especially Britain. Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain (who resigned in early May 1940 and was replaced by Winston Churchill) and other political leaders were staggered by the realization that this German madman and his henchmen had not only enslaved and dominated most of Europe in less than a year, but that they would be next. The Fuhrer was never closer to his ultimate victory than during those five days, May 24th to 28th, in 1940.

The loss of the British and French armies at Dunkirk would have left them naked in response to the anticipated Nazi invasion. If the British had surrendered without a fight, which was plausible in those bewildering days, the Nazi reign of terror could conceivably have continued for decades. Millions more Jews, Gypsies, Poles and other "undesirables" would have been gassed or shot, and 1,000 years of British history would have come to an inglorious end.

Winston Churchill stood firm during this frightening time, although privately he was also shaken by Britain's circumstances. For once, even his legendary appetite for food and drink was gone. Still, he told the French Prime Minister, Paul Reynaud, that England would go on alone if necessary: "We would rather go down fighting than be enslaved to Germany," he said. Unfortunately, Churchill didn't yet have a firm grip on the government. Lord Halifax and the other defeatists wrestled with him for the reins of power. If they had gained control at that critical juncture, the world would look very different today. Instead of offering Churchill's policy of "blood, sweat, toil and tears," they would have wrung their hands and whined, "Can't we all just get along?" Hitler would have chewed them into pathetic little pieces by the end of the year.

Well, that is the predicament in which Britain and France found themselves on May 24th, 1940. A half-million of their soldiers huddled hopelessly at Dunkirk, waiting for inevitable death or imprisonment. **It was at that desperate moment that the churches in Britain called for a national day of prayer** (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)). It had been suggested during April, but the Archbishop of Canterbury had opposed it. He said he didn't want the call to prayer to be misinterpreted, whatever that meant. But with the alarming deterioration of the military situation in France, he and many others decided that it was, indeed, time to pray. **On May 23rd, numerous political leaders, newspaper editors and King George VI issued a call for a national day of prayer** (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) **to be held on Sunday, May 26th 1940. (NB 1Tim 2v1-8).**

No one could have anticipated what was to happen during those three momentous days. Just 24 hours after the call for prayer, Adolf Hitler inexplicably ordered his armies to halt, to the surprise and dismay of even his own generals. **Two days later, on May 26th, the nation gathered to pray** (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)). Church attendance skyrocketed, including a large gathering at Westminster Abbey, during which people pleaded with the Almighty to spare their husbands, sons and fathers at Dunkirk.

Former Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain wrote this in his diary: "May 26th. Blackest day of all ... This was the National Day of Prayer." In reality, it turned out to be one of the most dramatic turning points of the war. At seven o'clock that evening, a critical order was issued to attempt a desperate evacuation of Dunkirk. Every tiny vessel and private craft was sent across the often treacherous waters of the English Channel with orders to rescue as many men as possible before the arrival of the Germans.

Hitler's armies remained largely in place not only on the 24th, 25th and 26th, but, incredibly, until early June. To this day, no one knows exactly why. The Fuhrer held victory in the palm of his hand, and yet he prevented his combat troops from finishing the job. Some have speculated that Hitler didn't want to risk unnecessary losses in a final battle. Others think Hermann Goering prevailed upon Hitler to let his Luftwaffe get the credit for destroying the British and French armies. As for Hitler's own view, he said he wanted to give Churchill "a sporting chance." However, the dictator never gave anyone a sporting chance. There is a more valid explanation. His armies were halted by the same God who shut the mouths of the lions during Daniel's night of peril. Dan.6v1-28. Just as the Lord repeatedly heard the prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) of the Israelites so long ago (e.g. Esther chapters 1-10, esp. Esther 4v1-17), He was listening when hundreds of thousands of believers in the UK were praying for divine intervention. He is the Lord (Yahweh), He changes not, the One Who is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Praise His name! Mal 3v6, Heb 13v8.

For nine critical days, the Germans were content to shell and bomb Dunkirk from the air and from a distance (also a great part of the German air-force was stranded in Flanders, hemmed in by a furious storm), but casualties were very low. Meanwhile, the English Channel became still and calm, and large numbers of Allied soldiers were scrambling aboard the little boats and yachts. On May 29th, 47,000 were rescued; on May 30th, 53,000; on May 31st, 68,000; on June 1st, 64,000. In all, 336,000 men found their way to safety in the British Isles! The British leaders were jubilant, and astounded. Alexander Cadogan, Permanent Undersecretary at the Foreign Office, called the evacuation "marvellous" and "a miracle," and Churchill himself called it 'a miracle of deliverance.' The same miraculous deliverance was also granted by God to the British people in The "Battle of Britain" which raged in the skies over Britain, during the months of August and September in 1940.

God is more than willing to respond to the prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) of His people and deliver them from impending danger. However, the great torrent of evil that will be unleashed upon the world during the Great Tribulation by Antichrist will **FAR** surpass that which Hitler (and the rest of the Axis powers) meted out during WWII (Rev 6v7,8, 9v13-21). If the countries of the West want to survive until the second coming of the Lord Jesus, the believers of those countries will have to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)) and **NOT** faint, or they will face complete destruction and annihilation. The nuclear missiles that Antichrist have pointing at the countries of the West, if not dealt with by believer's prayers (Greek, "proseuche" (Strong's NT:4335)) and "interventions" (with power), (Greek, "enteuxis" (Strong's NT:1783)), will certainly be launched by him and completely destroy and incinerate those countries upon which they fall. The nuclear weapons of today are 100s-1000s of times more powerful than those that fell upon Hiroshima (15 kilotons) and Nagasaki (22 kilotons), and will cause (if exploded) complete and utter destruction of a vast area. The dark evil days of the Great Tribulation that are rapidly approaching, will require prayers and interventions "with unspeakable yearnings and groanings too deep for utterance" by the believer, if they want to overcome victoriously! At the start of the Great Tribulation, if a believer's house is built on sand, it will collapse into a heap of rubble very quickly, so let us make sure that our "houses" have deep foundations and are built on rock, i.e. that our minds are filled with Truth (as revealed in the Scriptures, and **NOT** unscriptural man made traditions), and that we have a living faith and relationship with the Lord, that is fortified and energized by continuous communion with Him. Matt 7v24-27, Mark 13v19,20, Luke 6v46-49, Rom 8v22,23,26,27, Eph 6v10-20, 1Thess 5v17, 1Tim 2v1-8, 2Tim 3v1-9.

God empowers two prophets to Israel with the ultimate in prophetic power

The strategic timing of the start of the prophetic ministry of the Two Witnesses

The Two Witnesses appear to start their ministries a few days before Antichrist's image is set up in the Temple, and they warn of the terrible events that are about to overtake Israel and the world. In spite of innumerable attempts to kill them, their ministries continue for 1,260 days, until their death, a few days before the return of Jesus. Isaiah 59v19, Dan 11v32, Zech 12v8, Mal 4v5,6, Rev 11v3-6.

The conflict in Jerusalem between God's Two Witnesses and Satan's Antichrist and False Prophet, will be similar to the conflict that took place between Moses and Aaron, and Jannes and Jambres, Pharaoh's sorcerers. 2Tim 3v8,9, Exodus 7v11,12,22, 8v7,18,19. Prophesying against this kind of determined opposition by evil occultists, and the powers of darkness, demands great power and great spiritual gifts. God has in time past spoken to the Israelites by the prophets, and He will speak to them again in the Great Tribulation, through His two mighty Christian prophets, the Two Witnesses. Where it has been possible, God has usually sent His prophets in two's and three's, so that the truth and reliability of their prophecies could be confirmed out of the mouths of several trustworthy witnesses. 1Cor 14v29, Deut 19v15, Eccles 4v9-12, 2Kings 2v1,3. Isaiah, Hosea and Micah confirmed God's Word through each other, before the captivity; Haggai and Zechariah did the same, after the captivity.

God will give the ultimate in prophetic power and judgement gifts to His Two Witnesses

God describes the Two Witnesses as two olive trees, to show that they are full of heavenly oil and that He pours His life and power through them. Rev 11v4, Zech 4 all, Mal 4v5. God likens them to two lamp stands that shine brightly by their continuous manifestation of His power gifts. These Two Witnesses, like Elijah of old, stand in the presence of God in spirit, and operate in the fullness of His power for 1260 days. 1Kings 17v1. God commissions them to be prophets to Israel and the world. Their great ministries and godly lives stand out in sharp contrast to the evil lives of Antichrist and the False Prophet, who manifest Satan's power. They prophesy in sackcloth, the clothing of deepest mourning, to express their great sorrow over the gross evil around them, and by God's gifts bring judgement on this evil. Those who God sends to pronounce great woes, must have the same sorrow of heart that He has, over the sin that makes those judgements unavoidable and necessary. Matt 23v37-39, Luke 19v41-44.

The Two Witnesses will manifest God's power gifts in judgement, fire will devour those who try to hurt or kill them. Like Elijah, they will stop the rain from falling on Israel for the 1260 days of their ministry. Like Moses, they will turn water to blood, and smite the earth with every plague. **However, God gives them authority to manifest judgement gifts, "as oft as they will," a striking new level of authority,** for even Moses did not dispense plagues as he willed, he followed out God's orders. No one has manifested judgement gifts at their own will like these two prophets, but the circumstances of that time will demand this great power. However, even as Pharaoh and the Egyptians hardened their hearts in the face of God's power and judgements, so do Antichrist and his followers, and they refuse to repent of their evil deeds.

God allows the Two Witnesses to be killed to manifest a greater miracle

When the Two Witnesses have finished their testimony, God allows the Beast to kill them. Rev 11v7. This is the first of many references in Revelation where Antichrist is called "the Beast," the Greek, "to therion," speaks of a fierce wild animal. Antichrist is the last and worst ruler of a Satan dominated world system, which has always been ugly and beastly. Matt 4v8,9, Luke 4v5-7, John 14v30, 18v36, Rev 11v15, 2Cor 4v4, In Rev 11v7, The Beast is said to arise out of the bottomless pit, or abyss, ("abussos," it occurs in Luke 8v31, Rom 10v7, Rev 9v1,2,11, 11v7, 17v8, 20v1,3). This indicates that Antichrist will be raised from the dead, for to ascend out of the abyss, a person must have been dead, for it is God's prison for the unconverted and evil spirits. Dan 11v29,30, Rev 13v3,12, 17v8. This is the place to which unbelievers go to when they die, and it is the place to which our Lord went on His death, to purchase our redemption. Matt 12v39,40, Rom 10v7, Eph 4v8-10, Heb 2v14, 5v7, Isaiah 53v5,6,10-12.

It appears that God will allow Satan to openly resurrect Antichrist from the dead in a devilish parody of Christ's resurrection. It is after this resurrection that Antichrist comes to the fullness of his evil power. Satan has, of course, no control over the dead in Hades, Christ has the keys of Hades. Rev 1v18. Satan needs God's permission to raise Antichrist from the dead, and it is this resurrection of Antichrist that causes many to follow him. God performs a greater sign when He raises the dead bodies of His Two Witnesses to life before the eyes of the whole watching world, after their mangled corpses have lain in the streets of Jerusalem for 3½ days. For these 3½ days, "they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations," will rejoice over their death, elated that they can now continue in sin without the rebuke and judgement of these two mighty prophets. They deceive themselves into thinking, that because these two men of God are dead, that their God is dead also, and that they will escape the judgement of God, that these two prophets had warned them about.

After killing the Two Witnesses, Antichrist's followers feel that they have won the final victory and have nothing to fear. How well this agrees with 1Thess 5v2,3, "the people will cry peace and safety," but "sudden destruction will come upon them." Judges 16v23-30, Jer 6v14. God raises His Two Witnesses from the dead and openly translates them to Heaven, and puts a stop to the godless revelling and rejoicing of the wicked. This is not the first resurrection and rapture, that occurs soon afterwards as Rev 11v14-18, states, at the seventh trumpet. Their resurrection is a personal resurrection, like that of Lazarus, or the daughter of Jairus, with the difference that it is done before the eyes of the whole world. The world's television cameras record the Two Witnesses being resurrected from the dead and taken to Heaven in triumph, a tremendous sign and warning to all of God's power and glory. John 11v41-46, Luke 8v51-56, Matt 27v50-54, Acts 14v19,20.

The Two Witnesses are killed in Jerusalem, which God calls Sodom, Egypt, and Babylon

The bodies of the Two Witnesses lie in the streets of Jerusalem, "the great city...where the Lord was crucified." Rev 11v8. The phrase "the city, the great one," is in Greek, "tes poleos tes megales," which is used in reference to "Babylon" in Rev 14v8, 16v19, 17v18, 18v10,16,18,19,21, is here applied to the city of Jerusalem. In Rev 17 and 18, God calls Jerusalem Babylon," and in Rev 11v8, says that Jerusalem would be better named as "Sodom" and "Egypt," for its abominable wickedness and rebellion against God. This wickedness will bring about its destruction. One commentator writes the following: "Those who, like Alford, have decided that "the great city" is not Jerusalem but its spiritual antagonist, Rome or Babylon, find great difficulty in dealing with this plain statement:. The historical allusion is too definite to be thus explained away (i.e. as Rome or Babylon); it loses its whole point if it does not identify the place where the witnesses lose their lives with that where their Lord Himself was crucified, let those beware who feel that they know better than the Word of God."

The great earthquake of Rev 11v13, takes place earlier than the even greater earthquake of Rev 11v19, which shakes the whole world, and occurs when the feet of Jesus touch the Mount of Olives. Rev 6v12,14, 16v18-20, Zech 14v4,5. In the smaller earthquake a tenth of the city falls, and 7,000 men are slain, this brings some of the population to a state of fear and repentance. It certainly does not bring Antichrist and his armies to repentance, for they fight Jesus at His return. Rev 19v19. It seems that Antichrist burns and sacks the city, because the resurrection of the Two Witnesses and the earthquake turn many to the Lord. Rev 17v16. The armies of Antichrist are around the stricken city when Jesus returns, they are the vultures surrounding the carcass of Jerusalem that our Lord spoke about in Matt 24v28, and Luke 17v37. When the seventh trumpet sounds, the Father and Son take over the rule of a shattered and shocked world, all the redeemed creation rejoice that the Lord has come to bring righteousness and peace to the world, and claim that which is rightfully His own. Isaiah 32v1,2,17,18. The earth and the heavens ring with triumphant Hallelujahs. Rev 19v1-6. Even so come Lord Jesus. Amen.

The spiritual qualities that make up the character of The Overcomer:

Mention must be made of this subject as it is so important, the promises given to the overcomer are so great that the subject deserves special consideration. Christ has solemnly warned the Christians of the last days that they will have to live very careful, prayerful and godly lives if they are to overcome and come through the gross darkness with flying colours. Matt 7v24-29, 24v11-13, 42-25v13, Mark 4v19, Luke 8v14, 18v1-8, 1John 2v28. Let us consider the spiritual qualities that cause a person to be an overcomer and the things an overcomer does and is.

They Love The Word Of God. They are not lazy in Bible study, they learn the doctrines and truths of God's Word, they know truth and long for more, it is the joy and rejoicing of their heart. Joshua 1v8, Psalm 1 all, John 17v17,26, Acts 17v10,11, 20v32, Rom 6v17, Eph 6v14,17, 2Tim 3v15-17, Heb 5v11-14, 2Pet 2v2.

They Love To Do God's Will. They actively serve God, they seek the lost, and they have an evangelical fervour. Isaiah 52v7, Matt 6v10, 26v42, 28v18-20, John 4v34, 5v30, 12v26, Rom 12v1,2, Col 1v9, Heb 10v7, 12v23. They obey the will of God as revealed by the Spirit of God. Rom 8v14, Eph 4v30, 1Thess 5v17, Rev 2v7,11,17,29, 3v6,13,22. They obey the will of God as revealed by the Word of God, e.g. "follow after love and desire spiritual gifts." Matt 7v21, 12v30, Luke 6v46, 11v34, John 14v21-24.

They Love To Seek Their Father's Face. They love to pray (Greek, "proseuchomai" (Strong's NT:4336)), they have a life of public and private praise and prayer, they tarry for the Spirit, they wait on God. Psalm 27v8, 34v3,6, 37v9, 62v1,2,5,6 84v4-10, 91v1,2,9,14,15, Matt 6v5-15, Luke 11v1-13, 18v1-8, Eph 6v18,19, 1Thess 3v10, 5v17, Jude v20,21.

They Love To Walk With God In Their Daily Lives. They live a practical holy life. Rom 8v5-14, Gal 5v16-26, Eph 4v1-3,17-32, 5v1-6v9. By the grace of God they keep themselves pure and in victory. They are not in bondage to sin. By the grace of their Saviour they have overcome the world, the flesh and the Devil. Psalm 37v23,24, Matt 5v8, John 16v33, Rom 6v14-23, 2Cor 7v1, Phil 3v7-21, 1Thess 4v2,3, 1John 2v13-17, 3v1-10, 4v4, 5v4, Rev 14v1-5.

They Love the Brethren. Psalm 133v1-3, John 13v34,35, 1512-15, Acts 1v14, 2v1,44-47, 4v32,37, Phil 4v1, 1Thess 2v11, 1John 3v10-24, 4v7-5v3. They love to have fellowship with God's people, and dwell on the things of God together. Deut 6v4-9, Prov 27v17, Mal 3v16-18, Heb 10v24,25. In the home as well as the church building. Matt 23v37-39, Acts 2v1-4 with 1v13, Rom 16v5, 1Cor 16v19, Col 4v15, Philemon v2. Our conversation should be centred on Heavenly things and should be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ, gracious and loving like those of our gracious Lord, "They were all astonished at the beautiful words that fell from His lips." Luke 4v22 cf. Col 4v6. If this is not so, there is a definite need of reconsecration. Matt 15v10,11, Mark 7v20-23, Eph 5v4,5.

The letters to the seven churches in the book of Revelation give us a very good idea of what the Lord expects of the Christian, and what an overcoming Christian is like. We read that Christians are to have works, love, service, faith, patience, increasing works, a willingness to be faithful unto death, a separation from the world, spiritual alertness, and the thing that will assure all these, they must keep their fervent first love for Christ. Perhaps more qualities of the overcomer could be added to these, but these will suffice. In ALL things we are to follow the example of Christ, for by His grace we can overcome ALL that comes our way. Matt 11v28-30, 13v23, Luke 8v8,15, John 15v1-8, 1John 2v6, 4v17, Rev 12v10,11.

The Scriptures place great emphasis upon the second coming of Christ. It has been said, "There is more Scriptural authority for Christ's second coming than for all the other doctrines of the Bible put together." This statement soundly condemns the lack of interest shown by far too many of God's people today towards this vital subject. The silence of most preachers on the theme of this blessed hope of the Church gives cause for great alarm, particularly when the signs of the times indicate that the coming of Christ is near. What we believe regarding this subject will matter a great deal in the not so distant future. The lack of interest in Christ's second coming is a sure sign of a loss of first love for Jesus, and a spiritual apathy and lethargy among the people of God. Someone who noted the longing for Christ's coming and the zeal for this truth in the first part of Church history, wrote, "It would have been deemed a kind of apostasy not to have sighed after the day of the Lord." Those who have neglected the subject of our Lord's second coming should repent and meditate afresh upon this blessed hope that purifies. 1John 3v3.

The Scriptures warn us to take the subject of His Second coming very seriously. God warns us that judgement will fall upon those who misinterpret the book of Revelation and add to, or take away, its prophecies. Rev 22v18,19. An added secret rapture means an added judgement upon those who teach it. The subject of prophecy demands a teachable spirit, diligent study and trembling at the Word of God. 1Tim 4v14-16, 2Tim 2v15, Isaiah 66v2.

