

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

OF GOD'S KINGDOM

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INTRODUCTION

After years of studying the Bible and reading various commentaries, authors, professors and university preferences, I realized that there are only a few differences in most theological belief systems. From the beginning of Christendom, the narrowness of certified beliefs is minimal. When I say “certified beliefs” I am referring to the documented creeds that have existed throughout the generations.

Western modernity (students of Calvin, Luther, Arminius, Wesley etc., and the many denominations that proceeded from them) tends to focus on the trivial over which they have no control. They often agree on the essence and nature of God as well as the religious essentials of humankind, but they disagree on doctrines about salvation and how it occurs. To suggest that **salvation** is trivial is a mockery to some and an absurdity to others but in reality, we do not determine our own salvation.

Who is to say whether five-point or three-points of Calvinism is right? Calvin believed that God determined or predetermined the salvation of mankind. Who is to say if Arminius is correct and whether or not we have some choice in the process? In my opinion, the debate between Calvin and Arminius is a distraction from the original purpose and intent of the King. Salvation is not about whose doctrine is closest to the truth. Salvation is about the King and the fact that Jesus is our salvation.

Perhaps an understanding of the term “salvation” is necessary. What does it mean? Why are we saved? How are we saved? From what are we saved? To what are we saved? None of these questions actually reflect

the original meaning of salvation but they do lead to even more questions, confusion and doctrinal distinction. To those who say that we are saved from sin must explain why people who are saved from sin continue to sin. Does salvation prevent sin, cover sin, overcome sin, eliminate sin, save from sin, or some other verbiage that shows a sin/salvation relationship?

I decided to pursue a doctoral degree because I wanted to know more about God, His purpose and His intention for me. In other words, I wanted a personal theology. Much of the content in this book is taken from the research I did for a class called CD 605 – Systematic Theology.

In my undergraduate work, I learned about theology. Actually, there are many divisions as it relates to the study of God. Henry Thiessen named a few including: Historical Theology, Exegetical Theology, Practical Theology and Systematic Theology.¹

Historical Theology studies Christianity over the past two thousand years to affirm and clarify orthodox doctrines. Practical Theology applies the Scriptural knowledge about God and His involvement with humanity as it relates to regeneration, sanctification, edification, education and service to men. Exegetical Theology is also called Biblical Theology or learning about God through the exegesis of biblical texts.

Stanley Horton contends that Exegetical Theology and Biblical Theology are twin disciplines and explains that Exegetical Theology places emphasis on employing correct interpretive tools and techniques to properly translate the texts using higher and lower textual criticisms.² Gleason Archer explained that higher criticism deals with questions of authorship and integrity of the text while lower criticism is concerned with the restoring the text to its original.³

¹ Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), p 46.

² Stanley M. Horton, *Systematic Theology* (Springfield, MO: Logion Press, Gospel Publishing House, 2007), p. 3, 47.

³ Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody Press 1994), p. 15.

Bible scholars focusing on Exegetical Theology use both fields of textual criticism when analyzing biblical and non-canonical literature from the manuscripts written in both the Greek and Hebrew languages. Horton asserts that Biblical Theology requires exegetical analysis and cannot be complete without it.⁴

It seems to me that Biblical and Exegetical Theologies are two separate disciplines. People have the ability to discover God by reading the Bible and they are not required to be proficient in the Biblical languages to do so. Although exegetical theologies have existed since the writing of Scripture, it has only developed since the reformation and may be doing more harm than good. If one believes that God exists and the Bible is a message from Him, then it seems ironic that a scholarly and exegetical study of its texts leads so many to discard its veracity.

Systematic Theology is generally regarded as the formation of coherent beliefs about the order of God and His relationship with man. It is systematic, because it is an orderly and rational argument; it is theological because it is the study of God.

There is a primary difference between Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology. Biblical Theology is the historical and chronological arrangement of how God revealed his intent and purpose for mankind upon the earth, contrasted by Systematic Theology, which seeks to establish truths or doctrines from the entirety of Scripture in an orderly manner but not necessarily in a historical and chronological manner.

It seems logical that understanding the identity of God and His intention for mankind can be achieved by combining the courses of study from both a chronological, historical and systematic manner; thus, merging Biblical and Systematic Theology to examine the whole truth of God's intention. It also seems logical that understanding the identity of God must come intuitively, for only He can bring understanding whether intuitively,

⁴ Horton, p. 54.

from within a person, or interpretatively, through the message He has conveyed in Scripture.

Theology is incomplete without the completeness of the “theos.” The completeness of God as He relates to man must include the fullness of the Godhead and the attributes of the authority that exists within. That authority has a designed order and intent. It governs all that exists within the realm of God’s creation and therefore must of necessity have a prescribed form of government within the Godhead and over the realm of which the Godhead rules. The Bible calls this rule, realm, and government, the Kingdom of God.

It is the primary purpose and title of this work that we discuss a *Systematic Theology of The Kingdom of God*. This book will begin with the Message of the King. It is not really a message from Jesus. It is a message about him and why he came to earth. It highlight’s his mission, purpose and focus. It was a message that he lived for about thirty years before preaching and teaching it.

It took Jesus three years to deliver the message, which is now summarized in the four gospels. He told his disciples to preach and teach this same message. To Christianity, it is known as the gospel or good news about his kingdom. He instructed them to take the gospel message to Jerusalem, Samaria, Judea and to the uttermost parts of the world. He assigned twelve men with the task of guarding the message and he sent the Holy Spirit to be a spiritual navigator to assist them as they practically applied his teachings to the church. After delivering his message, he returned to his Father to rule humanity from an unseen spiritual realm that we often call heaven or the heavens. From there he rules and reigns.

Chapters One and Two make a feeble attempt to define God’s sovereignty, name, identity and transcendence. In Chapter Three, we will discuss the King and his kingship. How was he selected? How long is his kingship and what does it really entail? Continuing with the discussion in Chapter Four will be how his kingdom was created, prior to Genesis 1:2.

Every kingdom has a defined order or government by which the king rules and reigns. Every kingdom has laws and God’s kingdom is no

different. The laws of His kingdom have always existed. There was never a time when His spiritual laws did not function and to understand his kingdom, one must embrace the laws that rule it.

Chapter Five will discuss the order of God and the expansion of the kingdom. Much is said in Christendom about expanding God's kingdom but what does that mean? We often read Old Testament texts describing glory and announcing that the knowledge of the glory of the Lord is as the water covers the sea, but what does that look like? Is it a future promise, a past provision or present experience? What is the glory of God? Can it be seen with human eyes or does one require spiritual senses?

Chapter Six will explain the concept of kingdom expansion and how it is manifested through the Jesus's followers--his church—those people who pledge allegiance to the King and his kingdom. The ecclesiastical order of God describes how Jesus chose to enlarge his kingdom until the fulness of time, when he returns to earth in a globalized, glorified fashion.

The final chapter is about eschatology or the study of things that occur in the end. It seems that Christianity has a Quadra-focus when it comes to the *Book of Revelation*. Some believe the book is about first century Christianity and the conclusion of Judaism in the year 70 A.D. They contend the book was written primarily to Jewish Christians scattered throughout Europe and Asia and the revelation itself heralds Jesus to be the Messiah. Others believe much of the prophecy has yet to be fulfilled. Some look at it as historical and others argue that it is allegorical.

To me, the *Book of Revelation* is about Jesus. It's about worship and warfare. It's about the past, present and future. It's about judgments – both good and bad but mostly it's about God's kingdom as it exists right now and his glorious return to earth sometime in the future.

From the beginning chapters of this book, to the end, God's kingdom will be investigated, analyzed, magnified, and intensified. It will be spiritualized yet manifested. It will be personalized yet globalized. God's kingdom is about the King and everything he created.

“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers: all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things and by him all things exist...and it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.”

Colossians 1:16,17, 19.

THE MESSAGE OF THE KING

It may seem odd to begin the construct of a thesis about Systematic Theology with the sub-introduction entitled “The Message of the King,” but this thesis is more than a general overview of Systematic Theology. It is a specific variation labeled *Systematic Theology (of the Gospel) of the Kingdom*. Understanding the gospel of the kingdom is a necessary and vital component of Systematic Theology because without one’s understanding of the kingdom of God and the good news that Jesus preached, it is assumed that one cannot have the proper construct of God’s identity or man’s identity and therefore cannot understand why God created man or to know man’s purpose on earth.

N. T. Wright, noted Anglican theologian of this century, surmised that the message of the kingdom of God and the good news about that kingdom has been redefined by modernity of western Christianity. He suggests that westernized Christians view the gospel as Christ’s message to help people get to heaven. They see the gospels as the explanation of what Christ did to accomplish that purpose and the epistles as a manual about how to get there.⁵

Wright categorized Christians as “epistles Christians” and “gospels Christians.” He explained that epistles Christians are about getting people saved so they will eventually go to heaven; whereas, gospels Christians are all about bringing the kingdom of heaven to earth. He suggested that a merger of these two, whether Catholic or Protestant,

⁵ Steve Yamaguchi, “N.T. Wright on Book of Acts 1” Presented on youtube.com, 2009, 15, May 2016.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MHtJ94951Jg&feature=youtu.be>, 2009.

liberal or conservative is a better understanding of Christianity in the first century.⁶

The term “kingdom of God” has two presuppositions. First, that God exists and second, that He has a kingdom. The sequence of study will first be an introduction about God, His designated king and His Spirit, Who is currently manifesting His presence on earth. This introduction is followed by a thorough explanation His kingdom and government. It will be a simplistic overview of the gospel of the kingdom, which is the message of the king.

The term “gospel of the kingdom” is found in various places in the New Testament: Matthew 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; Mark 1:14,15; Luke 4:43; 8:1 and 16:16. The Greek word for gospel in the genitive case is τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (*tu euangelion*) and can be translated, “the gospel or good news about the kingdom or that brings the kingdom.” Another expression, (τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (*tu euangelion Ihsou Cristou*) is also used about Jesus and is translated, the gospel of Jesus Christ. This gospel is either a message that he brings or a message about him. Matthew 24:14 claims that this gospel will be preached until the end of the age and right before Jesus returns.

In Matthew 4:23; 9:35; Luke 9:11, the gospel about the kingdom was not only a message to be preached or taught, the gospel included healing people and freeing them from demons or evil spirits. Luke 4:43 recorded Jesus’ response when he was asked to stay in Capernaum. He said, “I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns too, for that is what I was sent to do.” Jesus knew his divine purpose and intent. His Father sent him to earth to preach the good news about the kingdom of God.

In Matthew 15:24, Jesus explained to whom he was sent. He said, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” These two verses summarize his mission and commission. He was sent to preach the gospel of the kingdom and he was sent to the Jewish people.

This certainly explains why he told the twelve apostles to only go to Jewish communities. In Matthew 10:7, Jesus gave them explicit directions

⁶ Ibid.

what they were to say and do; what they were to take with them and how to respond to people who received or rejected the message. He said, “Go specifically to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (not to Samaritans or Gentiles.) As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near!’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers and cast out demons.”

Later, Luke 10:9 recorded that he gave seventy-two disciples the same commission. He sent them into Jewish towns and told them, “Heal the sick in that town and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come upon you!’” John 20:21 confirmed that Christ’s mission was the same one that he gave to his disciples. Jesus said, “As my Father sent me, so send I you.”

Jesus preached and taught the gospel of God’s kingdom. He healed people and freed them from demonic forces. He told his followers that this was the work of the kingdom and explained to the Pharisees in Luke 11:20, “If I cast out demons by the finger of God, then God’s kingdom has already overtaken you.” In other words, when evil spirits are subdued in our lives, then it is a sign that God’s kingdom has prevailed.

God’s kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, which means it is about spirits: good and bad. And the good news that Jesus was sent to preach was to let his followers know the authority that they have to subdue the demonic and release God’s spiritual nature that occupies their lives.

Although Jesus was commissioned to the Jews, Paul wrote in Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is God’s power for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” Paul preached the same message that Jesus preached. He proclaimed the gospel. He said,

- The gospel is God’s power at work
- The gospel is for salvation or deliverance
- The gospel is for everyone who believes.

The Greek word for “power” in this text is *dunamis* and is actually a spirit that Jesus created. This will be explained in the discussion about spirits in a later chapter. Paul linked salvation to the gospel.

The Greek for salvation is *Σωτηρια* (*soteria*) pronounced (so-tay-ree'-ah) and has several English translations. First it means deliverance.

The initial understanding was the deliverance from the molestation of enemies. Deliverance was a national occurrence. When the lands were ruled by kings, war broke out between nations usually for economic reasons. When one king defeated another, the whole nation was under the rule of the victorious king and was required to pay homage and a tribute to the ruling king. Paying homage meant giving respect to the king and his kingdom, while paying a tribute involved money.⁷ It was a type of tax used to pay within the kingdom or to render payment to another king.

The first century Jews looked for a Messiah to save the Jewish people by reinstalling the kingship of David. The king who accomplished this was their Savior and had brought salvation to the country. To that end, salvation was a national accomplishment. The Old Testament prophets informed the Jewish people, who were in exile, that their separation from the land of promise was a result of their sin. So naturally, they looked for the time when God would forgive their sin, free them from bondage, and return them to their homeland. That occurrence was called salvation and indicated to the Jewish people that God had forgiven their sin.

To the first century Jewish Christians, Jesus was their salvation. Riding into Jerusalem on a donkey was a tradition offered to kings since the days of Jeru in 2 Kings 9:13 and Zechariah 9:9 when subjects of the kingdom recognized the king by laying their garments down, forming a path for the king to walk or ride. Perhaps this was the origination of the what is called “the red-carpet treatment” to welcome VIP’s ceremoniously.

Jesus told his followers that his kingdom was not of this world, so the Jews soon learned that salvation was more than a national event, it was something personal. Jesus talked about forgiving other people and in John 20, he breathed upon his followers and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” This action was followed by a statement, “If you forgive others their sins, then their sins are forgiven; if you retain their sins, then they are retained. The message about salvation soon became personal and Jesus’ followers understood that they were delivered from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear son. Jesus was the Deliverer, which meant he was their Salvation.

⁷ Merriam-Webster, “tribute money” Retrieved 30 April 2018, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tribute%20money> 2018.

The kingdom understanding of salvation or “deliverance” among the Old Testament Jews and first century believers was a Messianic salvation, so when Jesus announced his Messiahship, they looked to him to be their king sent from God. Their mindset was gauged to a physical government and they failed to have a clear comprehension of the spiritual domain of “God’s kingdom.”

As noted, the second meaning of deliverance was more about individual deliverance instead of national deliverance. The definition of salvation or deliverance included the safety or salvation of one’s soul. This concept suggested that true believers possess salvation or deliverance of sin through Jesus. People began to regard salvation as a personal right when one embraces Jesus, but ironically, that concept led to an anthropocentric Christianity where people embrace Jesus because of the benefits they receive. They join the Christian nation to have their sins removed, their sickness healed and to be delivered from their demons. And because they focused on self, they missed the point of Jesus’ message about the nature and purpose of his kingdom. It is not about the subjects, it is about the king.

The third concept of salvation is futuristic and relates to the sum benefits and blessings that believers will receive upon Christ’s return. A. W. Pink preached a fourfold salvation.⁸ He asserted that we are saved from the penalty, the power, the presence and most importantly the pleasure of sin but he doesn’t explain the essence of salvation and what it actually entails. He simply recites the results of salvation.

When Paul preached salvation to the Gentiles, he said it was first preached to the Jews and then to the Gentiles, indicating the importance of the Jewish people and not God’s abandonment of them. In fact, he wrote in Romans 11:1 that God had not rejected His people and according to Romans 11:26, 27, “All Israel will be saved and through God’s covenant, He would take away their sins.”

The message of the King was a message about his kingdom. Wright suggests that the clergy of western Christianity have replaced the message about God’s kingdom with a message of good works. Instead of preaching

⁸ NET Bible “Salvation” Notes on Romans 1:16 Retrieved 29 April 2018, <https://net.bible.org/#!bible/Romans+1:16> 2018.

the gospel of the kingdom, they preach a gospel of salvation.⁹ He maintains that first century preaching of the gospel was different. It was a public announcement that something had happened that has changed the world and everyone is invited to be a participator in what has happened.

Wright further quoted Josephus, a Jewish historian, to explain what the phrase “Repent and believe in me” actually meant. It had nothing to do with salvation. Josephus stated that the phrase meant, “Give up your way! Turn around and agree with me!”¹⁰ It was a marketplace political debate, not a religious one. The New Testament writers commonly used that phrase to suggest Jesus’ message about his kingdom was a declaration to the world that God has a kingdom, and everyone is invited to embrace His kingship.

Obviously, the context of embracing Christ’s kingdom included salvation but the message wasn’t meant to be a salvation doctrine to the individual. It was a message about the King and the corporate framework of his kingdom. Salvation was a corporate concept, not an individual claim.

Myles Monroe compared twelve governmental kingdom concepts that he believed are associated with God’s spiritual kingdom.¹¹ He maintained that our understanding of God’s kingdom is predicated upon our understanding of these kingdom concepts.

In my opinion, the pragmatic understanding of Jesus and his kingdom can be summarized in five main points: (1) the focal point of authority, (2) the realm of his kingdom, (3) the subjects of his kingdom, (4) the kingdom laws and (5) the succession plan. The message of Jesus was one that offered good news about his kingdom. In some concise systematic order, we will discuss what that actually means.

Jesus message to humanity was about a spiritual kingdom or rather a kingdom made of spirits. In my recent book, *The Study of Spirits*, I documented each time the word “spirit” was mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments. Surprisingly, I found that these spirits are easily

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid

¹¹ Myles Monroe, *Kingdom Principles: Preparing for Kingdom Experience and Expansion* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers Inc., 2006), p. 57-214.

understood when placing them into three categories: (1) Divine Spirit, (2) soulical spirits (those which have mental, emotional and volitional qualities) and (3) non-soulical spirits (those without mental, emotional and volitional qualities). I define this last category as thought generators or thought initiators. All thoughts produce words, form emotions and influence behavior but thoughts come from one of three sources. Not only do we have our own thoughts, we are also influenced by the spirits of God and the spirits of Satan.¹²

The first century preachers proclaimed a conflict between good spirits and evil spirits. The gospel message that Jesus conveyed was good news. So, what is the good news? In concise form, it is a message about how the first couple's sin blocked man's ability to engage the realm of the spirit. This realm is filled with good and evil spirits. After the initial sin, humanity has groped in darkness, without the ability to see God's glory and any aspect of the spirit realm.

John wrote in 1 John 1:5,

“This is the message which we have heard from him and declare to you that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all...If we walk in the light, then we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

The message that Jesus preached and demonstrated was a message of deliverance from the power of evil spirits and that we have his authority to operate in an unseen spiritual realm. Before his departure to heaven, Jesus explained the spiritual nature of his kingdom and told his followers how to rule in the spiritual domain by denying their “self” and yielding to the “Holy Spirit,” who was sent to help us navigate through this unseen spiritual world.

He also told them about his future return, when he will put an end to all enemies of the kingdom. Paul said the last enemy to be defeated is death, which he noted in Romans 7:23; 8:2 is a spirit that occupies our physical lives. The spirit of death comes because sin rules in our flesh.

¹² Randy Delp, *The Study of Spirits*, (Cedar Hill, TX: Lifeworld Publishing, 2018) p. 33-77.

The message from Jesus was quite clear, “All authority has been given to me” and “As my Father sent me, so send I you.” His mission was to preach the good news about his kingdom, which is simply stated, “We have control over our lives; we have the power to do something about them; the enemy cannot stop us.”

CHAPTER ONE

THE UNREVEALED ONE

How much do we actually know about God? Most of our knowledge comes from external sources: what we have read, what we have heard and only some of what we have experienced. Our experiences are usually not elucidatory, so we credit God with doing , but we are really not absolutely sure that He did them. Our designations are often our assumptions because we understand that God can do anything, and He is on our side; therefore, He must have performed the supernatural in our behalf or He must have allowed problems, which He had the power to stop or prevent.

Actually, it is not a bad assumption to have but the example proves just how little we know about God. In Exodus 6:3, God told Moses that He revealed Himself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as the Almighty God (אֱלֹהֵי שַׁדַּי -'el-shaddai) but the name Jehovah (יהוה yahwah) or “Always existing God” was not known to them. In other words, God revealed more to Moses about Himself than He did to the Jewish patriarchs.

In retrospect, we can see how God revealed Himself to Adam and Eve. He first revealed Himself as Creator but when they disobeyed, He revealed Himself as Judge. He also revealed Himself as Reconciler with a promise to overcome the evil that Satan had invoked and to reconcile humanity to Himself through Eve’s offspring. She overheard God tell the serpent in Genesis 3:15, “I will put enmity (hostility) between you and the woman and between your seed and her Seed. He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise His heel.”

Understanding that God reveals Himself differently to each of us will help us not to be so judgmental when it comes to spiritual matters. Both of my parents were strong believers in God and I learned so much from them but it was evident that Mom and Dad had different revelations about God. Dad was a strict disciplinarian. He was a rule keeper and did his morning devotions like clockwork. As children, we couldn’t miss church services and he never failed to pay tithes. He was a model Christian

by anyone's standards. Without any doubt, God had revealed Himself to Dad as a Holy Judge. Dad believed that God was El Shaddai (all-mighty),

Mom's relationship with God was different! God revealed Himself to her as a Best Friend. She chatted with Him all the time, as if He was walking next to her side. She knew the voice of God and tried desperately to honor every word. Sometimes, she would beat herself up if she thought she had disobeyed Him because it was her intense pleasure to please God properly.

Perhaps my greatest blessing in life was to inherit their knowledge and understanding about God. And even though their head knowledge was transferred, I too, had to seek Him for revelation. Everyone needs a personally revelation about God?

Who is He? How has He revealed Himself to you? This chapter is about the Unrevealed One. It will discuss things that we don't know about God. Things like, "Where Did He Come From?" What does He look like? How can he listen to billions of complaining people around the world and still love them with His life?

This chapter will discuss the uncreated, undefined and unlimited God. It will try to satisfy the atheist's favorite question, "If God is all powerful and if God is love, then why does He allow so much evil in the world?" The easy answer is, "Because He is all powerful and because He is love." And while this retorted answer only exasperates the cynical atheist, it actually expounds the notion that there is much that we don't know about Him. It reminds me of certain questions that I would ask Dad and his favorite response was, "Because I said so!"

The inquisitive mind of humanity has caused tremendous innovations throughout the last century. History records that Benjamin Franklin discovered electricity in 1752 with an experiment of flying a kite during a thunderstorm; however, Englishman, Sir Thomas Browne wrote books about electricity based upon the English scientist, William Gilbert, at the turn of the seventeenth century.¹³ Since this discovery, the following inventions have happened in less than 140 years.

¹³ Wonderpolis.org, "Who Discovered Electricity" Wonderpolis.org. Retrieved 3 May 2018. <https://wonderopolis.org/wonder/who-discovered-electricity> 2018.

Alexander Graham Bell is noted for the first telephone in 1876. Thomas Edison is credited with the invention of the light bulb in 1879. Steam engine automobiles were built in 1769; the electric automobile was designed in 1881; the gasoline powered vehicle was introduced in 1885. The first programmable computer (Z1) was patented 1936 and 1938. And the creation of the first Mobile Phone Call and use of the Internet occurred in the same year, 1973. The first laptop computer with a 5.25-inch floppy drive was released in 1981. Actually, I purchased one of those laptops three years later for \$1500, which began a thirty-five-year revelation about the world of computers, electronics and communications. The point is to establish that there is a lot of information about God that we don't know but we are continually learning.

There are some trivial matters that seems disconcerting when we attempt to understand God in the things that He has not revealed. For example, Number 23:19 states, "God is not a man, that he should lie." Yet, in 1 Kings 22:19-23, God convened an assembly to strategize how to bring judgment upon King Ahab. The minutes of the meeting revealed that God sent lying spirits to Ahab to deceive him into going to Ramoth Gilead to fight against Syria, which ultimately brought Ahab's demise. We might question, why is God allowed to use lying spirits, but we are told not to?

Humanly speaking, we want to hold God accountable to our own understanding of what is right and wrong. It is difficult to accept lying as an acceptable behavior especially when Proverbs 6:17 records that one of the seven things God hates is a lying tongue. There some things that are inexplicable because God has not revealed these matters yet.

It is not to say that He won't reveal them. For example, the author of Hebrews wrote an opening statement,

“God who at various times and in different ways spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.”

The prophets of old including Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses and King David all wrote about things that they believed God was saying in their generations. Yet, now, those teachings are not pertinent today. Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament law by willingly sacrificing his own life.

According to Hebrews 10:8-10, God did not desire the Jewish priests to perform sacrifices and He wasn't even pleased with them. Yet, he honored the obedient priests of the Old Testament as they carried out the ordinances. If God didn't desire or take pleasure in the killing of animals, certainly He couldn't find pleasure while His son hung mercilessly on a cross fulfilling the supreme sacrifice of the ordinances.

God seems to reveal Himself progressively. The angels of God gave Moses the standards and ordinances of the Sacrificial Law but today, the gruesome killing of animals seems like a barbaric way to worship God. That is because Jesus provided a greater revelation about worship. The Samaritan woman at Jacob's well understood worship to be act of killing animals on an altar at a certain location. Jesus introduced a different understanding about worship in John 4:21-23 when he said that worship is not about location or killing anything. He said, "The Father seeks true worshippers who will worship in spirit and truth."

One of the most perplexing things that we theologians debate in modern culture are the differences about how God responded to His enemies in the Old Testament compared to how Jesus told us to respond in the New Testament. According to Joshua 6:17, everyone in Jericho was to be killed except Rahab and her family. In Joshua 7:25, all 25,000 people of Ai were killed, and the King was spared only to be hung on a tree and used as a Memorial to those who fight against the people of Yahweh. In Joshua 10:8-11, the Lord told Joshua that He would help slaughter the enemy. Accordingly, large hailstones killed more from the weather than Joshua did with the sword.

The Old Testament seems to be riddled with stories about God or his angels killing people. In 2 Kings 19:35, one angel killed 185,000 Assyrians. During the infancy stage of the nation of Israel, the death angel came into Egypt and killed the firstborn of all humans and animals. In the days of Noah, God used weather to destroy the entire human population with water but then promised not to use water to destroy the human population again. However, earlier, Enoch had predicted two judgments, one by water to destroy the children of the Nephilim and a final future judgment that would occur with fire. In 2 Peter 3:5-10, the apostle quoted Enoch, confirming a destruction when the present heavens will pass away and elements of this present earth will melt with the fervent heat. Yet, God promised a new heavens and new earth afterwards.

How is it that Yahweh (the Father) of the Old Testament required annihilation of Israel's enemies but Jesus (His son) instructed us to love our enemies. Trying to reconcile the two concepts would be an exercise in futility, seeing that Isaiah 55:8-9 explained God's thoughts and ways to be as different from ours as heaven is different from the earth. Trying to figure out what God has not revealed only leads us down a greater path of ignorance. We must continually seek Him even though we don't understand His thoughts or His ways.

This chapter is about what God has not revealed. He has not revealed the origin of His existence or whether or not there is an origin. He has not revealed His total personage, which means He is undefined. Finally, He has not revealed his limits; therefore, we maintain God is unlimited.

God is Uncreated

Everything we see, hear, taste, touch, or smell was created by God. He also created everything that we can't see, hear, taste, touch or smell. God created all things but God, Himself, is uncreated. His existence is unrevealed but that is not reason enough for us to deny that God exists. There are two factors involved in creation. The first factor assumes a Creator exists and the second factor involves His creation.

On February 11, 2010, a heavy snowfall fell in Dallas, TX mounting the largest historical accumulation of 11.20 inches.¹⁴ Growing up in the mountains of West Virginia and having lived in Minnesota five years afforded me the opportunity to make snow forts to ward off oncoming snow projectiles during snowball battles. And from my youth, I have a good reputation of creating beautiful snowmen. On that day, my grandchildren and I built the perfect snowman. It was our creation. Many snowmen were created in Dallas that weekend and none of them assumed that they created themselves or evolved from a snowflake. As in all creations, there is the creator and that which he creates.

Likewise, the existence of the universal creation requires the existence of a Creator. He gave us physical senses, which enables us to experience a physical reality. Even without physical senses, we could still

¹⁴Iweathernet.com "Snow: Dallas/Fort Worth's Top-20 largest Snowfall Record" Retrieved 4 May 2018 <http://www.iweathernet.com/dfw-weather-records/top-20-snowstorms-dfw> 2010.

exist; albeit, we wouldn't know it. It seems reasonable to think that the first humans were also created with "spiritual senses" allowing them to see, hear, taste, touch and smell the spiritual realm. The sin of Adam and Eve caused a dormancy in their spirituality. Their spiritual senses still existed but the human subconsciousness prevented them from functioning consciously. In other words, their spirit was still alive, but sin prevented them from experiencing the spiritual realm. This condition has been passed down from one generation to another. It prevents us from experiencing the spiritual realm in the same way we experience the physical.