God has already executed preachers for wrong doctrine on the Second Coming of Christ

In 1Tim 1v19,20, we read that Paul delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan that they might learn not to blaspheme. We learn from 2Tim 2v16-18, that Paul did this because they had overthrown the faith of some Christians, by saying that the resurrection and the second coming of Christ had already taken place. Paul said their wrong doctrine ate like a canker and gangrene, and they died for their dangerous heresy, executed by the operation of God's judgement gifts through Paul; just as Peter had executed Ananias and Sapphira with those same gifts. Acts 5v1-11. Note in Acts 5v11, how "great fear fell upon all the Church, and upon as many as heard these things." The deaths of Hymenaeus, Philetus, and Alexander, show how serious and dangerous it is to misinterpret prophecy.

In Matt 24v48-51, Jesus warns us that if Christians believe that His second coming and the rapture take place before the great tribulation; then, when it does not happen, their faith will be overthrown, and they will say, "My Lord delays His coming;" and as a result go and live bad lives. Will the Lord Jesus feel any more tolerant of such faith destroying teachers and teaching, than He did of Hymenaeus and his false doctrine? Our Lord reveals the striking fact that these people will blame God for a delay, rather than examine and question their own doctrine. Let us be very careful what we teach about our Lord's second coming.

We can always find the truth if we really want to. The Bible is not so badly written that we cannot find the truth; if that were so we should rename the Bible, "Man's Word," instead of "God's Word," and give up the doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures. We can absolutely rely on the Holy Scriptures, for God has made the cardinal Truths of the Gospel perfectly clear for the sincere seeking heart. Unfortunately, however, the glorious truths connected with the second coming of Christ, like many other truths, have suffered at the hands of teachers, who for a variety of reasons have held down the truth. Truth has been perverted by pride, laziness, mercenary motives, false reverence for the traditions of men, and seeking the praise of men rather than the praise of God. Fear of suffering for the truth, or being thought unorthodox has blinded the minds of many to the truth.

Let no one think that they can treat this subject lightly, Truth is our shield and buckler, and our sword. Psalm 91v4, Eph 6v14,17. It will not be enough to say when the Great Tribulation arrives, "we were wrong after all." The false prophets of Israel said the same in their day, and we know what God thought of them. It is for pastors and teachers to prepare their flocks for the Great Tribulation **NOW**, before the evil day comes. This subject is so important in the eyes of God, that He has made it by far the most prominent Truth in the Bible, to fill people with lies about this

subject will certainly **NOT** please the Lord. It behoves us all to tremble at this Word of the Lord and take it as seriously as God has! Isaiah 66v2, Rev 22v18,19.

The Lord Jesus told His apostles again, and again and again, that He was going to be rejected by that generation, betrayed into the hands of men, scourged, beaten and killed, and the third day He would be raised up. However, the twelve apostles refused continuously to believe the Truth that He was trying to give to them (which was the result of their minds being filled with the unscriptural traditions of the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees), which if they had received, when the time came, they would have had the Truth firmly fixed in their minds (of a suffering Messiah), and have been spiritually prepared for it. But because they point blankly refused to accept His words on this vital matter (especially when it was confirmed by mighty signs, wonders and miracles), their minds became reprobate on this issue, and so, when it did happen they **ALL** failed and forsook Him! And the same thing will happen to believers who continuously refuse to receive and believe the Truth regarding a post-tribulation Advent and Rapture. When the Great Tribulation starts, and no Advent and Rapture have occurred, those Christians who are looking for a pre-tribulation Advent and Rapture, not being prepared for it, will be so overwhelmed by the tremendous inrush of evil into the world, that the vast majority of them will loose their faith (they will be saying "my Lord delayeth His coming"), backslide and go into apostasy, ending up with other evil people persecuting believers, who were their former brethren. The people who are looking for a pre-tribulation Advent and Rapture think that by continuously believing it and saying it is so, that they will make it such, however, this is such a tremendous folly! It is Truth that will give a believer victory in the evil day, not a pack of half-baked lies! Matt 16v21-23, 17v22,23, 24v48-51, 26v47-56, Luke 17v25, 18v31,33, Rom 1v28.

Appendix N: Baptism in Water. Acts 22v12-16, Rom 6v4,10,11

Introduction

Apollos was a Christian and an apostle, but he was ignorant about baptism in water and other Christian truths, and Priscilla and Aquila had to instruct him in these truths. Acts 18v24-28. The Ephesian Christians of Acts 19v1-6, were probably converts of Apollos, who were equally as ignorant about Christian baptism. Here was an apostle who was ignorant about water baptism, but he was humble enough to let a man and his wife teach him about baptism and other Christian truth, may we all be as teachable and humble.

Divine Energies are brought to play at "baptism in water", it is not just an empty form, it gives us a new, real, and lasting experience of God, when we accept and take hold of God's covenant with us in God's way, with true repentance and faith.

The Greek Word That Is Used For Baptism In Water Is "Baptizo"

This is full of significance; it is not "bapto," to dip, but "baptizo," to "immerse."

This shows why there was the need for "much water"

We see the need for "much water" to immerse people when John Baptist immersed people in John 3v23, and Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch went "down into the water," in Acts 8v38,39.

The relationship between "baptizo" and "bapto" are very similar to our English "to immerse" and "to dip." "Baptizo" gives the indication of people staying permanently under the water; "bapto" gives the thought of a temporary immersion. People obviously come up out of the water after baptism, or all would be drowned. Why, then, did God use "baptizo" instead of "bapto?" God wanted to convey that baptism in water instituted permanent and eternal realities and attitudes, and it was not just a brief rite and formality. We see:

In the baptism for repentance and remission of sins, God wanted to convey that a person should continue to live under the influence of repentance and remission of sins, not for a moment, but for ever.

The baptism into the name of the Father Son and Spirit, was to impress us with the fact that as believers we are going to live under the loving and gracious guidance and gentle Lordship of the Trinity, not just for a time, but for eternity. Matt 28v19.

The baptism into the body of Christ means that after baptism a person is eternally linked with the body of Christ. Baptism inaugurates us into Christ's Church. It is not just a momentary thing, it is permanent. 1Cor 12v13.

The baptism in the Spirit, likewise, is not a temporally thing for the Spirit comes to surround and guard us, and abide with us, and immerse us in Himself for ever. John 14v16,17, 16v13-15. "to immerse."

Both "baptizo" and "bapto" "to dip, " carry the thought not only of immersion, but dyeing and impregnation

This is seen in the use of "bapto" in Rev 19v13, we read that our Lord's garments are dyed with His own precious blood, "his garments are dipped in blood." His garments proclaim to all, that He who comes to judge has died for all those who will receive it. So we see that the abiding influence of repentance and regeneration, the abiding influence and fellowship of the body of Christ, and the abiding influence and presence of the Father, Son, and Spirit, are intended to dye and impregnate the soul with divine life and purity, and help to conform every child of God to the image of Jesus. Rom 8v28,29, 2Cor 3v18.

Paul's Important Statements On Baptism In Water

The baptism service is a burial service for the old life

Rom 6v4: "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (NKJV)

Rom 6v4: "By our baptism, then, we were buried with Him and shared His death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from death by the glorious power of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life, and live a new life." (TEV)

Paul rejoices in the glorious fact that baptism is not just a picture, but a definite event in which the believer shares in Christ's death, burial and resurrection, and starts to live and walk in a totally new life. "In newness of life," is "en (Strong's NT:1722), kainoteti (Strong's NT:2538), zoes (Strong's NT:2222)." Baptism points backwards to Christ's death and burial and to our death to sin, Rom 6v1, and forward to Christ's resurrection from the dead, and to our new life in Jesus on the other side of the baptismal grave. This is not just a picture but a glorious living reality.

"Therefore we are buried with him," is "sunetaphemen," (Strong's NT:4916), rather, 'we were buried with Him;' for it is looked upon as a past act, which was finished and completed at our reception of the Gospel, and sealed at our baptism in water. "Sunetaphemen" is the aorist passive indicative of "sunthapto" (Strong's NT:4916), to bury together with, it only occurs in the New Testament here in Rom 6v4 and Col 2v12. Our old lives were buried "by baptism into death," with Christ's death, and we started to "walk in newness of life," by union with the risen Saviour, and by sharing in His resurrection life. We should never go back to "those things whereof we are now ashamed," Rom 6v21, if we do, we deny our burial and resurrection with Christ to newness of life, and "forget, that we have been purged from our old sins." 2Pet 1v9.

As the baptism service is a burial service for the old life. This means:

God has buried our sins, and He forbids anyone to dig up the stinking corpses of our past

Anybody who digs up, or tries to pry into, our past, is in real trouble with God. Don't let Satan resurrect condemnation over your past, when you repent of your sins, they are buried with Jesus, never to be remembered any more. Psalm 32v1, 51v1,9, 73v38, 103v12, Isaiah 1v18, 43v25, 55v7, Jer 31v34 with Heb 8v10-12, Acts 3v19. God delights in mercy. Micah 7v18,19 states: "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy and loving-kindness. He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities. Thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."

We should make sure the old life remains dead and buried and crucified with Jesus. (Rom 6v2-6)

Our old desires and life should be crucified with Christ. Rom 6v6. We should "mortify" and "put off the old man" and "put on the new man," "put on "agape" love," and "put on Christ." Col 3v5-14. We read in Gal 3v26-28, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. **For as many of you as have been baptised 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." Paul in Rom 13v14 appeals to the Romans, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." We read in Eph 4v22-24, that Paul similarly instructs the Ephesians, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

The baptism service is a resurrection service for life in the heavenly places. (Rom 6v4,5)

Walking in newness of life, and experiencing the glory of the Father. Planted in the likeness of Christ's resurrection. Rom.6v4,5.

Crucifixion of the old life is through the law of the spirit of life in Christ. Rom 8v1,2. Christ's victory over the flesh, is the grounds of our victory. Rom 8v3,4. The life of Jesus energising our souls and spirits is our means of victory.

Seated in heavenly places in Christ. (Eph 1v3, 1v20, 2v6)

However, we have to fight spiritual wickedness, Greek, "poneros" (Strong's NT:4190) which is an active corrupting evil, much worse than "kakos" (Strong's NT:2556) which is abstract evil. Satan is "Ho poneros," the one who is actively corrupting people into evil.

Peter Tells Us That Baptism In Water Gives Us A Good Conscience Towards God. (1Pet 3v21)

Baptism in water does not wash away the filthiness of the flesh

Paul had to beat his body under. 1Cor 9v24-27, "...So I fight, not as one who beats the air; But I discipline my body and buffet it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified." (NKJV) This is best accomplished by fellowship, fasting and prayer. John Wesley would not allow anyone to be a local preacher who would not fast until 4:00 pm on two days a week. We read that even Jesus found it necessary to discipline His body by prayer and fasting. Psalm 69v9-11, Matt 4v2.

A good conscience means I have done what God told me to do

You know that you have obeyed God's command to be baptised, and have accepted God's covenant in God's prescribed way.

In Acts 22v16, we read, "Arise and be baptised and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

So linked is baptism with forgiveness that this was the method of appeal to seekers in the early Church. The appeal was not "Would you please raise your hands," it was, "Please come forward and be baptised." Titus 3v5. The cleansing bath of regeneration is linked with baptism in the New Testament. The Bible does not teach baptismal regeneration, but it does teach baptismal obedience and good conscience that is obtained by obeying God's Word.

In Heb 6v2 We Read That Baptism In Water Is A Foundation Truth Of The Christian Faith

Baptism in water and the Spirit are among the Foundation Truths of Christianity, they are vital and indispensable Christian practices and experiences, not the way out doctrines of fanatics.

The Example Of Our Lord Jesus. Matt 3v13-17

Our Lord was baptised "to fulfil ALL righteousness," Matt 3v15. "plerosai (Strong's NT:4137), pasan (Strong's NT:3956), dikaiosunen (Strong's NT:1343)." Jesus took our place as a sinner, this shows that we have got to be baptised. The dying thief shows we can get to heaven without being baptised, but it is best to follow our Lord's command and example.

Baptismal Formulae's And Confessions:

NB It is what the baptised convert says that is critical, not what those who are baptising them say!

Baptism in the name of Jesus means more than just the statement of a baptismal formulae over a person. It is a statement of repentance and remission of sins through faith in Jesus. Acts 18v25, Acts 19v1-6. **We read in Mark 1v5, that people who were baptised by John confessed their sins as they were being baptised.** Christians should not only "confess their sins" they should confess their faith in Jesus. It is the statement of the convert that really counts, not what the person who is baptising them says.

The "Jesus only" doctrine has caused great division in some churches, particularly over baptism in water, it states that God is one person who manifests Himself as three persons, this doctrine is called Modalistic Sebellianism, and is so called because this doctrine was introduced and preached by Sabellius who lived about 240 AD. Great division occurred because people disagreed over the baptismal formulae that was to be proclaimed over those who were being baptised. Converts have been told that they needed to be re-baptised because they had not had the statement said over them, "I baptise you in the name of Jesus," as they were being baptised. Others have insisted that people were not baptised properly because they were not baptised in the name of the Trinity. All this is foolish faith destroying nonsense, that brings division to the Church of Christ.

In Matt 28v18-20, the apostles were told to baptise in the **NAME** of the Father, Son and Spirit; and we see the early Church did baptise in the **NAME** of Jesus. Acts 2v38, 8v16, 10v48, 19v5, and 22v16. The Greek word for "name," is "onoma," and it is used in the New Testament in the same way that it was used in the Septuagint and papyri, for someone acting with the delegated power and authority of the person's name they used; as with our police, when they say, "I arrest you in the name of the Queen." Disciples were to baptise with the authority of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Matt 10v41, Acts 3v6,16, 4v7,17,18,30, 5v28,40, 16v18, 19v13. Our recognition of this delegated authority does not in any way lessen our appreciation of the spiritual and mystical union with the Trinity implied in baptism.

Robertson says that "eis" should be translated as "in" in Matt 28v19, whereas, Vincent feels that "into" is the best translation. It is interesting to note that Peter uses "en," "in," in Acts 10v48, and uses "epi," "upon," in Acts 2v38. It is tragic to see Christians being re-baptised in the name of Jesus, because they have been taught that the baptismal formula of the Trinity, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," spoken over them in baptism, was not correct. However, is not "the Son," the Lord Jesus? Does anything have to be said, if baptism is done in His name? Is Matt 28v19 to be ignored, and without authority?

To save Christians from controversy with those who have a strong baptismal axe to grind, I say at baptism, "I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, the Lord Jesus, and of the Holy Spirit." This stops both sides from harassing the person being baptised. Let us remember that baptism is intended to unite Christians, not divide them. 1Cor 12v13, 1v10-17, 3v1-16.

"What Mean Ye By This Ordinance?"

What is the doctrine that water baptism teaches? What relationship with the Lord Jesus does baptism in water reveal?

We Proclaim A Covenant Seal And Sign Between Ourselves And God

We proclaim that we are accepting God's covenant in God's way

This involves bringing forth fruits worthy of repentance. Luke 3v8. We read in Mark 1v4, that it is a baptism obligating repentance. "Repentance," in Mark 1v4, is "metanoia," which means a change of mind that results in a change of life.

We also read in Mark 1v5, that as people were being baptised, they were confessing their sins. "Confessing," is "exomologoumenoi," the present middle participle of "exomologeomai" 'to confess publicly, to vow openly'. "Baptizo" to baptise in Matt 3v6, is "ebaptizonto" the imperfect passive of "baptizo," which shows the continual ministry of John and the continual stream of people being baptised by him.

We Proclaim The Reality Of Our Lord's Death And resurrection

We proclaim that Jesus died and rose for us. We proclaim that we are identified with Jesus in His death. Our old life and sins are buried with Jesus. We proclaim our repentance and remission of sin through faith in Jesus.

We Proclaim Our resolve To Walk In Newness Of Christ's Resurrection Life. (2Cor 6v14-17)

We are "baptised into Jesus." Rom 6v3,4, Gal 3v27, we are not baptised to enter a denomination, we were baptised to receive the benefits of Christ's atoning death, and His resurrection life.

Some Of Those Who Were Baptised:

Believers, young and old, who knew their sins are buried with Jesus.
Jesus was baptised as an adult. Matt 3v13-16. God was well pleased with His life and this act of obedience.

Even Scribes, Pharisees, soldiers were convicted of their sins. Luke 3v7, also Tax-collectors, Luke 7v29.

Repentance first. Repent and be baptised everyone of you. Acts 2v38

Receive word first, "those who gladly received His Word were baptised." Acts 2v41

Men and women. They were baptised both men and women. Acts 8v12

Ethiopian Eunuch. Acts 8v36. "What doth hinder me to be baptised." he asked for baptism in water.

Paul. Acts 9v18. In Acts 22v16, Ananias said, "Why tarriest thou? arise and be baptised and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord." This shows the close connection between forgiveness and baptism.

The House of Cornelius. Peter commanded them to be baptised. Acts 10v47,48

Lydia was baptised and her household. Acts 16v15. Did she have grown up children? There is no mention of a husband.

The household of the jailor also could have been grown up, he could have been an old soldier. Acts 16v33

Corinthians baptised. Acts 18v8

Ephesians were baptised. Acts 19v1-6. NB 3v5

Household of Stephanas. 1Cor 1v16. NB 13-16

In 1Cor 12v13, "By one spirit were ye baptised into one body and were all made to drink of one spirit."

"Drink," is "potizo." "One body," the whole Church, not a part of the Church. The Church is not a denomination, local church, or fellowship, it is the whole body of Christ. "Baptism for the dead," was a false doctrine invented by some of the Corinthians. 1Cor 15v29

Teach all nations baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Matt 28v19

The imperfect knowledge of baptism of Apollos. Acts 18v25; and the Ephesians. Acts 19v3. They only knew the baptism of John. Apollos preached accurately what he knew, but his knowledge was limited. Priscilla and Aquila filled up the gaps in the knowledge of Apollos and taught him the way of God more accurately, Acts 18v26, the adverb "akribesteron." NB Eph 4v5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism.

What to do when you are baptised

Repentance first, faith next, then baptism. Acts 2v38. Confess your sins Mark 1v5. Confess your faith in Jesus.

The Posture And Prayer In Baptism

Pray, praise, and worship. Jesus was praying as He was baptised. Luke 3v21. Ananias tells Paul to call on the name of the Lord in Acts 22v16, this is an invocation of His name in prayer. The posture of baptism is therefore important. Some throw people backwards in baptism, and this causes water to run up the person's nose who is being baptised and greatly discomforts them. The normal posture of prayer is kneeling, Eph 3v14, and it also gives far less discomfort to those who are being baptised, they do not have to worry about getting the water out of their sinuses. I have known people who were baptised in the sea, to be lost in worship and prayer for over 15 minutes after they were baptised.

Like your Lord have an attitude of submission and dedication to God

Expect the Holy Ghost

Expect your Heavenly Father's expression of pleasure

Expect God to give you the maximum of spiritual benefit, and adore and thank Him for His gracious gifts and goodness to you.

Recapitulation:

Immersion In Water And The Holy Spirit Are A Glorious Reality, Not Just A Theological Exercise!

The Greek word for baptism, "baptizo," is used for both baptism in water and the baptism in the Spirit. The basic word of this Greek root, "bapto," "to dip," only occurs three times in the New Testament, Luke 16v24, John 13v26, and Rev 19v13. In Rev 19v13, "bapto" is used in its secondary sense, "to dye or stain." It is also necessary to note both the primary and secondary meanings of "baptizo." Though the primary meaning of "baptizo," is "to immerse," or "to submerge," its secondary meaning, which is derived and developed from its primary meaning, can refer to the influence which one thing exercises over another. "Baptizo," then, can speak, like "bapto," not only of an immersion, but also of an impregnation and infusion of the element of immersion, as in dyeing and staining. It speaks of a bringing into complete subjection to an influence, and an imbibing of the virtues and nature of that influence. We should also note that in many cases, though not in every case, the same distinction occurs between "bapto" and

"baptizo," as between their English equivalents, "to dip" and to "immerse;" "dipping" speaking of a momentary or temporary covering, "immersion" usually implying a prolonged or permanent covering. To be baptised with the Holy Spirit and fire, should mean that our whole personality is permanently influenced by, and deliberately submitted to, and stained and dyed, by the transforming influence, presence, power, and sanctifying purity of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes to transfigure us into Christ's likeness, and conform us to His image, as well as to empower us. Rom 8v28,29, 12v1,2, 2Cor 3v17,18.

In the New Testament, "baptizo" is used in the sense of permanent immersion and infusion, in regard to baptism for repentance and remission of sins, baptism in the name of Trinity, or baptism into the body of Christ, or baptism in the Holy Spirit. Matt 3v11, 28v19, Mark 1v4, Luke 3v16, 1Cor 12v13, These baptisms do not speak of a temporary dipping in an element, they speak of a permanent immersion under the influence of the thing suggested. Though "baptizo," "to immerse," is used in the weaker sense of "bapto," "to dip," in water baptism, (otherwise all who are baptised would be drowned); the actual spiritual realities connected with baptism, abide and continue. To be baptised unto repentance and remission of sins, means being brought under the power and influence of repentance and remission of sins, not for a moment, but for all time.

To be baptised into Christ's death and resurrection, is to be permanently identified with Christ in His death and resurrection, not for a moment, but for ever. Rom 6v9-11. To be baptised into the body of Christ, is the permanent placing of ourselves under the influence and power of Christ and His body, the Church. To be baptised into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is not just a mere baptismal formula, it is to come under the power and influence of the Trinity, not for a moment, but eternally and permanently.

Immersed in the transforming, sanctifying and miracle-working Holy Spirit

In Luke 24v49 and Acts 1v4,5, Jesus called the baptism in the Holy Spirit, "the promise of the Father," and instructed His disciples to tarry until they received it. In Acts 2v38,39, Peter said that this baptism in the Spirit was promised to every Christian. The Samaritans, Paul, Cornelius and his friends, are stated to have received the Holy Spirit after the initial outpouring on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2v1-16, 8v14-17, 9v17,18, 10v44-48, 19v1-6. The reception of the Holy Spirit is spoken of as a "baptism" six times in the New Testament; four times in the Gospels, by John the Baptist, and twice in Acts. Matt 3v11, Mark 1v8, Luke 3v16, John 1v33, Acts 1v5, 11v16. The phrases "filled with the Holy Spirit," Acts 2v4, 9v17, "the gift of the Holy Spirit," Acts 2v38, 10v45, 5v32, Rom 5v5; "received the Holy Spirit," Acts 8v14-21, 10v47, 19v2, 1Cor 2v12, Gal 3v2; "the promise of the Spirit," Gal 3v14; "the seal of the Spirit," Eph 1v13, 4v30; are all used to speak of the baptism in the Spirit. The words "anointing" and "dwell in" are also used to speak of the result of the baptism in the Spirit. 1John 2v20,27, 3v24, 4v13, Rom 8v9,23, 1Cor 6v19,20, John 14v16,17.

The phrase "filled with the Holy Spirit," is used to speak of other operations of the Holy Spirit's work, as well as the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Luke 1v15,41,67, Acts 2v4, 4v31,8, 13v9. In the Old Testament men and women of God were filled with the Holy Spirit just to fulfil a mission; however, in John 7v35-37, we are told that they were not baptised in the Holy Spirit, this is a New Testament experience, given to the Church by our glorified Lord; God's New Testament children receive the permanent filling of the Spirit, "He shall abide with you forever." John 14v16,17.

Some think, and I feel correctly, that 1Cor 12v13, "For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body," is referring to water baptism and not to the baptism in the Spirit, as O. M. Norlie translates it, "And by one Spirit we have through baptism been made members of one body." The Holy Spirit is the agent of regeneration, the baptism in water is the outward sign and ordinance of regeneration. The second part of this verse, "were made to drink into one Spirit," clearly gives the picture of the baptism in the Spirit; for the Greek word for "drink" is "potizo," which is used in the Septuagint in Isaiah 43v20, to speak of a wilderness flooded by abundant waters. "Potizo," truly conveys the thought of Isaiah 44v3, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and **FLOODS** upon the dry ground." This Spirit-flooded life, is the Spirit-baptised life. In the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament), "potizo" is used to speak of the abundance of water that brings abundant fruitfulness. In Gen 2v6, it is used of the heavy dew that God used to water the ground before the flood; in Gen 2v10, of the river that watered the garden of Eden into abundant fruitfulness. In Gen 13v10,11, we read that before God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, the land around them was "well watered," and like the garden of God; Lot greedily chose this area for himself, and spiritually ruined his life. In Gen 21v19, it is used of the well of water that God provided for Hagar in the desert; and in Gen 24v14,17,18,43,45,46, of the drink that Rebekah drew from the well for Abraham's servant, Eliezer. This Spirit-flooded abundantly fruitful life, is the Spirit-baptised life.

Conclusion

Baptism in water, then, is more than an outward sign of allegiance to Christ; it is the deliberate placing of oneself, under His influence and headship. The important thing is not a baptismal formula, the essential thing is the total submission of our whole personality to Christ; to be imbued, stained, impregnated and influenced, abidingly and permanently, with the presence and power of our dear Lord Jesus, and to experience all the benefits of His death and

resurrection life. In the same way, to be baptised with the Holy Spirit and fire, means that our whole personality is deliberately submitted to, and permanently submerged under, influenced by, and saturated and impregnated with, the presence, power, and sanctifying purity of the Holy Spirit. Our personality is still our own, but the Holy Spirit comes to transfigure our lives by His presence, and to imbue us with His virtues, abilities, life and love. 2Cor 3v18. However, I do not want to give the impression that we cannot fall from a state of grace, we can, let us be careful not to grieve or resist our gracious guest. 1Thess 5v19-22, Eph 4v30.

Appendix O: Looking away unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith. Heb 12v2

a) The authorship of Hebrews

Tertullian, one of the most learned writers of the second and third centuries ascribes Hebrews to Barnabus, however, it must be remembered that Tertullian was prone to being dogmatic, and this was undoubtedly one of His personal opinions; for this viewpoint was never widely accepted in Christendom, and Hebrews was not received as the work of Barnabus either in Africa, Tertullian's country, or in Cyprus, the country of Barnabus.

The epistle to the Hebrews was primarily and specially addressed to the Hebrews of the East, particularly those of Jerusalem and Palestine. The Christians there personally knew the author of the epistle, even though he did not append His name to the epistle, for we read in Heb 13v18,23, "Pray for us, for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly; but I beseech you the rather to do this, in order that I may be restored to you the sooner... And again, know ye that our brother Timothy has been set at liberty, with whom, if he come soon, I will visit you."

The churches of Alexandria, Asia, Syria Jerusalem, and Palestine, the people to whom the epistle to the Hebrews was primarily addressed, say that Paul wrote it. **Cyril of Jerusalem** attributes the epistle to Paul. **Theodoret also states that Eusebius wrote that Paul was the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, "and that all the ancients entertained this opinion concerning the authorship of the epistle."** Jerome also confirmed that Paul was the author of Hebrews, he wrote, **"All the Greek writers received it as His."** **The Church at Antioch confirms the Pauline authorship of Hebrews**, which was the centre from which Paul's missionary journeys originated by Divine commission and command. **Chrysostom of Antioch and Constantinople, ascribes Hebrews to Paul, as do Theodore of Mopsuestia in Cilicia, of Paul's own country, and many other important witnesses. The Council of Nicea, 325 AD and the Synod of Laodicea, 363 AD, received Hebrews as a genuine work of Paul.**

The fact that Clement of Rome does not mention that Paul was the author of Hebrews, may simply be due to the fact that He respected Paul's desire and reasons for keeping the work anonymous, and did not desire to betray His personal and intimate friends confidence. Phil 4v3. The name of Paul was not only abhorrent to the Jews, it was anathema to the Judaizing Christians, and so Paul did not want an epistle specifically designed to help people from a Hebrew background, to be hindered from reading it by putting His name to the document.

b) Hebrews was also written to rouse sleepy Christians to seek the promises of heavenly blessings. Eph 1v3

Paul wanted to awake these sleepy Christians and make them realise that they were pilgrims and strangers in this world. As in 1Cor 10, Paul uses the Old Testament experiences of Israel passing from Egypt to Canaan to drive home His lessons. Abraham was an immigrant from Mesopotamia into Canaan, and Hebrews draws attention to the fact that like Him all Christians are pilgrims and strangers in this world. Although probably written primarily to Hebrew Christians familiar with the Old Testament and Temple worship, it is equally applicable to all who have a knowledge of the Old Testament. The epistle should be read in conjunction with the prison epistles of Paul, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, which deal especially with **the heavenly places, which the Christian is called to enter by conflict with the powers of darkness.**

Christians are called to be a Royal Priesthood. 1Peter 2v9. We read in Exodus 19v6, that God called Israel to be "a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation," but their sin frustrated this Divine desire. However, in Jesus Christians are made and called to be kings and priest to God. We read in Rev 1v6, "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (KJV) And again, in Rev 5v10, Heaven declares of Christians, "And Thou hast made them {to be} a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." (NAS) **We are called to be priests after the order of Melchizedek with Jesus our Great High Priest, and operate God's mercy gifts. This is a very great calling indeed.**

c) Paul uses the picture of the games and competitors being encouraged to finish the race

Paul uses the example of the great saints; prophets and martyrs who had run well and finished their course with honour, praise and glory to inspire us to run well in the Christian race.

d) Paul's writes Hebrews to show that Jesus is the inspiration and cure for all the ills of our souls

After considering the Old Testament heroes of faith and their magnificent victories of faith, Paul states that Jesus is not only the source of all faith and justification by faith, but that He is also the incentive of all Christian holiness. "Looking away" is, "aphorontes," the present active participle of "aphorao" to look away and to concentrate on another. If we desire to run well and win the race, **we must look away into ("eis") all that Jesus was and is**, His majestic life, character and sacrificial love. We must look away even from the greatest of Old Testament saints, and concentrate our gaze on Jesus our Lord. It is good to be inspired by the saints, but the inspiration they give in the up building of the soul, is limited. Jesus is God's Word to speak to the depths of our soul. If we desire victory in the Christian life, we must concentrate our gaze on Jesus.

e) Paul was also defending the Church from the the Docetic Gnostics, who denied Christ's humanity. Heb 2 (all)

Both the apostle John and Paul realised the great danger that the acceptance of Gnostic doctrine would have on the Church, and wrote with the strongest words possible against it. John said that those who deny the humanity of Jesus are "not of God," and have the spirit of Antichrist. 1John 4v2,3, 2v18. This is a very present danger in the Church today, Docetic Gnosticism has invaded the Church again (by believing and accepting Augustine's doctrine of 'Original Sin' and 'Born in Sin' theories); it has always been one of Satan's major weapons against the true knowledge of Christ Jesus.

A) Looking away into Jesus the Pioneer of Faith. "ton-archegon"

"Looking unto Jesus," is "aphorontes eis." "Aphorontes," is the present active participle of "aphorao" a verb meaning "to turn the eyes away from other things and fix them on something," it only occurs here and in Phil 2v23. "Unto," is "eis," into," so, Paul exhorts us with the present continuous tense, to be actively and always "looking away," "eis" "into," and "unto Jesus."

The word for "author," is "archegon." (Strong's NT:747) "Archegon" speaks of a chief, leader, prince, and of anyone who takes the lead in anything, a pioneer, a predecessor and example. "Archegon" occurs four times in the New Testament. In the Authorised Version it is twice translated in Acts, as "Prince;" in Acts 3v15, "And killed the **Prince** of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses;" and Acts 5v31, "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a **Prince** and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. "Archegon" occurs twice in Hebrews, in the Authorised Version it is translated as "Captain," in Heb 2v10, "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the **Captain** of their salvation perfect through sufferings." It is translated as "Author" in Heb 12v2, "Looking unto Jesus the **Author** and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Jesus the Pioneer and greatest victor of faith

After considering some of the great heroes of faith, Paul, the writer to the Hebrews, asks us to consider the greatest victor of faith, our Lord Jesus Christ; His faith was tried to the greatest extent, and He overcame all the trials and difficulties of His life and ministry with triumphant faith. Jesus is not only our example in holy and loving living, He is our example in believing God. Jesus pioneered the way of faith, He not only inspired the faith of all those great saints of old, but He is also the most shining example of personal faith in God. The Scriptures state, "The just shall live by faith," Rom 1v17, Gal 3v11, Heb 10v38. This was the experience of Jesus, throughout all His life; Jesus lived by faith, just as we should do. Jesus said in John 6v57, "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." **When Jesus did His miracles, He turned His faith on, not His deity.** In John 14v10, Jesus said the Father did the miracles, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but **the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.** We read in John 5v19, "Then Jesus answered and said to them, Most assuredly, I say to you, **the Son can do nothing of Himself**, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner." In John 5v30, Jesus stated, "**I can of mine own self do nothing:** as I hear, I judge: and my judgement is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." Jesus walked in the Father's will, and His own great personal faith and love was the channel of the Father's power and mercy healing gifts.

1) Jesus the Pioneer of Faith in victorious daily Living

The life of Jesus at Nazareth was a triumph of faith, a life of faith in God His Father. Our Lord was not a protected hothouse plant, He conquered the pressures, problems, and temptations of life by sustained communion with God His Father. We read in Heb 2v17,18 and 4v15, that Jesus was "made in all points like unto His brethren," and was "tempted in all points like His brethren." Jesus was victorious, sinless and perfect, in childhood development, teenage temptations, and the temptations and trials of manhood, work and daily living. Luke 2v40-52. His life was continual manifestation of awe-inspiring wonderful faith.

2) Jesus Pioneered Faith in Victorious education and Training by God

The need for preparation for Ministry

a) Isaiah 49v1-3 and 50v3-6 Show our Lord's preparation by God the Father

We need to follow His example of victorious preparation for service. In John 1v14 we see our Lord full of grace and truth. A triumphant victorious faith over the circumstances, spiritual darkness, and backslidden people of Nazareth. John 4v6. Nathanael was amazed that anything good could come out of the notoriously spiritually dark town of Nazareth, Nathanael knew well the evil state of Nazareth by personal experience, for he lived about nine miles away in Cana of Galilee. John 21v2. **Jesus overcame the evil of Nazareth and lived the same perfect and beautiful life that He had lived in Heaven with the Father.** John 1v46-51

Our Lords faith and purity triumphed over the spiritual darkness of Nazareth

We read in Ps.69v19-21, that Satan stirred up opposition against Jesus and got people, including His family, to criticise and mock Christ's life of prayer and fasting. Reproach broke His heart, He looked for sympathetic companions who would understand, and there was none. The soul loneliness of Jesus was horrific, His heart was broken, but He set His face like a flint and overcame it all through His Father's grace, and a determined faith in His Father's care and love. Isaiah 50v3-9, Luke 9v51, Heb 2v8,9. These awful problems at Nazareth were part of Christ's preparation and training by God His Father, for both His earthly ministry and His High Priestly ministry. The vicious reproach and persecution Jesus endured at Nazareth is revealed in **Psalm 69v7-21**, there was bitter rejection by His brothers and sisters. Mark 3v21, John 7v5. Town leaders criticised and mocked Jesus, and drunkards sang vile songs about Him. All this brought deep waters into the soul of Jesus. Psalm 69v14. The sinless and prayerful life of Jesus at Nazareth stirred up pitiless continual opposition against Him. **We read in Psalm 69v8-12, v8:** "I have become a stranger to my brothers, and an alien to my mother's children; **Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up**, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me. When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting, that became my reproach. I also made sackcloth my garment; I became a byword to them. Those who sit in the gate speak against me, and I am the song of the drunkards." Scholars say, "Your House," refers to God's children, not just the Temple.

In Isaiah 53v10-12, we read "He shall," five times, and "shall," three times. Jesus must have repeated these verses in faith and love many times in the dark nights of His soul, when Satan and men attacked Him. He lived on, and claimed, the precious promises of God His Father, just as we do. **Jesus, like ourselves, had a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, in the immutable, counsel and promises of God's Word, and His father's unbreakable oath of confirmation.** Heb 6v13-20.

From Mark 6v1-6, we see that Jesus had four brothers and at least three sisters, and they came to forcibly take Jesus home when Jesus upset Israel's religious leaders, and these leaders started to oppose and persecute Him. We read in Mark 3v21 and John 7v5, that Mary's other children did not believe in Jesus, and thought that He was mad, when He upset Israel's religious leaders. Mark 3v21,31-35. In Mark 3v21, "hoi para autou," "His family," means literally "those from the side of Him," a phrase used commonly in the Greek Septuagint Old Testament, to speak of a persons family and kinsfolk, and the mention of our Lord's family in Mark 3v31-35, confirms that it is referring to His family. They said, "He is beside Himself," "exeste," the aorist active indicative of "existemi," a charge which was made against Paul by Festus in Acts 26v24, he said that Paul's much learning had turned Him insane. Festus uses "maine," the present indicative of "mainomai," to be mad, to be out of one's mind. Paul stated that he was certainly not mad, but spoke words of truth and soberness, ("sophrosune," means a rational control and soundness of mind. It was the minds of Israel's religious leaders and Festus, which were controlled by the delusions of the Devil, and the madness of spiritual insanity.

b) The attack on Christ's faith and Sonship. Matt 4v1-4

When Satan tempted Jesus to turn the stones into bread, our Lord replied from Deut 8v3. The context speaks of discipline and training, and humbling and proving by trial. Our Lord was saying, "My faith is being tested and I believe God My Father. **The discipline and testing of the wilderness proved our Lord's victorious faith.**

3) Jesus the Pioneer of Faith in Victorious Sanctifying Truth

a) Jesus had inspired the prophets with truth; He came down to live it. Jesus lived in worldly, carnal, and unspiritual Nazareth, the life of holiness and love He had lived in heaven. Wonderful Jesus!

b) Jesus had to believe God's Word when everything and everyone around Him denied it and rejected Him Even Mary and Joseph had fallen into unbelief over the purpose of our Lord's ministry by the time that Jesus was twelve. We read in Luke 2v42-52, that they did not understand what Jesus meant when He said, "I must be about my Father's business."

We read in John 1v14, that the Lord Jesus came out of Nazareth full of grace and truth, fully equipped by the Father for the task that lay ahead of Him. We read in John 17v19, that our Lord sanctified Himself to do the Father's will, and that doing the will of God was His delight. Psalm 40v6-8, Heb 10v5-10. Jesus prayed in John 17v17, "Sanctify them through Your truth. Your Word is truth." He also states in John 7v17, "He who does the will of God shall know the doctrine." When you walk with God and live a life of love, truth burns with light. Jesus lived a life of perfect love, and the truth He perceived burned with life

and energy in His heart and mind, and His words and sermons were filled with spirit and life. John 6v63. Jesus had a faith that was energised by a life of perfect love. **Gal 5v6. He lived out the more excellent way. 1Cor 12v31. He perfectly lived out the Word of God, and claimed, experienced, and demonstrated the sure promises of God. Jesus had a victorious conquering faith, which desired to do the Father's will and provide spiritual bread and healing of body and soul for others. Luke 11v9-13.**

NB Trials through life's problems, that test our faith in God's Word, impart qualifications for ministry to us Our Lord came out of Nazareth not just with an intellectual faith but a living experimental faith through tens of thousands of victories of faith over the problems, trials and temptations of life. Hallelujah.