Although we can't see God or this spirit realm, we cannot assume that a Creator doesn't exist because with that assumption, we explain away our own existence. A better assumption allows us to not only believe in a Creator but the hope of one day experiencing His spiritual realm in the same way that we experience our present physical world. In fact, Paul stated in 2 Corinthians 4:18 that we should focus not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since that which is seen is merely temporary and what is unseen is eternal. In verse 17, he labeled this unseen spiritual realm "glory" which I define as the light of the spirit.

If God is the uncreated Creator, how does He exist and from where did He come? We should not assume that because we were created that everything else that exists, was also created. Mankind often bases our reasoning upon the assumptions of self; thus, we compare everything to ourselves and innately think higher of ourselves than others. In so doing, we create divisions: Americans think their country is best; Republicans think their party is best; Pentecostals believe their doctrine is best.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 10:12 that it is unwise to measure or compare ourselves with others. If we think we are better than others, we are egotistical. If we think we are less than others, it develops a low self-esteem or even a false humility. This same innate "selfish" quality compares ourselves with God and assumes He is like us. It is not wise to think that because we were created by God, that God must have been created by another Creator. Such assumptions are "self" based.

As humans, we must accept that God, the Creator, exists because we, His creation, exists. We must also accept by faith that He is Uncreated because a Creator cannot create Himself. We must consider that we only know those things that God reveals and there are some things that are unrevealed. Where God comes from and how He exists without being

created is something we must accept by faith. Reason suggests that God exists. But how He Exists, when He started existing and where He exists are presently unrevealed.

God is Undefined

God cannot be defined. Any attempt to define God subverts the very definition of who He is. Man's feeble attempt to define God necessarily begins with the concept that God is unlimited. So when man starts to define God, he limits Him to a definition; hence, God cannot be defined. So, if God cannot be defined, how does one know He exists?

The introduction of this book argued the notion that God and His word cannot be proven. Although there may be many evidences that theologians present in their attempts to prove His existence, unless one accepts these evidences by faith, God's existence remains a question to that person. It is within the context of man's inability to prove God, that one must explore other means to determine whether or not God exists.

Thiessen suggested that God reveals Himself through nature, history and through man's conscience. He further maintains that God specifically reveals Himself through miracles, prophecy and the person of Jesus Christ.¹⁵ It seems illogical to think that man would search for ways to prove God's existence when God has already chosen a means to disclose that revelation. The product of this systematic theology maintains that God reveals Himself through Jesus, the Christ and the Bible is a written treatise that reveals his nature, identity and personage. Jesus is God, manifested in the flesh. His incarnation allows mankind to not only know about God but to actually know Him in a personal way.

J. Rodman Williams pointed out that the Bible records only one suggestion of a possible nonexistence of God. He cited Psalms 14:1 and 53:1 "The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."¹⁶ Williams is correct when he noted that the reality of God is an affirmation of faith, quoting

¹⁵Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), p. 32-41.

¹⁶J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology, Systematic Theology from a Charismatic Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996) p. 47.

Hebrews 11:6, “Whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and He rewards those who diligently seek Him.”

From a biblical perspective, God has revealed Himself in such a way that He can be identified, and He has chosen to reveal Himself in Scripture so that all mankind can know that He is spirit; infinite; eternal; alive; and unchanging. Inside these boundaries, we may find a partial definition of God but to define His completeness is unreasonable and impossible with our human finiteness. Although God cannot not be totally defined, it is imperative that we attempt to identify Him as we explore His very existence.

The question of whether God uses the Bible to reveal Himself to us must be met with the question, “How did God reveal Himself before Scripture?” The canonized Old and New Testaments have only been completed over the past 1,600 years but God revealed Himself prior to the canonization of the written text. Hebrews 1:1 states,

“Long ago, God spoke in various portions and in various ways to our ancestors through the prophets, but in these last days, he has spoken to us in his son whom He appointed heir of all things.”

In this verse we find that God speaks through people. Prior to Jesus, he spoke through prophets but today He speaks through His son, Jesus, who is the Word of God. Jesus told his disciples that he was revealed in the Old Testament through the Law, Prophets and Psalms. The four Gospels are also a revelation of Jesus. They declare Christ’s message about his kingdom. The account of Scripture is a written composite of what God has revealed from the beginning of time and it is a message to humanity about the King, whom He has appointed to rule His kingdom. As such, one can say that the revelation of Scripture is progressive.

It is through the Bible that we realize God can’t be defined. Every attempt to define Him leaves us lacking in understanding about His full identity and only leads to greater questions about who He is. If God is unlimited, then He cannot be limited to a definition. Neither can He be measured by His substance or essence. The concept of measurement relates to being limited to that measurement; therefore, God is unmeasured.

God is Unmeasured

As stated previously the essence or substance of God includes the idea that God is of a spiritual substance; self-existent, immense and eternal. As spirit, God cannot be measured. He is unlimited as it relates to matter, creation, space and time. According to Thiessen, there are four non-moral attributes of God that He cannot communicate to man. They are omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence and immutability.¹⁷ These attributes suggest that God has no limitations as it relates to knowledge, presence and power; therefore, He cannot change to become limited by any attribute or substance.

The primary basis of understanding the un-limitedness of God is found in His omnipresence. If God is omnipresent, then reason concludes He is also unlimited in power and knowledge. The Scriptures declare God's omnipresence. Proverbs 15:3 records, "The eyes of Jehovah are in every place, keeping watch upon the evil and the good." Jeremiah 23:23-25 confirms that God is everywhere and there is no place where man can hide that God does not see. David prayed to God in Psalm 139:7-12, "If I ascend up into heaven, you are there. If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there." Hebrews 4:13 declares, "No creature is hidden from God, but everything is naked and exposed to his eyes and to Him, we must render an account." Ezekiel in the Old Testament and Apostle John in the New Testament both had visions of God on His throne. Both remarked that the images they saw (Ezekiel 1:18; 10:12 and Revelation 4:6) were full of eyes all around symbolizing or confirming the omnipresence of God.

Establishing a belief that God is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient, leads to questions that demand answers? "If God is omnipotent, does He have the power to create an immovable force that can be moved?" Or if God is omniscient and Jesus is God, then why did Jesus say he didn't know the day and hour of his return to earth? Or if God is omnipresent, how can he appear in one location and share a meal with Abraham or specifically talk to Moses from a burning bush, while still be everywhere? Finally, if God is immutable and cannot change, why does Scripture say God repented that He had made man? All of these questions suggest God is limited in power, presence, knowledge and consistency.

¹⁷ Thiessen, p. 122-128.

To suggest that God is not unlimited, declares His limitations. To suggest that God is limited negates the essence of his incommunicable attributes. Is it possible to be unlimited and limited at the same time? Luke 18:27, Matthew 19:26 and Mark 10:27 state, “What is impossible for mere humans is possible for God.” There were two other places that Jesus declared, “for with God, all things are possible.” He made this statement in Mark 14:36, when praying to his Father and in Mark 9:23, when a grieving mother who sought deliverance for her demon possessed son. Jesus told her, “If you believe, all things are possible.” So what is impossible for humanity in a physical realm, can be possible with God in a spiritual realm.

Infinity of God

If God is immeasurable, then He has no boundaries; hence, there are no limitations to God. His infinity acclaims his immeasurability. God cannot be measured in time, knowledge or space. The Hebrew word *olam* (pronounced *o-lawm*) is the word used for everlasting or eternal, but James Strong confirmed the word to have a deeper meaning.¹⁸

When we think of eternal or everlasting, we consider God’s infinity as it relates to time but the word *olam* actually means “concealed” in the sense that one can’t be seen and vanishes in time. The word is translated as “always” expressing an immeasurability of time both past and present. That which is *olam* is perpetual as it relates to time and space. From this understanding comes the idea that God is omni-present and eternal.

God is infinite and immeasurable in that He existed before the beginning of time and will continue to always exist perpetually when time no longer exists. God is infinite presence and infinite time; therefore, He is infinite knowledge and power. His knowledge, ability and power cannot be measured because He exists outside the physical dimension of time, space, matter and force. Regarding time, He is past, present and future without limits. Regarding space, He is everywhere, always whether visible or invisible. His existence extends beyond the dimension of humanness; therefore, God is infinite in all of His ways, all the time, without limits to space, whether present or absent.

¹⁸James Strong, S.T.D., LL.D., “Everlasting” #5769, *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, (Iowa Falls, Iowa: World Bible Publishers, 1890), p 319, Dictionary of Hebrew Bible, p. 86.

There is so much about God that we don't know or that He hasn't revealed. Practical things like the emotions of a grieving parent who cries out, "Where was God when my son was murdered in the streets," can only be met with a trite but not so consoling answer, "He was in the same location when His son was crucified on a cross." The tendency to blame God for the unknown is linked to the fact that He himself is unknown or rather has not made Himself known in every instance.

As humans we tend to measure all things by our own understanding and our emotions. We fail to understand that God is immeasurable, and we therefore cannot measure His responses according to our needs or situations. There are some things that we just don't know. Robert Shuler said, "Anyone can count the seeds in an apple but only God can count the number of apples in a seed."¹⁹ Humans are limited to knowledge, time, ability and space. God cannot be measured by any of these.

Later, we will discuss how an unlimited, immeasurable God can be limited to time, space, knowledge and power. As a preface to those remarks, I will simply say here that God is immeasurable; Jesus is God; Jesus can be measured; therefore, God can be measured. This, of course, leads to the question of God's infinity compared to God's finiteness in the person of Jesus.

The concept of the Trinity will be discussed later in the book but for now it suffices to suggest that God is infinite; God has tripartite personages, which means God is limited in the humanness of Jesus. And although Scriptures (Old and New Testaments) reveal the triunity of God, there is no complete revelation regarding the Trinity. In the same way that we must accept God's existence by faith, we must also embrace the concept of God's Trinitarian personage by faith.

There are some things I don't fully understand. How can God be One but still exist in a trinitarian manner? Although the Bible (both Old and New Testaments) reveal the personages of the Trinity, there is much that isn't explained and remains unrevealed. Just because we can't reason or understand something should not stop us from embracing its existence. For example, the intricacies of electricity and air conditioners are beyond

¹⁹Robert Shuler, "Brainyquote.com" Retrieved May 29, 2018, https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/robert_h_schuller_121372 2018.

my understanding but that does not prevent me from turning up the thermostat to become more comfortable. Likewise, there is much that God has not revealed about Himself or His Trinitarian personage, but that should not prevent us from believing what He has said or that which has yet to be revealed.

CHAPTER TWO

THE REVEALED ONE

In the previous chapter, I mentioned that God is unlimited in His essence and substance and at the same time, I stated that God does have limitations. This chapter will address the things that God has revealed about Himself. It will address His limitations. It will explore the concept that God is undivided and discuss His threefold nature: spirit, light and love. We will present a biblical design of God's form, His identity and His name. His nature is revealed three ways: through His Word, His Spirit and through His transcendence.

Limitations of God

How can an unlimited God have limitations? How can an omniscient God be limited in knowledge? How can an omnipotent God be limited in power? How can an omnipresent God be limited in location? How can uncreated existence create something? How can eternity find limitations in time. Finally, how can an immutable God change? To say that God is unlimited denies these possibilities but to deny God of being unlimited is to deny God, because God knows no limits.

My grandmother, Dorothy Hornsby, was a Pentecostal preacher in the 1940s and 1950s. At the age of four, I recall sitting on the front row with my sister, Carole, listening to her preach. A few years later, she preached a sermon that I can still remember. It was entitled, *Things God Can't Do*. She went through a litany of things that sounded theological at the time but later, as I pondered them, questions arose. I recollect two things that she said, "God cannot lie" and "God cannot die." In similar

fashion, Maise Sparks²⁰ published a book listing 101 things that God can't do. *Christianity Today* published ten of them and provided Scriptures to validate the list. They include:

1. God can't get tired – Isaiah 40:28
2. God can't take on a job he can't handle - Jeremiah 32:17
3. God can't be unholy - Isaiah 6:3
4. God can't be prejudiced - Acts 10:34-35
5. God can't break a promise - Psalm 89:34
6. God can't remember sins he's chosen to forget - Isaiah 43:25
7. God can't make a loser - 2 Corinthians 2:14
8. God can't abandon you - Deuteronomy 31:6
9. God can't stop thinking about you - Psalm 139:17-18
10. God can't stop loving you - Jeremiah 31:3

And while this list presents is a feel-good sermon, it consists of many theological misnomers. Using the word “can’t” instead of “won’t” would be a good safeguard from Scriptural error; however, even that change disregards biblical text. Must we assume that Spark’s message was for the nation of Israel? In Jeremiah 31:3, the prophet was addressing the Jews when he wrote, “Yes I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, with lovingkindness I have drawn you.” On the other hand, Paul quoted a different prophet (Malachi) and recorded in Romans 9:13 that God loved Israel, but He hated Esau.

Also, if God is eternal and is the same yesterday, today and forevermore, how can He not remember the sins that He has chosen to forget. It is my contention that the words “forget” and “not remember” are perhaps two separate functions. How can a loving Father look at His son’s nail scared hands and not remember what caused it?

Each of these verses can be met with skepticism but I publish them here to show that although God is unlimited, He has chosen to limit Himself. Even Granny Hornsby’s list has suspicions. If God can’t lie then why did he send lying spirits to King Ahab in 1 Kings 22:19-23 as part of a strategy to entice him to Ramoth Gilead to fight against the Assyrians, so

²⁰ Maise Sparks, “Ten Things God Can’t Do” First printed 1996, Retrieved May 31, 2018, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/iyf/hottopics/defendingyourfaith/things-god-cant-do.html> 2018

he would be killed in war? And if God cannot die, then Jesus must not be God because he died; albeit, he resurrected from the dead.

How can God be unlimited and limited at the same time? The answer is quite simple. God is unlimited; Jesus is God; Jesus was limited; therefore, God was limited. The whole discussion about Christ's divinity should not be called into question. The fact remains, some Scriptures confirming God's attributes, attitudes and actions in the Old Testament should be reexamined in the New Testament in light of Jesus, the Revealed One.

Consider the Trinity. Jesus is both divine and human. Paul explained in Philippians 2:6-7 that Jesus was in the form of God but emptied himself and took on the form of a bondservant. The Greek word for empty is *κενω* (*pronounced ken-o' o*) and it means "to lay aside." So, while Jesus willfully laid aside his total divineness to live as a total human, he did not cease being God or cease being equal with God. In truth, there were some things that Jesus laid aside.

Since God's essence, substance and nature never changes, it is certain that Jesus did not lay these divine aspects aside. His spiritual substance never changed. Jesus said, "God is spirit" and the very last thing he said on the cross confirmed his substance. He said, "Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit."

The essence of God consists of his spiritual substance and his uncreated self-existence. Paul said in Colossians 1:16 that Jesus created all things in heaven and on earth. All things include those things that are visible and invisible. They include spirits such as thrones, dominions, principalities and powers. Jesus existed before all of these things and they are all held together or sustained in him. Jesus is spiritual and self-existent.

When Jesus became human, he did not lay aside his nature. His nature is defined in three statements: God is spirit; God is light; God is love. Jesus lived in both physical and spiritual realms, but his nature remained unchanged. He is spirit and light. John confirmed Jesus' message in John 1:5 quoting, "God is light" He also wrote in John 8:12; 9:5; 8:12, Jesus stated, "I am the light of the world."

Likewise, John conveyed Jesus' message about his nature when he wrote in 1 John 4:8, "God is love." Jesus' nature before his humanness, during his humanity and even today is the same. He is spirit, light and love. Jesus expressed love like no other. Who would have ever thought that we should love our enemies. But on the cross, he explained how we can do it. He cried, "Father forgive them. They don't know what they are doing." Jesus said, "No one has greater love than this—that one lays down his life for his friends." Most people hold ill feelings toward others because of personal infringements. Anger, bitterness and hate are personal emotions that we hold against other people for their actions or identity. Yet, Jesus showed us how to forgive them by recognizing that people do and say things out of ignorance. The Romans and Jews killed Jesus, but he forgave them, declaring that they didn't know what they were doing.

Jesus' essence and substance did not change but some of the godly attributes were emptied or laid aside. God is omnipotent, but Jesus said in John 5:19, 30. "I, by myself, can do nothing." God is omniscient, but Jesus said in Mark 13:32, "But as for that day or hour (time of his return to earth) no one knows it – neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son – except the Father." God is omnipresent, but Jesus was born in Bethlehem, traveled to Egypt, grew up in Nazareth, ministered throughout Galilee and only ministered to his Jewish relatives.

Although there are some things about God that go unrevealed, Jesus is the Revealed One. In fact, his very purpose for coming to earth was to reveal God's heart to humanity. Jesus said in Matthew 12:34 that the mouth speaks from what fills the heart. If Jesus is the Word of God, then he, in fact, came from the heart of the Father to reveal His spirit, His light and His love to the world.

As the revealed one, Jesus was limited to time, space, knowledge, power and presence but he was unlimited in God's essence, substance and nature. His humanity did not extinguish his divinity and his divinity did not extinguish his humanity. Jesus existed as totally divine and totally human. He was all God and all Man. He was unlimited; yet, limited. He was all knowing; yet, lacked knowledge. He was all powerful; yet, lacked in ability. He was immutable; yet, emptied himself to become a bondservant.

God is Undivided

The hallmark of the Jewish faith is summarized in the Shema Yisrael found in Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one." This pronouncement issues the credence that God is undivided. He has no parts. He is One! Yet the prophet Daniel revealed a vision in Chapter 7 of four beasts. In the middle of that vision, (verses 7-9-14) a picture of God identified as the Ancient of Days with His spiritual entourage and habitation. Daniel described a scene where the Ancient of Days gave all authority of his kingdom to the Son of Man. Daniel wrote:

"I watched till thrones were put in place and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame. Its wheels a burning fire; A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. Multiple thousands, times ten-thousands ministered to Him; ten-thousand times ten-thousand stood before Him The court was seated and the books were opened."

This description or vision was seen as part of another vision where Daniel's saw four beasts whom he indicated were successive world leaders seeking to become a unipolar power on earth. While these world leaders were speaking pompous words and elevating themselves, Daniel saw another scene which he recorded in verses 13 and 14.

"I was watching in the night visions and saw one like the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven. He came to the Ancient of Days and they brought Him near before Him. Then to the him (Son of Man) was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples nations and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away and His kingdom will not be destroyed."

Very few people would consider these two personalities (Father and Son) an infringement upon God's Oneness.

The Dead Sea Scrolls unveiled the *Book of Enoch*, whose extant copy was written some two hundred years before Christianity, Using the same terminology (Ancient of Days and Son of Man,) the book introduced a Trinitarian concept about God. Trinitarian theologians and historians had to rethink how God's Oneness is revealed in a Trinitarian personage. These

concepts were fundamental to the formation and the development of the Trinitarian theory. Enoch 48:2-3 records Noah's vision. He wrote,

“In that hour was this Son of Man invoked before the Lord of Spirits, and his name in the presence of the Ancient of Days. (This occurred) before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars of heaven were formed. His name was invoked in the presence of the Lord of Spirits. A support shall he be for the righteous and the holy to lean upon, without falling; and he shall be the light of nations.”²¹

Arguably, the Ancient of Days, mentioned by Daniel and Enoch was Yahweh, the Father. Jesus called himself the Son of Man perhaps as a means to announce his messiahship. The third person, Lord of Spirits, was clearly meant to be the Holy Spirit, who is the third person of the Trinitarian Godhead. If this is correct, then the concept of a Trinitarian God was documented almost two hundred years prior to the Incarnation.

These personages are found in written text. Daniel 7:9 referenced God as the Ancient of Days and Paul stated that Jesus was the fullness of the Deity who existed in a bodily form. This affirmation suggests that both Paul and Daniel were aware of the *Book of Enoch* and it was a source of study by the New Testament church. The argument that a Trinitarian God is “undivided” was certainly debated during the third and fourth century as the Church formally announced that the hypostatic nature of Jesus being both human and divine.

Genesis 1:1-3 explains an “undivided God” at creation. God created the heavens and the earth; the Spirit moved over the face of the waters, and Jesus was heard saying, “Let there be light.” If Colossians 1:16 is correct, that Jesus created everything, and if Genesis 1:1 is correct that God created everything, then only one conclusion exists. Jesus is God and God is undivided.

An undivided God existed in the creation story. The Father is mentioned in verse 1; the Holy Spirit was mentioned in verse 2 and Jesus spoke life or light into creation in verse 3. If either of the three personages are missing, then creation would not have occurred. God's trinitarian nature cannot be divided any more than speech can be subdivided. Words

²¹ Richard Laurence LL.D., *The Book of Enoch the Prophet*, Translated from *An Ethiopic MS. In the Bodleian Library* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1883), p. 53.

that we speak come from thoughts and they are vocalized with our breath. In like manner, Yahweh represents the thought; Jesus is the Word; the Holy Spirit breathes to allow the words to be heard. Without the thought, the Word would not exist. Without the Word, creation would not have occurred. Without the Spirit, the Word could not have spoken creation into existence.

Throughout the years, I have heard the Trinity explained by different illustrations. One person explained God as a geometrical figure called an equilateral triangle with each side representing the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The notion that God does not have parts can be seen by removing one of the equilateral sides. It is no longer a triangle.

Hebrews 1:2 and Colossians 1:15 confirm that Jesus was the creator of the world, but he was also the image of the invisible God. He was both firstborn over all creation and he created everything that exists, both spiritual and physical; visible, and invisible; whether they are thrones, dominions principalities or powers. All things were created by him.

In John 5:26-28, Jesus explained his undivided nature with his Father. He said, “For just as the Father has life in Himself, thus he has granted the Son to have life in himself.” This statement recognizes the unity of God while the next part of the verse addressed their personages. Jesus continued, “And He has granted the Son authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.”

To that end, God is One and undivided but through transcendence He has the ability to express Himself through three personalities and delegate proper authority within the godhead. It must be concluded that Yahweh, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are one in essence, one in substance, a single nature but equal in deity. God exists in three unified personalities with unique functions. All three persons created the heavens and the earth. Yahweh thought it; Jesus spoke it into existence; the Holy Spirit caused it to happen.

Similarly, the incarnation existed in the mind of Yahweh before the foundation of the world. The angel, Gabriel, spoke the “Word” to Mary and when Mary said, “Yes!” the Holy Spirit overshadowed her, and she conceived. Nine months later the Word became flesh.

God’s plan for human salvation is also undivided; yet, it involves all three unique personalities. The Father thought of the plan, Jesus executed

the plan; the Holy Spirit implemented the plan. Yahweh, His Word, and His Spirit all agree. They are three personalities in one deity. They are Who They Are, undivided.

Super-nature of God

Throughout this book, I have consistently used the phrase “nature of God.” But in this section, I will bring definition to the statement. However, instead of using the term “nature of God, I will use super-nature because it better defines my intention. God’s super-nature has been specifically revealed in Scriptures. According to Merriam-webster.com,²² the term “nature” has multiple meanings. It is defined as the inherent character or basic constitution of a person or thing. We often speak of a person’s disposition or temperament and say that she had a romantic nature, or it was his nature to be paternal. A second definition says nature is a creative and controlling force in the universe. Things like instinct, appetite or sex drive are said to be a person’s nature. All other definitions describe the physicality of creation and none actually define God’s nature. That is because God is super-nature. He created nature, which places Him outside of the natural; hence, the term, supernatural.

What is the nature or “super-nature” of God? The New Testament actually defines it in three phrases. God is Spirit; God is Light; God is Love. These three statements are the sum total of God’s nature, which Jesus and his apostles revealed to us.

God is Spirit

John 4:24 announced, “God is spirit.” In the same way that the human nature is expressed physically, the divine nature is described spiritually. God’s substance is spiritual, which ultimately means God is spirit. The Greek word for spiritual is *pneumatikos* (pronounced *new-mah-teeek-oh*) and perhaps is best defined as that which relates to spirits. In my book, *The Study of Spirits*, I explain that all known spirits (those revealed in Scriptures) can be categorized into three groups: divine spirit, soulical spirits and non-soulical spirits.²³ A soulical spirit is any spirit entity that has been created with mental, volitional, and emotional qualities. Non-soulical

²² Merriam-Webster, “Nature” Online dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nature> Retrieved 31 May, 2018.

²³ Delp, *The Study of Spirits*, p. 33-77.

spirits are better described as thought initiators. Spirits generate thoughts, which form words, create emotions and influence behavior.

God's substance is spiritual, which means He is immaterial and incorporeal. As such, God is invisible to the physical realm and His spiritual substance cannot be perceived with physical senses. Thiessen described substance as "essence" and suggested that God's essence or substance consists of spirituality, self-existence and infinity as it relates to space and time.²⁴ The nature of God's spiritual substance prevents man from relating to God through sensory means; however, God has constructed man with the capacity to know and worship Him through the spirit.

The nature of God's spirituality establishes that He is also alive, meaning He is active inside of nature and outside of nature. Being alive indicates that His personality consists of feelings, power and activity. God is conscious with intellect, senses, and volition. It is assumed that His spiritual substance has sensibility and only those with spiritual senses have the ability to experience His spiritual nature. Man was made in God's image, so we must assume that man originally had spiritual senses, which were forfeited when he sinned. Humans can only relate to the physical realm through five senses: hearing, seeing, tasting, touching and smelling, because it is through our senses that we experience reality. Having five spiritual senses would make the spirit realm come alive and allow us to experience life as Adam and Eve did prior to sin. The New Testament reveals that the resurrection will once again allow mankind and all creation to experience the spirit realm.

Zechariah 21:1 recorded, "God forms the human spirit within a person." The formation of the spiritual substance somehow reflects the image of God and at the same time our spirits are confined to our human bodies. At death, the human spirit separates from the physical, at which point the spirit is classified as a "spirit of the dead." These are mentioned in Isaiah 8:19; 14:9; 19:3, Leviticus 19:31; 20:27; and Deuteronomy 18:11.

At the resurrection, Isaiah 26:19 states the earth will bring forth its dead spirits. Luke 16 explains that dead people, separated from their bodies, have spiritual senses that feel pain, experience torment and

²⁴ Thiessen, p. 121-122.

communicate with other dead people. They have the ability to remember their past when they were alive and to suffer emotional anguish. They can reason, have compassion and intercede for those who are alive. Somehow the spirit of a man is inter-connected with his mind, will and emotions.

If God selected the Bible to reveal His intention about Jesus, then He intentionally revealed Himself as a spiritual God with intellect, senses and volition. The entire chapter of Genesis 1 declares that God is alive and active. Verses one and twenty-one state, “God created.” In verse two, He moved. In verse three, God saw. In verse four, He divided. In verse five, God called. In verse seven, He made. In verse seventeen, God set order and in verse twenty-eight, God blessed. These actions prove the activity and liveliness of God. They reveal his intellect, reasoning and sensory abilities.

Creativity requires intellect, reasoning, imagination and spiritual eyesight. These are the qualities of an artist. Imagination is the ability to have a mental picture of something. Spiritual eyesight is where imagination originates. Musicians have a similar artistic component that relates to hearing rather than seeing. Musical creativity originates with spiritual senses given by God. Once a musician hears a song with spiritual ears, he is able to translate that song through his physical senses so that others can hear physically what he heard spiritually.

These mental, sensory, and emotional processes allowed God to create everything that exists. He alone is uncreated, unlimited and undivided; yet, He created limitations and divisions. He created elements and processes. He created various disciplines of science and engineered creativity to produce spiritual and material things, when neither existed.

God is Light

To suggest that God is spirit and God is light is to contend that God is spiritual light. In 2010, I wrote a book called *Spiritual Light*. In a later edition, I renamed the book *The Light of the Spirit* in order to bring a better definition to what spiritual light actually is. The light of the spirit is perhaps better understood as ‘glory.’ It is from God’s glory or His light that He created everything. In the seven-day creation story, Moses described what God created on each day. He distinguished the difference between physical light, which was created on day four, from spiritual light that was created on the first day.

John 1:2-5 seems to be a re-telling of the creation story, naming Jesus as the Creator of all things. John wrote, “In him was life and that life was the (spiritual) light of humanity.” Verse 9 states that Jesus is the True Light who gives light to everyone coming into the world.

Professor Teresa Woodruff announced in April 2016 that new life begins with a flash of light. Researchers at Northwestern University discovered in fertility labs that a zinc spark occurs at the moment of fertilization, when the sperm meets the egg. According to Woodruff, scientists have shown for the first time after capturing the “fireworks” on film. The zinc inside the human egg radiates out in a florescent burst at the moment of conception.²⁵ Although this development shows a physical light radiation, it seems logical that the physical light produced is only an indication of the spiritual light that is created at conception. While it is true that a physical light can be seen at the moment of fertilization, the spiritual light (glory) cannot be seen through our natural senses. Paul supplies a good understanding about this spiritual light in 1 Corinthians 11:7. He explained that Adam received God’s glory when he was created, and Eve received Adam’s glory when she was created.