Moffat accurately translates Isaiah 53v3, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," as, "a man of pain who knew what sickness was." The Hebrew states that Jesus, "knew by personal experience sickness." Jesus experienced, and had personal victories of faith over the sicknesses that afflicted Him. **In Isaiah 53v3, "sorrows," "makob," means, grief, pain; and in "acquainted with grief," grief is "choliy," disease.** It is translated in the Authorised Version as "sickness," in Isaiah 38v9,12, Deut 7v15, 28v61, 1Kings 17v17, 2Kings 13v14, 2Chron 21v15,19, Psalm 41v3, Deut 28v59; as "disease," in 2Kings 1v2, 8v28,29, 1Chron 16v2, 21v18, Job 30v18, Psalm 38v7, Eccles 6v2; as sick in Isaiah 1v5. To be our perfect High Priest, Jesus had to be tempted in all points like ourselves, and this meant that He had to experience sickness, He really knows what we go through, He has personally experienced all the trials and temptations of life, and we are assured of His sympathetic understanding and merciful love, He has compassion and deals gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray. Heb 5v2.

4) Jesus the Pioneer of Faith in Victorious Inspiring Grace

Jesus calls us, and inspires us, to cast away every encumbrance and to run the race of life

a) There is a vast cloud of witnesses to God's faithfulness. "Nephos marturon," is in the plural "Nephele" is a single cloud, "nephos," a vast mass of clouds. "Marturon," does not speak of mere spectators, which would be described by "theatai;" "marturon" speaks of witnesses who testify out of their own experience. Heb 11v2,4,5,33,39.

b) Laying aside us, like the putting off of old clothes, Col 3v8. Runners ran nearly naked. Every weight that hinders, "ogkon panta." "And the sin which does so easily beset us." "Which doth so easily beset," is "euperistaton," it is derived from "eu," "well," and "peri," "around," and "statos," "standing," and so means easily encompassing, and describes the sinful environment of the world around us, and the difficulty to avoid its defiling influence. God recognises the difficulty of fighting against the defiling sin in our environment, and our personal fleshly and spiritual problems, but there is victory in Jesus. Rom 8v1-4.

c) Let us run: is, "trechomen," the present active, i.e. let us keep on running, the race that is set before us. "With patience," is, "di hupomones," with brave endurance, not with doubt, despair, self-criticism and impatience with ourselves.

Jesus experienced sickness and pain and had a great many victories of faith over them. Our Lord was tempted in all points like we are and this included sickness. In Job 2v4-7, Satan said that severe sickness is the greatest test of character, and God did not contradict Satan. It cannot be that Job was tempted more than our Lord, and is a more sympathetic person to those who are sick, because of it. Jesus is our perfect sympathetic High priest; He was made perfect and complete by experiencing and suffering the problems of life, as well as His suffering and dying on the Cross. Heb 5v8. Our Lord had a victorious triumphant faith over sickness, He personally believed and proved the promises of divine healing.

The Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, states of Isaiah 53v3: "He was despised and forsaken by men; a man of griefs, and well acquainted with disease; and like one from whom men hide their face: despised, and we esteemed Him not." --- "Moreover, He was [mak^aobowt (Heb 4341) 'iysh (Heb 376)], a man of sorrow of heart in all its forms, i.e., a man whose chief distinction was, that His life was one of constant painful endurance." End of quote.

NB Paul tells us to consider Jesus as the pioneer of faith, He not only won the victory on the Cross; His whole life demanded constant endurance over painful trials. Jesus He experienced a continuous and total victory of faith and love over all the trials that came against Him.

5) Jesus the Pioneer of Faith in Ministry, and a Life of Prayer

Our Lord's ministry was the result of a life of prayer and communion with God the Father. His love for God and people drove Him to pray through for others. When Jesus began His ministry, He was so busy that daily manual labour was impossible. This was quite different from Paul at Corinth, Ephesus and Thessalonica. Jesus believed God for the material provision, not just for Himself, but also for: **-a) The twelve:** The faith of Jesus had to provide for them for

3½ years. God provided for Jesus and the twelve apostles through women of substance. Luke 8v1-3. **b) The Seventy:** The thirty-five bands of preachers. Luke 10. Jesus believed for them, and gave them authority.

B) Looking away INTO Jesus the Perfecter of Faith

In Heb 12v2, Paul coins the word, "teleiotes," (seemingly from "teleio"), it means, "Perfecter", one who brings us to the goal, (the Latin Vulgate has "Consummator"). In Heb 12v3, "consider," is "analogisasthe," the aorist imperative of "analogizomai," to reckon up, to compare, to weigh, it only occurs here in the NT. In Heb 3v1, "consider is "katanoesate," the aorist imperative of "katanoeo," a compound verb, from "kata," down, and "nous," mind, and so means, to put the mind down on a thing, as in Matt 7v3 and Luke 12v24. These Hebrew Christians are exhorted to think hard about Jesus as their Apostle and High Priest, and not to give way to the temptation to give Jesus up, and backslide from the grace of God. Jesus can, and will, perfect our faith if we follow Him. This is the only place in the NT where Jesus is called an apostle, "apostolos," though the verb "apostello" is often used of God's sending Him forth. See John 17v3. "Profession" is "homologeo," from "homon," same, and "lego," say, and so, to say the same thing, to agree, to confess, to profess. **Fixing the mind and heart on Jesus, and confessing the truth about Him is the cure for spiritual weariness, doubt and fear.**

1) Jesus is the example of perfect patient endurance

a) Jesus endured the Cross

"Hupemeinen" the aorist active indicative of "hupomeno," to patiently and bravely endure, a triumphant endurance. "Prokeimenes," the present participle, "the laying before Him joy", this joy was the joy of seeing us saved and blessed. **Jesus endured the Cross for us, not for self glory, or exaltation and praise by others. The motive was pure love for us.**

b) Jesus endured the shame of the Cross; "stauros"

"Shame," is "aischune," shame, disgrace. "Despised it," is "kataphronesas," the aorist active participle of "kataphroneo," to think down on something, here with the thought of despising, and treating as contemptible the shame and disgrace of the Cross. **He treated the shame of the Cross with contempt, but not you; He endured it all for you.**

c) Jesus endured the contradiction of sinners

In "endured the contradiction of sinners," **"endured," is "hupomemenekota," the perfect active participle of "hupomeno," the perfect shows the abiding effect of Christ's redemptive sufferings and brave endurance. "Contradiction," is "antilogian," a hostile and vicious speaking against.** In "lest you be weary," weary is "kamete," the aorist active subjunctive of "kamno," to be weary, or as in James 5v15, to be weary and exhausted through sickness. In "fainting in your souls," "fainting," is "ekluomenai," the present passive participle of "ekluo," which mean to loosen out, to be set free, but in the passive it means to be tired out, or enfeebled.

2) The Throne of Authority Jesus sits on

In Heb 12v2, "Sat down at the right hand of God," is "kekathiken," the perfect active indicative of, "kathizo," to take one's seat and sit down. The perfect tense shows that Jesus is still there at the throne of infinite power and authority, to perfect your faith. **"Consider," is "analogisasthe," the aorist middle imperative of "analogizomai," to reckon up, count up, to consider, to compare and weigh, it can also speak of meditation. It only occurs here in the New Testament.**

3) Jesus is the perfect Perfecter of faith

As we have seen, "teleiotes," Perfecter, is one who brings to the goal. In Heb 5v9 we read, "And being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation to all those that obey Him." "Perfect," is "teleiotheis," the aorist passive participle of "teleio," to complete, to perfect.

Jesus perfected faith in a) In the woman at the well. b) In the dying thief. c) In Peter. D) In Paul. Etc, and etc.

4) Jesus will perfect our faith, transfigure us, and conform us to His image

We read in 2Cor 3v18, that as we behold the glory and beauty of God our Father and the Lord Jesus, we are transfigured from glory to glory by the Spirit of God. Beholding the glorious Trinity changes us, and perfects our faith and love. The power of the Holy Spirit, Communion with God our Father, and contemplation of Jesus transfigures us.

We read in Rom.8v28-39: "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, and these He also glorified. What then

shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? **He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?** Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. **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 Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. **For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, v39. nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."** (NKJ)

Before creation God the Father knew who would truly respond to the Gospel call, and He set His mind to conform us to the image of the Lord Jesus. Nothing can separate us from God's love and His eternal purposes for us. Jesus came into the world with a totally unselfish magnificent desire to save us, and share with us the eternal riches and blessings of the kingdom of God. Jesus **will** perfect our faith and love and bring us to His everlasting kingdom.

Paul warns us about failing under discipline and life's trials. Heb 12v3-17

1) Jesus is the cure for weariness and fainting under opposition. Heb 12v3-15

Jesus was victorious in His conflict with Satan and evil men. We read in Heb 12v2, that Jesus bravely endured the violent and vicious verbal abuse and opposition of sinful men. "Endured," is "hupomemenekota," the perfect active participle of the same verb "hupomeno," which is used in Heb 12v2, of our Lord's brave and triumphant endurance of the Cross. A prayerful consideration of Our Lord's determined bravery will keep us from weariness ("kamno," as in James 5v15.), fainting and enfeeblement. The bitter hostility and hatred did not quench His faith in God or zeal for God. Jesus conquered by faith.

2) Jesus the cure for fainting and weariness under discipline. Heb 12v5-11

We read in Deut 8v5, that God chastens us as sons, for "chastening," in Heb 12v5, is "paideias," from "paideuo," to train a child, and "pais," instruction, see 2Tim 3v16, "instruction in righteousness." The primary thought is the instruction, training, and development of character, which is given to children. **God is conforming His dearly beloved children to the image of Jesus, and this sometimes means, as with a child, that there is the necessity of gentle reprimand, rebuke, and even punishment.** Rom 8v28-34. In Col 3v21, Paul warns fathers, that excessive discipline can discourage children and hinder the growth of personality and character. See also Eph 6v4. The thought behind "paideia," is of instructive discipline not punishment.

Our Lord personally experienced temptation and "training as a child," in His time of preparation for His ministry at Nazareth, and when Satan tempted Him in the wilderness, and on many other occasions too. The discipline proved His Sonship, and matured His personality, for we read in Heb 5v8., that our Lord was "made perfect through suffering."

Problems and pressure produce character as 1Pet 1v3-7 tells us, "the trial of our faith is much more precious than gold." When Jesus experienced the many trials of His faith at Nazareth, He undoubtedly said to Himself, what He tells us to say, "these trials are more precious than gold." His faith triumphed over them. Jesus was a victorious pioneer of faith.

Feeble knees and faint hands in the body of Christ should be encouraged onward by the loving ministrations of the church, and the direction to look to our sympathetic Saviour, who has been through it all, and conquered. Heb 12v12,13.

3) Jesus the cure for a defiling root of bitterness. Heb 12v15

In Deut 29v18, we read of "a root of bitterness," and here it speaks of departure from God. Bitterness is "pikria." The departure from the living God is here manifested in two ways.

a) Carnality and impurity; any fornication v16. "Pornos" immoral.

b) Worldly-mindedness and despising of sacred and eternal things. "Profane," is "bebelos," a despiser of sacred things, an irreligious person. 1Tim 1v9, 4v7, 6v20, 2Tim 2v16.

Bitterness against God produces a bad life. We are warned that a large number of believers, and even the majority of believers, like the Israelites, can be infected with bitterness, unless great care is taken. **Contemplation of Jesus is the cure.**

NB The warning of Esau. Esau lost His birthright and blessing through carnality; we can lose our inheritance if we are not careful. v16,17. The blessing was gone and had been given to another. We can lose our place in the kingdom by similar carnality and worldliness. Contemplation of Jesus is the cure for the Esau spirit.

Meditating and feeding on Jesus and His living truth, is the cure for all the ills of our souls:

"Consider" in Heb 12v3, is "analogisasthe," to reckon up, to count up, to consider, it includes the thought of meditation.

In John 6v51-71, Jesus informs us that it is vitally necessary for us to eat His flesh and drink His blood; He means that we must meditate upon His life and words, to grow spiritually strong. Judas never fed his soul with a heart relationship with Jesus. Judas hardened his heart, and refused to turn him from his evil ways, even after Jesus had fed the five thousand, walked on the water, stilled the storm, and miraculously transported the boat from the middle of the lake to the shore. Judas failed to feed on Jesus and His words, and so his soul shrivelled and died spiritually, and he started to slander Jesus, and then betrayed Him. John 6v1-71, Matt 26v15,16. Meditate upon Christ's words of spirit and life, and you will have His life in you. The depths of your soul will be inspired, fed, and filled with Jesus, and changed by the living Word of God, and you will be transfigured from glory to glory, by beholding the beauty and splendour of His majestic being. 2Cor 3v18. The gentle humility and loveliness of Jesus invite us to come to Him, and we will find rest and rejuvenation for our souls. Matt 11v28-30.

In Heb 6v1, Paul pleads with us to allow God's gale of the Spirit to propel us along to maturity. We are to walk with God and be diligent in spiritual matters, but seek for God's enabling to carry us forward, and not rely on self-effort. Heb 6v12. We read in Heb 6v1., "Therefore leaving the elementary doctrine of Christ, let us be borne on to maturity." No longer babes on milk, but mature adults, able to eat solid spiritual food, and able to comprehend the deeper truths about Jesus." The translations, let us go on, or press on, to perfection, give the idea that the effort is ours. However, "pherometha," the present subjunctive passive of "phero," literally means, "let us be borne on to completeness, or maturity. **We must rely on God's enabling grace and power, and not on our human efforts. We must put up our sails by communion with God, and let the gale of the Spirit blow us on.**

The Scriptures teach that the prophets were impelled and borne along by the mighty energies of the Holy Spirit. We read in 2Pet 1v20,21. "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin, or came, by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved (**"pheromenoi," the present passive participle of "phero;"** AMP "borne along, moved and impelled;" Phillips "inspired," NIV "carried along") by the Holy Spirit." "Moved" is the same verb as "came," it literally means, "being borne along." It is a favourite word with Peter, occurring six times in his two epistles. 1Pet 1v13, 2Pet 1v17,18,21, 2Pet 2v11. It speaks of someone being powerfully spoken to, and carried along, by God, and as a result being mightily used by God.

We are to be blown along by God like a sail ship before a mighty wind. The spiritual impetus comes from God!

"Phero," is used in Acts 27v15,17, to describe the ship in which Paul was on being "borne along" ("epherometha," the imperfect passive of "phero"), and "driven," ("epheronto," the imperfect passive again) before the mighty wind. In Acts 2v2, "phero" is used in the present participle, passive voice, to describe the "rushing" sound of a mighty wind, literally, a mighty wind borne along violently, ("hosper pheromenes pnoes biaias"). We read in Acts 2v2, "And suddenly there came an echoing sound out of heaven as of a mighty wind borne along violently. And it filled ("eplerosen") the whole house where they were sitting." ("Echos," our echo, is used in Luke 4v37 for "rumour," and Luke 21v25, for the last days "roaring of the sea.") The Pythagorean Schools used "pherometha" in the sense of being carried on to a higher stage of instruction, but this Scripture goes much further than mental instruction, it speaks of a deep experience of the mighty energies of God.

God, through Paul, urges us to put up our sails, and allow ourselves to be borne along in the gale of the Spirit to maturity, to an experience of Jesus as our great High Priest. Heb 5v10 to 6v1. "Unto perfection," is "epi ten teleiotes," from "teleios," mature, adults, as in Heb 5v14; it only occurs twice in the New Testament, here in Heb 6v1, and Col 3v14. Paul appeals to us to leave Christian babyhood, and go on to be mature adult Christians, who are able to masticate solid spiritual food, and able to comprehend the deeper truths about Jesus. Paul assures and promises us that the Divine energisings and powerful transforming and enabling gale of the Holy Spirit will impel and carry us along to Christian maturity and Christ-like character. **See 2Cor 3v17,18:** "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. **And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transfigured into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.**" Beholding the glory of Jesus will transfigure our lives, so let us look to and into Jesus, who will inspire and perfect our faith and character.

Appendix P: Foundation Truths

A Text Book for Young Christians**By C L Parker****Tutor Hampstead Bible School, Kenley, Surrey****(Formerly Chaplain, Fellow, and Tutor of University College, Oxford)**

To my students, who by patient listening and unceasing questioning, have through the years, forced upon me hours of strenuous Bible study, this booklet, to which they have contributed so much, is affectionately dedicated.

Contents**Foreward****Introduction****Repentance From Dead Works****Faith Towards God****Baptism In Water****Baptism In The Spirit****The Laying On Of Hands****The Resurrection Of The Dead****Eternal Judgement****The Cross Of The Lord**

The Foundation of Repentance from Dead Works, and of Faith towards God, of the Doctrine of Baptisms, and of Laying on of Hands, of Resurrection of the Dead, and of Eternal Judgment. Heb 6v1,2.

Foreward

It is a pleasure to commend to the thinking student this first edition of a book by a painstaking scholar and theologian upon the intriguing subject, which he has called "Foundation Truths."

My mind was made up before first reading the script that I would not agree with the writer simply because he was a friend of mine. It is a happy mood to be in when one can disagree reasonably. That was how I first read this textbook.

I found, however, that after reading a few pages, this care-free mood was not guaranteed any permanence: for the writer's logic, careful application of abundant scripture references and sincere appeal to his readers to prove to their own satisfaction his interpretations of fundamental truth, made it very difficult for me to disagree. This I presume was just where he wanted me—thinking—thinking for myself.

This is a textbook for the careful reader: and its subject matter is worthy of painstaking study. The doctrines considered are vital and essential to an understanding of both God and man, sin and salvation, death and life, heaven and hell.

The chapter on Eternal Punishment is very provocative and should be studied prayerfully with an open Bible at hand. This subject is as much for the heart as for the intellect. One's heart is warmed as it is plainly shown that God is not a Being with a split personality, as many must have thought Him when considering His judgments: a loving God to His own people, but fearful in hatred and revenge upon a disobedient host of unbelievers!

God is love: and at no time nor in any circumstances does He change: for in His unchanging love and mercy He provides a secure Keeping Place for the unbelievers and thus preserves the eternal peace of His own beloved people. This is Hell—God's madhouse, for the ultimately irreconcilable.

If this brief foreword were for purposes of comment, then it would be as long as the book. It is not. It is a privilege granted me to commend this book to all students of God's Word and to those who love His appearing. **George Newsholme. (An outstanding Pastor, and former Principal of the Hampstead Bible School.)**

Foreward

It gives me great satisfaction to recommend this third edition of Foundation Truths by one of the Lord's most esteemed servants.

The value of these thought-provoking studies can never be truly estimated in mere words. I am most grateful to Lord for allowing me the privilege of hearing them expounded by the writer himself in the lecture hall of the Hampstead Bible College; there was never a dull moment!

Ever since Foundation Truths have been committed to print I have never been without a copy, and it has been my joyful practice to pass them on to others in the hope that they will be as enriched by them as I have been.

Clyde Young. Assemblies of God Minister, Sunderland

About The Author

A summary of the life of C. L. Parker by his son, John Parker

Cuthbert Layland Parker was born in 1887, gained 1st Class Honours at St. John's College, Oxford in 1908 in the Classics (Latin and Greek), was ordained priest in 1912 and became a Tutor at University College, Oxford, from 1912-1918. He also gained a blue and two half blues while at St. John's in Rugby, Swimming and Athletics respectively.

Mr Parker's varied and unusual career in the ministry meant that at one time he was General Secretary of Assemblies of God and at another was Vicar of St. James, Clerkenwell, London and Chaplain to the Royal Free Hospital when it was on Grays Inn Road.

It was during his first curacy at St. Luke, Redcliffe Square, that an old lady prayed for him to be saved - it must have been a rather well to do church, more traditional than evangelical. Mr Parker used to tell how, at this time, he was sitting in the garden, smoking a pipe and reading his Greek New Testament, when the Holy Spirit illuminated the Word, and he cried out 'By gad, the Bible's true!' He then went into the pulpit and told the people he had been telling them lies thus far - and now would tell them the truth!

In 1917, Mr Parker married Phyllis Harcourt Kent at St. James, Clerkenwell, of which at that time his father was vicar and of which he would become vicar 20 years later. It was during this latter period that the church experienced an outpouring of the Spirit, which must have made it one of the earliest charismatic churches of the 20th century.

Returning to 1917, Mr Parker, and his wife Phyllis, quickly absorbed and entered into the fundamental truths of New Testament Christianity, such as Justification by Faith, Divine Healing, the Second Coming, etc. It was not long before he commenced his teaching ministry at various Bible Colleges (including the Bible League College and the Assemblies of God Bible College in Surrey), and also as a Convention Speaker all round the country.

His style of teaching was to allow his students to ask questions as the lecture proceeded, and sometimes this would drive him back to the Word of God to search out the answers. So both he and his students grew in their understanding of the Scriptures, and there are many alive today who still remember with gratitude how his teaching revolutionised their Christian lives and their theology.

"Foundation Truths", based on Hebrews 6v1,2, contains the essence of his teaching, built around his graphic representation of man's Spirit, Soul and Body (1Thess 5v23) - to which he gave the name 'Archie'! Any readers of these pages will find themselves challenged and stimulated theologically and generally, whether or not they agree with all Mr Parker's conclusions.

A Guide to the Diagrams

The Serpent represents sin; dead when coiled, alive when upright

The Book represents Moral Law, whether of God or of conscience

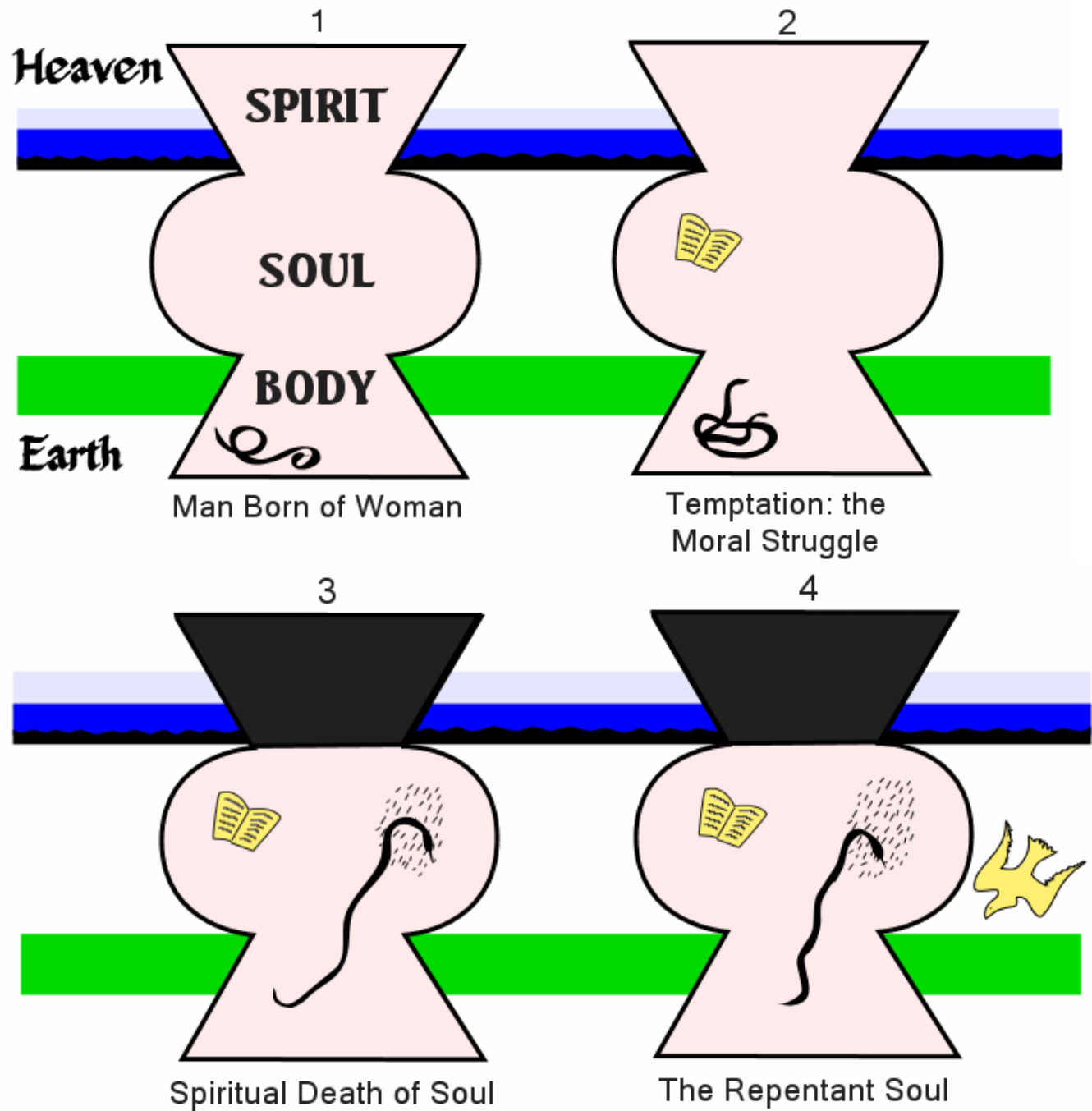
The Dove represents The Holy Spirit of God

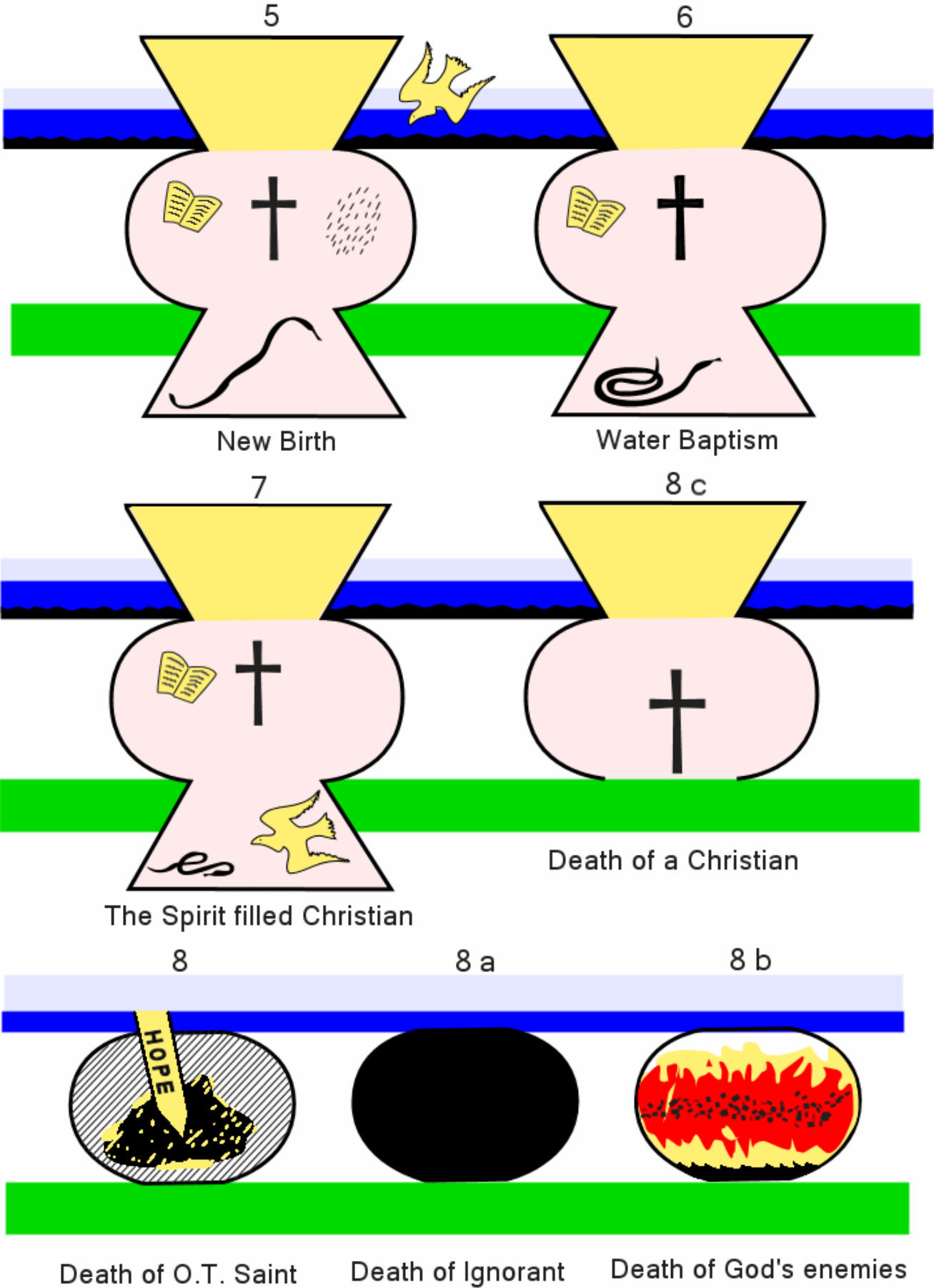
The Cross represents Calvary

The Black Line represents the first Heaven, the home of Satan

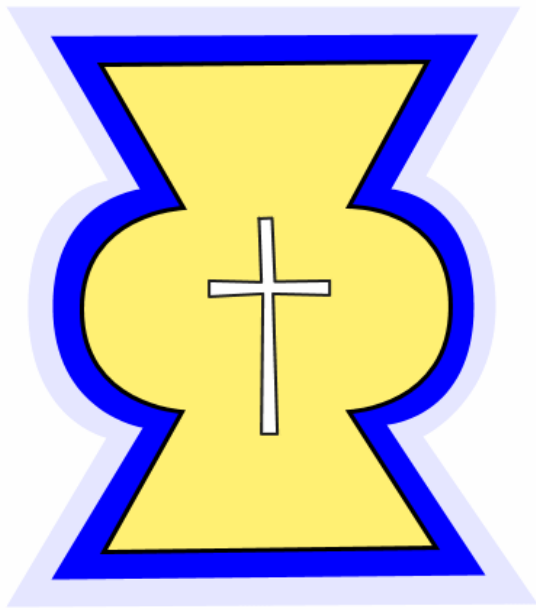
The Black Colouring represents that which is dead to God

The Gold Colouring represents that which belongs to the Sons of God





9



The Resurrection
of a Son of God.

Introduction

New converts to Christianity are spoken of in the Bible as babes in Christ, with hearts full of desire for understanding, and minds equally full of problems and questions. Peter (1Pet 2v2) tells us that what they need is the sincere milk of the Word, if they are to grow to a healthy maturity. When they are grown up there is solid food for them too; but until then they need milk and not meat.

Many young Christians have suffered life-long spiritual indigestion or the diseases that spring from malnutrition owing to a wrong diet in their early days. Those who are ignorant of the Scriptures can be misled by any teacher with strong personality, and need to acquire for themselves that full assurance of understanding of which St. Paul speaks. (Col 2v2, Heb 10v22)

It is of the first importance therefore to know what is meant by the milk of the Word; and our Father has left us in no doubt on this matter, but has detailed it for us in Heb 5v11 to 6v2.

The Foundation Truths, the A.B.C. of Christianity, are seven in number, Repentance from dead works, Faith towards God, Baptism in Water, Baptism in Spirit, the Laying on of hands, Resurrection of the dead, Eternal Judgment. Only after he has learnt the truth in these simple matters is the Christian baby ready to consider the harder problems and deeper wisdom of God's Revelation.

These studies are designed primarily therefore to lead the new convert to those passages of the Bible in which these matters are most simply handled, that he may see for himself the Scriptural basis of his faith, and be fully persuaded in his own mind. In the hour of battle a man cannot stand upon another's teaching, but only upon those parts of the Truth that he has made his own.

It will soon become apparent to him that these Foundation Truths show the steps by which His Heavenly Father plans to change a "man born of woman," who was rightly at home on this earth, into a mature "Son of God" who longs for His Heavenly home and destiny.

I am indeed grateful to Mr. George Newsholme (Editor of Redemption Tidings), who has not only read the manuscript, but has also written the preface and helped in the final form of this booklet. My hearty thanks are also due to Miss E. F. Dodgson, who patiently typed and retyped the manuscript, and to my wife for the designs of the diagrams. May the Lord be able to use it to His own refreshment, Prov 25v13, and to the blessing of His people.

Chapter I: Repentance From Dead Works

The first Foundation Truth contains the arresting phrase "Dead works," which is aptly illustrated by our Lord's words, "Let the dead bury their dead," or St. Paul's phrase, "... is dead while she liveth." Fully to understand these words we need to consider the birth and constitution of a "man born of woman." (Luke 9v60, 1Tim 5v6)

The First Birth

He is tripartite; body, soul and spirit. His body comes from his parents, his spirit comes from God, and his soul, i.e., himself, is the result of this union of body and spirit, a new individual without experience of any kind, but good because made by God Himself. Man is a soul, he possesses a spirit and a body, the former whereby he can contact the spirit world, and the latter with which to enter and appreciate the material world. The soul, if it loses its body, is dead to this world; if it loses its spirit, it is dead to God and the Heavenly world. If it loses both, it is dead to both worlds, conscious only of the isolation and hopeless darkness of death. Gen 2v7—margin "lives," Num 16v22, Isaiah 57v16, Eccles 12v7, 1Thess 5v23, Matt 11v11, Heb 4v12, John 3v6, 1Cor 2v10-16, Job 10v21-22, Heb 2v15, Luke 12v5.

Every child therefore that is born into this world is alive to God through the spirit which He has given it, and alive to this world through the body which it has inherited through its parents. Its spirit is, of course, perfect like all God's works; but its flesh, coming down ultimately from Adam, is imperfect, and liable in varying degrees to desires which are sinful.

These desires, however, are not in the soul of the baby but in its flesh, and therefore this "sin in the flesh" is in the Bible phrase "Dead," i.e., harmless, and the child itself is alive to God through its spirit with which He has endowed it. So that looking at young children, our Lord said that of such was the Kingdom of Heaven; and exhorted us to become like them; which He could hardly have done if their souls had been as a matter of fact incapable of goodness, totally depraved, and fit only for eternal punishment, as so many Christians have thought they ought to believe! God's mercies are over all His Works, and the child of even the wickedest parents is not born without the gracious gift of spirit from the Creator.

Every baby then is born alive to God and well pleasing to Him, and receives grace from God through its own spirit, which God has given it, and its Guardian Angel whom God has appointed over it.

NB The phrase "Original Sin," which, like that other phrase "born in sin," is not scriptural, would be shorn of its misleading implications if it were changed into the Scriptural language "Dead sin in the flesh." Every theory of "Original sin" which locates the effect of Adam's sin in the soul of his descendants, instead of in their flesh, or implies that the child is born without grace from God or in any way "Dead to God" is to be unhesitatingly rejected.

The first diagram therefore shows the condition in which all "men born of women" come into the world. (Rom 7v8-8v3, Mark 10v14, Matt 18v1-10, Psalm 51:5, Job 14v1-4, Job 15v14) See Diagram 1—Man born of Woman.

Note on various erroneous doctrines

There are several erroneous teachings about the fall of man, which crept into the Church at a very early date and should be noted at this point; since not only have they led to wrong practices, but they have also clouded the minds of men and dimmed the glory of God, presenting such a picture of Him that, while men could still fear Him as the Almighty, they could neither respect His justice nor discover His love.

The soul of a baby is not hopelessly corrupt because of Adam's sin; it is its flesh only which is tainted; its soul and spirit are pure, being made by God. Mark 10v14, Isaiah 57v3-7,16, Eccles 7v29, 12v7, Num 16v22.

A child is not born dead in sin, alienated from God and without knowledge of Him. It is the sin which is dead; the child is alive. Rom 1v19-21, Acts 17v27, Matt 18v3-5, Rom 7v8-9.

God (a) does not impute the sin of Adam to his children, nor (b) does He impute the righteousness of Christ to a Christian.

(a) In Ezek 18, God clearly teaches that a man dies for his own sin, not his father's; and that it would be wholly unrighteous to blame one man for the sin of another. (2Chron 25v3-4)

(b) Neither is the righteousness of Christ imputed to anyone; it is Christ's death, which is imputed, suffered on our behalf. The moral perfection of Christ cannot be imputed to anyone; but it is imparted as we obey Him. Each man will receive the reward of his own deeds. (2Cor 3v18, 5v10)

NB The Greek word *dikaiousune* has two meanings: (a) Justification when brought to trial by the Law; this can take place in two ways;

1) The evidence shows you not guilty; and you are discharged;

2) The evidence shows you guilty, but you, or someone else, pay the penalty. Thus the convict who has done his time is "justified" and no longer a convict: it is libellous to speak of him as such! (b) A moral character, which deserves praise because, so far from breaking the Law, it goes the "second mile."

Diagram 2a Is the condition of the sinner when saved; he is "freed from the Law." But God wants him to live so that he becomes, **diagram 2b** and is "saved with glory." (2Tim 2v10, 1Pet 1v17, Heb 2v10)

It is not true that God is angry with us, for our "fallen nature," and would be justified in condemning us to Hell for it. Out of this slander upon the justice of God has arisen the erroneous practice of Infant Baptism, which is an attempt to counter the supposed danger by means of Baptismal regeneration. If it were true that we were so born that sin is inevitable, not only would repentance be impossible, but we should have a perfect excuse for our sin, and could not possibly feel guilty. Historically and practically the doctrine that sin is inevitable always leads to this very frame of mind, an acquiescence in it as a regrettable necessity: *humanum est errare*! God, of course, could not and does not, condemn us for what we cannot avoid; neither could men repent of actions which were forced upon them by their nature. They could only grieve over the fact that they were so badly created: and for that they would of necessity blame, not themselves, but their Creator. Gen 18v23-25, Rom 3v5-6, Rom 5v13.

NB1 The fact that all men do as a matter of fact sin is not due to some taint of "original" sin in their nature which makes sin inevitable; but as the Bible says, to the fact that "all like sheep go astray." It is the herd instinct and the fear of standing alone which operates so powerfully. We are to confess Christ before men.

Sin is not due to some flaw in the soul, but simply to the possession of free will. Both Adam and Eve sinned, though from different motives, in spite of the fact that they were created completely perfect in body, soul and spirit. Lucifer also sinned, though perfect in all his ways from the Creation. Perfection of creation is no safeguard against sin! (Eccles 7v29, Ezek 28v12-15, Isaiah 53v6, Gen 2v5-25)

Neither is perfection of surroundings a preventative. The first sins both in Heaven and Earth were committed under ideal conditions.