Spiritual light is produced by the life of God’s Spirit. The Bible distinguishes between light and darkness; good and evil; righteousness and sin. Jesus said in John 8:12, “I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness but has the light of life.” James said in James 1:17 that God is the Father of lights.

Fourth century clerics purposefully included the light nature of God into the creeds of both the First Council of Nicaea in 325 and the First Council of Constantinople in 381. Appendix A shows the variation of the two creeds, identifying Jesus as God of God and Light of Light. Their creeds argue that God, the Father, was Light and Jesus is Light of Light, God of God, very God of very God.²⁶

²⁵ Sarah Knapton, “Bright Flash of Light Marks Incredible Moment Life Begins When Sperm Meets Egg,” *The Telegraph (Science)*, 26, April 2016, Retrieved 19, May 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/2016/04/26/bright-flash-of-light-marks-incredible-moment-life-begins-when-s/> 2016.

²⁶ Wikipedia, “Nicene Creed” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicene_Creed Retrieved 01 June 2018.

Spiritual light is the very substance in all living creation that causes life. According to Jesus, when people let their lights shine, others can see their good works and glorify God. The light that God gives us is designed to produce spiritual qualities that are good in nature. Second century Clement stated that we need to think of Jesus as we do of God and not belittle the one who is our salvation. Referring to Jesus he said, “How can we repay him and how many holy acts must we do to repay him? For he has given us light; as a father, he has called us children; he saved us when we were perishing.”²⁷ Clement recognized that Jesus had given us light.

Agnus Sanford understands spiritual light as God’s eternal life as it relates to the kingdom of God inside believers. She stated, “The kingdom of God is within you. It is the indwelling light, the secret place of the consciousness of the Most High that is the King of Heaven in its present manifestation on this earth.”²⁸

Geerhardus Vos argued a different view suggesting that the light referenced in the New Testament was symbolic and could mean the light of knowledge, the light of holiness or the light of joy, which were the three spheres of religious manifestations in the Old Testament Temple.²⁹ It seems reasonable to me that the light mentioned in Genesis 1:3 was the literal manifestation of God’s glory. One of the primary definitions of glory in both the Old and New Testament was “light.” This glory or light was seen by Isaiah when he saw the LORD high and lifted up and the train of His garment filling the temple.

Stephen experienced or saw this same glory when he was being stoned. Luke recorded that the heavens were opened, and Stephen not only saw the glory of God, he also saw Jesus standing at his right side. Many people were present at the scene but Stephen was the only one who saw the vision. Perhaps this was the fulfillment of Jesus’ prayer in John 17:5 when he prayed, “Oh Father, glorify me together with Yourself, with the

²⁷ Michael Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers in English* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006) p. 77.

²⁸ Agnes Sanford, *The Healing Light* (Saint Paul, MN: MacAlester Park Publishing Company, 1947), p. 19.

²⁹ Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology, Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948), p.152.

glory, which I had with You before the world was.” The glory of Jesus was also manifested on the Mountain of Transfiguration and was witnessed by Peter, James and John. In the same vision, they saw the glory or light Moses and Elijah.

God’s spiritual light and the light He gave to humanity is the same glory that Adam and Eve had when He created them. Paul said in Romans 8:2 that life (*zoe*) is a spirit. At creation, God breathed the spirit of life into their nostrils and they were filled with life (light.) When the first couple sinned, their glory could no longer be seen. They felt naked and ashamed; so, they tried to cover themselves. The penalty of disobeying God in the Garden was a type of spiritual death, which resulted in their inability to experience the spiritual realm. Their glory and the spiritual kingdom that surrounded them became invisible. In response, God introduced a plan of to resurrect the invisible dimension. Hence, Jesus came to earth and preached the good news about God’s kingdom and demonstrated what will happen when death is finally defeated, and we are all resurrected.

Vos and other contemporary theologians maintain that God manifested His glory in the Tabernacle of Moses. It was called “Shekinah glory” and is thought to have been a supernatural experience that occurred temporarily but did not remain.³⁰ Eastern Orthodox theology calls this Taboric Light or Divine Light.³¹ An Athonite monk, Gregory Palamas, taught this in the fourteen century when he referenced the light that was revealed on Mount Tabor at the Mount of Transfiguration. It was the same light that Paul saw on the road to Damascus when he was blinded and had to be escorted to visit Ananias. This tabor light is considered “uncreated light” and would conspicuously be associated with Jesus, who according to John 1:9, is the True Light.

If Jesus is the true light and if he has given light to everyone coming into the world, then his statement, “Let your light shine” may help us understand the regenerative and redemptive work of the Holy Spirit. Although mankind is born with a degenerative nature, he is also born with a life-giving spirit that keeps his flesh alive. Jesus came to earth to declare

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Wikipedia, “Tabor Light” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tabor_Light
Retrieved 1 June 2018.

that being born of the spirit was a spiritual birth into His kingdom. That experience or process embraces the True light of Jesus, which lives in the believer and covers him with a spirit called “grace.” While Jesus brings us grace, the Holy Spirit brings us power, which does two things.

First, this power helps us to be conformed into God’s image. It helps us to forgive. He produces spirits like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, faith and self-control. These spirits create the godly character inside us. Secondly, the Holy Spirit helps us to help others. Through spiritual gifts, we are able to provide words of knowledge, wisdom, discernment and faith that will encourage, edify and bring life to others. The fruit of the spirit works inside us; the gifts of the Spirit work through us.

According to Luke 11:34-36, the light inside us was not placed there at regeneration. It must have been there from birth. In this setting, Jesus was speaking to Pharisees and lawyers who he later rebuked because of their un-regenerated, legalistic religious rituals. The light mentioned in Luke 11 and Matthew 6 references the light or glory that we receive when we come into the world (John 1:9.) Of this light, Jesus said, “The lamp of the body is the eye: therefore when your eye is good, then your whole body also is full of light; but when your eye is evil, your body is full of darkness.”

In the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:15-16, Jesus referenced the light by saying, “You are the light of the world.” And this was signified by the good works people did to glorify God. In Matthew 6:22, he again said the eye (how we see things) is the lamp of our body. In other words how we perceive or our perspective of things will determine whether or not good (light) or evil (darkness) lives within us. Following that statement in verse 23, he gave us insight about how spiritual light and darkness work inside us. He said, “If the light in you is darkness, how great is that darkness.” We must ask, “How can the light in us be darkness?” Obviously, our understanding of spiritual light is vague and opaque. We should not think that spiritual light is the same as physical light. It is difficult for us to grasp the concept that light can be darkness because we gauge light from a physical perspective. In these texts, Jesus wasn’t referring to physical light. His reference was to our spiritual nature and what causes us to have the proper outlook on life.

His illustration was followed by the contrast between God and wealth. Both of the them seek to be our masters. That is why Jesus said,

“No one can serve two masters.” He said that we will hate one of them and love the other. He can only be loyal to one of them. The other one, he will despise. Following that statement, Jesus explained how our attitude should be to seek God’s kingdom about all matters pertaining to money and don’t be anxious about the necessities of life that we lack.

How we view life will ultimately depend upon our future. If we have a pessimistic and negative attitude about people, places and things, our perspective leans toward evil. If we have an optimistic positive attitude, then our perspective leans toward good. How we see things will ultimately determine our future. He gave us His light, so we can have a positive perception and demonstrate good deeds.

God is Love

The cultural understanding of love is discretionary in that the English language does not provide an efficient and adequate definition of love. We use this term to describe different kinds of emotions and feelings. The ancient Greek language has at least four distinct words for love: *agápe*, *éros*, *phília*, and *storgē*.³²

Agápe distinguishes love as charity or a gift. Agápe love is identified and expressed by the feelings one has for children or spouse. Christians use this word to express God’s love for His children. A second type of love is éros and typically means a type of love expressed in sexual passion. It is the root word for erotic. Philía is an affectionate friendship or brotherly love that is found between family and friends. The word, storgē, is another Greek word that means affection and was commonly used in ancient scripts to define the relationship between parents or children, but it could be used to express allegiance to one’s dog, country or favorite ball team, etc.³³

John’s statement in I John 4:8, referenced agápe to define God’s existence. According to the New English Translation Commentary,³⁴ the phrase “God is love” does not contain an interchangeable subject and

³² Wikipedia, the Free Dictionary, “Greek Words For Love,” Retrieved 20 May 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_words_for_love 2016.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ NET Bible, “1 John 4:8” New England Translation (NET), Net Notes 20. Retrieved 20 May 2016, <http://net.bible.org/#!/bible/1+John+4> 2016.

predicate nominative. In other words, “God is love does not equate to love is God. The predicate noun is anarthrous, as it is in two other Johannine formulas describing God: “God is light” in 1 John 1:5 and “God is Spirit” in John 4:8. As such, these statements describe God’s nature. John’s letters to the churches emphasized the love nature of God, which was seen in the responses and behavior of the people. In other words, when we see love working in people, it is a sign of God’s presence in their actions.

The word *agápe* is not used exclusively to describe God’s love. Sometimes it is used to directly or indirectly effectuate evil. For example, John 3:8 states “Men loved darkness (*ἠγάπησαν*). This verb form of *agápe* suggests that man can *agápe* the world of darkness, indicating that men have the capacity for *agápe* that is directed somewhere other than God. This leaves theological scholars groping to define love other than with the use of the word *agápe*.

If *agápe* is from God and is directed toward Him, a familia relationship develops between man and God. Paul said in I Corinthians 8:3, “If someone loves (*agápe*) God, he is known by God. The Apostle wrote in I John 4:12, “No one has seen God at any time. If we *agápe* one another, God resides in us, and his *agápe* is perfected in us.” The use of *agápe*, in both instances, indicates that our relationship with God is predicated upon our expressing His love to others.

John also wrote in I John 4:20, “If anyone says, “I love God” and yet hates his fellow Christian, he is a liar, because the one who does not love his fellow Christian whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.” The occupation of love recognizes and proves one’s allegiance to God’s kingdom as summarized in the following verse 21, “And the commandment we have from him is this: that the one who loves God should love his fellow Christian too.”

The kingdom of God is filled with love. It is more than an emotion. It is the committed loyalty that energized Jesus to go to the cross. John 13:1 recorded, “Having loved his own, he loved them to the end.” Love is the discipline that leads mankind to forgive those who have given cause for offense. According to I Corinthians 13:4-8 it is the power of the Holy Spirit that produces patience, kindness, humility, peace and selflessness. Love is filled with truth, forbearance, faith, hope and endurance. Love never ends.

Jesus told some Jewish leaders in John 5:42 that they did not have the love of God in them because they refused to come to Jesus to receive (zoe) life and instead tried to obtain life through the Scriptures. And while God can and does reveal Himself through Scriptures, the revelation only occurs when one has a relationship with Jesus who gives us (zoe) life or the nature of his light. God has revealed Himself to mankind as love, which helps one to understand man's emotional nature. Expressing God's love to others demonstrates a yielded volition toward the Holy Spirit.

God Has Form

In my book, *The Study of Spirits*,³⁵ I discussed the concept that God has form. The Scriptures suggest that spirits of another dimension are actually formed. As such, spirits have form. If spirits have form and God is spirit, then what is His form and what does it look like?

Philippians 2:6-11 may provide an answer for us. This passage of Scripture was a stylistic poem that Paul used to describe an event that occurred when Jesus was on earth. Paul used the event to contrast Christ's humanity and divinity. He wrote or recited,

“Jesus, who though he existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking on the form of a slave, by looking like other men and by sharing in human nature.”

In theological circles, this verse is strategic to explaining the Trinitarian nature of Jesus. It was crucial in the church split in 451 A.D. at the Council of Chalcedon when the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox churches disagreed about Christ's nature. Paul wrote that Jesus “emptied himself” indicating that he set aside his divine nature in order to become a human.

Sometimes the Greek word κενωο (*ken'-o-o*) is translated emptied and other times it is translated voided. However, the word it is translated, the inference explained that Jesus chose to empty and humble himself. As a result, his name was highly exalted above everything to the extent that every knee and tongue in heaven, on earth and under the earth will bow and confess his kingship.

³⁵ *The Study of Spirits*, p. 24-29.

This poem contrasts two forms: the form of God and the form of a bondservant and describes an event that occurred on the Mountain of Transfiguration, when Jesus brought Peter, James and John to the top of the mountain and was transfigured before them. According to Matthew 16:28, Jesus wanted to show some of his disciples what he would look like in the spiritual kingdom. It was during this transfiguration that they were allowed to see his glory. Luke 9:30-32 describes the glorious appearance of Jesus, Moses and Elijah as they exist in the spiritual realm. John wrote about the occasion in John 1:14 when he wrote, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we saw his glory...”

The Gospel writers included this transfiguration story in order to explain the fulfillment of the law about slavery found in Exodus 21. According to this law, the Jewish community could only procure a Hebrew slave for six years and in the seventh year, the slave had to be released. There were certain conditions written into an unmarried slave’s purchase.

If a single slave became married while in slavery, he was allowed to leave after six years but his wife and children belonged to the master. On the other hand, if he wanted to stay with his family, he could become a bondservant by intentionally declaring his lifelong service and devotion to his master and have it notarized before the community judges. A ceremonial earring was inserted into his earlobe to acknowledge his decision. It is out of this context that the poem was written. The statement that Jesus was in the form of God but took upon himself the form of the bondservant indicates that God’s glory has a form which we can’t see but can be seen in the spiritual realm. In this case, Jesus’ disciples saw a vision depicting the form of God.

These three disciples weren’t the only people privy of seeing Christ’s glory. Acts 7:55-56 explained the vision that Stephen saw when he was being executed. Luke said that Stephen saw the “glory of God.” He saw God’s Spirit in an unseen realm. It was invisible to others but visible to Stephen because the heavens were opened to him. In the vision, Stephen saw God standing next to His son, Jesus. Luke wrote,

“But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked intently toward heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. “Look!” he said. “I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”

Stephen's use of the term "Son of Man" pointed to the Daniel 7 prophecy as confirmation to the church that the Messiah is the "Son of Man," the same name that Jesus called himself among his followers. Unless our spiritual eyes are opened to see into the spiritual dimension, we are unable to see God's spirit or His form. This could occur in a vision, dream or possibly an out-of-body experience at death.

We experience our physical reality through our senses; however, we are unable to see our spiritual dimension unless the spiritual heavens are opened to us. This special, supernatural, phenomena also occurred in other Scripture texts. For example, in 2 Kings 6:17, Elisha prayed that God would open the eyes of his servant, so he could see how God was protecting Elisha from the Syrian army. The LORD answered his prayer and unveiled the spiritual realm, so his servant could see horses and chariots of fire surrounding Elisha. He saw the forms of angels that appeared as fiery horses and chariots. The servant was unable to see what was happening in the spiritual dimension until God opened his spiritual eyes in a vision.

On other occasion in the Old Testament, people have seen God's form. Exodus 24:15-18 reports that Moses saw the form of God's glory on Mount Sinai in plain view of the people. The story in Numbers 12:4-8 highlights a story about the time when God told Aaron and Miriam that their brother would see the form of God. The two siblings had challenged Moses' authority and God intervened by rebuking them He said,

"Hear now my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD (Yahweh) will make myself known to him in a vision; I will speak with him in a dream. My servant, Moses is not like this; he is faithful in all My house. With him, I will speak face to face, openly, and not in riddles; and he will see the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

God told Miriam that Moses would see the form of the LORD. But why did Moses have the sacred experience when others were prohibited? Moses explained to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 4:11-16, when he summarized their forty-year wilderness journey. They were not allowed to see God's spiritual form because He didn't want them to make physical carvings of it. And while God has determined not to reveal His spirit form to everyone, the Bible is laced with examples to produce the understanding that God is spirit and spirits have forms.

Isaiah 43:10 indicates that spirits have forms when the prophet spoke in behalf of God, saying, “No god was formed before me and none will outlive me.” Hermeneutically, we cannot suggest that the former phrase “formed before me” was allegorical and then literally apply the last phrase “outlive me.” There can be only one conclusion as to why the Scriptures references God’s form. God is spirit and spirits have forms.

We must conclude that God has a form, but what does His form look like and is it the same all the time? It seems that God has the ability to reveal himself in different forms. He first revealed himself to Moses in a burning bush. He revealed himself to Abraham in the form of a man accompanied by two angels who also appeared as men. He revealed himself to John the Baptist and to those being baptized when the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove. According to Mark 16:12, even Jesus appeared to Cleopas and his wife in another form as they journeyed from Jerusalem because he didn’t want them to know who he was. But later, after he explained the Old Testament Scriptures about the Messiah, they realized that they were talking to Jesus and he immediately vanished from their sight. The form of God must somehow be linked to His glory or the light of His spirit.

The *Book of Enoch* reveals how God’s servant walked with God in the spirit realm and saw the angels in their spirit form. One of the angels escorted him throughout the heavenly realm and Enoch was permitted to see angels and the place of departed spirits. Enoch also confirmed that the angels took him to a place where he interacted with God. He explicitly described the brilliance and sensations, even though he said it was a vision.

Apostle John recorded how Jesus interacted with Isaiah and gave him a message to preach in Isaiah 6. It was a message to the Jewish people. He wrote in John 12:41, “Isaiah said these things because he saw his (Jesus’) glory and spoke about him.”

Closely connected to the concept of forms is the word “image.” Paul told the Colossian church that Jesus is the physical image of God’s invisible form. He also noted in Colossians 2:9 that the fullness of the Godhead dwells in his physical bodily form. Jesus told his disciples the same thing just before his crucifixion. John 14:5-9 records his comments, noting that Jesus would go to his Father to make a way and prepare a place for them. Philip then asked, “If you will show us the Father, we will be content?” Jesus simply explained, “Whoever sees me, sees the Father.”

If our spirit has a form, what does it look like and from where did it come? The debate about the composition of man existed before Christ and continued among the patristic fathers. The debate focuses on whether or not man is dichotomous comprising of spiritual and physical capacities or tripartite, comprising of spirit, soul and body. Watchman Nee differentiates between the soul and spirit and offers a biblical analysis of man's spirit. He maintains there are three functions of the spirit as it relates to God: conscience, intuition and communion. He also teaches that man's soul is the seat of his personality and the soul's faculty relates to volition, intellect (mind) and emotion. Appendix B shows biblical verses provided by Watchman Nee that describe the functions of the spirit and soul.³⁶

The Hebrew language uses the word נֶפֶשׁ *nephesh* to synonymously translate soul and life. For example, in Genesis 2:7, Moses wrote, "And God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life and man became a living **soul**. In this passage, *nephesh* is translated soul. But Leviticus 17:11 states, "The life (*nephesh*) of the flesh is in the blood." Hence a person's life and soul are interchangeably the same.

In that same passage, the Hebrew word נְשָׁמָה (*njshamah*, pronounced *nesh-aw-man'*) means "breath" and the Hebrew word חַיָּה – (*chay* pronounced *khab'-ee*) means living. There seems to be a link of the human blood to the soul and human breath to the spirit. The phrase חַיָּה נְפֹשׁ (*nephesh khayyah*, "living soul") is not only used about man's creation in Genesis 2:7, it is also used for animals, See Genesis 1:20, 24, 30; 2:19.

In agreement with Scripture, we must confirm that God formed man's spirit. It doesn't seem logical that the spirit of man conforms to his physical body but rather the physical body conforms to his spirit. As such, the spirit of a person is like a unveiled glory covering and generating life through the individual. When Jesus revealed his glorified body on the Mount of Transfiguration in a vision, he simply opened the eyes of Peter, James and John and allowed them to see into the spiritual dimension. They were able to see the glory that covered and penetrated Jesus' physical body. To that degree, when Christ returns, we will be like him for we will see him as he is -- glorified. We will see our spiritual forms.

³⁶Watchman Nee, *Spiritual Man* (New York: Christian Fellowship Publishers Inc. 1968), p. 33.

God Has a Name

Exodus 20:3 records the first of ten commands that God dictated to Moses. He wrote, “You shall have no other gods before Me.” This statement assumes that the God, who met Moses on the mountain, was a god among other gods. It indicated that mankind served multiple gods and God wanted exclusive worship without other gods positioned before Him.

The second commandment restricted Moses from making physical images of His presence. God is spirit and does not want to be viewed outside His substance. According to Paul’s statement in Colossians 3:5, worshipping other idols (idolatry) is greed. The intention for anyone to worship any god other than Yahweh is done for personal reasons stimulated by man’s Adamic nature. God told Moses in Deuteronomy 4:28, “These gods are made by human hands that cannot see, hear, eat, or smell. In other words, these worthless gods were not alive. They were mere idols without sensory abilities. Conversely, God has spiritual senses, which makes Him alive.

Jesus said, “God is spirit” and all spirits have names. Whether the spirit is human, angelic, good or evil, all spirits have names. And when people die, they keep their names as was noted on the Mount of Transfiguration when Jesus was speaking to Moses and Elijah, who had been dead for centuries. Also, when Saul paid a witch to conjure up the spirit of Samuel, Saul called him by name.

God confirmed to Moses that idols are idle and have no ability to respond to people’s needs. On the other hand, He has a specific name and identity upon Whom people can call and He will respond. The third commandment stated, “You shall not take the name of The LORD (*Yahweh*), your God, in vain, for The LORD (*Yahweh*) will not hold people guiltless who takes His name in vain.”

The name Yahweh was not new to Moses. His mother’s name was Jochebed, which means “Yahweh is glory.” He had heard about Yahweh but had never met Him. According to the Septuagint, Levi had three sons, and the middle son, Caath (Kohath in Hebrew) married Jochebed who was his cousin.³⁷ The Hebrew MSS of the same verse, Exodus 6:20, states that

³⁷ Thomas Horn, *Researcher’s Library of Ancient Texts, Volume 3, Septuagint*, Translated by Sir Lancelor C. I. Brenton, 1851. (Crane, MO: Defense, 2012), p. 45.

Jochebed was Amram's aunt. The relationship is not as important as the understanding that Levi and his family knew about Yahweh. It was Yahweh, who first met Abraham and later Isaac and Jacob. Levi had heard about the Yahweh's glorious appearance and he passed these stories down to his children. Kohath then named his baby daughter Jochebed, which means "Yahweh is glory" and she would be like Mary of the New Testament who gave birth to a deliverer.

Moses was eighty years old when God spoke to him from a burning bush. At that time, Yahweh told him to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt. Moses had never met God in this manner; so, he inquired about His identity by asking, "What if the people want to know Your name; what shall I tell them?" God responded, "I AM that I AM. You must tell the Israelites, "Yahweh has sent you." The Septuagint reads, "Thus say to the Children of Israel, "THE BEING has sent you."³⁸

The Hebrew word for "I AM" is Ehyeh (*pronounced "haya"*) and is the first-person singular of the verb "to be," The word "Yahweh" is the third person masculine singular form of the verb, "he is." The context of His name suggests His omnipresence. He was the God Who was with them presently and He would always be present with them. From this dialogue, the name of the Hebrew God "Yahweh" was etched in the Hebrew writings. According to Russell Joyner the name Yahweh appears 6,828 times in 5,790 verses in the Old Testament.³⁹

In polytheistic societies, all gods have names. At Athens, Paul observed an altar with the inscription, "To the unknown god," suggesting that the Greeks had names for all their gods but in this instance, they also made an altar to a god, whose name the people did not know. The names of gods were important because they revealed the purpose for the gods.

In 2010, the three major monotheistic cultures: Judaism, Christianity and Islam had a total population of about 3.78 billion,⁴⁰ which

³⁸ Ibid., p. 43.

³⁹ Horton, p. 134.

⁴⁰ Bill Chappell, "World's Muslim Population Will Surpass Christians This Century, Pew Says" *The Two-Way*, 02 April 2016 <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/04/02/397042004/muslim-population-will-surpass-christians-this-century-pew-says> Retrieved 20 May 2016

is 45% of the world's population. All three of these religions use a single word to express monotheism. The Hebrew language uses "Elohim," the Arabic language uses "Allah" and the English language uses God. Superficially, it appears that all three religions believe in the same God; however, there are basic differences that one should investigate.

The name of the Jewish God is Yahweh, whom the Christians call "Father." The word, Yahweh, is written as Jehovah in English versions because the Germantic languages use a "J" sound for "Y" and "V" sound for "W." Hence, Yahweh and Jehovah are one and the same. A common comparison can be seen in the names Yeshua and Jesus. They are the name expressed in two different languages.

Islam is different. Allah is the Arabic word for god. And in the same way that Christians capitalize the word God when referencing Jehovah, the Muslims capitalize Allah as opposed to a different allah." The word Allah is derived from two words, "al" meaning "the" and "lah" meaning god or deity. It seems strange that all other religions (both monotheistic and polytheistic) have names for their gods. Muslims are unique because their God does not have a name; however, they would argue that Allah has ninety-nine names.

In reviewing those names, it seems clear that the ninety-names are really descriptive words for Allah and not an actual name. For example, at one time in my life, I weighed almost 300 lbs. If someone called me "the fatty man" they would be describing my appearance. That is not my name. Likewise, if someone called me Professor, that is what I do. My name or identity is Randy Lee Delp. Understanding God's titles, name and function will help us to determine whether or not the Jewish, Islamic and Christian God are one and the same. The chart below illustrates the difference between position, name and function of the First President of the United States and compares these to the names of God in Hebrew, English and Arabic languages.

The English word "god" can be used to describe any deity. The same is true for the Hebrew "Elohim" and the Arabic "Allah." The following chart shows the capitalization of the nouns because they reference a specific God that they worshipped.

Identity	United States Head of State	Hebrew For God	English For God	Arabic For God
Title or Office	President	Elohim	God	Allah
Function or Descriptions	Commander and Chief	Adonai or Lord	Lord	99 Various named functions
Name or Identity	George Washington	Yahweh	Jehovah	Allah

Because the Hebrew God (Elohim) identified Himself in Exodus 3:14 as (Yahweh meaning “He Is) it stands to reason that if the God of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims were the same God, then Muslims would call their God “Hu,” which is the Arabic word for “He is.” The chart shows “Allah” as the name of God because Yahweh and Jesus have not been revealed to Islamic people; albeit, many Muslims are coming to Christ in the Middle East.

Islam insists that their god’s name is God (Allah in Arabic) when actually that is a title and not a name. The Muslim’s recognize Yahweh as the God of the Jewish people but still insist it is not the name of their God whom they call Allah.

According to Francis Edwards Peters, "The Muslims believe that Muhammad and his followers worship the same God as the Jews insisting that Qur’ān 29:46 recognizes Allah as the same Creator God who covenanted with Abraham.⁴¹ Peters also contends that the Qur'an portrays Allah as both more powerful and more remote than Yahweh, and as a universal deity, unlike Yahweh who closely follows the Israelites. Although his statements confirm his lack of knowledge between the words Elohim and Yahweh, he is correct that Yahweh chose the Israelites to be His kingdom of priests.

Doctrinally, Muslims and Christians disagree about the paternal nature of God. Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God while Muslims claim Jesus to be a prophet whom God created in the same way

⁴¹ Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, “Allah”
<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allah>, Retrieved 22 May 2016.

He created Adam. Although Muslims believe in the virgin birth of Jesus they disavow his crucifixion and resurrection.⁴² Jesus told his followers to pray to the Heavenly Father but Muslims refuse to pray to the Father because they do not recognize him as Allah.

Jesus told the Jews in John 5:39 that they would not find eternal life in the Scriptures. They could only find eternal life through him. Likewise, it seems that Islam seeks for eternal life through their Scriptures, the Qur'ān, but the words of any Sacred book without a personal relationship with Jehovah and His son, Jesus, would not effectuate eternal life.

Arabic Christians are different than Arabic Muslims. Although Arabic Christians pray to Allah (God) they believe that Allah is their Father and He has a son who was crucified and resurrected. It must be concluded then that the Arabic Christians and Arabic Muslims pray to different allahs or gods; One has a son who was crucified and raised from the dead and the other is childless. It seems consistent then to conclude that Arabic Christians serve a different god than Arabic Muslims.

Identity of God

In the first chapter, we discussed the Unrevealed God and documented the things God has not revealed about Himself. This chapter is about the Revealed One, who is Jesus, the Christ. The best way to know about someone is to listen to what other people call them. When I was in college, I worked at a finance company with a man named Andy Ballinger. Andy gave me the nickname “Rabbi.” Although I am not Jewish teacher, he knew me as a student, studying for the ministry. No one else in the world has ever called me Rabbi but that is how Andy identified me. My wife calls me honey and sweetie. I respond by calling her sweetheart and babe. These pet names identify our affection for each other but those are not our real names.