NB2 Even perfect flesh, such as Adam and Eve possessed, was endowed by God with desires, which unless curbed by the soul would lead it to sin. The realisation that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasant to look at is put first in the motives that led to Eve's sin! The stronger the bodily instinct, the greater the danger of misuse. The strongest and most lovely of all physical instincts implanted by God, the sexual, is also the most dangerous unless ruled by the soul. The perfect flesh of the perfect man contained within it the possibility of temptation and sin just as inevitably as did the fallen flesh of Adam! The only safety of the most perfect flesh lies in its control by a wise and loving soul. (Gen 3v6, Matt 4v2-4, Matt 26v41, 1Cor 9v27)

NB3 While it is true that Cain and Abel came into the world with smaller opportunities than Adam and Eve, since God no longer visited them intimately in the garden, it is also true (a) that God did not again ask so high a standard and (b) that Enoch walked with God and that Noah pleased Him. It is true that the fall of Adam brought the whole race down to a lower level of possibilities; it is also true that the lower level was capable of achievement, and that God could still be pleased with men. From Adam justification was no longer by works but by faith; and the rite of blood-sacrifice for sin was well known from Abel, who was the first of a long line of men who have pleased God by their faith. (Acts 10v35, Ezek 14v14, 2Chron 20v7, Heb 11v1-40, Hab 2v4)

"As in Adam all die even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1Cor 15v22), does not refer to our souls, but to our bodies. If it did refer to our souls, it would be a powerful argument for Universalism! Adam died physically not because he sinned, but because God drove him from the Tree of Life; otherwise in spite of his sin he would have lived for ever. For the same reason all men suffer physical death. Hence all, including the wicked, will be raised from death by Christ. The death of this resurrection body in the Lake of Fire, which is the second time a man loses his body, i.e., his second death, will be for a man's own unrepented and hence unforgivable sin: and will be eternal, leaving the soul in hopeless impotence and anguish. (Acts 24v15, John 5v28-29, Rev 20v11-15, Rom 2v1-9, Mark 9v43-50, Gen 3v22-24)

Moral Law

There comes a time, however, when moral law enters into the soul of a child, either from instruction in God's Word, or in the ordinary course of nature. When this has happened, and the child begins to pass moral judgment upon others, then sin in the flesh, which has hitherto been dead and harmless, comes alive, and proceeds to entice and try to deceive the soul, as in the Garden of Eden. Rom 7v9-11, 1Cor 15v56, James 1v14-15, Rom 4v15, Rom 5v13, Rom 2v1-16, Matt 7v1-5. See Diagram 2—The Moral Struggle.

Note on Temptation

It is essential to realise that temptation is not sin. God did not intend Adam and Eve to live without temptation; since it is only by resisting it that frail innocence can develop into strong purity, and learn not only to love good but also to hate evil. Accordingly Satan was allowed to enter Eden; Job was left in his hand "without cause," the Israelites were led through that great and terrible wilderness, Jesus was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil; the disciples were handed over to be sifted as wheat.

The surest way to throw a maid into the arms of her lover is to speak against him! Every instinct of protection and loyalty rises up in passionate rejection of the imputation. So should it have been with Adam and Eve in the garden when Satan slandered their friend and Creator. They should have risen up in defence of Him they loved, clung the closer for the attack, and conceived such a hatred for Satan that he would no longer have dared to enter their garden. Such, no doubt, was the design of the Almighty, but it was frustrated by the folly and disloyalty of the perfect creatures, Adam and Eve! Eve allowed herself to be deceived by Satan's innuendoes, and Adam put his wife's companionship before his God's; as many another man has done, since the first one said, "I have married a wife and therefore I cannot come." It was God's greatest gift which brought about the downfall of the perfect man! Solomon, the wisest man, owed his downfall to his inability to use the gifts of God aright. It was Lucifer's wisdom and ability, the gifts of God, which fed the pride which caused his ruin. Every blessing, indeed, from God has in itself the seeds of temptation: and history is full of men whose heart was lifted up to rebellion by the very gifts, which should have made them grateful. (2Chron 18v1, 2Chron 26v16, 32v25)

Temptation is not sin; the hour of fiercest temptation can be the hour of greatest purity. By allowing us to inherit from our parents a body from which temptation is inevitable, God has not been unfair to us, but has given us the opportunity by resisting such temptation, of establishing ourselves for ever in His love and service. When God gave men and angels freewill He made it possible for them to disobey any command He might impose and to embark on a life of selfishness instead of love. Hence temptation was possible in Heaven before sin occurred. (Ezek 28v11-15.)

The fact that we are tempted, however severely, whether by the flesh, the world, or the Devil, is not accepted by God as an excuse for sinning. We are indeed to welcome, though not to invite, temptation, albeit with fear and trembling humility, for the overcoming of temptation is the royal road to the Throne of God. (James 1v2-4,12-15, Heb 2v18, 4v15, Luke 22v28-32, 1Pet 1v6-7, Gen 3, Deut 8v2-3,15-16, Matt 4v1-11, Job, chapters 1 and 2, Gal 6v1, 1Cor 10v13)

It is obvious that temptation and sin are permanent possibilities of a "free will"; by which we mean that a man can choose his own course, whether it be good or evil, even if he lacks the power to put it into action. The whole aim of God is therefore to do away with sin, not by excluding temptation but by making the soul immune to it; as the body becomes immune to disease not by elimination of bacilli but by the setting up of a sufficient resistance to them (Heb 1v9). Only the man who hates evil is safe against temptation. Therefore God has allowed evil great liberty in this world, that by awful experience of its effects, its deceitful promises might be exposed, and mankind might learn to dread it above all things and to achieve an iron determination never to commit it. (Luke 15v17, Heb 1v9, Psalm 119v97-104, Heb 12v4)

Note on Conscience

Conscience is not the voice of God, neither is it necessarily pleasing to God or according to His Law. It is that standard of conduct which a man lays down for his neighbour, to which he is himself accountable. This standard is formed by a man (a) out of his own heart in automatic reaction to his neighbour's acts, e.g., the last six of the ten commandments are the involuntary response of human nature to the selfishness of another which threatens its happiness "Thou shalt not steal" pours out of the lips of the man who is being robbed: "thou shalt not commit adultery" is the cry of the man whose wife is unfaithful: "thou shalt not covet" is the instinctive thought in the heart of the man who sees his neighbour eyeing his poultry too lovingly! (b) Out of the opinions of the society in which he lives. (c) Out of any revelation which he may have received of God. By this and by this alone will he be judged. (Rom 2v1-16, 5v13, 14v5, Luke 12v47-48, James 4v17, 1Cor 4v4, Acts 26v9, Matt 7v1-5, Titus 1v15, 1Tim 4v2)

Life or death

It is the peculiar glory of Jesus, which He shares with no other, that though tempted in all points like as we are yet He never yielded to the solicitations of sin, from whatever quarter they might come. Wherefore for this reason God has given Him the Name which is above every name. (John 8v46, Luke 4v1-13, 22v28, Heb 2v14-18, 4v14-15, 5v7-10, Phil 2v5-11)

It has been the tragedy of the human race on the contrary, that like sheep we have all turned to our own way and gone astray; so that, instead of growing strong in character by continuous and successful struggle against temptation, we have become the weak slaves of sin, and found out that the soul that sinneth it shall die. Let it be noted that only a living soul can die; a dead soul is already dead. Hence the salvation of God finds us in the condition of diagram 3, not from compulsion but of choice. The tragedy of Eden is continually repeated, so that each soul having once turned aside finds itself a captive, cut off from God by the death of the spirit; and able, and at first at any rate contented,

only to live in the world of sense through its body. The whole life of such a person is described in the vivid phrase "dead works" or the life of a man dead to God.

There is a short story by H. G. Wells entitled "The Country of the Blind," which is an apt illustration of this condition. In this tale, a man with eyes strays into the kingdom of The Blind and is taken captive. The fact that he can see, however, is not a help to him but a hindrance, since it rouses the jealousy and dislike of the blind, who prefer to think that no such thing as sight exists. In the end they will allow him to live in their midst only upon the condition that they may put his eyes out and make him as one of themselves. So would the world put out the Christian's eyes, and pull him down into their chosen darkness. (John 3v19, Rom 1v18-21, Isaiah 53v6, Luke 9v60, John 8v31-34, Rom 1v18-32, 5v12, 6v12-16, 7v9-11, Gal 5v15-16, Eph 2v1-3, 1Tim 5v6, Ezek 18v4, James 1v14-15) See Diagram 3—Death of a Soul.

Note on Death of the Spirit

Be it noted that a dead spirit is not an annihilated or non-existent spirit, but one which no longer performs the duty for which it was intended, that is, to contact God. A "dead spirit" though unable any longer to contact God, can yet get into touch with other dead spirits, both angels and demons, which inhabit the first Heaven and the earth: viz., the black line in the diagrams. (Eph 2v2, 6v12, 2Cor 4v4, 1Cor 10v19-21, Isaiah 8v19, 1Sam 28, 2Kings 21v6, 1Tim 4v1, 1John 4v1-3)

Repentance

The consideration of the phrase "dead works" has made it clear that man's estrangement from God is due in each case to his own deliberate act.

He who hides his action from his fellow man whom he can see, hides it also from the righteous God whom he cannot see; and comforts himself for having done so by some protective covering, e.g., "There is no God," or "God doth not see," "You can't expect to be too good while in the flesh," or even "God doesn't mind sin so long as you are saved."

The modern sinner hides himself from the true God as definitely as did Adam and Eve; and the various religions of the world have as their motive the desire to pretend that there is no righteous God who has revealed Himself to us, but only gods who leave us free to do evil. (Psalm 14v1, 36v1, 50v21, Eccles 7v16, Rom 1v23, 2Cor 4v4)

It is clear then that, until he is willing to retrace that step and come into relationship with God again, even God cannot help him. This willingness to change his attitude towards God is called repentance; and, since nothing can be done without it, all God's efforts are lovingly turned to bringing it about. The Holy Spirit uses in each case the most appropriate means to appeal to the heart of the one with whom He is dealing. It may be fear of judgment, fear of consequences, dreadful experiences of an ungodly life, revelation of the love of God in sending His Son to die for sinners, experience of His power in signs and wonders, the hope of eternal life instead of the fear of death. The variety of the means He uses is as great as that of the hearts with which He has to deal, but the end is always the same, to persuade the ungodly to be willing to come into contact with a living God, to be reconciled to the One they have distrusted. (John 16v8, Mark 1v15, Acts 9v32-35, 8v6-8, 16v27-30, 17v30-31, 2v37, Luke 11v31-32, 13v1-9, Rom 5v8, John 3v16)

NB1 God does give space for repentance, but does not wait beyond the appointed time. (Gen 6v1-7, Luke 13v1-9, Rev 2v21, Heb 12v17, 6v4-8, 10v26-30, Rom 2v1-11, Dan 4v27-31, Jonah 3v4, Jer 18v7-10, 2Chron 36v14-16, Eccles 8v11)

NB2 Repentance always leads to action. (Jonah 3, Luke 3v8, Acts 2v38, Luke 15v17-19, 19v8-9)

It includes hatred of sin, sorrow for those we have wronged, and a desire to put things right; remorse is sorrow for oneself, because one's sin has been exposed and must be paid for. (Matt 27v3-5, 2Sam 17v23)

Thus the first Foundation Truth is illustrated by—Diagram 4—The Repentant Soul.

Chapter II: Faith Towards God

The new Birth

As soon as the Holy Spirit sees that the soul is willing to believe the truth about God, He enables it to do so by begetting it a new spirit. Spiritual things are only discerned by spirit, and therefore the Lord told Nicodemus that what he needed was not teaching, but a living spirit. The body and spirit might be compared to a couple of radio sets for receiving and transmitting, the one tuned into the seen world, the other to the unseen: the soul being entirely dependent upon them for contact with either world. A room may be filled with all kinds of music, plays, talks from all over the world: yet its occupants are in complete ignorance of the fact, since they have never possessed or even heard of a wireless set! So it is with both spiritual and natural things. The world is full of sounds, but this one is

ignorant of them as he was born deaf: in a similar way, heaven is shut to the man whose spirit is dead, since he has lost that part which alone can receive impressions from the spiritual world; and his one overwhelming need is that this part should be restored, i.e., born again, so that once more he may be in contact. (John 3v5, 1Cor 2v14)

The more the radio is used the wider the knowledge of the outside world. There are those who might be said to live at their radio: we are expected likewise to live in the spirit! Some radios have a wider range and more perfect reception than others: so the spirit of Christ is more sensitive than the spirit of a servant and opens to us a much wider range of understanding of spiritual realities. (Rom 8v15)

NB1 It is the spirit which is born again, not the soul; the soul, which has already lived in the human family, is adopted into the Royal Family of God, and has to learn how to live in its new surroundings. (John 3v1-8, Eph 1v5, 4v11-16, Rom 6v15-23, Gal 4v6, 2Pet 1v4, 1Tim 3v15, 2Cor 3v18)

NB2 That, which a Son of God receives at his new birth, is not the Holy Spirit Himself, but that which is born of Him, holy spirit. The Holy Spirit Himself is normally given through the laying on of the hands of one in whose body He has taken up His abode, and this happens after the new birth. The Holy Spirit is a person; the holy spirit, which He gives at the new birth, is a thing, just as the body, which the parents give, is a thing, not a person. (John 3v6, Acts 8v17, 9v17, 19v6, Eph 1v13 "after")

So the Apostles received holy spirit and were born again on the night of the Resurrection. After that they were continually in the Temple praising and blessing God. It was, however, not until the day of Pentecost that they received the Holy Spirit Himself, who immediately manifested His presence in a miraculous fashion. Much confusion has arisen through the failure to differentiate between the Person and the thing. Since there are no capital letters or other ways of distinguishing between them in the original MSS., every translator is free to use his own judgment in the matter, and so mistakes have been made. (John 20v22, Acts 2v4, Luke 24:53)

All Christians then have that which the Holy Spirit begets, and all Christians have also the Holy Spirit Himself "with them," for it was He who brought them to repentance and begat them again. It is, however, those who are baptised in the Spirit who have Him "in them." (Rom 8v9, John 14v17, Acts 19v2-6.)

The body of every Son of God is a temple of the Holy Ghost: but that temple is empty until the Spirit enters it, of which entry there is always a clear sign. Even as the Tabernacle and Temple were first prepared and built, and after that manifestly filled with the glory of God. (1Cor 3v16-17, 6v19, Exodus 40v33-34, 1Kings 8v10-11, Mal 3v1)

The Gift of God

Faith is therefore the gift of God, because it is the result of the new spirit, which is born; just as hearing is the result of an ear, or sight of an eye. A man believes because he has been given a living spirit; and because he has such a spirit he cannot help believing, even if for some selfish reason he may wish to do so. Only by spiritual suicide can he kill this spirit and become "twice dead." In such cases he knows what he has done and lives in apprehension of fiery judgment (1Pet 1v23-2v2, Eph 2v8-10, Heb 6v4-8, 10v26-29, Jude 12)

It is essential that faith should be the gift of God and not a human ability. Were it not so, a man might be discouraged by the thought that he had always found faith difficult, and was in this way handicapped: but, since it is the gift of God, all men may have it, for God gives it freely to all who will accept it. Indeed, men whose thoughts have been far from God have found themselves suddenly believing in Christ so that to their great surprise the whole course of their lives has been changed. God has made it possible for the most difficult and unlikely soul to believe, by giving him spirit, the source of faith, that through which the unseen is apprehended. The soul by itself is not in touch with spiritual things: but as soon as its spirit is quickened by God, the soul finds itself believing in what before seemed to it foolishness. (1Cor 2v10-16.)

The Food of Faith

The food of faith is the Word of God. Without regular feeding, the spirit grows weakly and eventually dies, just as the body cannot remain alive without its proper food. Christian weakness is due generally, not to inherent inability or wickedness, but simply to malnutrition or positive starvation. This God-given food rightly used, is sufficient to ensure spiritual victory on earth, and to give us our inheritance in heaven. Like the body, the spirit needs not only food but also exercise. This exercise is most naturally taken in prayer. A spirit, which is fed by the Word, soon grows strong enough to engage in prayer and to exercise spiritual gifts. (Matt 4v4, 2Tim 3v14-17, 1Tim 4v13-16, Deut 8v3, 1Pet 2v1-3, Acts 20v32, Jer 15v16, John 6v26-63, Job 23v12, Ezek 2v8-3v3)

The Fight of Faith

The fight of faith is allowed by God to bring us to a state of strength and purity. Faith, the gift of God, brings justification; tried faith covers us with glory. (Job, chapters 1 and 2, James 1v3,12, 1Pet 1v7, Luke 22v28-29, 1Tim 6v12, 2Tim 4v7, Eph 6v12, Matt 4v1-11)

The Rest of Faith

The effect of such a tried faith is peace of mind, and the ability to depend not upon ourselves, but upon God. (Heb 3v13-4v11, Rom 5v1-11, 1Pet 1v21)

Life in the food

There is no lesson more vital to the young convert than the realisation of his dependence upon the Bread which came down from Heaven. Babies grow, not because of their own health or strength, but simply because they are fed. The life is in the food. The Christian is entirely dependent upon his living bread. (Cf. Psalm 1)

NB1 The New Birth is wholly a gracious act of God, and is not the result of any action on man's part. It is not the consequence, but the cause of faith. (John 1v13, James 1v18, 1Pet 1v3, Eph 2v8-10, cf. Luke 6v10)

This living faith, given by God through the New Birth, is what God counts as justification. It is of the heart, and not just the intellect; and includes:

(a) An understanding and grateful acceptance of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, so that we believe as He did about sin and its consequences and atonement; we are His brethren, like-minded on these vital subjects. (Isaiah 53, Luke 24v25-28,44-47, Rom 3v21, 5v21, 10v9-10, Gal 3v1-15, 1Pet 1v17-21)

(b) Actions, which proceed naturally from it. (Matt 3v8, Luke 19v8, James 2v14-26, Mark 16v16, Acts 2v38, 8v36-38, 10v47-48, 19v18-19, Rom 1v5, 16v26, Gal 5v6, 2Cor 4v13, Heb 11)

NB2 The New Birth does not put the believer back into the position in which he was born. Then he was "born of woman" with the spirit of a servant of God, looking upon God as his Creator and Lord, and upon this earth as his natural habitat. At death he expected to go to Hades, an experience which he dreaded, since he was cut off from God's presence for a season through the loss of his spirit; but his hope was a resurrection to life upon the earth at the last day, when God should restore all things. He was in fact of the earth earthy, for God had created Adam and Eve to live for ever upon this earth through the Tree of Life.

At the New Birth, however, he becomes a child of God with the same spirit of Sonship that Christ has. Earth is no longer his habitat, but Heaven. At the death of his body, since he retains his spirit, he goes, not to Hades, but to Paradise and the presence of God; and at the resurrection he will receive a body fitted for life, not on the earth, but in Heaven. His fellowship is no longer with man born of woman, but through the help of the Holy Spirit of God, with his Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the rest of the Royal Family of God in Heaven and earth. Although the New Birth is an experience which is highly individualistic, yet the effect of it is to place this lonely person into a family in which he should grow to maturity. (Rom 8v9-15, John 8v35, Heb 11v40, 2v14-15, 2Tim 1v10, Matt 11v11, Luke 16v19-31, 2Kings 20v1-3 (contrast Phil 2v21-23, Acts 7v55-59), Rev 5v9-11, Acts 3v21, John 11v24-26, Job 10v21-22, 19v25-27, Ezek 37v11-14, Dan 12v2, Heb 12v22-24, Phil 3v17-21, Col 3v1-4, 1John 1v3, Matt 12v46-50, 23v9) See Diagram 5—The New Birth

Chapter III: Baptism In Water

Baptism in water, as a divine ordinance connected with repentance and forgiveness of sins, was already known to Israel through John the Baptist; he announced it as a preparation for the coming Messiah, Who should baptise in the Holy Ghost, and also open the Kingdom of Heaven. (Matt 3v1-12, Mark 1v1-8, Luke 3v1-17, John 1v26,27,33)

Christian Baptism, however, had an even deeper meaning added to it after the death and resurrection of Christ.