Although my name is Randy Lee Delp, my parents called me Son, my son calls me Dad, my students call me Teacher, and my professional associates refer to me as Doctor. My relationship with each of these are different. These are names given me by others that express specific

⁴² I. A. Ibrahim, “What Do Muslims Believe about Jesus?” Islam-guide.com Retrieved 21 May 2016, (<https://www.islam-guide.com/ch3-10.htm>).

relationships. Similarly, throughout Scripture, God has been called various names to depict some aspect of His identity; although his name or identity is Yahweh or Jehovah. That is the name He does not want us to defame.

This first list of named relationships begin with “El,” which is singular for Elohim, the Hebrew word for God. Each name is linked to an aspect of God. This certainly isn’t an exhausted list of the many expressions of God but it helps us understand how the Bible brings description to His character and function. Discoveryworld.us provides a list of compound names to describe the character and function of Elohim.⁴³

- Elohim (God)
 - The Hebrew word for gods and the name used in Hebrew language for the One God. The singular for Elohim is El.
- El Shaddai – (God Almighty) Genesis 17:1
 - God met Abraham when he was 99 years old and said, “I am God Almighty. Walk before me and be blameless.
- El Roi – (God who sees) Genesis 16:13
 - Hagar called God the One who sees because she believed she had seen God and He had seen her.
- El Elyon (Most High God) – Genesis 14:18
 - Melchizedek was a priest for El Elyon. Whenever angelic beings or demons referenced God, they called him the Most High God.
- El Gibhor (Mighty or Strong God) – Isaiah 10:21 and Isaiah 9:6
 - One of the names that people will call Him.
- El Tzur (God our Rock) II Samuel 22:47 –
 - A Psalm of David who sung, “Blessed be God, the Rock of my deliverance”
- El Olam (The Everlasting God) -- Genesis 21:33, Isaiah 40:28
 - The term everlasting suggests God’s eternal, perpetual, continuum of existence.

A second list of names presents functions and character and includes the actual name of God. In Hebrew, Yahweh is used, and the Latin languages use Jehovah. The following list of compound names of Jehovah (Latin languages) was provided by Cloversites.com, which is Website business out of Lenore City, TN. and an archived pdf file that they obtained from Capital Community Church.

⁴³Discoveryworld.us, “Compound Names of Elohim” Retrieved 02 June 2018, <https://www.discoveryworld.us/bible-study/names-of-god-in-the-old-testament/compound-names-of-elohim/> 2018.

- Jehovah Elohim (The Lord God as in Creator) Genesis 2:4
- Jehovah El Elyon (The Lord Most High) Genesis 14:22
- Jehovah Adonia (The Lord, the Master) Genesis 15:2
- Jehovah El Olam (The Lord, the Everlasting) Genesis 21:33
- Jehovah Jireh (The Lord Will Provide) Genesis 22:14
- Jehovah Rapha (The Lord That Heals) – Exodus 15:26
- Jehovah Nissi (The Lord My Banner) – Exodus 17:15
- Jehovah MekaddeshKem (The Lord Who Sanctifies You) Exodus 31:13
- Jehovah Shalom (The Lord Is Peace) Judges 6:24
- Jehovah Shaphat (The Lord is Judge) Judges 11:27
- Jehovah Sabaoth (The Lord of Hosts) 1 Samuel 1:3
- Jehovah tSidkenu (The Lord Our Righteousness) – Jeremiah 23:6
- Jehovah-Raah (The Lord My Shepherd) – Psalm 23:1
- Jehovah-Elyon (The Lord the One who Blesses) Psalm 7:17
- Jehovah Hosenu (The Lord the Maker/Creator Psalm 95:6
- Jehovah Gibbor (The Lord the Mighty) Isaiah 42:13
- Jah Jehovah (The Lord, The Lord) Isaiah 12:2, 26:4 – Jah is a shortened name of Jehovah and is used universally in Hallelujah, which means Praise Jehovah)
- Jehovah Shammah (The Lord Is There or Ever-present) – Ezekiel 48:35

Cloversites⁴⁴ pointed out that there are many compound names in the Old Testament that mention Jehovah. But there is only one compound name mentioned in the New Testament for God and that is Jesus Christ, meaning Jesus, the Messiah or Jesus the Anointed One. In most translations of the Bible, the word for “Yahweh” or “Jehovah” is written as LORD; hence, the translations say “The Lord” instead of Jehovah. When reading the New Testament, you will find that Jesus always used Father instead of God’s proper name. The only exception was when he quoted from the Old Testament. It was an expression of respect, Similarly, I did not call my father Raymond or Raymond Cromwell Delp. I called him, Dad.

Revealed Through His Word

In the New Testament, God has revealed Himself in three persons compared to one in the Old Testament. Although the name of God (Yahweh or Jehovah) is quite prevalently used by Old Testament writers, it

⁴⁴Cloversites.com, Retrieved 02 June 2018, <http://storage.cloversites.com/capitalcommunitychurch1/documents/Name%20Of%20God%20-%20Charts.pdf> 2018.

is commonly not mentioned in the New Testament. Typically, the New Testament authors (in the tradition of the elders) used God when referencing deity and did not call him by name but rather by their relationship. Although the Jews of the Old Testament believed that Jehovah was Lord, Paul seemed to imply that Jehovah is the Father and Jesus, His son, is Lord. The apostle's opening statement in 1 Corinthians 1:2 stated, "Grace and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

The understanding of the Trinity was embraced very early in Christendom but continued to be debated in the first four centuries. Although the prayers in the *Book of Acts* acknowledges Jesus as the servant of God, the Trinitarian concept was freely taught. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 13:14, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you" distinguishing the three persons of the Godhead and their distinct relationships with the church. His statement in Ephesians 4:4-6 reinforced the relationships of the Trinity with the church when he recorded, "There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all, and through all, and in in all."

Although Paul inferred that Jesus was Lord, Jesus told one of the scribes that his Father was Lord. In Mark 12:29, the scribe asked Jesus which the most important or foremost commandment. Jesus answered, "The first of all the commandments is, "Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God and LORD is one." Jesus also called his Father, Lord, when he prayed in Matthew 11:25, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding but revealed them to little children." Even though he called his Father the Lord of heaven and earth, he didn't discard his own lordship.

During that time, all the Jews were looking for a Christ or Messiah to lead them away from Rome's tyranny. Jesus stumped the religious Pharisees in Matthew 12:42; Mark 12:37 and Luke 20:41-42 when he asked them about the Messiah and whose son he will be. Their familiarity with Scripture helped them to know the answer so they said, "The son of David." But Jesus quoted Psalm 110:1, "The LORD said unto my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand till I make your enemies your footstool.'" The original Hebrew recites, "Yahweh said to Adonai, 'Sit at My right hand till I make

your enemies your footstool” acknowledging the lordship of the Messiah. Perhaps that is what Jesus meant when he prayed in John 17:21-23 “Let them be one even as we are one.” He also told his disciples in John 14:9, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.”

Jesus acknowledged that God was his Father in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only son...” Going further, Jesus instructed his followers in Matthew 28:19 that they should be baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. He also taught the disciples how to pray by first acknowledging, “Our Father in heaven.” And to conclude his famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commanded, “Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Although it might be difficult to understand, and more difficult to explain, God revealed himself to the world as Father for two reasons. First, He wanted humanity to understand their need to depend upon God as children must depend on their fathers. Second, He produced us. We are children of Light. He is the Father of lights.

The explanation of the Trinity cannot be found in three parts equals one but rather one-part equals three. God is not three entities nor is he a third of One. God is One. He has not revealed Himself by three equal parts but He has revealed Himself as one God manifested in three persons. The Father is not different or separate from His word or His Spirit. They are One.

All words come from thoughts. Words (whether spoken or written) are stimulated by thoughts, which are formed in brain cells called neurons. These thoughts produce words and the words are an equal expression of the thoughts. The phrase, “I spoke without thinking” is oxymoronic. Actually, all words are vocalized thoughts. Speaking without thinking is actually vocalizing sub-conscious thoughts, sometime called a Freudian slip or a parapraxis, which is an error in speech, memory or physical action caused by an unconscious thought. All words, emotions and behavior derive from thoughts. Words are the expressions of thoughts. In the same manner, Jesus is the expressed image of God. To that end, God is like a thought and Jesus is the Word that speaks it. They are one and the same.

Apostle John first revealed Jesus to be the Word of God. He explained that God created everything with His Word. He spoke everything into existence. That is why Paul wrote in Colossians 1:15-16,

“Jesus is the image of the invisible God. For by him (Jesus,) all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions or rulers or authorities---all things were created through him and for him.” If you want to know what God looks like in the spiritual realm, look at Jesus in the physical, material baryonic world. He is the physical imprint of the invisible God.

Jesus’ physical incarnation began with a word. The angel Gabriel delivered God’s word to Mary by informing her that she would give birth to God’s son. That word was manifested in the flesh nine months later. The Revealed One is the Word of God. He is God’s word manifested in human flesh. He is Emmanuel, God with us.

Revealed through His Spirit

Jesus lived on earth approximately 32 or 33 years. The last three years of his life was spent preaching in synagogues and teaching the people about God’s kingdom. Because God is spirit, His kingdom is comprised of spirits. Through His word (Jesus), God rules His kingdom. God’s Spirit has always existed. Only twice in the Old Testament was God’s Spirit identified as Holy Spirit but in over sixty places, the terms, God’s Spirit or the Spirit of the LORD are used.

The Spirit of God was exhibited in Joseph, Daniel and Bezalel. Prophetically, in Isaiah 61:1 and fulfilled in Luke 4:18 Jesus said the Spirit of the Lord is upon me with an anointing to preach good news to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted and proclaim freedom to those imprisoned as release people from the darkness of this world.

The Holy Spirit is not a third of the Trinity: He is rather God manifested as the Father, the Word and the Spirit. He is the Spirit of God and the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead. God is spirit; Jesus is spirit; the Holy Spirit is spirit...One Spirit.

God has chosen to reveal Himself by His Spirit, but He has also revealed His desires, directions and distinctives through angels, which are identified as spirits. If there is such a hierarchy of angels or spirits as Dionysius reported in the fourth or fifth century⁴⁵ then it is evident that

⁴⁵ Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia “The Christian Angelic Hierarchy,” [tps://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_angelic_hierarchy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_angelic_hierarchy). Wikipedia.org, Retrieved 5 March 2016.

these angels or spirits are covered by and submitted to authority. His book about *On the Celestial Hierarchy* presented the concept that there are three spheres of angels with a triad of angels in each sphere. The three levels are named as follows:

- Level One consisting of (Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones)
- Level Two consisting of (Dominions, [Lordships] Virtues [Strongholds] and Powers [Authorities])
- Level Three (Principalities [rulers] Archangels, Angels)

There are ample Scriptures to contend for his thesis but very little has been discussed in recent years about spiritual hierarchy because of the lack of focus on the metaphysical or spiritual realm. There has been more of a focus of the outward functions of religions. However, it is imperative that we understand the revelation of Christ's kingdom in the same manner that he revealed it. Christ's message about his kingdom focused squarely on the spirit realm, freeing people from evil influences and healing them from sicknesses and diseases initiated by evil spirits. He said in Matthew 22:18, "If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God then the kingdom has already come upon you."

People question how Jesus was able to do so many healings and miracles and how he cast out spirits. His explanation can be understood from two distinct passages; both had to do with prayer. On one occasion, his disciples requested that he teach them to pray, like John the Baptist taught his disciples. Jesus simply said, "When you pray, say, "Our Father in Heaven, Your name is revered above all things. Your kingdom come *on earth as it is in heaven*; your will be done on earth as it is in heaven..." The concept of God's heavenly kingdom being manifested on earth is accommodated by the Spirit, when heavenly desires are realized on earth.

The second passage indirectly dealt with prayer. Jesus said in John 5:19, "I can do nothing by myself, but as I see the works of my Father, I do the same thing on earth." Also, eleven verses later he said again, "I can do nothing by myself, but as I hear, I judge, and my judgments are right because I seek not my will but the will of the Father." I suggest that these verses indirectly deal with prayer because there seems to be a meditative connection that Jesus had with the unseen spirit realm. In both of these verses (19 and 30) Jesus admitted that he could do nothing on earth without instructions from heaven. It is my opinion that most of the verses

about heaven and earth in both the Old and New Testament were meant to explain the spiritual and physical realms. Genesis 1:1 stated, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” In this verse, it appears that the heavens represent the unseen spirit realm and the earth represents the physical, material world that we experience. This assumption is made because the physical heavens (sun, moon and stars) were not made until the fourth day and the physical earth did not appear until the third. This is adversarial to the unproven theory of evolution.

These two verses in John 5:19, 30 indirectly show how Jesus was aware of the spirit realm and its spirits that influenced people. Through mental visions, he saw people getting healed and by hearing the voice of the Spirit, he responded. His obedience resulted in healings and miracles. People throughout the centuries, who teach that healing and deliverance is for today, have connected to the unseen spiritual realm to accomplish their many supernatural results.

Before I pray for people, I try to be mentally aware of their problem while prayerfully and meditatively inquiring of the Lord. Sometimes, He shows me how to pray sometimes He doesn't. When God speaks to me, I am generally aware of it with words; however, sometimes there are images. I don't have the reputation of being a faith healer and oftentimes, I pray, and nothing happens. But I am adamantly aware that I cannot heal or deliver people on my own. At the same time, when God speaks or shows me something, I have confident assurance that the Spirit is doing something in the lives of people for whom I pray. When it happens, God's kingdom comes on earth as it is in heaven.

Revealed through Transcendence

The term transcendence refers to the aspect of God's nature and power whereby he is wholly independent of the material or physical realm. Immanence exists when God is fully present in the physical realm and accessible to humanity.⁴⁶ Immanence typically is manifested in visions, inspiration or even sensing God's presence. It might be said that immanence is when God interacts with humanity. And while theologians use these two terms to explain God's spirituality, it seems inconsistent to

⁴⁶ Wikipedia, “Transcendence” Retrieved 01 June 2018.
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcendence_\(religion\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcendence_(religion)) 2018.

think that God is not immanent when He is transcendent and vice versa. Using both terms in this manner seems to divide God's essence, purpose and activity. I prefer to simply say God is transcendent, which means He has the ability to transcend from the spirit realm and become immanent to the physical realm without losing transcendence.

God is Transcendent

We have described God as both unlimited and limited. This impossibility is made possible through His transcendence. From man's perspective, the word transcendent is recognized as one's ability to extend beyond the range of the mere physical experience without actually losing physical capacity. From God's perspective, transcendence is the ability to exist in an unlimited capacity but transcend into limitations without actually losing unlimited capacity.

The notion of transcendence is not to be confused with "transcendentalism" and the philosophical movement propagated by Ralph Waldo Emerson of the nineteenth century. Transcendentalism was a complimentary teaching of Unitarianism that became popular through Schleiermacher and Immanuel Kant.⁴⁷

The concept that God is transcendent comes from the Latin word "transcendere" and means to climb across or go beyond. People who have reported out-of-body experiences are said to have crossed over into another realm. The notion of transcendence declares God to be unlimited while choosing to limit Himself to specific situations that enables His creation to relate to Him. The argument of transcendence suggests that God can be spiritually unlimited in His omnipresence and at the same time be physically limited if He so chooses.

Transcendence was evidenced when God and two angels visited Abraham as recorded in Genesis 18. Moses identified one of the three men as Yahweh, and the other two were angels who later visited Sodom and Gomorrah. In this story, the omnipresent God appeared in a single place without losing His omnipresence elsewhere. Two other conclusions can be made. Either God is not omnipresent and He appeared to Abraham, or God is omnipresent and Abraham was mistaken about the identity of the

⁴⁷ Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, "Transcendentalism," Retrieved 23 May 2016, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcendentalism> 2016.

visitor. And while modern theologians project the story as metaphoric, transcendence is the only other solution for those who believe in an omnipresent Creator who revealed Himself to one His creatures.

Another example is found in Exodus 3 when God appeared and spoke with Moses from the middle of a burning bush. Verse 2 stated, “An angel of the Lord” appeared to Moses on Mount Horeb. The term “angel of the Lord” is debated in theological circles with four different arguments. (1) He was the pre-incarnate Jesus. (2) He was the Holy Spirit. (3) He was another angel sent from God. (4) He was actually, God, the Father. The understanding of transcendence allows for any of the options to be embraced.

With modern technology, mankind is able to document and experience miracles that occur at different locations around the world at the same time. Through God’s transcendence, these occurrences are individually located but occur simultaneously in multiple locations.

The best example of God’s transcendence is the incarnation of God’s word. When Jesus became flesh, the Father and the Holy Spirit remained omnipresent. Another current example is the infilling of the Holy Spirit that happens to individuals and multitudes concurrently. While the Holy Spirit lives inside flesh, Jesus and the Father transcendently exist in the unseen spirit realm. To this degree, God is unlimited in the spiritual realm while transcending into the limitations of the human body by the Holy Spirit.

Transcendence also explains the possibility of Jesus’ instructions to the disciples about how to pray. He told them in Luke 11:2 and Matthew 6:10, “Pray that God’s will and His kingdom will manifest on earth, as it is in heaven.” Man’s need to pray for such experiences suggests that God is able to transcend at will while man does not have the same capacity. Prayer is the utter dependence upon God for transcendence, requiring man to solicit His intervention.

Transcendent Sovereignty

If God is transcendent, it applies to more than his omnipresence, it also applies to his other attributes. According to Thiessen, most evangelical theologians assert that God is sovereign, eternal, and omniscient. They also agree upon God’s moral attributes of holiness, righteousness and

goodness. The remainder of this section will delve farther into the concept of transcendence as it relates to the other attributes of God.

As previously stated, the very word “unlimited” suggests no limitations; however, the transcendence of God allows Him to be unlimited and limited at the same time. It allows Him to be unlimited in His omnipresence but still appear in a limited physical form at a specific time and location, without losing His omnipresence. Similarly, the term sovereign suggests supreme power and ultimate authority. Sovereignty is an issue of will and volition. One who is sovereign has the ability to make decisions without interruption or negation.

God is the ultimate sovereign; yet, He is transcendent. This means He has the ability to retain His ultimate sovereignty and still endow His creation with the gift of volition and with that endowment, He retains His own sovereign nature. So, while God is still sovereign in Himself, man has been gifted a sovereign will with an ability to deny God’s will. Peter confirmed in 2 Peter 3:9, “It is not God’s will that any perish but that all come to repentance.” Jesus stated in Luke 13:3, 5, “No, I tell you! But unless you repent you will all perish as well!” These two verses reveal distinct human and divine wills. It also suggests God’s sovereign transcendence. As such, God does not lose His sovereignty but rather imposes His will on the unrepentant by exercising His righteousness and justice.

Other Old Testament Scriptures also declare man’s individual sovereignty compared to God’s ultimate sovereignty. When Moses was eighty years old, God gave him a mission to free the Israelites from Egyptian slavery and to lead them into the land of covenant. In Exodus 7:3, God told Moses that He would harden Pharaoh’s heart in order to multiply His signs and wonders. That verse would indicate that Pharaoh did not have a sovereign will since God could soften or hardened it by manipulating his volition. However, in Exodus 8:32, Pharaoh hardened his own heart to prevent God’s will. There is an easy answer to the question, “Who hardened Pharaoh’s heart? God of Pharaoh himself?” The answer is both. Although Pharaoh was free to choose whether or not he would grant a mass exodus, his denial of God’s will, resulted in additional judgments while God maintained his ultimate sovereignty.

When God decreed that man possess volition, He allowed humans to be sovereign over themselves. Man possessed personal sovereignty but,

God retained ultimate sovereignty. Man had the ability to decide, determine and choose. This volition created a potential situation where God's will and man's will would become adverse with each other. God's transcendent sovereignty includes a concept of "submission of will." If man submits his will to God, then man will experience God's righteous standard. On the other hand, if man refuses to submit his will to God, then his refusal establishes a state of unrighteousness. Both righteousness and unrighteousness are spirits that are weighed by God's justice. Righteousness was adjudicated with the blessings of God's kingdom, but justice demands that unrighteousness receive a certain judgment.

According to Paul in Ephesians 5:9, righteousness is the offspring of The Light, in the same way goodness and truth are. All three are spirits. Paul also confirmed in Galatians 5:22-23 and Romans 3:21; 7:14-8:2; 9:31 that spirits are laws and he contrasted the laws or spirits from God with the laws or spirits from Satan. So, God gives humans the ability to choose: embracing the spirit or law of righteous or embracing the law of unrighteousness. Man's volition is limited but God's volition is sovereign.

The statement, "God's sovereignty is unlimited" means that no one is sovereign above Him. And while His sovereignty remains unlimited in the spiritual realm, it became limited through transcendency. This occurred when He decreed the will and authority of angels and humans. And although angels and men have a limited authority, God still has unlimited authority to judge them if they refuse to submit to His sovereign will.

An example of God's unlimited and limited sovereignty can be viewed in the Garden of Gethsemane. As a human, Jesus had a limited will and by example showed us how to submit our limited will to the Father in heaven. Jesus cried to His Father, "Not my will but thine be done." In so doing, he embraced the law of righteousness, paid the penalty of human sin, and reconciled mankind to his Father. His sacrifice, as resurrected king, gave mankind an option to embrace the king and possess righteousness or reject the king and possess unrighteousness. To that end, our choices determine our destination, while God's ultimate sovereignty remains intact.

Transcendent Time

God is eternal but through transcendence, He limits himself to the workings of time. According to the creation story in Genesis 1:14, God created time on the fourth day. Moses wrote,

“Then God said, ‘Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on earth.’”

According to this verse, God created a celestial clock to record time. Also, Isaiah 60:20 and Revelation 10:6 confirm that eventually, time will no longer exist. Eternity is the term used to explain God’s existence prior to the beginning of time, God’s present existence and God’s existence after time ceases. Time is that portion of eternity inside the physical realm when things are measured.

God is eternal in that He has no beginning and ending. Man is considered aternal, indicating he had a beginning but has no ending. That which has a beginning and ending is said to be terminal. Although God is eternal, He is able to transcend time and still maintain His transcendent eternity. Hebrews 13:8, states, “Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forevermore,” which describe the three dimensions of time. As such, time is a global physical feature that measures activity. Since God is immeasurable, it is certain that He created time for mankind. He established time by creating a celestial sun, moon and stars by which mankind measures seedtime and harvest. Time is a consistent regulatory system to measure seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, years etc.

Time exists in the physical realm but is not needed in the spiritual realm. Although Jesus is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, he also exists in eternity. Four times in the *Book of Revelation*, Jesus said he was Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. In Hebrews 12:2, it is noted that he is the beginning and ending of our faith. These titles reflect his transcendency as it relates to time. However, it must also be noted that Jesus existed prior to time and will continue to exist after time. His existence prior to time is called eternity. His existence after time is also eternity.

The incarnation of Jesus revealed his transcendent presence that existed in time without losing his existence in eternity. Transcendent time gives him the ability to pause at a point in eternity to interact with His creation. His incarnation was not the first instance when God’s transcendent time was enacted. He became immanent at creation. The eternal God met with Adam at a certain time, in the cool of the day. God

met with Abraham and then returned nine months later when Sarah was due to deliver Isaac. The thirty-three-year period of time when Jesus lived on earth as a man is sufficient evidence that the One who created time had the transcendence to be measured by it.

God's eternity allows him to know the future before it happens. Oftentimes, prophets would inform people of the future. When the Syrians laid siege against Israel causing there to be a crisis food shortage with inflated prices, Elisha told the leaders in 2 Kings 7:1 that everything would be reversed in less than twenty-four hours. He said, "About this time tomorrow, the food shortage would end and food prices would drop exponentially." Elisha's prediction occurred exactly as he said it.

God transcended time in 1 Samuel 9:16 when He said to Samuel, "About this time tomorrow, I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin and you shall anoint him commander over My people Israel." Within twenty-four hours, Samuel recognized Saul and anointed him to be Israel's first king. It is easy to understand how the future can be told once you realize that the spirit dimension is governed by eternity while the physical realm is governed by time. As such, God knows the end from the beginning and oftentimes, Scripture reveals time related information to His servants.

The Messianic prophecies and predictions of the Old Testament are not always marked within time frames, but sometimes they are. For example, Jeremiah's prophesy about "seventy years" was recorded in 2 Chronicles 36:21. He said that the land Israel occupied would not be inhabited for seventy years. The land would rest while His people lay desolate. Jeremiah also predicted that after the seventy years, a king named Cyrus, from Persia, would free Judah and the people would once again occupy the land. Soon thereafter, Israel went into Babylonian captivity for a period of seventy years.

In the midst of the seventy-year period and during the reign of Darius, Daniel set out to seek the Lord about Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years. While praying, an angel named Gabriel visited him to explain that the seventy-year prophecy referred to seventy weeks of years. Gabriel's message helped Daniel to understand that Jeremiah's prophecy was about the Messiah.

Gordon Lindsay, in his book *The Prophecies of Daniel*, laid out time divisions of what those seventy weeks actually meant.⁴⁸ He used historical citations from Ploetz's *Dictionary of Dates* and Putnam's *Dictionary of Events* to pinpoint the timing of Cyrus' release of the Jews and Nehemiah's tenure as governor. It included the sixty-nine weeks of years (483) until the crucifixion of the Messiah. Theologians debate the final week to be finalized around 70 A.D. or yet to be completed, depending upon how one interprets prophecy. But the point is, God revealed timed events in the Old Testament that came to pass.

The concept of transcendent time intersects with transcendent knowledge, which is important when trying to explain terms like "foreknowledge" and "predestination." Matthew quoted Asaph in Psalm 78:2 and said the prophets predicted things that were known from the foundation of the world. Jesus said in Matthew 25:34 that God's kingdom was prepared before the foundation of the world. He even said in Luke 11:50 that the deaths of the prophets were known from the foundation of the world. Jesus even declared that God's love for His son existed from the foundation of the world.

Paul recorded in Ephesians 1:4 that God chooses us from the foundation of the world to be holy and without blame before Him. Hebrews 4:3 revealed that God prepared a rest from the foundation of the world, but the people of Israel did not enter into it because of their unbelief. Furthermore, in Hebrews 9:26, the author explained that Christ's incarnation, crucifixion and subsequent resurrection were known before the foundation of the world.

Peter confirmed in 1 Peter 1:20 that Christ's crucifixion was not only known but was actually foreordained to be manifested in that generation. John also stated in Revelation 13:8 and 17:8 that the judgment of Christ's enemies occurred from the foundation of the world and those who didn't follow Christ would marvel. Transcendent time must of necessity accompany transcendent knowledge for all things which are known from the beginning are known and manifested in time.

⁴⁸ Gordon Lindsay, *The Prophecies of Daniel* (Dallas, TX: Christ For The Nations, Reprint 1985), p. 99-106.

Transcendent Knowledge

The transcendence of God allows the Father to be omniscient, whereby He knows all things, but God can still limit Himself to certain knowledge. Jesus is Emmanuel, “God with Us.” According to Philippians 2:7, Jesus was equal with God (omniscient) but he emptied himself of omniscience when he became a bondservant to the Father. He confessed limited knowledge about the end times and his return to earth. Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32 recorded that limitation. “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”⁴⁹ The truth of Jesus’ statement declared the omniscience of God and the limitation of man. His transcendent knowledge is seen in the statement, “He existed in the form of God” while his limited knowledge was described with the statement, “He took on the form of a bondservant.”

Wayne Jackson noted that theologians use the term “anthropomorphism” to attribute man’s physical features to God so man can understand Him. Also, the word anthropopathism is used to attribute emotions and thinking processes to God such as Genesis 6:6 when Moses wrote, “God repented that he made man,” and I Samuel 15:35, “... Yahweh regretted that he had made Saul to be king over Israel.” These terms are only used because theologians have not embraced or understood the transcendency of God and how He can move at will from the spiritual realm to the physical realm.

Another example of limited knowledge is found in Genesis 22:12 when God tested Abraham by first telling him to sacrifice Isaac but once He knew that Abraham feared him, He rescinded the sacrificial request. E. W. Bullinger embraced the concept of anthropopathism suggesting that God already knew the events but stooped to make Abraham understand.⁵⁰

Absolute foreknowledge is debated among theologians. John Lynn opposes the concept that God has absolute foreknowledge asserting it

⁴⁹ Wayne Jackson, “Does God Limit His Foreknowledge?” ChristianCourier.com, Retrieved 22 May, 2016, <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/227-does-god-limit-his-own-foreknowledge> 2016.

⁵⁰ E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerHouse, 1968), p. 884.

belittles a loving God to suggest He foreknew that Adolf Hitler would sacrifice six million Jews and still created him anyway. Lynn maintains. “God is not in control, man is. And the fruit of our present choices determines our future destinies.”⁵¹

The concept of transcendence allows God to be omniscient with the ability to transcend the physical realm of incomplete knowledge as it pertains to man’s will. God is unlimited in righteousness but still allows unrighteousness to exist. At the same time God is just and will not allow unrighteousness to continue forever. In time, He will judge the actions of those committed to its evil.