(a) It is the way appointed by God whereby we wash away in water the sins which God has forgiven through the blood of Jesus, and receive a glorious consciousness of complete cleansing from the past. (Eph 1v7, Rev 7v14, Acts 22v16, 1Pet 3v21, Mark 16v16, Titus 3v5, Rev 1v5 (R.V.), Heb 10v22, Psalm 103v12)

(b) It is also an act, which typifies the death and burial of the old worldly unbeliever and the rising up of a new spiritual believer to live in a new and holy fellowship, that is, that of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is the birth of a sanctification which is to grow to perfection. (Matt 28v19, Rom 6v1-11, 1v17, Col 2v12, 3v1-4, 1John 1v1-3, 2Cor 7v1, 3v18, Heb 12v6-14, John 1v16)

NB1 It is a definite command of both Christ and His Apostles. (Mark 16v16, Matt 28v19, Acts 2v38, 10v48)

NB2 Being associated with salvation and the washing away of sins, it was also treated as a matter, not of choice, but of urgency. (Acts 2v41, 8v36, 16v33, 9v18, 22v16, Mark 16v16)

NB3 The Christian is freed from sin, but not from temptation. (John 15v3, 8v31, Rom 6v1-8:4, 1Cor 10v1-13, James 1v2-4)

NB4 Christian Baptism, being in the Name of the Spirit, as well as of the Father and the Son, must include some instruction about the Spirit of God, and so paves the way for the next Foundation Truth, the Baptism in the Spirit. (Matt 28v19) See Diagram 6—Water Baptism

Chapter IV: The Baptism In The Spirit

The Baptism in the Spirit is a phrase used in Scripture to describe the experience wherein the Holy Spirit enters the Temple of God, i.e., the body of a Son of God. The Holy Spirit, who brought the sinner to repentance and begat him again into the family of God, desires a still closer union, whereby He that was "with us" now enters "into us." As an evidence that He has entered the believer's body, He begins to use the most unruly part of it, i.e., the tongue, to speak in a language of which the believer is ignorant; thus making it manifest that there are now two occupants of the one body.

The Baptism of the Spirit is spoken of by John Baptist and Christ as a vital element in the work of Salvation He came to procure. (John 1v29-33, 7v37-39, 16v7-15, 14v17, 2v21, Luke 24v49, Acts 1v4-8, 2v3-21, 10v44-48, 11v15-17, 19v1-6, Mark 16v17, 1Cor 3v16, 6v19, 2Cor 6v16.)

The actual Baptism in the Spirit is, however, only the initial experience of a fellowship, which is to be eternal; and the initial evidence is meant to be followed by further manifestations of the Spirit's presence. The New Testament Church is a society of the Sons of God, in whose bodies dwells the same Holy Spirit of God, manifesting His Almighty presence by the various miraculous Gifts of the Spirit. (1Cor 12v1-14v40)

The Church, the present earthly Body of Christ, who is its head, is therefore to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God, even as was Christ's own earthly body, so that the will of God may continue to be done by the Spirit of God in the Sons of God. (John 14v16-26, 15v26, 2Cor 3v17-18, Acts 4v31, 5v3,32, 7v51,52, 8v29,39, 13v2. etc.). See Diagram 7—The Spirit-filled Christian

NB1 In the Old Covenant it was the Holy Spirit who laid hold of the chosen Servants of God, even against their desire, that they might perform the task allotted to them. The instances of Moses, Amos, Jonah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel spring to the mind.

In the New Covenant the privilege is opened to all the Sons of God at their own desire. (Exodus 3 & 4, Jer 1v4-7, Ezek 3v14, Jonah, Amos 7v10-15, John 7v39, Acts 2v38-39, 5v32, Gal 4v6)

NB2 The Holy Spirit comes as Comforter, Guide, Teacher, Co-Worker and Lord. We are to please Him, therefore, and not to cause Him grief. The great essential for all who seek the Baptism in the Spirit is a determination to obey Him when He has entered. Failure to do so, and continuous stubbornness, will lead to the disaster which overtook Saul. (1Sam 16v14, Josh 5v13, Eph 2v22, 4v30, Heb 6v3-8, 10v26-31, 1Tim 1v19)

NB3 The Baptism in the Spirit is not a means whereby the believer is sanctified; it is the means whereby the already sanctified believer is enabled to do the miraculous works of God, by the power of the indwelling Spirit of God. (Acts 1v8, Luke 24v49, 1Cor 12-14, John 5v19-30, Luke 4v14, Matt 12:28)

NB4 Sanctification is the effect of the Word of God on the obedient hearer. As the true state of affairs enters the believer's heart, he is more and more powerfully drawn not only to forsake sin, but also to throw himself heart and soul into his Master's business. For sanctification is not the cultivation of one's own soul, which leads to Pharisaism, but the whole-hearted interest in the souls of others. (Luke 15v25-30, Isaiah 65v1-5, John 8v31-2, 15v3, 17v17, Eph 5v26)

Chapter V: The Laying On Of Hands

The teaching of Scripture is that spirit is a divine substance which can come direct from Heaven, or be imparted by physical contact with one in whom the Spirit of God is. As such a substance it is capable of having a physical effect upon the material substance of which the world is composed; so that a house can be shaken by it, or a new eye formed.

It is also clear that spirit is subdivided into different types, even as light is composed of different colours. So that, when Jacob was blessing the sons of Joseph, it mattered which hand was placed upon which boy, since the blessings were different, and came through different hands. (Gen 48v13-19.) So also the "divisions of spirit" of Heb 2v4 refer to

this difference; each separate kind of spirit carrying in itself the blessing that was to be given. The same thought is given in "the seven spirits of God" of Rev 1v4.

The Laying on of Hands, i.e., physical contact—even of the whole body in the raising of the dead—was the usual way whereby spirit was imparted, though at times the unction was so great that even without actual contact those near a spirit-filled person would receive it. Even inanimate objects could be so impregnated with spirit as to convey it to a person at a distance. (Acts 8v18, 9v12-17, 5v15, 19v12, 20v10, Matt 14v36, Mark 5v27-30, 2Kings 13v21, 1Kings 17v21, 2Kings 4v34-35)

The following are typical of the blessings imparted by the Laying on of Hands:

The Baptism in the Spirit and the Healing of the Body. (Acts 9v17, 8v18, 19v6, 28v8, Mark 16v18)

The spirit of Wisdom. (Deut 34v9)

An unspecified gift. (1Tim 4v14, 2Tim 1v6)

A future career. (Gen 48v13-19)

The impartation of spirit through the Laying on of Hands means that the blesser is the poorer and the blessed the richer for the transaction (Luke 5v17, 6v12-19, 8v46), and therefore the blesser needs a continual refilling if he is to continue imparting. Hence, the Lord's habit of retiring for prayer in the midst of such ministry, e.g., Luke 5v16 (Greek—"kept retiring in the desert places and praying").

In all these matters we have the example of our Lord, who laid hands not only upon the sick (Mark 1v40-41), but also upon the babies (Mark 10v13-16)

While it is true and scriptural that spiritual blessing is imparted through the Laying on of Hands, it is equally true that God could and did dispense with any such medium when it so pleased Him, e.g., Acts 1v2-4, 10v44-45, John 4v50, Matt 8v8-13, John 11v43

Since spirit in all its varieties can therefore be imparted through physical contact, it is clear that the Laying on of Hands for such a gracious purpose is indeed one of the Foundation Truths, to be not only understood, but also put into practice. Here again, as in everything pertaining to God, the safeguard against misuse is an honest heart.

By the act of the Laying of Hands you cannot impart what is not in you; and if you attempt to do so the result will be failure and disappointment. Matt 7v22 makes it clear that many will claim to have served God in the spirit who never knew Him. It is for this reason that care is necessary in all things pertaining to the spirit life; just as Israel needed to be watchful in Canaan (Josh 8v7,9,14). It was because of the dangers that awaited them in Canaan that the people refused to go over. Many Christians have been kept from a full Pentecostal experience by the same motive. They are unable to trust the Lord to see them through the undoubted dangers, and prefer to play for safety. (Num 13 & 14)

Chapter VI: The Resurrection Of The Dead

Belief in the Resurrection of the body is implicit in all Bible history. It lay at the very root of the Patriarchal and Jewish theology. The promises of God, which had no fulfilment in the life time of those who believed them, could only be received and enjoyed after a resurrection from the dead; without it they were null and void.

This belief runs all through the Old Testament like a golden thread. Abraham believed in the resurrection of Isaac, the Patriarchs died in this hope; Elijah and Elisha saw the dead raised to life before their eyes; Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Job all spoke of it with confidence. It was the only hope of Martha in the hour of Lazarus' death. (Heb 11v9-21, 1Kings 17v22, 2Kings 4v34, Job 19v25-27, Isaiah 26v19, Ezek 37v1-14, Dan 12v2, John 11v24)

Belief in the resurrection of the body was also the centre of our Lord's life. He spoke repeatedly and confidently of His own death and resurrection, and of what He would do afterwards. It was lack of this faith in His disciples, which so bitterly disappointed Him, and was responsible for their own collapse.

Their own teaching after the Ascension of the Lord centred round His Death and Resurrection and physical return. The whole Christian position depended entirely upon its truth. For, as St. Paul said, if in this life only we have hope in Christ then we are miserable indeed. Faith to raise the dead persisted in the Apostolic Church, and the last book in the Bible ends with the plain vision of a Universal Resurrection of all the dead of all the ages. It is the only doctrine which can give meaning to a Creation, which relentlessly slides into the darkness of frustration and death. (Luke 9v22-45,

24v25-27,36-47, Mark 16v14, Acts 2v22-36, 4v33, 17v32, 26v18-23, 9v36-42, 20v9-12, Rom 8v19-25 (compare Ecclesiastes), 1Cor 15, Rev 20v13)

There was, however, in the Bible a clear development of revelation concerning the resurrection of the dead. The original design of God, foiled by the Fall, was that man should live for ever upon a perfect earth, their bodies being sustained in health by eating of the Tree of Life continually. It is evident that the Tree contained elements which maintained the body in perfect condition. (Gen 3v22, Ezek 47v12, Rev 22v2) It was the action of God in cutting off the human race from this perfect food, which resulted in the universal death of the body. Nothing short, of this diet will restore earthly bodies to their original health. (Gen 3v22, 1Cor 15v22, Rom 5v12-14)

The Bible speaks of the death of the body as an unmitigated evil. It is the greatest and last enemy of the human race. Not until its final defeat will perfect victory be enjoyed. (1Cor 15v22-28, Rev 20v14) Hades (Greek) or Sheol (Hebrew) was the name of the place to which the souls of those who lost their bodies went. It had two sides to it, as the Lord showed in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, and between those two sides was a great gulf fixed. (Isaiah 14v9, Ezek 32v17-32, Luke 16:19-31)

(a) In the one division were the believers in God. The darkness of their experience was relieved by their faith in the resurrection at the Last Day; so that they might be said to rest in hope, together with Abraham the Father of the believing. Yet dread even of this softened experience kept the Old Testament saints all their lifetime in bondage, and made the hour of death highly unwelcome, since the loss of their spirit cut them off from God, and the loss of their body cut them off from the world. At this Resurrection they would enter into the enjoyment of the promises of God in Palestine during the Millennium. (Heb 2v15, Matt 4v16, Job 10v20-22, 2Kings 20v1-3 (contrast Phil 1v21-23), Luke 1v79, 16v19-23, Psalm 16v9-11, Isaiah 26v19, Ezek 37v1-14, Dan 12v2 (compare Ezek 44v13))

(b) In the other division were:

1) The ignorant dead, who in the darkness of the disembodied state had no ray of hope of any escape from their miserable condition. The final resurrection will come to them as a wholly unexpected shock.

2) The enemies of God whose hearts are filled with expectation of fiery judgment and punishment. (Psalm 73v18-19, Ezek 32v17-32, Mark 9v43-48 (compare Matt 8v29), Matt 25v41, Jude 6 & 7, 2Pet 2v4-9, Heb 10v27)

See Diagrams 8, 8a and 8b

Through Jesus Christ, however, came a mighty revelation, and also a great change in these matters.

(a) He revealed that against those who believed in Him the gates of Hades would not prevail at the death of their body. Since they retained their spirit at death they would not be cut off from the presence of God, but, on the contrary, would enjoy the happiness of Paradise in the spirit, instead of entering the darkness of Hades. He brought life and immortality to light. (John 11v21-26, 8v35-36,39-40,50-52, Matt 16v18, Luke 23v43, Phil 1v21, Acts 7v55-60, 2Tim 1v10, 2Cor 12v1-4.) See Diagram 8c

(b) He also revealed that unlike the Old Testament saints, who looked for an earthly resurrection in an earthly body in which they would enjoy earthly happiness, the Sons of God were called to mount up into Heaven and rule with Christ over the universe, and so would need Heavenly bodies like His. (John 14v2-3, Matt 24v31,47, Heb 3v1, Eph 1v18, 4v1, 1Cor 15v35-54, 1John 3:1-3) See Diagram 9—The Resurrection of a Son of God

(c) The Millennium, therefore, or 1,000 years of Christ's reign over this earth with a rod of iron, was to begin with a double resurrection:

1) That of Israel in earthly bodies to live in Palestine.

2) That of the Royal Family in Heavenly bodies to reign over this earth from the Heavenly Places. (Rev 20v4-6, Job 19v25-27, Isaiah 26v19, Ezek 37v1-14, 44v9-16, Dan 12v2, Phil 3v10-21, Luke 20v35, John 6v40, 1Cor 15v23-24, 1John 3v2)

(d) After the Millennium was over and the last revolt had failed, and after Heaven and earth had passed away, would come the final resurrection of all the dead of all the ages, and after that the Last Judgment, in order that those whose names were written in the Book of Life might enter into the eternity of Peace in the new earth, and those whose names were not found therein might enter into the torment of hell for the same everlasting period of the Ages of the Ages. (Rev 20v11-21, John 5v28-29.)

(e) This final resurrection of the dead and Last Judgment upon the Sea of Glass would be followed by, as it were, a glorious resurrection of the old Heaven and earth into the glory of the New Heaven, the New Jerusalem and the New Earth, in which would be fulfilled the promise of Rev 21v4-5.

Note on Resurrection

A study of ICor 15v35-50 brings out the following points:

That, whereas our present earthly bodies may entirely mislead our neighbours about the state of our souls, our resurrection bodies will correspond to our souls, and so will differ in glory.

That recognition, therefore, will be not solely of the body but more essentially of the personality, e.g., the distorted body of a hunchback will give way to the glorious form of a Son of God. Peter knew that he had been with Moses and Elijah, but he had not recognised their bodies! (Luke 9v33)

NB Our Lord's resurrection body was for the purposes of recognition different from His ascended and glorified body, as shown in Rev 1v13-17.

Chapter VII: Eternal Judgement

God having created the Universe, is also responsible for its well-being. He is, therefore, the judge of all His creatures who possess a moral nature.

He has revealed that this present Creation will pass away and be replaced by a New Heaven and New Earth. There is also in the eternal State to be a Lake of Fire, which was not part of the original creation. (Gen 1v1, Isaiah 65v17, Matt 24v35, Rev 20v11-21v8)

While God, as Judge, is constantly passing judgments upon His creatures, e.g., at the Flood or Nineveh, yet these judgments are temporary and may be revised or revoked, as justice or mercy dictate. There are, however, before the eternal state begins two inexorable judgments which must be universally passed:

(a) The Judgment of whether a person is to exist eternally in the Kingdom of God or in the Lake of Fire.

(b) The Judgment of where in that vast Kingdom of the New Heaven and Earth each one whose name is in the Book of Life is to be placed; whether in Heaven or Earth, and in what position in either. These Judgments, once passed, are unalterable. (Gen 6v7, Jonah 1v2, Jer 18v7,10, Matt 11v21-24, Rev 20v11-15, Mark 16v16, Luke 19v11-27, Heb 12v17)

Originally Heaven was created for Angels and earth for men; but the passage of time and the intrusion of sin have brought about modifications in the original structure. The number of those who dwelt in Heaven and shared in its government has been greatly depleted by the rebellion of Satan and his Angels. God has revealed that it is not His intention to create more Angels to take their places; but, instead, to choose from amongst men those who might become His Sons by adoption, and hold a place higher than that ever offered to Angels, so that Jesus Christ would not be ashamed to call them brethren. (Rev 12v7-9, 21v7, Heb 2v5-18)

Every Christian, being begotten again by the Spirit of God, has this Heavenly calling by right of inheritance; it is his natural development from a babe in Christ to a full-grown Son of God. Yet it is an inheritance which has to be won, and may be forfeited by incompetence; for God cannot put responsibility and honour upon those who are manifestly unable to bear it. (Eph 1v5-11, 4v13, Rom 8v14-19, Phil 3v13-21, Heb 3v1)

The gift of God to His children is their eternal life, and the only qualification for this is faith in Christ, however slight; but God is leading many Sons to glory, if they will come His Way. Glory is something which cannot be given, it must be won. It is a faith, which has stood the trials of life victoriously, an overcoming faith, which will alone be found to praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. There is the possibility of being ashamed from Him at His coming because we have been disobedient or idle or lukewarm. (Heb 2v10, 12v17, 1Pet 1v7, 2Tim 4v6-8, James 1v12, Rev 3v16, 1John 2v28)

The headmaster of a school may give all the pupils a holiday, but he cannot give all the first prize, or, indeed, any prize at all. It is the essence of a prize that its winner has accomplished some feat which has marked him out from his brethren. He has written a better essay or run a faster race than the others, and so has gained a position of honour. The whole value of the prize is that it is the badge of achievement. Glory is that feeling of respect that rises in the minds of men when they hear of what you have done. Even Christ was moved to admiration of the believing centurion and the poor widow woman. (Matt 8v10, Luke 21v3-4)

So far as a Christian is concerned the first of these Judgments, that is, of Life or Death, is passed at his new birth; he then has eternal life, and nothing and nobody can deprive him of it: for God will not allow anything too powerful for

him to come against him. So long, therefore, as he continues to believe in Christ he is justified by faith and a member of God's Kingdom. (John 5v24, 10v27-29, 1Cor 10v13, Rom 4v5, 5v1, 1Pet 1v5)

It is possible that he himself may throw away the gift that was his, and commit spiritual suicide. But this will need the most determined effort and continuous rebellion on his part, and be as unnatural as is physical suicide. There is, of course, nothing that can ever take away from man his freedom of choice; there is a backsliding which knows no repentance, a final shipwreck of faith. (James 5v20, 2Pet 2v20-22, Jude 12, 1Tim 1v19, 6v9, Heb 6v6, 10v26, 1John 5v16-17, Phil 3v18,19, 1Chron 10v13,14)

NB There are two touchstones by which every theological dogma may be tested. The first, that God is Love (1John 4:16); the second, that man's will is free, though not necessarily his actions (Luke 13v34, Gal 5v17)

Rom 7 gives us a vivid picture of a man whose will is set upon righteousness, but whose actions are forced upon him by habitual sin in the flesh. The drunkard, the drug addict are obvious examples of this pitiful condition.