The physical world has a three-fold dimension of past, present and future as it relates to time. The spiritual world does not have the same time dimensional limitations, nor is it omniscient. Angels are spirits that exist in a spiritual dimension where things are known prior to their being manifested on earth. But Jesus confirmed in Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32 that they do not know the day or hour of his return to earth. This information is reserved for the Father only; hence, only God is omniscient.

All of the prophetic declarations mentioned in the previous section about Transcendent Time were known in the spirit realm prior to the prophets revealing them to the physical realm. Amos 3:7 states, “Certainly, the sovereign LORD does nothing without first revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.” Paul explained the process in Ephesians 3:5, “Now this secret was not disclosed to people in former generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.”

It seems logical to believe that angels are not omniscient, and they only have knowledge of those things, which have been revealed or decreed by God. According to Scriptures, angels are sent on assignment to implement God’s will and oftentimes that includes information. If God has not declared and decreed the information, then angels have no knowledge of them. Jesus explained that angels are limited in knowledge. They are aware of some future events and they understand their assignment to

⁵¹ John Lynn, “Does God Have Absolute Foreknowledge?” (Indianapolis, IN: <http://thelivingtruthfellowship.org/jltf/bibleteachings/articles-by-topc/gods-foreknowledge/156-does-god-have-absolute-foreknowledge>, Retrieved 23 May 2016.

gather together the elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to another but they are not cognizant of the time because the Father has yet to reveal it.

The Nephilim (fallen angels) are aware of their own future judgment that will occur at the time of the end. They reminded Jesus that he could not send them to the Abyss before their time. In other words, they knew a time was coming in the future when they would be judged but they did not know the day or hour.

According to Luke 9:35, Jesus had been revealed as the “Elect one” or “Chosen one.” The New Testament writers echoed what Old Testament prophets spoke. Noah revealed that the Elect or Chosen One would sit on a throne as judge.⁵² Isaiah 42:1 acknowledged the same thing, functioning as the servant of God. And Matthew validated it in Matthew 12:18.

One might ask, “When did the election occur? When was Jesus named “King” of God’s kingdom. The Scriptures state that it occurred prior to the foundation of the world. As such, all of the spirit world was appraised of Jesus’ function before creation.

Daniel wrote about a vision that he had in Daniel 7:13-14 when he saw the Son of Man being escorted to the Ancients of Days and was given dominion, glory and an everlasting kingdom. But when did it actually occur? Isaiah 14:12 surmises that Lucifer was one of the fallen ones because he wanted to exalt his throne above the other angels and sit in the mount of the congregation, like the Most High. Because Jesus was appointed to be king, then we can assume that his appointment occurred prior to Lucifer’s fall. As such, we can also assume that all of the adversity, which is common to man, exists because of the adversarial nature of Satan.

Transcendent Power

The concept of transcendence also acknowledges God’s omnipotence but account’s for Jesus’ lack of power while living as a human. The Bible lists the many healings and miracles, signs and wonders that Jesus performed when he was on earth. However, there are also other instances when it seemed that his power was limited. A story is told in Mark 8:22-25, when Jesus went to Bethsaida and some people brought

⁵² Randy Delp, *The Living Enoch, Chapter By Chapter*, (Cedar Hill, TX: Lifeworld Publication, 2018 Original copyright 2008), p. 46.

their blind friend to Jesus. He just wanted to touch Jesus, about whom he heard performed many miracles. For some reason, Jesus didn't heal him in Bethsaida but led him out of the town. The first thing he did was spit on his eyes and placed his hands on him. Afterwards, Jesus asked him if was able to see. The man responded, "I see men, but they look like walking trees." After Jesus put his hands on his eyes the second time, he made him look up and the man was fully restored and saw clearly.

There are three things that occurred in this story that revealed the limitations of Jesus. First, he didn't want to or couldn't perform the miracle in Bethsaida. He had to lead the man out of town to perform the miracle. Second, he spit on his eyes and laid hands on him, but the full healing didn't occur. Third, he had to ask the man if could see. If he was all knowing and all powerful, he would not have had to ask. The man told him that he had partial sight, but people looked like walking trees. After laying hands on the man the second time, the man was fully restored. His limited power was announced in Mark 6:5 when Jesus was in his hometown, Nazareth, where he could do no great miracle. He did; however, lay his hands on a few sick people and they were healed.

In Mark 7:31-35, a similar miracle was performed at Decapolis. People brought a deaf man to him who had difficulty speaking. Jesus took him aside privately, away from the crowd. He put his fingers in his ears and then spat upon him. There seems to be a debate about why Jesus spit. In the first story, Jesus spit on the blind man's eyes. In another story, he spit on the ground, made mud and applied it to a blind man's eyes. In this story, the original text suggest that the spit fastened to the man's tongue. What did Jesus lack that he needed to spit to produce these healings?

Jesus admitted to being limited in power. He said in John 5:19, 30, "I, of myself, can do nothing" but as I see and hear from heaven, I am able to perform the miracles. Those statements expressed and demonstrated Jesus' limited ability. They also explained how our limitations can become unlimited when God reveals His intentions via His Spirit. Jesus performed the supernatural when he saw his Father doing it or when he heard the Spirit's voice. The transcendent omnipotence of God continued in heaven (the spirit realm) while Jesus was limited on earth (the physical realm.) The human Jesus did or said what he saw his Father doing or heard the Spirit revealing.

Conversely, after Jesus returned to the Father, and they sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in us, he retained his omnipotence, but the Holy Spirit was limited on earth or in humans. Jesus said in John 16:13, “When the Spirit of Truth comes, He will not speak on His own authority. He will speak whatever he hears and will tell you what is to come. Jesus helped us to understand the power to demonstrate the supernatural is not naturally derived. He exclaimed in John 12:49, “For I have not spoken on my authority but the Father, Himself, who sent me has commanded me what I should say and what I should speak.”

Jesus was limited in his message. In Luke 4:43, the crowds in Capernaum, wanted him to stay and continue to preach in the synagogues. He told them, “I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns too, for that is what I was sent to do.” The only message that Jesus preached was the gospel of the kingdom. It was not only a verbal message, he performed healings and miracles to demonstrate the power that is found in his kingdom. The Greek word for power is *dunimis*, which is a spirit that accompanies the Holy Spirit. Jesus told his followers in Acts 1:8, “You shall receive “power-*dunimis*” when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.

After teaching and showing his followers how to minister, he sent the twelve apostles out and told them to preach the same message to the same Jewish people. He instructed them to heal the sick and cast out demons. Later, he sent seventy-two more and gave them the same instructions. As a man, Jesus was limited to the message he was to preach. He was sent to preach the gospel of the kingdom.

He was also limited to whom he preached. A Syrophenician, Canaanite woman asked him to cast an evil spirit out of her daughter, but Jesus ignored her and didn’t respond to her request. She became very insistent and the disciples saw that Jesus wasn’t answering her persistence, so they asked him to send the woman away. The woman eavesdropped Jesus’ response to his followers,

“I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Is it right to take the children’s bread and feed it to the dogs?”

The non-Jewish woman immediately interrupted him by saying, “But even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the Master’s table.” Her statement recognized two things. First, she recognized who she was (a non-Jew) and

second, she recognized that Jesus was Lord and Master. When Jesus recognized the woman's faith, he said, "You can have whatever you want." And her daughter was healed from that hour.

Transcendence allows God to be omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and unchanging in His essence, substance and nature and still exist with limitations of knowledge, power, and presence in the physical realm. In John 5:19,30, Jesus explained how humans can tap into the spiritual dimension by seeing and hearing God's will. That is what Jesus did. He merely did what he saw his Father do and obeyed what his Father said. It is not something we do at will; it is our response to God as we pray and seek His will.

This demonstrates not only the transcendence of God on earth but also the transcendence of man in heaven. For when man sees and hears God's divine will, he can declare, "Thy kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth as it in heaven." The nature of transcendence allows the infinite to experience finiteness and allows the finite to experience infinity. Such will be the case when Christ returns, and man experiences a glorified body in full transcendence.

CHAPTER THREE

IT IS ALL ABOUT THE KING

Where Did the Church Go Wrong?

In 2003, I started a book entitled *Anthropocentric Christianity*. It lays dormant in my files awaiting the finishing touches and the right timing for publication. In the book, I define an inherent systemic problem that faces the church at its core. Western Christianity has created a new kind of religion that was never intended.⁵³ In the book, I present the idea that the modern church we experience is different from the church that existed in the first century and the message we preach today is different from the message Jesus instructed us to preach. Here is my theory of why and how it changed.

The term “anthropocentric” means man-centered or self-centered and defines western culture church that is being transferred to other countries. The message that Jesus preached to his followers is the same message he intended for us to preach until he returns. Jesus said in Matthew 24:14, “And the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to the nations and then the end would come.” Somehow, through the years, we have lost track of the central message of the kingdom of God, which is God-centered. Instead, we began preaching an anthropocentric message that is man-centered. What is the difference between the two?

⁵³Randy Lee Delp, *Anthropocentric Christianity* (Cedar Hill TX: TBP by Lifeworld Publications, Copyright 2003), p. 16-37.

My unpublished book highlights the many reasons for the change and its unintended results, which primarily has to do with processes and how a believer enters into God's kingdom. Western Christianity focuses on how to become a Christian and utilizes evangelism as a tool to increase church attendance, increase finances and build platforms for one's ministry. That was never Christ's intent for his church.

Entrance into Christ's kingdom is clearly laid out in John 3:5, where Jesus taught that we must be born again by the Spirit to gain entrance to the kingdom of God. The purpose of being "birthed by the Holy Spirit" is to have capacity to be led by the Holy Spirit in order to do the works of God. His kingdom is made of spiritual laws, which biblically are defined as spirits that govern or rule our lives. These spirits are interlinked with our minds to develop attitudes and mindsets. Spirits initiate thoughts and thoughts produce words, form emotions and influence behavior. Adhering or yielding to these spirits or spiritual laws will cause the kingdom of light to shine through us.

Jesus said in Luke 17:22, "The kingdom cannot be observed outwardly, because it lives within us." Paul confirmed in Romans 12:17, "The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, referring to physical. Instead, the kingdom is the work of righteousness, peace and joy that comes from the Holy Spirit. That is why Jesus said in Luke 12:32, "It is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." God wants us to have His kingdom living inside us to squelch the kingdom of darkness that claims residency because of its invasion of sin.

The persecution of the Church from without and the various internal doctrines from within have sought to destroy the Church. Religious philosophers and/or apostolic leaders focused on new doctrines, which were propagated by preachers. Paul told his protégé in 1 Timothy 4:1 that many would leave the church and follow doctrines emanating from evil spirits. Jesus previously had informed the Pharisees that they were breaking the commandments of God because of tradition. They honored God with their lips and their teachings were merely human doctrines.

Christ's resurrection left church leaders with the responsibility to distinguish between the doctrines of God, the doctrines of demons and the

doctrines of men. Those who seriously sought God's kingdom were able to discern the difference because the results of these doctrines were obvious. The doctrines of God led to freedom; the doctrines of man led to bondage; the doctrines of demons led to deception.

Development of Ordinances

This message of God's kingdom that Jesus taught waned after the first century and a new form of Christianity was covertly established. In an effort to obey the words of Jesus, two ordinances of the church were implemented: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Although it was never Christ's intentions for these ordinances to be agencies of salvation, it occurred nonetheless. Baptism was never meant to be a saving agent and Communion was never meant to be a preserving agent. We were to be baptized to show the world that we embraced Jesus and his kingdom, and we were to observe the Lord's Supper so that we wouldn't forget what he did for us. Jesus taught his disciples to baptize in the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, it is unlikely that he meant that baptism to be the foundation of an institutionalized church, but it was the only way our fathers knew how to obey Christ's commands.

Some denominations offer infant baptism as a parallel to the Old Testament covenantal ritual of circumcision, when God told Abraham to circumcise the men in his family as a sign of being in covenant with Him. Moses decreed that baby boys must be circumcised, when they are eight days old. In Acts 15, the elders and apostles determined that baptism would be the new covenantal ritual whereby people would be recognized as followers of Christ.

Early in Christianity, babies were baptized based upon the practices of Old Testament circumcision and the writings of first century leaders noting that the promise would be to the entire household even the children (Luke in Acts 16:15, Acts 16:31-33, 1 Corinthians 1:16, Acts 2:39.) Paul even inferred in 1 Corinthians 7:16 that an unbelieving husband and children could be saved by the believing wife.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Wikipedia, "Infant Baptism- History" Retrieved 06 June 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infant_baptism#History 2018.

The Didache, a first century document, was circulated to the churches to give instructions on church protocol. It was probably the first constitution of the church and outlined guidelines for those to be baptized.⁵⁵ Early instructions and rules regarding baptism included a requirement to read Jesus' teaching about the two roads that people travel. One leads to life and the other leads to death. Baptisms took place in moving water such as oceans and rivers but if there was no moving water, then in a pool of water was sufficient. If a pool of water large enough to submerge could not be found, then pouring water from a pitcher onto the head three times, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit would suffice. Prior to being baptized, the person officiating the baptism and the candidates were required to fast at least one or two days prior to the baptism.⁵⁶

A copy of this manuscript was found at an end of the *Epistle of Barnabas*, labeled chapters 18 through 20.⁵⁷ The earliest reference to infant baptism was by Irenaeus in 180 A.D. Also, Origen lived between 185 and 254 A.D. and had three references in his writings. At the beginning of the third century, Tertullian spoke about infant baptism saying it was customary, but he advised against it.

The Didache was written within the first fifteen years after Christ's ascension and prior to Paul's acceptance as an apostle. The original title of the manuscript was *The Lord's Teaching through the Twelve Apostles to the Nations* but soon the title was called *The Didache* or *The Teaching*. One could reason that it failed to be canonized because Paul challenged how they instituted the Lord's Supper. In 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 Paul revealed the class divisions in the church and how the Lord's Supper was administered around prepared meals. The wealthy would get drunk on their wine while those without money went hungry. The original "Lord's Supper" was administered by Jesus at Passover so the people conveniently continued to

⁵⁵ Randy Lee Delp, *The Teaching, A paraphrase of The Didache*, (Cedar Hill, TX: TBP by Lifeworld Publications, 2006)

⁵⁶ Ibid

⁵⁷ Randy Lee Delp, *The Living Barnabas* (Cedar Hill, TX: TBP by Lifeworld Publications, Copyright 2009), p.93- 103.

observe the Lord's Supper with meals. Paul's letter to the Corinthians changed that practice and formalized it into liturgy.

Throughout the first four centuries, theologians came from various regions to hammer out their belief systems and established creeds. At the Council of Laodicea in Phrygia in 364 A.D. sixty canons were established by the church council, which were codified into church doctrine. The first fifty-nine commonly sealed the fate of the church to forever regulate the confines of church leaders. Authoritative order was established with the priesthood, clergymen and laymen. The order began with the Bishop followed by the presbyters, deacons and sub-deacons. Readers, singers, exorcists and door-keepers were considered leaders and prohibited from entering a tavern.⁵⁸

Strict rules were ordered to prohibit sub-deacons, readers and singers from wearing a stole. In fact, sub-deacons were not allowed in the Diaconicon which was a vesting place and treasury where liturgical books and vessels were kept. Love feasts could not be conducted in the Lord's Houses and when members of the priesthood, clergy or lay were invited, they weren't permitted to take leftovers because it brought a reproach on the ecclesiastical order. This seemed to follow Paul's directions of observing the Lord's Supper and still acknowledged the spirit of assuring the ecclesiastical leaders did not use their authority for personal benefits as noted in *The Didache* on how to judge true prophets and apostles.

A litany of rules was made regarding women in ministry, marriages, mixed bathing, or offering the oblation in private homes. Selection of leaders was not done publicly and a listing of heretical groups namely the Novatians, Plotinians, Quartodecimen, and Phrygians must be renounced prior to being embraced by the church. Only the canonical singers were permitted to sing, which was done from the ambo and they had to use a book. Scriptures were to be read on Saturday and when reading the Psalms,

⁵⁸ Reluctant Messenger, "The Council of Laodicea in Phrygia Pacatiana 364 A.D." Retrieved 06 June 2018, <http://reluctant-messenger.com/council-of-laodicea.htm> 2018.

they were not permitted to be joined together. They had to read one psalm and explain the lesson before going on the next psalm.

Gathering times, and the entrance and exist of church leaders were regulated by an approved prescribed order. After the sermons of the Bishops, the prayer for the catechumens were to be made first by itself and then after the catechumens have gone out, prayer for those who are under penance. After they have passed under the hand of the bishop, then three prayers for the faithful (the first in silence and the other two aloud. Afterwards, the kiss of peace was given to the Bishop, then the laity gave the kiss of peace to each other. This completed the Holy Oblation.⁵⁹

Within four hundred years the message that Jesus gave to the church (the gospel of the kingdom of God) was lost to an institutionalized church. The only salvaging Scripture is Paul's statement in Philippians 1:15-18.

“It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preached Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.”

In the same spirit, I maintain that denominational groups, which started in the first century, have led the church away from the original teaching of Jesus, which is the gospel of the kingdom of God. Although they have strayed from the original course with varying doctrines, and although some have true and others have false motives, I rejoice when Jesus the Messiah is preached. My only cry is that we return to basics and preach the same message that Jesus preached.

The New Western Church

Frustration arose among the leaders and oftentimes it came from those clerics not in prestigious positions. It was out of this frustration that

⁵⁹ Ibid.

Martin Luther wrote *Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences* also known as the *Ninety-five Theses*. He posted these on the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church and a new order of Western Christianity was birthed.

The Protestant Movement led to many more major denominations within the Christian Movement, with a focus of preaching Christianity as the means of Salvation. Anglican theologian, N. T. Wright, suggested that the message of the kingdom of God and the good news about that kingdom has been redefined by modernity of western Christianity. He contends that westernized Christians view the gospel as Christ's message to help people get to heaven and Wright labeled them "epistles Christians."⁶⁰

As a means of evangelization, we tend to promote Christianity as a benefit religion. Those who become Christians are saved and therefore share the many benefits of salvation. These include having your sins removed, healing and deliverance, and a clear path to heaven. Some even promote it as a prosperity gospel. And while these all may be true, if this is one's motive for becoming a Christian, then it creates an anthropocentric message that Jesus didn't preach.

Jonathan Edwards preached a message on July 1741 at Enfield Connecticut named, "Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God"⁶¹ where he describes the anger and vengeance of God upon the wickedness in the world. In it he said, "There is nothing that keeps wicked men out of hell but the mere (sovereign) pleasure of God." His emotional sermons attacked the evil of the world and condemned those who did not repent stating they would suffer under the wrath of an angry God.

His revivalist puritanical sermons were part of the impetus for the First Great Awakening, which brought many people into a knowledge of Jesus Christ and launched the revival of Reformed Theology. Because they

⁶⁰ Steve Yamaguchi, "N.T. Wright on Book of Acts 1" Presented on youtube.com, 2009, 15, May 2016.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MHtj94951Jg&feature=youtu.be>, 2009.

⁶¹Jonathan Edwards, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" 08 July 1741, Retrieved 7 June 2018, *Christian Classics Ethereal Library*, ccel.org
<https://www.ccel.org/ccel/edwards/sermons.sinners.html> 1741.

seemed effective, some western culture evangelists used scared tactics, which produced a holiness movement.

The holiness movement was a forerunner of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the United States at the turn of the 20th century. From the foothills of the Smokey Mountains to the shores of the Pacific Ocean the Holy Spirit was poured out upon rural churches of North Carolina and Tennessee as well as Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California. The Pentecostal movement on the west coast was led by William J. Seymore that began with a meeting on April 9, 1906 and was the impetus for the denominational movement of the Assemblies of God⁶² and later in 1923 the Foursquare Gospel Movement⁶³ under the leadership of Aimee Semple McPherson. On the other side of the country, a small group of Christians met at the Barney Creek Meeting House on August 19, 1886,⁶⁴ which eventually led to the forming of the Church of God, which claims to be the oldest Pentecostal denomination in the United States.

In 1960, the Charismatic Movement began when Dennis Bennett,⁶⁵ Rector at St Marks's Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, California, announced to the church that he had received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Anglican charismatic teaching spread around the world in New Zealand in 1964 and then touched mainstream Christian congregations from Evangelicalism, Lutheranism, Methodism, Calvinism and Adventism as people within these denominations adopted beliefs and practices similar to Pentecostalism. Seven years later, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal was started at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana and Duquesne University in Pittsburgh.

⁶² Wikipedia, "Azusa Street Revival" Retrieved 07 June 2018.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Azusa_Street_Revival 2018.

⁶³ Wikipedia, "International Church of the Foursquare Gospel" Retrieved 07, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Church_of_the_Foursquare_Gospel 2018.

⁶⁴ Charles W. Conn, *Like A Mighty Army* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press 1977), p. 7.

⁶⁵ Wikipedia, "Charismatic Movement" Retrieved 07 June 2018,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charismatic_Movement 2018.

A precursor to the Charismatic Movement was the Latter Rain Movement of 1948. Ernest Gentile wrote, “William Branham is considered by many to be the initiator and pacesetter of the healing revivals in 1947, as well as the precursor of the entirely separate Latter Rain movement of 1948.”⁶⁶ In April 20, 1949, the Assemblies of God issued a letter to its ministers disapproving the Latter Rain movement.

Gordon Lindsay, editor of *The Voice of Healing*, was instrumental in chronicling many supernatural miracles and healing of William Branham and is known for his large investment in the movement. In 1967, Lindsay changed the name of the magazine to *Christ For The Nations* and three years later, started a Bible School in Dallas, TX. At the time of this writing, they have trained some 45,000 students in Dallas, TX and that does not include over one-hundred thousand who have been trained at the 82 Bible Schools in 42 countries, which are part of their Association of Bible Schools.⁶⁷

The ministry of Christ For The Nations sought to reintroduce the importance of understanding the original message about the gospel of the kingdom of God that Jesus taught. In 2012, Ginger Lindsay re-introduced the Voice of Healing conferences emphasizing healing and miracles and authority over the demonic as part of the gospel of the kingdom that Jesus told his disciples to preach and practice.⁶⁸

The Christian movement, which started when Christ was resurrected, has grown exponentially to become the religion with the largest population. In 2012, they were listed with 2.4 billion adherents compared to Islam with the next largest numbering 1.8 billion.⁶⁹ All religions seem to be fragmented with varying doctrines becoming the means of separation. Christianity is no different. I contend that the fragmentation of the Christian church is the result of the leaders who fail

⁶⁶ Blogspot.com.,, “The Chronology of the Latter Rain Revival, Retrieved 07 June 2018, <https://lrm1948.blogspot.com/2014/01/the-chronology-of-latter-rain-revival.html> 2018

⁶⁷ Randy Delp, *Historicity and Values of Christ For The Nations*, (Cedar Hill, TX: Lifeworld Publications 2018), p 17-19.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 137-138.

⁶⁹ Wikipedia, “List of Religious Populations” Retrieved 27 November 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_religious_populations 2018.

to preach the same gospel of the kingdom of God message that Jesus taught and instructed his followers to teach and preach. This fragmentation is an obvious result of the church preaching an anthropocentric Christianity instead of a theocentric one. Theocentric Christianity focuses on the king and not the subjects.

The first part of this chapter addressed the process and sequence of how the message that Jesus taught has so subtly changed throughout the years. The remainder of the chapter will address the various names and titles that are given to Jesus because the kingdom of God is all about the King. He initially was called, the Chosen or Elect One. His other titles include Creator, Intercessor, and Judge. His most recent title is the Word of God.

The Chosen One

Perhaps the least known title given to Jesus is the “Chosen One.” It is found in both the Old and New Testaments. Actually, it was a name given him from the Father. In Luke 9:35, the story about Jesus’ transfiguration was told. The same story was reported in Matthew 16 and Mark 9; however, in those passages, the name “Chosen One” is not mentioned. Neither Matthew, Mark and Luke were actually on the mountain with Peter, James and John. Therefore, the story itself is hearsay; albeit, since all three confirmed the event, we maintain that it literally occurred as it was reported.

While Peter, James and John were with Jesus, his body began to change. His face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light. Appearing with him were Moses and Elijah who were discussing his departure. Peter was so moved by the supernatural experience, he suggested that they build three tabernacles to commemorate the occasion as a memorial that Jesus was the fulfillment of the law and prophets. While Peter was speaking and presenting the idea, a bright cloud overshadowed them and a voice came through the cloud saying, “This is My son, the Chosen One. Listen to Him.”

This occasion wasn’t the first time that God spoke audibly, making that same statement. It also occurred at his baptism, which was recorded

by three writers. Matthew and Mark indicated that God spoke in third person when referencing Jesus, but Luke 3:22 indicates that He spoke directly to Jesus saying, “You are my beloved son; in You, I am well pleased.” This was contrasted with the Transfiguration announcement in Luke 9:35, when the Father actually addressed Peter, James and John saying, This is My Chosen Son. Listen to him.” The use of the phrase “This is My Chosen son” must be explored.

The Greek word in this text for chosen is *ελεγομαι* (pronounced ek-leg-om- ahee) and comes from the Greek word *electos*, translated elect or chosen. Since Trinitarians believe that Jesus is the second person in the Godhead, how is it that he was chosen? And what other entities were not chosen or elected?” Our modern-day term “chosen” does not have the same connotation as that of the first century. We view “chosen” as a choice made from a selection. For example, when playing sandlot ball, two captains choose their teams from the available players who want to be on a team. Or during a NFL, MLB or NBA draft, ballplayers are chosen from many candidates. Even during the election process, only one of the candidates can be chosen for the position or selected to a team.

The biblical concept of chosen was different. It had to do with pre-ordination. Paul said in Romans 8:29, “those he foreknew, he also predestined. And the church was “the elect” or “chosen” of God. It was not a selection process as we might suppose, it was not a determination based upon God’s analytical choice, it was a predetermination based upon His volition not because He was choosing between various options. He chose a plan whereby His word would become flesh. Jesus is the Word, the Chosen One.

The Old Testament displays many Scriptures related to the “Chosen One.” Psalm 106:23 states that Moses was His Chosen One. Isaiah 41:8 and Isaiah 44:2 declare Jacob/Israel or one of his descendants would be the Chosen One. Psalm 89:3 revealed that David was a Chosen One but when he wanted to build a Tabernacle for God, he was promptly told, “You are not to build Me a house. In fact, I will build you an eternal house.” God told David, “Your son, Solomon, is the one who will build my house, for I have chosen him to become my son and I will be his

Father. Notice the relationship that God had with Solomon. “He will be My son and I will be his Father.” Perhaps the Father-son relationship referenced Jesus, who would build an eternal house instead of Solomon, who would build an earthly house.

All of these people: Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon and Jesus had one thing in common; they were all God’s chosen or elect leaders. They were selected in their generations to be a leader of God’s people. The idea of being the “Chosen One” was quite popular when Jesus was alive. The Chosen One was deemed to be the Messiah or Christ who would be the king of the Jewish people. This was illustrated at his crucifixion, when the soldiers mocked him for claiming to be king of the Jews and the Jewish leaders ridiculed him saying, “He saved others. Let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, his chosen one.”

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, also called Mormons believe the Chosen One had to do with a choice that God made between two of His sons: Jesus and Lucifer. It is called The Tale of Two Sons. According to the Mormons, in the pre-existence, God the Father convened a Grand Council in which two of his sons, Jesus and Satan, came forward and presented alternative plans for the salvation of humankind. The LDS Church-published the story in the manual called *Gospel Principles*.⁷⁰ Ronald V. Huggins posted a blog highlighting the Mormon view about Jesus being an angel.⁷¹ The concept that Jesus and Satan were spirit brothers (angels) is not embraced by most of the Christian Church but the Mormon theology embraces the concept. The story was written as follows:

Our Father said, "Whom shall I send?" (Abraham 3:27). Two of our brothers offered to help. Our oldest brother, Jesus Christ, who was then called Jehovah, said, "Here am I, send me" (Abraham 3:27).

Jesus was willing to come to the earth, give his life for us, and take upon himself our sins. He, like our Heavenly Father, wanted

⁷⁰ *Go Principles*, (Salt Lake City, Utah: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1997) 17-19: <http://lds.org/library/display/0,4945,11-1-13-6,00.html> 1997.

⁷¹ Ronald V Huggins, Mike Huckabee, “Is the Mormon Jesus the Brother of Satan?” *Mormons in Transition*, <http://mit.irr.org/on-mike-huckabees-question-mormon-jesus-brother-of-satan> Posted 22 August 2011, Retrieved 07 June 2018.

us to choose whether or not we would obey the Heavenly Father's commandments. He knew we must be free to choose in order to prove ourselves worthy of exaltation. Jesus said, "Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever" (Moses 4:2).