And, on the other hand, the old lag in the cell gives us an illustration of the exact opposite. Here we have a man whose will is all for evil, but whose actions are forced into a blameless mould of stone breaking or oakum picking, such as a saint might copy!

Men have always feared the responsibility which attaches to free will, and longed to believe that God can do something which will relieve us from the burden. Yet the truth remains that although God is Love and will secure us from all outside aggression or internal decay, yet even He is not master of men's wills but only of their actions. Were He so, all would be saved; for He is not willing that any should perish: but the decision of salvation or destruction is man's own decision; and his only eternal security lies in his eternal determination to obey God. It is man's spirit, not his soul, which is born again. His soul, adopted out of his earthly family and introduced into his heavenly family, may yet hanker after the old home and bring God to a dreadful decision. For God having saved a people out of Egypt, after destroyed them that believed not, and they knew God's breach of promise. It is unfortunately true that there are those who by their own choice and with determination have repeated their original transgression, and are therefore twice dead. (Heb 10v26) For the soul that once received a living spirit from the Almighty can also kill it, and again plunge into the darkness from which it once emerged. (2Pet 2v20-22, Jude v5-12, Num 14v34, Heb 3v12-4v2)

On the other hand, while the Christian is sure of Eternal Life, he is not sure of glory. The reward of the Christian is to be allowed to share with His Lord in the Eternal government of His Kingdom; in a word the faithful servant is, as always, rewarded by more work and higher responsibility!

The Judgment of Christians for position in the Kingdom will take place at the Lord's return before the Millennium. All who appear thereat are assured of life in the Kingdom; it is only their position in the Kingdom that is at stake. Full accounts are given of this Judgment that no one may have any misunderstanding in the matter. Verdicts will range from "Well done good and faithful servant" to "Thou wicked servant," from being entrusted with all that belongs to God, to being deprived of what is rightfully one's own, from joy in the Lord's Presence, to being bound hand and foot and cast out of it. Those Christians who have proved by their lives on earth that they are unfit to rule over it, will have to wait in darkness till they can be found a place upon the New Earth, where maybe some faithful servant of the Old Testament will find himself exalted to take his inheritance amongst the Brethren and to rule over him for his good. The Lord has clearly spoken of the weeping and gnashing of teeth amongst those of His children, who, too late, find that they have forfeited the blessing they despised, and must content themselves with second best for Eternity. (Cf. Ezek 44v10-14.)

It is madness to imagine that because we are Sons of God we shall automatically inherit the Government: to forget the "if" of Rom 8v17. We may be Sons who cause shame, who cannot be rightfully entrusted with even the slightest responsibility upon earth, whose lives cause shame to the Family, and are a stumbling block to the world. The greater the responsibility the higher the standard!

The Biblical illustration is the contrast between Abraham sharing God's secrets upon the mountain top, and Lot drinking himself drunk in a lonely cave; both saved, but worlds between them! (Gen 18v17, 19v30) When an Apostle runs his hardest, we may well determine to do our best! (1Cor 9v24-27, Phil 3v10-15) The rationale of this Judgment of the Sons of God by the Son of God is that the Government of the earth during the Millennium is to be in the hands of Christ and His Brethren, who will take the place of Satan and his Angels, who will have been cast out of their thrones in the heavenlies. It is necessary, therefore, for this Judgment to precede the setting up of the Millennial Kingdom. (Matt 25v14-30, Luke 12v31-48, 16v1-12, 19v11-27, Rom 8v17, 1Cor 3v10-15, 2Cor 5v9-10, Heb 2v3, 12v16,17,23, Rev 3v11, Prov 17v2, 29v21)

The Great White Throne

There remains, however, the final Judgment Throne of God at the close of the Millennium, at which will appear all the dead of all the ages, including Angels and demons as well as men. Here again, the first question to be decided is that of Life or Death. Will one be in the Kingdom or in the Lake of Fire? And therefore the Book of Life is opened. (Rev 20v11-15, Jude v6, 2Pet 2v4)

NB The present course of events upon this earth is most deceptive to the natural mind. God in His mercy, though He condemns instantly every work of evil, does not immediately execute His sentence, but waits to see if His forbearance will lead the sinner to repentance. Unfortunately, so hard are the hearts of many sinners that this very forbearance only emboldens them in their wickedness, as was the case with Pharaoh, who was hardened by God's repeated forgiveness, till he lost all fear of God's justice. God's children are often perplexed when they see the wicked apparently unscathed, and themselves chastened! Calvary, however, has shown us in one glaring example God's real estimate of sin. The soul that sinneth it shall die, and Christ died therefore for the doomed. God's wrath is indeed mounting up steadily, till it shall be revealed at the Day of the Lord and the Great White Throne. (Psalm 73, Eccles 8v11, Isaiah 26v10, Rom 2v4-9, 9v17,18,22, Rev 6v16-17)

It has often been hastily assumed that all who appear at this Judgment are lost; but there is, of course, no scripture to support this, and a moment's reflection will show that it cannot possibly be so; for at this Judgment will appear those who have been born during the Millennium as well as those who have either rejected or never heard of God's salvation, and the great assembly of Angels and demons who have been waiting for the execution of sentence uttered long ago. It will, indeed, be a mixed company. The Book simply says, "And if any man was not found written in the Book of Life, he was cast into the Lake of Fire," and in Rev 21v8 it gives a description of the characters of such. (Matt 25v41, 2Pet 2v4, Jude 6)

It is a scene of unimaginable solemnity. Here upon the brink of eternity are gathered a vast concourse of beings to hear a verdict, which will carry with it their eternal fate. The Judgment, we are told, will be in the hands of the Royal Family, every member of which will have passed through the temptations of life and know the infirmities of human nature. At their head will be the Son of God, who took our nature upon Him that He might be qualified to perform this very duty. The Judgment will be in the hands of Him, who is not willing that any should perish. (1Cor 6v2-3, Dan 7v22, Rev 20v4, John 5v27)

Why then in face of this loving mercy of God, will there be any who throughout eternity will know no alleviation of their pain? Eternal punishment is not the retribution for the sins that men have committed in the past—it is neither vindictive nor remedial nor punitive. It is, however, the only safeguard against the sins which the finally unrepentant intend to go on committing for eternity if left at liberty. Eternal punishment is God's answer to eternal sin: and the responsibility for it lies, not with God, but with the soul that is set upon sin, scorns mercy, and would gladly destroy the happiness of others for his own base ends. (Acts 17v31, 1Tim 2v4, 2Pet 3v9, Mark 3v29 (R.V.))

The Lake of Fire is the second death: i.e., it is the second time a man loses his body. The first time was because God had taken away the Tree of Life after Adam's sin: the second time is because of his own sin. On both occasions it is torment; the first time temporary, the second time eternal. God cannot prevent a free will desiring to do evil, but He can and will prevent it doing it. This He will do by depriving them of their bodies, without which they can do nothing. The ruin and anguish of those in Hell is irremediable and eternal, and rests solely upon the truth that it is impossible to renew them to repentance, and so make them fit to live with others.

It is as if a father had given his son a penknife that with it he might be enabled to do all sorts of needful things, only to find that instead the boy is cutting things up just to suit himself, and spoiling other people's property. That boy could, if he refused to listen to admonition and warning and continued in his folly, force his father to take away the knife, lest others should be inconvenienced. A razor is a good thing for shaving; but when used for cutting throats it is always confiscated! The Lord pointed out that disembodiment was a ceaseless torment allowing of no rest; so that even a swine's body was better than none, allowing its tenants to do at least one more act of senseless destruction. (Rev 20v14, 21v8, Gen 3v22-24, Heb 6v6, 10v26, Dan 7v11, Luke 16v19-31, Matt 10v28, Luke 8v32,33, 11v24)

NB It is perhaps worth pointing out here that the parable of Dives and Lazarus is a physical picture of the suffering or peace of the souls of the departed. Dives' body was not actually being burned: it was in the grave where it had been buried: nor was Lazarus actually reclining on Abraham's bosom. That was the ordinary Jewish description of the destiny of the believing dead, i.e., with faithful Abraham awaiting the resurrection in faith.

Hades was the place of departed souls not of dead bodies. In the same way the bodies of those destroyed by the Lord at His coming will lie in the Valley of Gehenna: their souls will be in Hades, just as our Lord's body was in the tomb while His soul was suffering the pains of death in Hades. (Isaiah 66v24, Luke 16v22, Acts 2v24-31, John 11v24)

The torment of Hell will not in any sense be vindictive; God will not needlessly afflict even the wicked, nor add to their pain any unnecessary suffering. The awful truth is that their endless pain will be absolutely unavoidable, and spring

from the fact that never again will they be free to do anything: since all they desire to do is evil. They will spend eternity in fruitless remorse and hatred of God and each other and the whole creation; yet in the mercy of God not able to inflict physical torment even on each other. Their souls wrapped round in endless lying pride they will refuse to admit their own guilty folly and will instead throw the blame for their awful condition upon a long-suffering Judge, whose love and mercy they spurn and whose every act they treat with suspicion and hatred. To come to the place where you cannot even trust the Almighty, and see a trap in His every word, and throw a doubt upon His every promise, is the last darkness of despair, from which there is no deliverance.

It has been said that not only must justice be done, it must also appear to be done; lest there should be any possibility of doubt about the righteousness of it. There are always those who feel that surely punishment will bring repentance. God has lovingly safeguarded us against this by leaving Satan in prison for the Millennium and then allowing him to come out. We shall then see that he is at once at his old ways of life in hatred and destruction. Hell then is the painful duty, which the unrepentant force upon a long-suffering God. They are hardened, not softened, by forbearance, and His only choice is either to abandon the righteous to the tender mercies of the wicked, or else to bring the wicked to a full stop. He has in His love for the righteous chosen the latter step. (Rev 20v7-9, 19v1-3, Rom 2v4-6, Eccles 8v11, Exodus 4v21)

It is often said that this end would be equally achieved by the annihilation of the wicked. In the first place, the language of Scripture will not allow of such an interpretation. It is torment, not just the smoke of it, which is everlasting. In the second place, the very severity of the penalty will doubtless frighten into the sanity of repentance countless numbers, who would cheerfully have had their fling at the expense of others, if there had been no retribution to be feared. The fear of the Lord may not be the last attitude of wisdom, but it is often the beginning. In the third place, there will likely be many who will be eternally safe because the smoke of Hell, continually ascending in their sight, will play its part in the steeling of their determination to obey God. For the saved will include not only those saved with glory, but also those who are scarcely saved, and only brought to repentance with the greatest difficulty. In the vast Kingdom of God will be vessels to honour, but also to dishonour; yet in the Kingdom. God will save into Eternal Life everyone who can by any manner of means be induced to turn from evil and do good.

Finally, and most important of all, it is the very fact that man is eternal that gives him his importance, and makes him different from the animals. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. Let him think of himself as the mere creature of a day, and you prevent him from thinking highly of himself. The evolutionist who tells man that he is but the short-lived head of an animal creation must not be surprised if men live like animals. It is the very fact that man is eternal which gives him dignity, rescues him from the frustration of death, and allows him to live in hope and eternal purpose: the Christian is saved by hope, and in the light of eternity pulls himself together as one whose actions matter, and will have eternal consequences. Deprive man of eternity, and you have but a dying animal. (Rev 20v10, 14v10-11, Isaiah 66v24, 1Pet 4v18, 2Pet 3v9, Jude 23, 2Tim 2v20-21, John 15v22-25, Ezek 18v23)

NB1 It is essential to remember that all who will be in Hell will be there because they hate God without any cause. They would spoil the happiness of Eternity if they could, and they cannot be induced to repent and receive a free pardon and Eternal life. It will be the unreasonable hardness of their own heart, not of God's, which will be responsible for their fearful condition. Yet God will make use of them as an eternal warning to the righteous.

NB2 If it be objected that it had been better for God not to have created at all, with His foreknowledge that the result of so doing would be the creation of Hell as well as Heaven, the answer is:

(a) That He is in no sense responsible for Hell; it is an unwanted addendum forced upon Him by the wicked,

(b) That it would be most unfair to deprive the righteous of their happiness, just because some elected to play the fool and preferred misery to happiness, without a cause.

What amazing joy it will be to know that a happy eternity in a glorious place with a loving God and kindly companions is finally assured! No wonder that those who believe the promises of God are exhorted to shout upon their beds! True emotion is the inevitable effect upon the soul of facts. The greater the facts, the greater the emotion. No emotion can be too great in the face of the greatest of all facts, Eternal Life in the Kingdom of God.

The Justice of God

Finally God has laid down in His Book certain lines which He always follows in Judgment. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

1) Matt 11v21-24. God will take into account at that day not only what one did, but what one would have done under happier circumstances. Cp. Matt 10v15, 1Sam 30v21-25.

- 2) John 15:22-25. There is a real sense in which men have not sin until they see and hate God. It is the person who knows it all and yet falls away, who is utterly hopeless. Heb 6:4-8, 10:26-31, 2Peter 2:20-22.
- 3) Matt 10v41-42. A man will be credited with doing the thing with which he sympathised though he had no opportunity himself. It is the intents of the heart which count with God. Cp. Matt 20v6-7.
- 4) Matt 25v31-46. Love for and kindness to any Son of God, will be counted as love and kindness to the unknown Son of God. Cp. Matt 10v40, 18v5.
- 5) Rom 2v11. God is no respecter of persons. All will be treated with scrupulous fairness and generosity. There will be no one in Heaven or Earth through their own righteousness, but all solely through the forgiving mercy of God, who is rich in pity. Cp. James 2v1.
- 6) 1Cor 3v13. Quality, not quantity is God's criterion. Cp. Mark 12v41-44, Luke 16v10.

Chapter VIII: The Cross Of The Lord

The faith whereby the Old Testament saints were justified varied greatly in its content. They had to believe whatever revelation God had made to them. Noah believed the Flood was coming, Abram believed that he was to have a seed; Rahab believed that Jericho would be taken.

The faith whereby a Son of God is justified has however always the same object; it is faith in the death of Jesus as an atonement for sin, and in the resurrection of Jesus as an evidence of God's acceptance of His sacrifice.

This faith is capable of great expansion as the Christian baby grows to maturity. It may begin as a very personal blessing; it will grow to be an event of universal significance. (Rom 3v21-26, 4v23-5v11, 10v9) The central reason for Calvary was that the Law of God might be established in all its awful majesty. The whole success of the Creation depended upon the voluntary obedience of God's creatures to His Law, the Law of Love and Liberty. Anyone who broke the law of unselfishness, and wished to embark upon a life of self-pleasing, could at any time upset the whole loving plan. Therefore, because of the exceedingly dangerous nature of sin, that is, disobedience, God laid down the law that "the soul that sinneth it shall die," because it is too dangerous to be left at large. Indeed, the whole happiness of Eternity will rest upon the unceasing obedience of all in it. (Gen 2v17, Jer 31v30, Ezek 18v4)

The fearful nature of sin, therefore, and its awful consequences had to be burnt in upon every conscience. To do this and so ensure the prosperity of the Ages of the Ages God has taken two steps:

- (a) He has allowed one sin to work itself out to its bitter end, so that all may see and understand the misery of a world in which evil is allowed. (Rom 5v12-21, Isaiah 14v12-13, Ezek 28v15, Gen 3v6)
- (b) He has satisfied the righteous demands of His Law that the death of a sinner is the inevitable result of his sin by sacrificing, not sinners, but their sinless Creator, to establish the inexorability of His Law's decree. No one will enter the Kingdom who has not understood the horrible danger of sin, and made clear to the Almighty his intention never to commit it. By the Cross all hope of escaping the punishment of sin is taken away (no sinner can hope to get away with unrepentant sin). The Law is the custodian of the happiness of Society. Contempt of it brings its inevitable reward. To forgive the sinner without establishing the Majesty of the Law would encourage sin, and render justice impossible. (Isaiah 42v21, Psalm 138v2, Rom 3v21)

The Leprosy of Sin. Leviticus 13

The plague of sin is:

- (a) That successful selfishness at the expense of others tempts them to play the same game, and so fills the earth with violence, and leads to the final triumph of the most unscrupulous, and the servitude of the righteous. (Gen 6v11, Rev 13v3-4)
- (b) That the risks of living with those who will take advantage of one are so great as ultimately to force a man into a similar line of evil conduct for mere self preservation. The righteous make themselves the prey of the wicked, (Isaiah 59v15, James 5v6)
- (c) That it provokes retaliation from those who are wronged and plants a root of bitterness whose fruit grows more and more bitter with the passage of time. The wheel of nature, when once it has started rolling, is not too easily stopped. Ishmael still despises Isaac, and Esau hates Jacob! (James 3v6)

(d) That when unchecked it advances from evil to evil, until at last there is no part of the soul which is not infected with a perfect selfishness, which knows no repentance and has no regrets, but finds its satisfaction in the torture and misery of others, and in a self-advancement which rises upon the slaughter of its rivals, and plunges its possessor into a ceaseless apprehension of retaliation from its victims. It is the same tree which bears Athaliah and Herod, Nero and Hitler! (Gen 6v5, Prov 4v14-17, Micah 7v1-6)

Meditation upon these awful truths must lead, however, to an ever-increasing understanding of the Love both of God the Father, who laid our sins upon His own Son; and of His Son who delighted to do the Father's will and set us free. This is not the legal but the personal side of Calvary, and reveals to us not simply the inflexible righteousness of God, but also His tender love for each one of His creatures. (John 3v16, Gal 2v20, Rom 5v8)

These two great truths, **(1)** that the wages of sin is death, **(2)** that God has out of love given His own Son to carry our sins in His own body on the tree, were in the mind of God before the Creation; and the revelation of them was given through the prophets of Israel.

Yet although they were plainly stated in the Old Testament, no one believed them or understood them till Jesus came. He believed, but He could not get even His Apostles to agree with Him till after His death and resurrection. They had no fear of punishment for sin; nor any desire that Jesus should die for their Sins. Indeed, they did what they could to prevent Him doing so. They were quarrelling about the positions they would hold in His Kingdom, when the King was realising that unless He died for them they would not be able even to enter that Kingdom. It was His post-resurrection ministry, which explained to them the victory of Calvary. Before that they refused to consider or discuss His death and resurrection; after that, this was the centre of their message, as it has been the centre of the family life ever since. (Rom 6v23, Rev 11v18, 1Pet 1v20, Isaiah 53v11, 1Cor 1v23, Luke 24v25,44,45, 9v45)

The world has always hated such truth; it seems to lay upon them an insupportable burden. Their thought is that free will carries with it liberty to do as they please; and not, as is the truth, liberty to keep the law of God. It has always been the dream of the world that in some way or other universal selfishness could lead to universal happiness; whereas the truth is that universal happiness is the fruit of universal obedience to the Law of Love.

They hated Jesus, therefore, who pointed out this truth, and laid upon man, not God, the responsibility for the world's prosperity. It is the work, however, of all the Sons of God to preach this simple but unwelcome truth, that the happiness of Heaven will depend upon man's obedience and not upon God's power. They, too, must take up daily their cross with all the explanation of it which God has given; that all men may clearly grasp that selfishness will bar them from Heaven and plunge them into Hell; that only Christ could avert from them the doom that is pronounced upon disobedience; that God loves them like His own soul, but that even He can do nothing for them except they turn from sin; that one sin in its outworking is bound to defile and wreck the peace and happiness of a whole society, whether in Heaven or upon earth.

So the study of the Foundation Truths has drawn to its close, leaving us safe in the everlasting arms of the Creator and Redeemer. Continued study will only serve to enlarge our love of God and give us the full assurance of understanding of His heart and mind.

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