Satan, who was called Lucifer, also came, saying, "Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor" (Moses 4:1). Satan wanted to force us all to do his will. Under his plan, we would not be allowed to choose. He would take away the freedom of choice that our Father had given us. Satan wanted to have all the honor for our salvation ... After hearing both sons speak, Heavenly Father said, "I will send the first" (Abraham 3:27).

The belief that angels are "sons of God" is based upon Scriptures like Job 1:6, Job 2:1, Job 38:7 and Genesis 6:2, 4. Also, Hebrews 1:2,5,6 includes angels as spirits who were called to worship the Begotten Son of God. The term "only begotten son" found in John 3:16 seems to suggest that God has more sons than Jesus, to which we must confirm that Solomon was named a son of God and Paul declared that those who are led by the Holy Spirit are also sons of God. But the phrase "only begotten son" references the virgin birth when God's eternal Word became flesh.

We should not think that Jesus was chosen among other angels or between angels as the Mormon story above (in Abraham 3:27) implied. A more accurate understanding of "Chosen or Elect" is about God's determination. He predetermined that Jesus would be the Messiah. His word would become flesh and Jesus would be born as the Son of Man and the expressed image of the invisible God. That is the essence of Jesus being named the Elect One or Chosen One as identified in Scriptures.

The title "Son of Man" must also be reviewed as it relates to Jesus, "The Chosen One." The Old Testament books of Daniel and Ezekiel are the only books using that title. Ezekiel, himself, is called son of man but Daniel recorded a vision where the Ancient of Days installed the Son on Man to be king over an eternal kingdom.

The *Book of Enoch* provides a clearer picture of the Elect One in a similar vision. The use of the term "the elect" and the "Elect One" are found in that book. It must be understood that the *Book of Enoch* was a

composite of three authors. Methuselah, son of Enoch, probably took his father's journals and placed them in one manuscript, which is notably entitled, *1 Enoch*. A second part of the book was written by a different author at a different time and possibly in a different language. Internal evidence suggests that Noah was the author but someone else inserted his writings in the middle of Methuselah's. The last author of the book was an unknown Jewish Scribe, who lived after the Jewish exile, somewhere before 200-300 A.D. He took the writings and merged them together, with his own sermons, and entitled it *The Book of Enoch*. The book has been canonized by the Ethiopian and Eritrea Orthodox churches and was very popular among the New Testament writers. Both Jesus and Barnabas labeled it as Scripture.⁷²

The uniqueness of the *Book of Enoch* reveals it to be the source of many doctrines that are found in every major religion of the world. Its discovery among the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi library found in the mid 1940s opens a debate about how this one book influenced both Old and New Testament writers. Archeologists maintain the extant texts were written around 160 B. C.

The *Book of Enoch* first used the term "Elect One" and "the elect" and the terms have quite a different meaning from those found in the Mormon Church. Initially, the word "elect" referred to a group of people who would be exempt from judgment because the "Elect One" would atone for their sins. At that time, the elect was a collective group of righteous people who obeyed God and did not intermarry with the Nephilim. They would be preserved from the final judgment and destruction, when all demonic kingdoms will be destroyed. The elect were righteous people compared to the Nephilim who had tainted the blood line as well as God's image in mankind and therefore assigned to judgment.⁷³

⁷²Randy Delp, *The Impact of the Book of Enoch on Christianity* (Cedar Hill, TX: Lifeworld Publications 2018), p. 81.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

The term Elect One is found in the *Book of Enoch* and was only used in the section attributed to Noah. In 1 Enoch 45:3, the Elect One will sit on the throne of glory to adjudicate works. Again in 1 Enoch 50:2-3, the Elect One will arise and choose the righteous and holy among the dead. In 1 Enoch 54:5, the Elect One is the king of God's kingdom sitting on the throne of glory and judging Azazel (the Devil) and his associates.

It is likely that Daniel understood this belief based upon Noah's vision that he had about the Ancient of Days and Son of Man. Noah wrote in 1 Enoch 45:1,

“When I asked the angel, who showed me all the hidden mysteries, who the Son of Man was and why he went with the Ancient of Days, he answered, “This is the righteous son of Man who will live with the righteous and show them all the hidden treasures. The Lord of Spirits has chosen him to be the supreme authority in uprightness forever.”

This verse links the Son of Man or Messiah to be God's “Chosen One.” As previously stated, the term “chosen” was found in other Old Testament texts as it relates to people. Jacob, Moses, David and Solomon are all said to have been chosen and Psalm 106:23 stated the Moses was God's “chosen one.”

There are also prophetic references to the “Elect One” found in the Old Testament. Isaiah 42:1, “Behold My servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon him and he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.” Matthew referenced this Old Testament Scripture in Matthew 12:18-21 and identified Jesus as the Chosen One whom the Pharisees intended to kill. In the story, Jesus told the people that they should not tell others that he was the Messiah because he knew that this would produce the wrath of the religious people.

The first title given to Jesus as it relates to His kingdom is the term “Chosen One” or “Elect One” precisely designating him to be the pre-determined king of God's kingdom, prior to the creation of the world. This was confirmed in 1 Enoch 48:2-5 when Noah wrote,

“I was taken back to the time when the Ancient of Days named the Son of Man in the presence of the Lord of Spirits. Yes, it happened before the sun and the signs were created and before

the heavenly stars were made. The Lord of Spirits named him before all these things were created and this is what was said about him when he was named,

‘He will be a crutch to the righteous to keep them from falling. He will be the light of the Gentiles and hope to those with troubled hearts. Everyone who dwells on earth will fall down and worship him. They will praise, bless, and celebrate the Lord of Spirits with song. He was chosen before the creation of the world and hidden in Him forevermore.’”

It would be consistent to think that if Jesus was named before the creation of the physical realm that he was also chosen prior to the created realm of angels in the spiritual world. Although angels are not omniscient, they seem to have knowledge of things to come because the spirit realm is not limited to the time dimension of present, past and future. If so, then angels can know future events, especially those things that have been determined from the foundation of the world. Paul said in Ephesians 1:4 that the Father chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world and Peter noted in 1 Peter 1:29 that Jesus was foreknown before the foundation of the world.

Matthew 13:35 quotes the prophet who wrote, “I will open my mouth in parables, I will announce what has been hidden from the foundation of the world” and Matthew 25:34 confirms that God’s kingdom was prepared and given from the foundation of the world. Logically, the term kingdom indicates some semblance of authority and it is reasonable to conclude that God’s kingdom existed at the event that Isaiah referenced, when Lucifer rebelled against God seeking to place his own authority and ultimately was assigned to Sheol, the place of the dead.

It would be inconsistent to think that the kingdom of darkness existed prior to Lucifer’s rebellion and the fact that Sheol was made for the devil and his angels leads one to think that God engaged the spirit realm creation prior to a physical realm and these created spirits rebelled against His authority, which resulted in an opposing spiritual kingdom to God’s kingdom of Light. It was after this dark kingdom was formed that humans were created, which ultimately led the first couple to sin because of the deception of Satan.

The King of Kings

The sovereign leader of any kingdom is entitled the king. Any discussion about God's kingdom must first focus on its sovereign leader and what the term king actually means. But before concentrating on the kingship of Jesus, we should look at the phrase "king of kings." This phrase was used three times in the Old Testament. Ezra 7:12 identifies Artaxerxes, king of Persia, as king of kings, while Dan 2:37 and Ezekiel 26:7 assign Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonia king, with the same title.

Throughout history, kings were considered the sovereign leaders of geographical areas. Although the term "king of kings" was not used in Genesis 14, the concept or idea of "king of kings" existed at that time. Jubilees 11:1-15 states that the beginning of kingdoms occurred three hundred years after the flood and about one hundred years prior to the life of Abraham. It was the same time that slavery was instituted.⁷⁴ It was near this time that Genesis 14:4 declared Chedorlaomer to be king of Elam, who ruled over eight other kingdoms. Later this type of political alliance designated him to be king of kings. For twelve years, Chedorlaomer ruled over these kings but in the thirteenth year, five of the Canaanite kings rebelled and refused to pay the homage and any tribute to Chedorlaomer, which resulted in the war of the kings.

From that time, the strong and power nations battled against the weaker ones and some nations forged allied relationships with other kings for self-preservation. God called Abraham out of that power struggle at a young age to serve Him and to eventually form another kingdom, which Moses called a kingdom of priests. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob became the patriarchs of these people hiding 400 years in the land of Egypt growing into a powerful nation.

Through a series of miracles, God used Moses to free these people from Egyptian slavery and their exodus turned slaves into warriors. Moses appointed Joshua to be his military general and he designated his brother, Aaron, to be the spiritual leader of the people. But after Moses and Joshua

⁷⁴ Sacred-texts.com "Book of Jubilees 11:1-15," Retrieved 26, 2018, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/bib/jub/jub27.htm> 2018.

died, there was no earthly plan to keep the Canaanite land they had surveyed and assigned to the various tribes of Israel. For 350 years, when warring kings invaded their land, God raised up military judges and leaders to defend that which God had given them and after winning the wars, the people reverted back to their rebellious ways. The last judge to serve over the people of Israel was a Levite prophet named Samuel. During his reign as prophet and priest, the people asked to have a king like all the other nations. Samuel warned them of the consequences of such a request. First, it would cause their taxes to double (from 10% to 20%) and second, the king would make slaves out of them and they would lose their freedom.

Knowing the consequences of their request did not minimize their desire, so at God behest, Samuel anointed a young Benjamite to be Israel's first king. But Saul was not from the tribe of Levi and had no authority to offer sacrifices; however, when Samuel was delayed and couldn't offer a sacrifice prior to their engaging the enemy in war, he took upon himself the authority of the priesthood, which caused him to lose the crown.

King Saul viewed his armorbearer, David, as his nemesis because of his extraordinary favor with the people and his military prowess in warfare. David was fearless as he engaged and killed the giant leader of the Philistine army and this launched him into stardom with the people. But Saul viewed him as a threat and sought to kill him. Eventually, Saul and his family were destroyed, and David was elevated as king of Israel. He joined the independent tribes together as one nation under God and indivisible until his son Solomon became king and failed to obey God's word.

Solomon's disobedience caused a division among the tribes, which created and an ongoing civil war between the north and south. In 722 B.C. the Assyrian army invaded and overcame the northern tribes and in 586 B.C. the southern tribes fell to Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king of kings. He and his sons maintained the title of king of kings until the Medes and Persian kingdoms formed a coalition to overthrow them, at which point, Artaxerxes, king of Persia, defeated the Babylonians and became king of kings.

During Nebuchadnezzar's reign, the prophet Daniel interpreted the king's dream and predicted a series of four world leaders, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar. He announced that these kings would fulfill their tenures and then the God of heaven would set up a kingdom, which will never be destroyed.

In true form, the Babylonia kingdom was followed by the Medes and Persians, which was followed by the Greek kingdom and later the kingdom of Rome. It was during the Roman rule that Jesus was born, and it was his kingdom that would be different from all the others. It would never cease, and his title would forever be "king of kings" and "lord of lords." From the foundation of the world, Jesus was named King of kings; he would be the king that all others would submit to; however, his kingdom was quite different than all others. His kingdom was not of this world; it was a spiritual kingdom, with spiritual laws and subjects who were of a spirit substance.

When Pilate asked Jesus in John 18:33, if he was king of the Jews, Jesus replied in verse 37,

"My kingdom is not of the world. If my kingdom were from this world, my servants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish authorities. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here."

This statement explicitly confirms that Christ's kingdom was not physical kingdom but rather a spiritual kingdom. Jesus was anointed king of God's kingdom. In 1 Corinthians 15:24, Paul confirmed that when the resurrection of the saints would eliminate the last enemy of death. At that time, Jesus will hand over or deliver the kingdom to God, the Father. Until that time, Jesus reigns as king. One of his titles is King of Kings and the term Lord of lords are functions of his kingship. The word "lord" actually means owner and reveals the sovereign authority of the king.

In countries where people own property, they are considered lords or landowners. If they rent out that property, they are called landlords, owners of the land. In a kingdom, the king not only has sovereign rule, he owns all the geographical land within the geographical boundaries of his kingdom. Since Jesus is king of God's spiritual kingdom, he has ownership

of all spiritual substances including angels, humans and the various spirits that exist in his kingdom.

Kings were also considered gods. Recognizing Yahweh as the God of gods, Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 10:17,

“For the LORD (*Yahweh*) your God (*Elohim*) is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, mighty, awesome God is unbiased as a judge and takes no bribe.”

Not only did Nebuchadnezzar recognize Daniel’s God as the revealer of mysteries, he also said *Yahweh* was God of gods and Lord of kings. The people at that time understood Daniel’s prophecy about an anti-Christ king who would speak blasphemies against the God of gods.

The priests who wrote the Psalms of Ascents certainly understood that Yahweh was God Most High. Their lyrics in Psalm 36:1-3 are recorded in a repetitive chorus:

Oh give thanks to the LORD!
For He is good and His mercy endures forever.
Oh give thanks to the God of gods!
For He is good and His mercy endures forever.
Oh give thanks to the Lord of lords!
For He is good and His mercy endures forever.

In Revelation 17:14 and 19:16, the title “King of kings” is assigned to Jesus, the Lamb or God. John wrote, “He will conquer his enemies because He is Lord of lords and King of kings.” His name is written on his royal garment, “King of kings and Lord of lords.”

The Word of God

Throughout Scriptures the phrase “word of God” is used extensively to announce God’s heart and will. In the Old Testament, it was expressed through dreams, visions and prophetic utterances. It was often presented by angelic visitors and dramatic announcements through poetry, songs and prose. In the New Testament, the Greeks had several terms to describe spoken words but the two primary Greek words are “logos” and “rhema.” Confusion exists because these are two distinct words with similar meanings.

Brian and Scott McPherson suggest that Charismatics have made a doctrine out of the “word of God” by distinguishing a major difference between *logos* and *rhema*. They contend that both words mean the same thing with overlapping definitions.⁷⁵ However, it seems to me that there is a difference between *logos* and *rhema* and understanding the difference is necessary to understand the operation of God’s kingdom. The word “*logos*” is not only translated “word” it also references Jesus as the word of God. John 1:1 explains, “In the beginning was the word (*logos*) and the word (*logos*) was with God and the word (*logos*) was God.” As such, in Genesis 1:3, Jesus, spoke the worlds into existence. Jesus said in Matthew 12:34, “From the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks” and in Luke 6:45 he implied that a person’s character or nature can be determined by what the person says because people speak from the overflow of the heart. Each of these Scriptures use “*logos*” to reference words.

And while it is true that both Greek words have similar meanings with interchangeable translations, it is also true that they can be distinguished by the context of the words in Scripture. Apostle John not only distinguished the two words by recording Jesus as the *logos*, six out of the eight times in the *Book of Revelation*, he referenced Jesus as the *logos* of God.

On the other hand, Paul wrote in Romans 10:17 that faith comes by hearing the word of God. The Greek word “*rhema*” is used in this passage. To argue McPherson’s point, it seems that both words have overlapping meanings and translations; however, linguistically speaking two words cannot have identical meanings; otherwise, there would be no need for both words.⁷⁶

So, while both *logos* and *rhema* are translated as word and both are defined as an utterance, message or saying, *logos* extends the definition to

⁷⁵ Brian McPherson and Scott McPherson, “The Rhema and Logos Word, Part 1,” (St. Charles, MO: biblestudying.net, 2008,) Retrieved 17, May 2016. <http://www.biblestudying.net/charismatic36.html> 2008.

⁷⁶ James Strong, “Logos” and “Rhema,” *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance* (Iowa Falls, IA: World Bible Publishers, ISBN 0-529-06440-5, no date), Greek Dictionary *logos*, p. 45, “*rhema*”, p. 63.

suggest it is an expression of reason, while rhema is linked by a biblical definition with the spirit.

Perhaps the best distinction can be found in John 3:34, “For the one (referring to Jesus, *the logos*) whom God has sent speaks the words (*rhema*) of God, for he does not give the Spirit sparingly.” Notice that both *logos* (Jesus) and *rhema* (the words he speaks) are used in the same sentence indicating a distinction. In John 6:63, Jesus also said, “My (indicating *logos*) words (*rhema*) are spirit and life.” Again, this Scripture differentiates between the *logos* (who is Jesus) and *rhema*, (the words he speaks) that produces spirit and life.

The notion that Jesus is *logos* and words are from the spirit are *rhema* aptly describe the distinction between the two words. Explaining his own humanity, Jesus said in John 14:10, “The words (*rhema*) that I say to you, I do not speak on my own initiative, but the Father residing in me performs his miraculous deeds.” He confirmed that same humanity when describing how he performed the supernatural. He said in John 5:19, “The Son can do nothing on his own initiative, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise.” Eleven verses later, he reiterated “I can do nothing on my own initiative. Just as I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will, but the will of the One who sent me.” Jesus explained that his power was sourced in God’s spirit and His words. The miracles he performed were “*rhema*” words from the Father.

The charismatic doctrine that suggests *logos* is the written word and *rhema* is the spiritually revealed word aptly defines the differences as it relates to the Bible and the revelation given to the one who receives it. When they are accurately distinguished, it becomes easy to read the Greek text and see why the *rhema* of God produces life. It also helps the believer to know that we will be judged by our spiritual understanding of the *rhema* and not by what is written in the pages of a book.

Jesus is God’s Word

Jesus is called The Word of God. Marvin Vincent compared the *logos* of John 1 to Old Testament expressions and argued that the word or

logos as it related to Jesus, embodied the divine will and personification of wisdom. The angel of Jehovah was the messenger of God who sometimes was distinguished from Jehovah and other times identical with him (Genesis 16:7-13; 32:24-28; Hosea 12:4, 5; Exodus 23:20, 21 and Malachi 3:1).⁷⁷ Vincent contended that the logos in John 1 was a real, personal God who was originally with God before creation and was God in essence and nature. At the same time, he was distinct as one manifested in flesh (John 1:14).

Frederic Godet added a different component by including Exodus 23:21, “My name (my manifested essence) is in him,” essentially stating that Jesus was not only the voice and wisdom of God, they shared identity. They were one and the same.⁷⁸ This is accurately explained by John 1:1, that states, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. As previous noted, God has a kingdom and Jesus is the king. His word has final authority and power as ultimate judge. His edicts are final and permanent.

The term “truth” relates to words that are either spoken or written. The Word of God, whether spoken or written, is truth. Understanding Jesus as the word, makes it easy to understand his assertion in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth and life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” And while many people use this Scripture to validate Christianity as the only religion approved by God, Jesus was not promoting a religion. He was explaining the way to access God. The word “way” infers direction, indicating that the words of Jesus are the directions to God. The “truth” indicates integrity and trustworthiness. He told his followers that his words could be trusted. Thirdly, Jesus explained that the words he spoke produced life, spiritual life that brought completeness to people.

Jesus clearly contrasted this proclamation by declaring the antithesis of truth to the Judeans in John 8:31. He said, “If you follow my

⁷⁷ Marvin Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament, Vol. 2* (New York: Scribners, 1887), p. 25-33.

⁷⁸ Frederic Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of John, with an Historical and Critical Introduction* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1886) p 286-291.

teaching you are my disciples and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.” The Jews took offense that Jesus called them slaves, suggesting they were not free, but Jesus pointed out anyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. At this point of the conversation, an argument ensued whereby Jesus acknowledged God as his father. And although they were sons of Abraham, they were acting like they had a different father.

Their next response may indicate that Jesus’ reputation of being born a bastard, preceded him. They said, “We were not born as a result of immorality. God is our Father.” Their statement ridiculed Jesus and his reputation of being born to unwed parents. Joseph and Mary did not consummate their marital vows until after Jesus was born.

Jesus sharply responded, “If you were born of God, you would love me and not desire to kill me.” Then he said, “You people are from your father, the devil, and you do what he desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and he doesn’t uphold the truth because there is no truth in him...He is a liar and the father of lies.” This statement contrasted God and Satan. Jesus was truth and the son of God. The Judeans were from Satan who was the father of lies. The story ended with the Judeans trying to kill Jesus but he slipped out undetected.

The moral relevancy in today’s society has diluted truth because of culture’s refusal to acknowledge absolutes. Truth can only exist when absolutes are acknowledged. A vivid explanation of this can be found in John 4, when Jesus encountered a Samaritan woman at the community well. When Jesus told her to call her husband, she replied, “I’m not married.” In John 4:17, he acknowledged her words as correct or true but then he followed up by saying, “The truth is you have five husbands and man you live with is not your husband.” When Jesus spoke truth, she recognized him to be a prophet. Jesus responded and said, “True worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.” This statement highlighted the Trinity: God the Father, God the Spirit, and Jesus, who is truth. Jesus highlighted his connectivity with the Father with an understanding of his own identity.

In John 17:17, he prayed for his followers by saying, “Sanctify or set them apart by Your word. Your word is truth.” Paul declared in

Galatians 2:5, 24 that the gospel is truth and in Ephesians 1:13 called it the “word of truth.” The good news or gospel of the kingdom still exists. Jesus is king of God’s kingdom. As king, his words are truth. They are final. They establish law. His kingdom is filled with truth and it is the only means by which he adjudicates justice.

Is the Bible the Word of God?

The protestant Bible contains sixty-six books that were written by thirty or more people in three different languages over a period of 1600 years.⁷⁹ According to Gordon Lindsay, the Bible itself claims divine inspiration by the continual confirmation that God spoke to certain people and the Bible recorded those conversations. He further noted that Jesus validated its inspiration when he quoted from the Old Testament prophets and Psalms.

Lindsay contends that the Bible’s universal appeal to all people is another evidence of inspiration. He noted that tens of millions of copies are printed daily into over a thousand languages and more than five billion copies have been sold over the past two hundred years.⁸⁰ He maintains that history and science both prove and validate the Bible as God’s word as well as fulfilled prophecies that it contains.

Richard Patterson, who is known for his research on Old Testament literature suggested that the study of God’s word has four legs. Typically, scholars refer to the historical, grammatical and theological interpretations but Patterson adds another leg called interpretation according to literary forms.⁸¹ John Feinberg agreed that literary forms of the Old Testament implicate the inspiration of Scripture.⁸² Speaking about the Old Testament, Josephus esteemed the books as divine doctrines that

⁷⁹ Gordon Lindsay, *The Bible Is the Word of God* (Dallas: Christ For The Nations, 2014), p. 9.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.18.

⁸¹ D. Brent Sandy and Ronald L. Giese, Jr. *Cracking Old Testament Codes* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1995), p. 4.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 45-67.

people were willing to die for,”⁸³ essentially embracing the Roman Catholic Old Testament canon of Scriptures plus others that were not later canonized. New Testament canonization was different because so many letters and gospels were written during the first two centuries and the church leaders had to sift through the heresies to recognize truth.

It is my contention that Jesus is the Word of God and the Bible contains those things he spoke. But does that make the entirety of the Bible the Word of God? The inspiration of the Bible cannot be proven to be God’s word any more than God can be proven. Both are matters of faith and one must accept the existence of God by faith in the same way that we accept the Bible by faith. And while I do not diminish the validity, necessity, and credibility of the Bible, I consider only the original manuscripts and the initial copies to be inerrant. But this too is a faith issue because none of these manuscripts are extant.

Thiessen argues that the Bible is genuine, credible, and authentic. It outlines each aspect of the law, writings, and prophets, providing sufficient reasoning to embrace the credibility.⁸⁴ He offers proof of inspiration such as the character of God, internal claims of the Bible and even Jesus own words that declare Scripture cannot be broken. He cited 3,800 times that the Old Testament records the terms, “Thus says the Lord.”⁸⁵

I cannot disagree with Thiessen in his view of inspiration; however, inspiration cannot be proven and must be accepted by faith. Thiessen and other renown theologians argue why they believe the Scriptures to be inspired but their arguments are not necessarily proof that the Bible is inspired. They believe in its inspiration, accept it by faith and then seek evidences to substantiate their beliefs. If their evidences were fool-proof, then no one could argue against inspiration. And since others do not

⁸³ Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, (Nashville: TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999) p.28.

⁸⁴ Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), p. 91-115.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

accept the Bible as inspired, then evidence remains that those who fail believe the Bible to be inspired, do so because they have no faith in its inspiration.

The canonicity of the New Testament offers less proof as to validity of authorship and textual accuracy than the Old Testament. The development of the New Testament occurred over a period of four centuries concluding with the regional synod called the Council of Laodicea in 364 A.D. This council consisted of only thirty clerics from Asia Minor who assembled in Laodicea, Phrygia Pacatiana to discuss the various doctrines that were issues at the time.⁸⁶

The Council instituted sixty canons or “church laws.” Twenty of the canons addressed the maintenance of proper order among bishops, clerics and laypeople. Seven canons enforced modest behavior among clerics and laypeople. Fourteen canons identified Jewish and pagan heretics. Canon 29 regulated the rest on Sunday instead of the Jewish Sabbath. The final canons 59 and 60 are commonly called the Biblical canon or Scriptural canon and they listed the books appropriate for reading in the churches.⁸⁷

A few years earlier, between 330 and 360 A.D., Codex Sinaiticus, which is the oldest and considered one of the best Greek texts of the New Testament, listed other books, which are now excluded from our current Bible. Included in the New Testament were the *Epistle of Barnabas* and portions of *The Shepherd of Hermas*. This codex also excluded several apocryphal books of the Old Testament: *Wisdom of Sirach*, *Book of Tobit*, *Book of Judith*, *1 Maccabees* through *4 Maccabees*.⁸⁸ It seems unimaginable that within such a short period of time so many books (Old and New

⁸⁶ Kevin Knight, “Synod of Laodicea – Canon 60” Newadvent.org, Translated by Henry Percival, Dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, 2017, Retrieved 30 June 2018 <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3806.htm> 2017.

⁸⁷ Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, “Council of Laodicea,” Retrieved 18. May 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_of_Laodicea. 2016.

⁸⁸ Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, “Codex Sinaiticus,” Retrieved 18, May 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex_Sinaiticus. 2016.

Testament) could become un-inspired after having been inspired for three hundred years.

The subjectivity of man cannot determine the inspiration of God. Based upon this assumption, it leaves me without an any other option except to believe in the inspiration of Scriptures. By faith, I embrace them and not because of some meritorious reasoning of man, but because it seems reasonable to do so. At the same time, I cannot deny that other non-canonical texts are also inspired. Just because the early bishops omitted some writings as canonical texts, does not necessarily argue against their inspiration.

The Bible is God's standard for human life and belief. He providentially preserved the texts as the standard for faith but that does not necessary mean other books fall outside of God's standard, it simply places them on the different level as canonized texts. Everyone needs a basis for belief. For Christians, it seems that the Bible is that basis. But which Bible shall we embrace?

When I first joined the faculty of Christ For The Nations, I visited the office of the Academic Dean, Dr. Harold Reents. I noticed his "worn and used" Bible sitting on his desk. I picked it up to look for a particular Scripture to add to our conversation and noticed he was using a Catholic Bible, which included the additional apocryphal books. Not having grown up in the Catholic church, I was unfamiliar at the time and mentioned the apocryphal books.

The Bible that I used at the time was the New King James Version, which came from the Latin Vulgate and first translated into English as the King James Version. The Protestant Reformation was led by Martin Luther in 1517 along with other leaders such as Huldych Zwingli, John Calvin, Philip Melanchthon at Wittenberg, and Andreas Karlstadt, as well as Bugenhagen and Oecolampadius. They propagated the message of the Bible about the time it began to be printed many languages.

When we use the word Scripture, are the references only to the Bible? In James 4:5, the author wrote, "Do you not think the Scripture says in vain, "The spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously?" What Scripture was

he referring to? In a search throughout the Bible, it seems mystically hidden or not recorded, yet James called it Scripture. Likewise, Jesus told the Sadducees in Mark 12:24, “You are deceived, for this reason, you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.” Then Jesus quoted from the *Book of Enoch*⁸⁹ or other non-canonical texts but the words he spoke were not recorded in the Old Testament. In similar fashion, Barnabas, Paul’s traveling companion wrote an epistle where he stated that the *Book of Enoch* was Scripture,⁹⁰ yet that book has only been canonized by the Ethiopian and Eritrea Orthodox Churches.

In 2002, the American Bible Society reported that since 1526, when the Tyndale New Testament was first printed, that more or less than 900 English translations and paraphrase of the Bible have been published.⁹¹ They maintain that the most comprehensive English bibliography of Bible Translations was compiled by William J. Chamberlin, who published *Catalogue of English Bible Translations* in 1991.⁹² The 806 page book covers canonical and Deuterocanonical books but cannot logistically list all of the paraphrase versions of the Bible that continue to surface.

When one mentions the Bible, are they referring to the Catholic version with apocryphal books or the ones produced since the beginning of the Reformation? And because there are so many versions, which one is the most exact? How about the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Bible. It has been around longer than the ones used after the Reformation. In fact, it was birthed out of the Council of Chalcedon and has 46 books in the Old Testament and 35 books in the New Testament, canonizing 81

⁸⁹ Non-Canonical Literature:: Jesus statements were found in 1 Enoch 15:6; 51:4; Wisdom 5:5 2 Baruch 51:10 and 1 QH 3:21-23.

⁹⁰ Randy Delp Ph. D. *The Living Barnabas*, (TBP by Cedar Hill, TX: Lifeworld Publishing 2009) Ch 4, p. 59.

⁹¹ American Bible Society, “Number of Translations of the Bible” 02 September 2009, Retrieved 28 June 2018. <http://news.americanbible.org/article/number-of-english-translations-of-the-bible> 2018.

⁹² Ibid.

books.⁹³ As a whole, these books were written in the Geez language on numerous parchments, causing church leaders to deem them as Scripture.

Professor Sergew Habele Selassie provided the history of the Ethiopian Church suggesting that paganism and Judaism were practiced side by side before Christianity was introduced.⁹⁴ Monotheism found its way into Ethiopia when the Queen of Sheba visited King Solomon and was impregnated with a son whom she named Menelik. When the young lad grew up, he visited his father in Jerusalem and returned with many Levite priests who brought with them the Ark of the Covenant, where it is still kept by the priests, until this day.

St. John Chrysostom mentioned in one of his homilies on Pentecost that Ethiopians were present in the Holy City on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon Christ's followers in the upper room. The conversion of Queen Candace's Treasure by Phillip (mentioned in Acts 8:26-40) actually brought the gospel to Ethiopia and the dispersion of the early church commissioned Apostle Matthew to Ethiopia where he was martyred. Christianity became the official religion of the Aksumite kingdom in the fourth century.

Christianity was adopted by the royal court of Ethiopia and became the state religion in 330 A.D. but 120 years later, they found themselves in strong disagreement over the nature of Jesus at the Council of Chalcedon, which led to a major split in the church where the Oriental Orthodox churches could not embrace the Chalcedon Orthodox teachings regarding the nature of Christ. They were accused of teaching that Jesus had one nature that was both human and divine, while the Chalcedon orthodox stated that Jesus was one person with two natures (both human and divine).⁹⁵ The division led to another decision of which Bible to embrace. The Ethiopian Tewahedo Orthodox Church eventually accepted a

⁹³ Ethiopianorthodox.org, "The Bible" Retrieved 28 2018, <http://www.ethiopianorthodox.org/english/canonical/books.html> 2018.

⁹⁴Sergew Habele Selassie, "The Establishment of the Ethiopian Church" <http://www.ethiopianorthodox.org/english/ethiopian/prechristian.html> Retrieved 30 Jun 2018.

⁹⁵Derek Thompson, "The Council of Chalcedon" June 2003, Retrieved 28 June 2018. http://whr.idx.com.au/Attachments/Council_of_Chalcedon.pdf 2003.

Scripture with more books than what was found in the Chalcedonian churches.

Matteo Calisi from Bari, Italy, has been commissioned by the Pope of the Catholic Church to find a way to fulfill Jesus' prayer of John 17, "that they would be one even as Jesus and the Father are one." At the turn of the second millennium, my son accompanied CFNI Vice President, Dr. Eric Belcher to Rome, responding to an invitation to sit in round table discussions and dialogue about how to fulfill John 17 between the Catholic Charismatics and the Charismatic Pentecostal churches in the United States. Since that time, Calisi has continued to pursue an ecumenical embrace of the all Christian religions. In October 2017, Calisi met in Kansas City, MO with national leaders of church groups from Catholic, Protestant, Messianic Christians, Charismatic Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. In October 2019, the same Congress that convened in Kansas was scheduled to meet on the Christ For The Nations campus in Dallas, TX. At a luncheon to extend the ecumenical initiative on a local level, Matteo said to me, "The enemy doesn't care which group you belong to, his attack is against Christians."

I was reminded of an event that occurred in 2015, when the ISIS militia marched twenty Coptic Christians dressed in orange jumpsuits and videoed their beheadings on the shores of a Libyan beach. Very few Christians around the world debated which Bible was the inspired. They watched as these young men were martyred for their faith and that faith was based upon the Bible they embraced and believed to be inspired. May we diminish our differences and focus on that which brings unity, even Jesus Christ.

The Lawgiver and Judge

Jesus' brother wrote in James 4:12, "But there is only one who is lawgiver and judge—the one who is able to save and destroy." This statement was written as a rebuke to the people who were setting themselves up as judges by speaking against a fellow believers and using the law to judge them. He told them, "If you judge the law, you are not a doer of it but a judge and there is only one lawgiver and judge." This verse

names Jesus as Lawgiver and Judge and these two titles are two functions that are inextricably linked together.

The cultural background of kings and subjects revealed three things: the king establishes the law, the subjects obey the law, the judge determines whether or not the subjects adhered to the law. In kingdom culture, the lawgiver and judge were the same. It is difficult for democratic countries to understand this concept. In the United States, we have three branches of government: a legislative branch, an executive branch and a judicial branch. The legislative branch makes the law, the executive branch enforces the law and the judicial branch adjudicates lawbreakers. But in a kingdom culture, the king in authority makes and adjudicates the law. He is both the lawgiver and the judge.

Prior to Israel having a king, Jacob prophesied that Judah's lineage would be the tribe from which a king would come and rule the people of Israel. On his deathbed, Jacob said in Genesis 49:10, "The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruling staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes and the nations will obey him." The word "Shiloh" is a transliteration of the phrase "he whose right it is." Until recently, when new translations actually translated instead of transliterated "Shiloh" the phrase meant very little to the readers. Shiloh was an ancient city in Samaria, which was the major Israelite worship center prior to Solomon building the first Temple in Jerusalem. Today, Bible Scholars understand Shiloh as a prophetic name for the Messiah.

In the same way "the Chosen One" was a prophetic title for the Messiah, the prophets of the Old Testament understood the Messiah to be the Anointed King who would become the king of the Jews. The word Messiah (in Hebrew) and Christ (in Greek) means "the anointed one." The king is the lawgiver and he is also the judge, but how does that resonate in Christ's spiritual kingdom? First, I will briefly mention the spiritual laws of his kingdom and then provide an explanation of his duties as judge.

Every kingdom has laws whereby the subjects are governed. Christ kingdom is the same. We are governed by spiritual laws. Paul stated in Romans 7:14 that laws are spiritual (about spirits) and then he listed several laws. Some are given by King Jesus and come from God's kingdom.

Others are given by Satan and come from the kingdom of darkness. In Romans 7:21 through 8:2 he listed these spiritual laws. I will categorize them into laws of the kingdom of light and laws of the kingdom of darkness.

- Kingdom of Light:
 - The law of God in the inward man - vs 22, 25
 - The law of our minds (mental) - vs 23
 - Law of spirit of life – vs 8:2

- Kingdom of Darkness
 - The law of sin (that evil dwells within us--in our flesh) - vs 20, 21, 23, 25, 8:2.
 - Another law (spirit of slavery or bondage) in our members that brings me captive to law of sin - vs 23
 - Law of death in our body - vs 24, 8:2

These laws contradict each other, and Paul provides the understanding about how they work. The method in how he identifies these laws is quite unique. First, it appears that these laws are actually spirits warring with each other. Second, these laws seem to have ruling agencies with assigned authority to rule or reign in us. Paul said in Romans 6:12, “Do not let sin reign in your mortal body by obeying its desires.” He also said in Romans 6:16, Paul that we are slaves to the one we obey. We are either slaves to sin (which results in death) or slaves to obeying God (which results in righteousness.) In Romans 6:6 he explained that our old man (flesh) was crucified with Christ so the body of sin would no longer dominate us, making us a slave to sin.

In Romans 6:14, Paul contrasted the law of sin as a ruling spirit with the law of grace, which is also a ruling spirit. He said, “For sin will have no mastery over you, because you are not under its law but under the law of grace.” It must be understood that grace is the spirit mentioned in Hebrews 10:29 that becomes insulted when people sin willfully after having received the knowledge of the truth. This occurs when people treat God’s covenant and Christ’s blood as common and not sanctified.

I suggest that grace is a throne, which has authoritative or ruling power in the spirit hierarchy. Hebrews 4:16 identifies the spirit of grace as a

throne that gives us mercy. Zechariah 12:9 predicted that the Messiah (Jesus) would come with a spirit of grace and supplication. The grace would produce healings and miracles for the people.

Another spiritual throne mentioned frequently in the New Testament is peace. Paul said in Colossians 3:15, “Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart...and be thankful.” Peace seems to be throne that has ruling agencies. When Jesus sent his disciples into the communities to share the gospel of the kingdom, he told them in Luke 10:5, “Whenever you enter a house, first say, “May peace be on this house.” In other words, announce God’s kingdom on the places where you stay.” Perhaps this statement was the impetus of the common greeting that Paul made as he introduced his epistles. He commonly opened his epistles with the statement, “Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. This was written at the beginning of each letter to the Ephesians, Philippians, Galatians, both letters to the Corinthians, the Thessalonians as well as Philemon. Grace and peace are spiritual laws in God’s kingdom of light.

In Romans 6:22, Paul suggested that when we become bondservants to God, we are no longer slaves to sin; therefore, our end would be eternal life. Grace is the spirit that stands guard and covers our inward man warding off the spirit of sin that exists in the our physical bodies. Paul encourages us by saying, “Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds.” In other words, sin is a spirit that desires to take our lives while grace is a spirit seeking to preserve our lives.

Sin is a spirit that lives in our flesh and causes the physical body to die or to be ruled by the spirit of death. Paul explained that a spirit of slavery seeks to rule our minds, which allows sin to have its desire. At the same time, grace is a spirit that rules our spirit and prevents sin from captivating us; hence, we are slaves to righteousness instead of slaves to sin. Sin and death are both spirits of destruction while righteousness and life are spirits from God. Proverbs 21:21 says the one who pursues righteousness and love will find life.

Paul stated, “There is another law that brings us captive to the law of sin in our members.” He doesn’t identify the spirit, but he insists it is a

captivating spirit of some sort that is linked to the spirit of death. I suggest that this law is the same spirit that Paul mentioned in Romans 8:15, the spirit of slavery that leads to fear. Hebrews 2:15 states that this spirit captivates people by their fear of death. So the spirit of slavery, spirit of sin and spirit of death work together against humanity. But Paul said in Romans 8:2, “For the law of the spirit of life, in Christ Jesus has freed us from the law of sin and death.”

Paul listed other spiritual laws in Galatians 5:22-23. These laws are also spirits, which are produced by the Holy Spirit. They are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness goodness, faith, gentleness, and self-control or moderation. God gave us these spirits or laws to live by. Jesus said, “It is the Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom, referencing the spiritual laws and the healing that comes to those who embrace them.”

Jesus is not only the Lawgiver, he is also the Judge. The first biblical reference of Christ being the Judge came in the form of a prophecy in Genesis 3:15. God told Satan that the seed of woman (Jesus) would bruise his head. From that time, humanity has understood that God is judge of all things. Jesus is not the Judge because he is Creator, he is Judge because he is the Lawgiver. His judgment is two-fold. First, he came to earth to judge sin. Second, he will return to judge his enemies.

Monarchal kingdoms do not have branches of authority like democracies. They have a single focus of authority where the Lawgiver and Judge are one and the same. Jesus is the physical manifestation of God’s word. In his prayer of John 17:17, he told the Father, “Your word is truth.” And he told his followers in John 14:6, “I am the truth.”

It is especially important to understand how the word of truth relates to our salvation. Paul said in Ephesians 1:13, “When you heard the “word of truth, you were sealed with the promise of the Holy Spirit.” This same verse describes or defines the “word of truth” as the good news of our deliverance. Paul said the sealing of the Holy Spirit happens when we believe in Christ.

The crucifixion of Christ was his judgment over sin. All of the New Testament authors understood the purpose of the crucifixion. John said in

1 John 3:5 that Jesus was incarnated and revealed to take away sins. He remarked that Jesus was without sin but he came to take our sins away. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:21, “God made Jesus, who didn’t know sin, to be sin for us that in him, we would become the righteousness of God.” In other words, he took our sin and we became his righteousness.

Peter said in 1 Peter 2:24, “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we may cease from sinning and live for righteousness. By his stripes you were healed.” John said in 1 John 2:2, “He himself is the atoning sacrifice for our sins and not only for ours (Jews) but also for the whole world.” Paul wrote in Romans 8:3, “For God achieved what the law could not do by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh by condemning sin in the flesh.” Jesus told the Jews in John 8:24, “You will die in your sins, unless you believe that I am from the Father.”

When Jesus died on the cross, he paid the debt of our sin. From the time Adam and Eve fell, the whole world became indebted to sin. But Paul said in Colossians 2:14-15 that Christ’s crucifixion cancelled our indebtedness to sin when he nailed a certificate of indebtedness to the cross. In that day, if a person was in debt to another person, the lender would publicly post their debt to let everyone know that a person had not paid their debt. It was like a credit bureau. Once the debt was paid, the lender would fold the parchment and write “paid in full: and then post it in the same place. Paul used that analogy to explain that Christ wrote out a certificate of indebtedness and nailed it to the tree (cross) declaring our sins were paid in full.

Christ’s first appearing was to judge sin. A final judgment will occur at his second coming. At that time, he will judge his enemies and submit the kingdom to his Father. Paul named some of the enemies he will judge. In 1 Corinthians 15:24-26, he wrote that Jesus will return and put an end to all rule, all authority, and all power. These enemies are spirits that fight against us. He also named the last enemy to be destroyed. It is the spirit of death.

The Greek words rule (*arche*), authority (*exousia*) power (*dunamis*) and death (*thanatos*) are evil spirits that we fight against. Paul said in Ephesians 6:12 that we do not war against each other but against rulers, (*arche*),

powers (*exousia*), world rulers of darkness (*kosmocrator skotus*), and spiritual wickedness (*pneumatikos pornea*), which are sexual spirits in the spiritual realm. These are just some of the spirits that Jesus will destroy when he returns.

All evil spirits will be destroyed and we will be free from sickness, sin, trouble, problems, crisis, chaos, calamity, dissension, division, divorce, disaster, destruction, disease, infirmity, anger, wrath, jealousy, envy, sin, hate, bitterness, anxiety, infirmity, iniquity, poverty, slavery, bondage, fear, hopelessness, malice, vengeance and all other evil things.

Jesus's incarnation led to his crucifixion, where he judged sin. He sent the Holy Spirit to convince the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. In John 16:11 Jesus said, "The ruler of the world (Satan) is judged" The Holy Spirit has been given to convince us that his dark power is over in our lives. We are no longer subject to his power because we are sons of God, led by His Spirit. Jesus said the Holy Spirit will not speak on His own but declare the things that come from Jesus and the Father.

The spirits in this world are currently invisible to us. That is why Jesus and his Father sent the Holy Spirit to help navigate us through the unseen spiritual realm. When Jesus returns, two things will happen, first he will destroy all of his enemies including death. When that happens, our spiritual senses will be resurrected and activated. This will allow us to experience the reality of the spiritual domain. We will be able to see, hear, taste, touch and smell the spirit realm. Second, it will be a resurrection of spirit and body together. We will be able to see our physical bodies and spiritual bodies at the same time. The light of our spirits (glory) will be glorified. We will be like Jesus. At that time, we will see Jesus' glory as it looks right now. John said, "We will see him as he is."

The Creator

Colossians 1:16 reveals that Jesus is the Creator? But how many creations were there? Paul wrote,

"By him (Jesus) all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created

through Him and for Him. He is before all things and in Him all things consist.”

Notice that Jesus created things in heaven and on earth. Logically, one could surmise that there were two different creations, one was a spiritual the other physical; one was heavenly the other earthly; one was invisible the other was visible.

Genesis 1:1 seems to validate that notion. Moses wrote, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” It is unknown whether that was a statement about creation or an introduction to the creation story that followed. It seems more consistent with the text to suggest that a creation of the spiritual and earthly realms happened prior to the created world that we know. As such, the heavens represent the spiritual and the earth represents the material.

Although N.T. Wright and other theologians maintain that Genesis 1 is a poetic text, that does not deny the infallibility of the story. In the early 1700s, French doctor, Jean Astuc, wrote *Conjectures*, which formulated a documentary hypothesis that Genesis was not written by Moses suggesting it was compiled from four sources.

In 1780, John Eichhorn built upon Astuc’s work, presenting the idea that Genesis was composed by combining two identifiable sources, the Jehovist (J) also called the Yahwist (Y) and the Elohist (E). The basis of the theory contends that Genesis 1 refers to God as Elohim while Genesis 2 identifies him as Yahweh Elohim or LORD God. Later a third source Deuteronomy (D) was added to the mix and a finally a split of the Elohist to create the Priestly (P) established the thesis.⁹⁶

Although embraced by a majority of 20th century theologians, David Carr maintained the theory collapsed in the last part of century.⁹⁷ But there seems to be clear evidence that Moses did author Genesis and

⁹⁶ Wikipedia, “Documentary hypothesis” Retrieved 13 October 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Documentary_hypothesis 2018.

⁹⁷ David M. Carr, “Genesis”. In Coogan, Michael David; Brettler, Marc Zvi; Newsom, Carol Ann. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*. (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007), [ISBN 978-0-19-528880-3](https://doi.org/10.1017/9780195288803).

the entire *Pentateuch*. Moses could have used other history texts in his Chronical. It appears that Moses may have copied the *Book of Jasher* when writing chapter one and the *Book of Jubilees* when writing chapter two. Both books were written prior to Moses' *Pentateuch* and Joshua's "long day miracle." The *Book of Jubilees* seems to be an ongoing diary from the beginning of time that passed down from Enoch to Noah and eventually to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses. The book ends when the children of Israel cross into the promised land. As such, we must insist that the stories were true as revealed by God.

God first created the spiritual realm and order prior to creating the physical or material world. In the Garden of Eden, the Devil or Satan had already been assigned to his judgment; therefore, the spiritual realm was created prior to the physical realm. Charles Choi present seven theories on the Origin of Life⁹⁸ which include:

- Life started with an electric spark
- Life started when molecules met on clay
- Life started at submarine hydrothermal vents spewing hydrogen rich molecules
- Life started during the ice age three billion years ago
- Life started in RNA, which stored the potential for DNA
- Life started with simple cell membranes
- Life was brought here from somewhere else.

All of his theories are based upon something physical and none of them explain the spiritual aspect of life. Darwin's theory of evolution was introduced in 1859 where he claims that organisms change over time resulting in heritable physical or behavior traits.

Contrasting these scientific theories, creationism is an altogether different concept about the origin of life. It supposes that an intelligent designer created all things by divine acts and that everything that currently exists or became extinct, came from God. Creationists are not in agreement about the timing of creation. Young Earth creationism contends

⁹⁸ Charles Choi, "Seven Theories on the Origin of Life" LiveScience.com, posted 24 March 2016, <https://www.livescience.com/13363-7-theories-origin-life.html> Retrieved 30, June 2018, 2016.

that God used seven (24-hour) days to complete creation while Old Earth creationism contends that the seven-day period mentioned in the *Book of Genesis* was figurative and seeks to blend with astronomy and geology to arrive at their conclusions.⁹⁹

Gordon Lindsay believed in the Gap Theory,¹⁰⁰ which surmises multiple creations, those prior to Genesis 1:2 and our present creation after Genesis 1:3. He based his belief upon the concept that God did not make the earth to be a waste, but He had intentions for this planet. Validating Scriptures include: Isaiah 45:18; Jeremiah 4:23-26; Job 9:4-7; 2 Peter 2:46 and 2 Peter 3:3-6.

His son, Dennis Lindsay, presents an argument for Young Earth¹⁰¹ and maintains that sin is the cause of death and he insists that death did not exist prior to our creation. He further maintains that Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension are doctrines upon which our salvation is based; therefore, sin and death did not exist prior to our current creation.

Much of the debate regarding divine creationism is argued on the merits of Biblical interpretation. Is it literal or subject to symbolism? Other Old Earth beliefs include Day Age Creationism based upon the Hebrew word "yom," which Young Earthers interpret literally as a 24-hour day while Day Age Creationism translates the word as "age" instead of "day." Progressive Creationism is a type of progressive evolution, which was initiated and guided by intelligent design. All creationists argue against evolution by natural selection, which teaches that creation just happened on its own.

These philosophic debates seemed to be a distraction if one believes Paul's assessment found in Colossians 1:16. He wrote that Jesus created all things, visible and invisible, spiritual and material, heavenly and

⁹⁹ Wikipedia, "Creationism" Retrieved 1 July 2018, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creationism> 2018.

¹⁰⁰ Gordon Lindsay, *Creation* (Dallas, TX: Christ For The Nations, 1971), p. 3-15.

¹⁰¹ Dennis Lindsay, *The Origins Controversy: Creation by Design or Chance* (Dallas: Christ For The Nations, 1991), p. 28-56.

earthly for himself. What is often missing in the creation story is spiritual activity involved at creation. The natural inclination of mankind's study of creation focuses on that which he can experience through his senses; hence, the heavens are about the sun, moon and stars while the earth is about humans, animals, plants and other physical creatures. This focus grossly neglects the basis for life.

Genesis 1:3 states, "And God said, 'Let there be light' and there was light." The New Testament story of creation produces further clarification. John 1:1-4 records,

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."

Verse 9 explains that Jesus was the true Light, who gives light to every human that comes into the world. Verse 14 also claims, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory." It seems that John intended to describe the light mentioned in Genesis 1:3 as life (zoe) which is the spiritual ingredient from God that causes all animate and inanimate creation to exist. In Romans 8:2, Paul called it the Law of the spirit of life."

The focus on creation seems to be about our present creation but one must ask, was there more than one creation? Did the creation of spirits and angels occur simultaneously with the creation of humans or was there a prior creation? The assumption that all creation happened at the same time leads to the pretense of dualism, the belief that good and evil strive for preeminence and have equal qualities. The alternative viewpoint is that God either created evil or the potential for evil.

Old Testament Scriptures seem to indicate God's creation and involvement of evil. In Isaiah 45:7, the prophet claimed that God formed light and created darkness. The text suggests it was more than physical darkness because Isaiah also said, "He brings about peace and creates calamity." These two spirits are from two different kingdoms. Also, Isaiah noted God's words in Isaiah 54:16, "I create the Destroyer, so he might

devastate.” This leaves theologians graveling to ascertain whether or not God creates evil.

Exodus 4:11 unequivocally announced that Yahweh made people mute and blind, but this is inconsistent with the nature of Jesus who exorcized unclean spirits in the New Testament to free people from being deaf and blind. Such debate leaves people questioning whether the God of the Old Testament and Jesus, the God of the New Testament were one in the same.

It is my supposition that God doesn't change over time nor do the people of the Bible change gods after Jesus was revealed. The God of the Old and New Testaments are One. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have always existed as (Father) God, His Word and His Spirit. I also contend that the message of the Old and New Testaments doesn't change. Both are about man's covenant with God. The unfolding revelation of God's nature begins in Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created...” The first three words of verse 3, “And God said,” describe how He created. He spoke light or life into existence. John further validates the Creator's incarnation. in John 1:14, “And the “Word” became flesh and dwelt among us.”

There are other New Testament Scriptures that declare Jesus to be the Creator. They include:

- John 1:3, “All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”
- John 1:10, “He (Jesus) was in the world and the world was made through him...”
- I Corinthians 8:6, “Yet for us, there is but one God, the **Father**, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one **Lord**, **Jesus Christ**, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.”
- Colossians 1:16, “For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him.”
- Hebrews 1:2, “...in these last days, (God) has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

These verses attest to the Creator Jesus. The author of Hebrews explained that God used His Son (The Word) to make the world and he is also heir of all things, making him King of God's kingdom.

The Old Testament confirms that Yahweh alone made the heavens and earth as found in the following verses: Nehemiah 9:6; Genesis 1:1-25; 5:1; 9:6; Isaiah 37:16; 40:26; 42:5; 44:24; 45:7,18; 66:2; 65:17; Jeremiah 10:11-13; Psalm 8:3-8; 19:1; 33:6,9; 96:5; 100:3; 104:2-4, 30; 139:13; 148:2-5; Job 9:8-9; 26:7; 38:8-11; Amos 4:13. Each of these verses proclaim Yahweh as the Creator but Hebrews 11:3 described how He did it, "By faith, we understand that the worlds *were prepared by the Word of God*, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible."

The early church had no difficulty embracing Jesus as God because they understood him to be the Word of God, which made him inseparable to the mind (thoughts) and spirit of God. Words are spoken thoughts. And spoken words are produced by breath or spirit. Although the patristic and apostolic fathers debated the issue throughout the years, a Trinitarian God has always existed as the Creator. Yahweh, the Father, conceived the thought of creation. Jesus, the Word, spoke the thought. And the Holy Spirit activated the spoken thought when He moved on the face of the waters.

Without the Father's idea or thought, creation would not have happened; without God's voice (Jesus,) creation would not have happened; with the Holy Spirit activating the Word, creation would not have happened. It is with this understanding that we declare, "God created the heavens and the earth when Jesus spoke the world into existence. According to Job 33:4, the Spirit of God has made us, and the Breath of the Almighty gives us life. Without controversy, Christians embrace Jesus as the Creator of the universe.

Son of Man

The name that Jesus used the most had the least divine ascription. He called himself, "Son of Man." At the same time, the name Jesus used the least, "Son of God" described his salvific function. These two names

identify the humanity and divinity of Jesus, God's king and savior of the world. First, we will investigate the title Son of Man.

Origin of the title Son of Man

It seems ironic that such a name was used. Although Jesus was the son of woman, he was not the son of man. Technically, the title "Son of Man" is incorrect because Jesus had no earthly father. He had an earthly mother and a heavenly Father but not an earthly father. According to Matthew 1:25, Joseph was legally engaged or espoused to Mary, but he did not have sexual intercourse with her until after Jesus was born. Jesus called himself the Son of Man, but he had no earthly father. So, why did he use that title?

There are only two other places in Scriptures where the term "Son of Man" is used. Both are in the Old Testament. The *Book of Ezekiel* lists 93 times that the phrase "son of man" is used and most of the references are uniquely a title given by God or his angel to Ezekiel. Some of the locations include: Ezekiel 2:1,3,6,9; 3:1,3,4,10,17,25; 4:1,16; 5:1; 6:2; 7:2; 8:5,6,8,12,15,17; 11:2,4,15; 12:2,3,9,18,22,27; 13:2,17; 14:3,13; 15:2; 16:2; 17:2; 20:3,4,27,46; 21:2,6,9,12,14,19,28; 22:2,18,24; 23:2,36; 24:2,16,25; 25:2; 26:2; 27:2; 28:2,12,21; 29:2,18; 30:2,21; 31:2; 32:2,18; 33:2,7,10,12,24,30; 34:2; 35:2; 36:1,17; 37:3,9,11,16; 38:2,14; 39:1,17; 40:4; 43:7,10,18; 44:5,6.

Only once, was Daniel called the son of man and that was on the banks of the Ulai River after he had seen a vision about a ram, a male goat and the little horn that grew out of the goat. Daniel 8:17 describes the scene after he heard angelic voices discussing the timing of this vision and he saw an angel, who appeared in human form, standing before him.

In the vision, he heard an audible voice command Gabriel to make Daniel understand the vision. The prophet explained that Gabriel came near to him and said, "Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end." This is the only time that Daniel was called son of man; however, Daniel 7:13 uses the same title but prophetically references Jesus.

This vision happened in the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon when Daniel had a vision of four beasts. As Daniel meditated upon these beasts, he saw another vision of God, Whom he called Ancient

of Days. In the vision, the Ancient of Days was seated on His throne being served by millions of angels. The court was seated, and He was about to pronounce His adjudication.

As Daniel watched, he said “One like the Son of Man came in the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days and he was given dominion, glory and an everlasting kingdom.” These were the only two instances where Daniel used the term “Son of Man.” It must be noted that the term “Son of God” was used time in Daniel 3:25, when King Nebuchadnezzar said, “But I see four men, untied and walking around unharmed in the middle of the fire, and the fourth is like that of the Son of God.” And while most translations translate the phrase son of a god or son of the gods, only the KJV and NKJV translate it son of God.

Perhaps the translation is similar to that in John 1:1 where the literal Greek reads “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was a God.” Most scholars remove the article “a” distinguishing one of many gods in lieu of other Trinitarian passages declaring Christ’s divinity not in a polytheistic divinity but monotheistic one.

There is only one other place in Scripture where the term “son of man” is used and that is in Job 25:6 but it is not a title given to man but rather a poetic description indicating humans are born to other humans.

Is God a Man?

When discussing the humanity of Jesus, a look at Numbers 23:19 is necessary. Moses quoted Balaam’s prophecy,

“God is not a man that He should lie; nor a human being, that He should change His mind. Has God ever said that He’d do something and then not do it? Or has He ever spoken that something would happen, and it not occur?”

First, we must look at the context of the author of this verse and why he said it. Balaam was not considered a Jewish prophet. In fact, Rabbinical literature asserts there are seven heathen prophets found in the Old Testament. These include: Balaam, Balaam’s father, Job and his four

contemporaries.¹⁰² Balaam's prophecies were gained through sorcery or divination, which was disparaged by God and the Jewish leaders. Although Moses vindicated Balaam as a prophet who heard God, he did not validate his methods; albeit, Balaam did not seek to use sorcery during his third oracle because he saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel. Balaam claimed that he could only speak what God said but he was certainly deceptive by telling the Moabites how to get the Jewish men to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. So, Balaam's statement in Numbers 23:19 does not come from an authentic prophet of God.

Second, the statement, "God is not a man that He should lie" was not focusing on the deity or the humanness of God, it was focused on that which man frequently practices—lying. Balaam was trying to convince Balak that God was not lying when he told Balaam that Israel was a blessed people.

Third, if one takes literally the statement, "God is not a man," then Balaam may have been correct, at that time, but the incarnation made that phrase incorrect. Today, it would be improper to say, "God is not a man," because Jesus is a man and Jesus is God.

The many references about Jesus being the Son of Man counters Balaam's statement because Jesus used that title more than any other. He referred to himself as the Son of Man in the following verses: **Matthew** 8:20; 9:6; 10:23; 11:19; 12:8,32,40; 13:37,41; 16:13,27,28; 17:9,12,22; 18:11; 19:28; 20:18,28; 24:27,28,30,33,37,39,44; 25:13,31; 26:2,25,45,64; **Mark** 2:10,28; 8:31,38; 9:9,12,31; 10:33,45; 13:26,29,34; 14:21,41,62; Luke 5:24; 6:5,22; **Luke** 7:34; 9:22,26,44,56,58; 11:30; 12:8,10,40; 17:22,24,25,26,30; 18:8, 31; 19:10; 21:27,36; 22:22,48,69; 24:7; **John** 1:51, 3:13,14; 5:27; 6:27,53,62; 8:28; 9:35; 12:23,34; 13:31; **Acts** 7:56, **Hebrew** 2:6; **Revelation** 1:13; 14:14. At least ninety (90) times the title "Son of Man" was used in the New Testament. In all but four, Jesus used that title to refer to himself. This includes Acts 7:56, when Stephen saw Jesus standing at the right hand

¹⁰² Morris Jastrow Jr. Ira Maurice Price, Marcus Jastrow, H.M. Speaker, John Dyneley Prince, Dr. S. Muhsam, Kaufmann Kohler, "Balaam" Jewish Encyclopedia 1906. Retrieved 2 July 2018, <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/2395-balaam> 1906.

of the Father. Also, Hebrews 2:6, used it to quote a Psalm and John used it twice in his vision of Christ's return. So, on every occasion where the Son of Man was mentioned in the New Testament, it referred to Jesus.

One must question, why did Jesus use the phrase "Son of Man" so often and why did he use it exclusive to any other title? Only in John 5:25 does Jesus refer to himself as Son of God. He certainly doesn't deny that he is the Son of God. In fact, in John 10:36, when the Jewish leaders picked up rocks to stone Jesus, he asked them, "Why do you say that I am blaspheming because I said, "I am the Son of God?" Why does the Bible record Jesus calling himself "Son of Man" some 86 times but only the "Son of God" twice. There must be a reason.

My doctoral dissertation was entitled *The Impact of the Book of Enoch on Christianity and Other Religions*. I contend that Methuselah, Enoch's son was the actual author of the book and Noah added his own visions to it later on. The book was finally compiled sometime in the third or fourth century B.C. when a Jewish scribe added additional sermons to the texts and called it the *Book of Enoch*.

In the dissertation, I argued that Enoch's memoirs had a tremendous impact upon the culture of the New Testament including the authorship of its books. Only once, in the *Epistle of Jude*, is the *Book of Enoch* mentioned but James, Peter, John, and Paul all quoted or used phrases that were first found in the *Book of Enoch*. Jesus even called it Scripture as did Barnabas in his non-canonical epistle. Many of the apostolic and patristic fathers of the first four centuries quoted from or cited its content.

My reasoning for including the *Book of Enoch* in this section is to suggest that Jesus' use of the term Son of Man was based upon what Noah had written in 1 Enoch 48:1-3. He wrote,

"In that hour was this Son of man invoked before the Lord of spirits, and his name in the presence of the Ancient of Days before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars of heaven were formed, His name was invoked in the presence of the Lord of spirits."¹⁰³

¹⁰³IBID. *Impact of the Book of Enoch on Christianity and Other Religions*, p. 41.

This statement, written by Noah, is the first mention of the Trinitarian God naming the Trinity: Ancient of Days, Son of Man and Lord of Spirits. Daniel saw a similar vision but he didn't include "Lord of Spirits" as part of his vision. There is no doubt that Daniel and the Jewish sages understood the Son of Man to be the Messiah. It seems logical to suggest that Jesus referred to himself as "Son of Man" over eighty times in the four gospels to let everyone know that he was the second person of the Trinitarian God.

Son of God

Perhaps the most important title that Jesus carried was "Son of God." It was the title assigned by Gabriel. It was the title the Father gave to Jesus. It was the title that the early church had to confess before being recognized as a follower of Jesus Christ. In Luke 1:35, the angel (Gabriel) told Mary,

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the child to be born will be holy; he will be called the Son of God."

This same title identified Jesus when a heavenly voice spoke. Luke 3:22 recorded the event,

"And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form (like a dove) upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, 'You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.'"

People who believed and confessed it were saved and those who didn't were not considered believers. John may have been at Jesus' baptism and heard God's pronouncement, because he wrote in 1 John 5:10,

"If you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, then your testimony validates your belief, but if you do not believe, then you are calling God a liar, since he first testified that Jesus was His son."

And while his followers acknowledged and called him "Son of God, the devil tempted Jesus about his own identity. Immediately after the Father's affirmation of his sonship, Jesus was led by the spirit and tempted three times to prove his own identity. While on the cross, he was tempted one last time to do it again; however, people that know who they are do not have to prove it. Jesus refused to yield to Satan's temptations.

Those living in the spirit realm certainly knew his identity. In Mark 3:11, Jesus encountered men with unclean spirits. When they saw Jesus,

they fell before him and cried out, “You are the Son of God.” Jesus rebuked them and told them to quit talking or make his identity known. In Luke 8:28, one demon saw Jesus and fell before him, shouting with a loud voice, “Leave me alone, Jesus, Son of the Most High God! I beg you, do not torment me!”

Although he didn’t want his identity revealed at the beginning of his ministry, it was during the end of his earthly ministry that he was brought before the Sanhedrin Court and asked whether or not he was the Son of God. In Luke 22:70-72, he responded affirmatively, which ended the interrogation. They said, “What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from his own mouth.”

In Matthew 26:64, the high priest tore his clothes and accused him of blasphemy, stating his actions were worthy of death. The Jews took Jesus to Pilate, who found no fault in him, but the Jews said in John 19:7, “According to our law, he must die, because he made Himself the Son of God.”

Perhaps Apostle John laid out the best case for recognizing Christ’s Sonship as a means of salvation.

1 John 4:15 - If anyone confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, then God resides in him and he in God.

1 John 5:18 - We know that everyone fathered by God doesn’t sin, but God protects the one he has fathered, the evil one cannot touch him.

1 John 5:12-13 - The one who has the son (Jesus) has eternal life; the one who does not have the Son of God does not have eternal life. I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

1 John 5:5, - Now who is the person who has conquered the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

1 John 3:8 - The one who practices sin is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. For this purpose, the Son of God was revealed: to destroy the

works of the devil. (Hence, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus helps us overcome sin.)

John 20:31 - These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you have life in his name.

Finally, the title “Son of God” was so vitally important for Christ’s followers that John acknowledged and published Nathanael’s salvation in John 1:49 when he declared Christ’s kingship and sonship. It occurred when Philip told Nathanael about Jesus and Nathanael asked, “What good thing can come out of Nazareth?” As Nathanael doubtfully walked towards Jesus, the Master saw him, he said, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.” Nathanael was puzzled and questioned Jesus asking, “How do you know me?” Jesus said, “I actually saw you when you were under the fig tree, before Philip even told you about me. Nathanael was convinced and said, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel!”

At the inception of the church, the only authenticating and confirming process of being a disciple of Jesus was to acknowledge that Jesus was the Son of God and those who believed their own confession were saved. Baptism was the outward expression of an inward belief and Jesus commanded his followers to baptize believers in order to validate their belief that he was the Son of God.

John was not the only author to accentuate the title. Mark began his story about Jesus by saying, “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” and immediately after Saul of Tarsus was converted in Acts 9:20, he began preaching in the synagogues that Christ was the Son of God. Even the author of Hebrews attests that our acknowledgment that Jesus is the Son of God is a test of salvation. Hebrews 4:14 explains Christ’s high priestly authority and records, “Therefore since we have a great high priest, who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession.”

In one last effort to defeat Jesus, Satan used those around the cross to tempt him regarding his identity. While Jesus breathed his last breath, the people continued to deride and ridicule him. In Matthew 27:40, they taunted, “You can destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are God’s Son, come down from the cross!” But they failed in their effort.

Perhaps one of the first converts after the crucifixion was the centurion who killed him. In Mark 15:39 and Matthew 27:24 the soldier saw how he died. He experienced the earthquake, the darkness covering the earth and heard the love and compassion coming from the heart and lips of Jesus as he prayed, “Father, forgive them. They don’t know what they are doing.” The impact of that statement changed the heart of the centurion for he confessed, “Truly this one was God’s Son!”

CHAPTER FOUR

CREATION OF THE KINGDOM

Christ's Message About God's Kingdom

The term “kingdom of God” has two presuppositions. First, that God exists and second, He has a kingdom. There are many opinions about the nature of God's kingdom. Early Judaism taught that the Jewish people were God's chosen or “elect” race and they were a kingdom of priests. Initially, the government of Israel's kingdom was strictly led by a high priest, who had governing authority. But priests were not equipped to be warriors so when invading countries came, God raised up judges to lead the people militarily. Samuel was the last judge and he established a twofold branch of government: the priests ruled the religious while the kings ruled the people. It was a type of separation of church and state; albeit, the King was responsible for the kingdom and the priests were responsible for the sacrifices and worship. Today, only Messianic Jews embrace Jesus as king of God's kingdom, but they view the kingdom as spiritual rather than physical.

Christians agree that Jesus is king of God's kingdom and they view the kingdom as spiritual and not physical. They portend that Jesus rules the hearts of people and that he has established a church, which is a group of people called out of the world. Jesus is head of the church and guides it from heaven by the Holy Spirit who lives in believers. In this manner, Jesus presently rules his kingdom from heaven but sometime in the future, he will return to earth as king.

The Muslims view God's kingdom differently. They believe God's kingdom is physical. Dr. Shabir Ally teaches that Jesus is the Messiah of

God's kingdom and he believes that God's earthly kingdom is Islam. Ally contends that a future event will occur when Jesus, the Messiah, will return to earth as king and everyone will convert to Islam because Jesus will explain the error of the cross theology and that Christianity and Judaism are both wrong.¹⁰⁴ This explains their tenacious evangelistic efforts and those with radical jihadist beliefs.

Rather than assume that we know what the kingdom of God is, we must learn from the words of Jesus and his immediately followers how they viewed the kingdom of God; otherwise, we will replace God's kingdom with an artificial religion that was never intended.

Jesus revealed his incarnate mission to his disciples in Luke 4:43 when he said, "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns too, for that is what I was sent to do." He also conveyed his commission in Matthew 15:24, when he said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

It is apparent from these two statements that Jesus was sent to earth to convey the reality of His kingdom to the Jewish people. The significance of his incarnation is revealed in Acts 1:3. After his resurrection and just prior to his ascension, that Jesus spent forty days speaking to his disciples about of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. One must question why the focus on the kingdom that Jesus spent his entire ministry and the last forty days talking about it?

Another question to consider is whether or not the church and specifically theologians who discuss the church have lost the meaning of the "gospel of the kingdom?" If Jesus spent his lifetime teaching it, why isn't it a priority for discussion in some theological circles? Is it possible that theologians have lost the initial understanding of God's kingdom and perhaps the message Jesus conveyed; hence, it has little value for discussion? The conversation in this chapter will be about God's kingdom: when it started, what happened to it, the message that Jesus came to

¹⁰⁴ MuslimByChoice, "What is the Kingdom of God From an Islamic Perspective?" YouTube video of a debate in Toronto, Canada, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UVQ1u6TUnTQ> December 3, 2012, Retrieved 24 May 2016.

convey and its future prominence and permanence. But first, it is necessary to understand the basic understanding about the term “kingdom” in order to understand the kingdom of God.

Earthly kingdoms have existed since creation, but God’s kingdom was established before creation. The word for “kingdom” comes from two words “king” and “domain.” Therefore, the rudimentary concept and focus of a kingdom should be about the king and his domain. When one looks at the present and past earthly kingdoms, there are several aspects that each of them have. Every kingdom has a focal point of authority; every kingdom has a domain and boundaries whereby the kingdom is sovereign; every kingdom has governmental rule; every kingdom has subjects; every kingdom has a succession plan. These must be reviewed to help us understand God’s kingdom.

Appointment of the King

According to John Piper, Jesus declared his kingship on Palm Sunday, just before his crucifixion.¹⁰⁵ Piper said his donkey ride into Jerusalem was not only the fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9-10, it was the declaration of his kingship as he enacted Jehu’s coronation found in 2 Kings 9:13 and Solomon’s in 1 Kings 1:33. Jesus hinted at his own royalty in John 5:22-23, when he said,

“The Father does not judge anyone, but has assigned all judgment to the son, so that all people will honor the son just as they honor the Father. The one who does not honor the son does not honor the Father who sent him.”

The primary function of kings was to enact laws and then adjudicate the laws of his kingdom. That is why kings were esteemed with great honor.

There are several places in the New Testament that mention the selection process. I Peter 1:20 records, “He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.” Later in I

¹⁰⁵ John Piper, “Jesus Declared His Kingship” Sermon on March 24, 2002, Retrieved 24, May 2016. *DesiringGod.org*, <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/jesus-declares-his-kingship-2002>.

Peter 2:4 he wrote, “So as you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but chosen and priceless in God’s sight.”

Luke 9:35 recorded the Father’s announcement to the world that He had selected His son, Jesus, to be the king. He said, “This is My son, My chosen one, Listen to him.” Prophetically, in Isaiah 42:1, the prophet announced, “Here is My servant whom I support, My chosen one in whom I take pleasure. I have placed My spirit on him; he will make just decrees for the nations.” When Jesus told his followers to get a colt for him to ride into Jerusalem, it wasn’t to relieve his tired, weary legs. It was a ritual declaration to announce his kingship in the Capitol City.

There is a major difference between God’s kingdom and all others that exist. Earthly kingdoms have physical boundaries but God’s kingdom is spiritual and exists everywhere. Thiessen suggested that there is a difference between the terms “kingdom of heaven” and “the kingdom of God.” He argues that the kingdom of heaven made reference to the future millennial kingdom, while the kingdom of God references those who are saved. He insists that neither terms refer to the church.¹⁰⁶ He also asserts that the term kingdom of heaven may be used in three senses: the earthly millennial kingdom, the spiritual kingdom (same as the kingdom of God without any implications of an earthly kingdom) or a mixed condition known as Christendom.¹⁰⁷ His concept of the millennial kingdom of God has little difference than that of Islam except he portends that the kingdom is about Christians, reigning for elongated time, while Islam asserts it is about Christ ruling Muslims for a shorter period of time.

In a debate at the University of Toronto, Canada between Islamist Dr. Shabir Ally and Christian Professor Anthony Buzzard a question about the kingdom of God was presented in order to discuss the various views. According to Ally, the kingdom of God is about the Muslim people. Although he agreed with Buzzard that God’s kingdom presently exists as the rule of God on earth, he contends it is a future event that will occur when Jesus, the Messiah, returns to earth. Quoting the Qur'an he cited,

¹⁰⁶ Thiessen, p. 40

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

“When Jesus returns, he will break the cross, kill the swine, and abolish taxes on all non-Muslims.”¹⁰⁸

Ally explained the Muslim context. He said, “From an Islamic perspective, the teaching of the cross is erroneous and the message of Jews about dietary laws will die. All people will convert to Islam, which will produce a time of peace when Jesus reigns about forty years before dying and returning to God who created him.”

Buzzard sees God’s kingdom as a future kingdom where Jesus, the Son of God, will return for a thousand years to reign on earth. Both Buzzard and Ally believe in the present existence of God’s kingdom but maintains Jesus’ comments were about the future more than the present.¹⁰⁹

My understanding of God’s kingdom is different and perhaps unique. It is more than a future and present kingdom; it also existed prior to the creation of the universe. This understanding is necessary and vital to the explanation of Christ’s teaching.

While the opinions of both scholars cannot be correct, I agree that both debaters are correct in their assessment that Jesus is the Messiah and will return to earth. I disagree with their notion that the good news of God’s kingdom was primarily about Christ’s return and the consummation of God’s kingdom. Jesus teachings about the gospel of the kingdom had a far greater connotation than a single end time event. Neither Ally nor Buzzard had a proper assessment of the kingdom from its foundation. Likewise, many theologians miss the main concept of the kingdom because of their limited understanding of the spiritual realm.

It is clear that the kingdom of God is more about the king and his domain than it is about the subjects who are in the kingdom. To this extent, we must acknowledge that the kingdom of God is far greater than the church and existed before the creation of the world. In order to fully grasp the foundation of God’s kingdom, one must look at the first verse in

¹⁰⁸Ibid., MuslimByChoice,

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

the Bible. The first verse in the Bible states, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and earth.”

Nineteenth century philosopher, William Herbert Spencer, suggested that this verse contains every discipline that man will study. These include: time, force, motion, space and matter.¹¹⁰ Each of these disciplines were created simultaneously by an uncreated being. The phrase “in the beginning” denotes time; however, not the same time that was created on day four when God made the sun, moon and stars for signs and seasons. The phrase suggests a starting point of creation to which it is understood that God existed prior to that starting point.

Spencer maintains that God is the force of creation and creation is the motion or foundation of all things visible and invisible. Colossians 1:15-17 declares that Jesus is the image of the invisible God who created all things in heaven (spiritual) and earth (physical.) He created the visible and invisible realms. All things that were created came from him. Jesus was before all things and in him all things exist.

The following chart shows the five things man studies as mentioned in Genesis 1:1.

Genesis 1:1	Things Man Studies
In the Beginning	Time
God	Force
Created	Motion
Heavens	Space
Earth	Matter

A surface view of Genesis 1:1 might suggest that the reference to heavens was about celestial matter and the earth was about global matters. It could even be an introductory statement about Creation itself because

¹¹⁰ John MacArthur, *The Inerrant Word: Biblical, Historical, Theological, Pastoral Perspectives*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), p. 8.

the celestial sun, moon and stars were not created until the fourth day. It is likely that Moses' reference to heavens was about spiritual matters and his reference to earth was about physical matters because the globe, as we know it, was not really created until the third day when God separated the upper and lower waters and later caused dry ground to appear in order for plant life to grow. As such, God created the spiritual realm prior to creating the physical.

To effectively understand God's kingdom, one must understand that first, it is a spiritual kingdom that exists in the spiritual realm with a spiritual king ruling over the spirits of His creation. It is not illogical to suggest that God's kingdom is about nonphysical substances. Logic suggests if God is spirit, then His abode is spiritual, His kingdom is spiritual, and He rules over spiritual substances. To this end, we argue that His kingdom existed prior to the foundation of the world and everything physical creation has a co-existing spiritual component.

From Where Did God's Kingdom Come?

Inquiring about the existence and beginning of God's kingdom requires us to ask two more questions, "What does His kingdom look like and when did it begin? Since the term "kingdom" insists upon the presence of a king with sovereign authority over a domain, we maintain that God's kingdom has always existed. He creates many kingdoms, but His kingdom was uncreated. It has always existed. The next question to ask is simply, "What does it look like." If I took a photograph of His Kingdom, what would I see? The answer to that question will help us explain His kingdom.

There are three words found in the New Testament that describe the nature of God and His kingdom. These three words describe His existence. God is spirit; God is light; God is love. They also describe His kingdom. God's kingdom is spiritual. It is a kingdom of light and a kingdom of love. His uncreated spiritual kingdom of light and love has always existed; yet, He creates other kingdoms.

The terms "kingdom of light" and "kingdom of darkness" are not phrases found in the New Testament but there are other phrases to imply they exist. For example, in Ephesians 6:12, when Paul identified the struggles we have in life, he wrote, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness and against the spiritual forces of evil in the

heavens.” The satanic, adversarial kingdom of darkness has rulers and delegate authority. But where did it come from?

Paul also referenced God’s kingdom of light when he wrote in Colossians 1:13, “He delivered us from the power (*exousias* or authority) of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son he loves.” This statement suggests that His kingdom is a kingdom of light, ruled by Jesus as opposed to the kingdom of darkness governed by another ruler.

The phrase, “Let there be light” found in Genesis 1 was an obvious assertion to the creation of spiritual life that exists in the physical realm, but God’s kingdom of light existed prior to then. In fact, John 1:1-9 states that Jesus is Light, which is life and when he said, “Let there be light” in Genesis 1:3, it was the beginning of physical life and creation of the universe.

Not only is God light, he is the Father of lights so that all light creatures were created by Him. We must not confuse the light of His kingdom with the light that we can see, for the light we see has physical and sensical components. According to Jesus in John 4:24, the Light of God is a spiritual substance. This spiritual light is referenced in both Old and New Testaments and is called “glory.” By definition, the Hebrew word “*chabod*” and Greek word “*doxa*” are translated glory and described as light. This light was sometimes revealed Scriptures i.e. when Peter, James and John described the transfiguration of Jesus and when the heavens opened at Stephen’s execution and he said he saw the glory of God, with Jesus, His son, standing at His right hand. John also described Isaiah’s vision in Isaiah 6 as a time when the prophet saw the glory of God.

It is important to separate the spiritual dimension from the physical dimension. With five senses (sight, hearing, smelling, touching, and tasting) humans experience the physical world. We see three-dimensional objects (width, length and depth) and seven dimensional colors; we hear seven dimensional sounds and we have five taste dimensions (salty, sweet, sour, savory and bitter.) With touch sensory mechanisms we feel pain, pleasure, and sexual feelings and this sense seems to be connected to deep seated visceral feelings and emotions. Even our olfactory sense of smell distinguishes fragrances and odors; good and bad smells.

We experience the physical realm with these senses but how do we experience the spiritual realm, the realm of God’s kingdom? In the same

way we retain knowledge for the physical realm in our spirit, we also retain the knowledge of God in our spirit. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:9-12,

Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For human knowledge is revealed through man's spirit that is within us. Now, we have received the Spirit of God that we might know the things that freely come from God.

If God created man in His image, and God is spirit, it is reasonable to suggest that we should experience the spiritual dimension through spiritual senses in the same way we experience the physical dimension with our physical senses. God is spirit and originally equipped humans with spiritual eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and hands. But access to the spirit realm was removed when Adam and Eve sinned; albeit, the resurrection will allow us to see glorified bodies.

Sons of Light

Before exploring the creation mentioned in Genesis 1:2-28, we should investigate the creation mention in Genesis 1.1, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." This verse declares two creations: the first creation was the heavens or the spirit realm, the second creation was the earth or the physical realm. Let us inquire about the spiritual realm.

Just because we don't see, hear, taste, touch or smell the spiritual realm does not indicate its non-existence. We noted in Chapter Two that God has form. We can't see God's form, but Paul said in Philippians 2:6 that Jesus was in the "form of God" but took on the form of a servant. He compared Christ's divinity with his humanity and suggested that he had both. Paul said in Colossians 2:9 that Jesus was the fullness of deity in bodily form and Ezekiel 1 described some heavenly creatures as having human form and others had human form with wings. Zechariah 12:1 declares man to be or to have a spirit and Yahweh forms that spirit within us. Although we cannot not see God, we believe He exists. At the same time, we can't see our spirits, but they exist.

Evidences in Scripture portend that there are other spirit creatures that exist besides man. Angels are spirit beings that existed prior to man and according to Hebrews 1:14, they were sent to serve those who would inherit salvation. If angels were created by God, then we must reason that they are sons of God. Several Old and New Testament Scriptures are given

that title. Job 1:6 and 2:1 mentioned the time, when the sons of God presented themselves before Yahweh. Genesis 6:2 recorded a time when the sons of God took wives for themselves for the purpose of procreating. Although the *Book of Jubilees* is non-canonical, its history declared angels to be sons of God who married human women and produced giants. Jubilees 5:1-11 gives record that these giants brought a dreadful unlawfulness on earth, which led God to bring a worldwide catastrophic flood that destroyed all land and air creatures except for a few species and He started another civilization under Noah.

These angelic creatures are invisible spirits that are the sons of the Father of lights mentioned in James 1:17, “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, who never changes.” Apparently, the heavenly dimension is a higher dimension than the earthly dimension and James stated that God sends these lights or spirits from on high apparently to minister to those who inherit salvation.

We should not think that all spirits are good. For this reason, 1 John 4:1 said we must discern or test spirits to see if they are from God. One of the primary tests of Christianity included a proper confession of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. People who didn’t confess and teach that Jesus was the son of God were considered anti-Christ and motivated by a different spirit. John explained the gospel message when he wrote 1 John 1:5-7,

“Now this is the gospel message we have heard from him (Jesus) and announce to you, God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.”

If anyone asks you, “What is the gospel message?” The best response would be the words of John, “Jesus said, “God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.” John went on to say,

“If we say we have fellowship with him and keep on walking in darkness, we are lying and not practicing the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, then we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, His son, cleanses us from all sin.”

Christ’s gospel message was about his kingdom of light establishing laws (or spirits) that come from the Father to help us live a kingdom life--a kingdom filled with love.

The third aspect of God's nature is love. According to 1 John 4:8, Jesus said, "God is love." His very essence is the primary law of God's kingdom. James 2:8 states, "If you fulfill the Royal Law, as expressed in Scripture "You shall love your neighbor as yourself, you are doing well." God's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom of light that is expressed in love.

Dr. Caroline Leaf, a neuroscientist who has studied the brain since 1987, explained how we use our brain. She said, "We can alter brain anatomy in a positive love direction or negative fear direction by how and what we choose to think."¹¹¹ Choosing which thoughts we embrace will determine our words, emotions and behaviors. She explained "plasticity of the brain" is the ability for the brain to be creative to the extent that how we think will determine the health of our brain and ultimately our physical body. She noted that plasticity is not isolated to one part of our brain. For example, if we think through a paradigm of love, it will affect the whole brain.¹¹² But the adverse is also true, If we think negatively, in a fear direction, then it also affects the entire brain and physical body and creates toxic thoughts or gift-blockers.

Leaf explained, "If we start building fear pathways by entertaining toxic thinking, such as bitterness, worry, anxiety, anger, unforgiveness etc., we can wire negative and rigid behaviors into the brain, which become gift-blockers." What she calls toxic thoughts or gift blockers, the Bible calls evil spirits. She noted that they have a damaging chemical and physical effect on the brain, resulting in inflammation, which interrupts the cycle of thought in some way and hinders your ability to think clearly."¹¹³

Her belief that brain anatomy can be determined by filtering our thoughts through love or fear aligns with Paul's words in Galatians 5:22,23. He wrote, "For the fruit of the (Holy) Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness and self-control." These are spirits produced in us by the Holy Spirit. Notice that he started with love. Is it possible that love, the very nature of God, is the funnel by which all of

¹¹¹ Dr. Caroline Leaf, *The Gift In You*, (TN: Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 2009), p. 23-23.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

these spirits or thoughts come? And if so, is it also possible that filtering through fear produces an opposite effect.

John contrasted these spirits when he wrote in 1 John 4:18, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears punishment has not been perfected in love.”

It is obvious that the Sons of Light are those who are born of the Holy Spirit and who think with a love filter, react emotionally by love and behave intentionally through love. James 2:8 places the responsibility upon us, “If we fulfill the Royal Law, as expressed in Scripture, “We shall love our neighbors as ourselves, then we will do well.” God’s kingdom is a spiritual kingdom of light that is expressed in love.

This love expression includes our attitude towards God and towards other people. It includes people we know and those we don’t. It includes friends, acquaintances and enemies. Love is displayed in how we respond to people, to adversity, to pain and problems. Love has no boundaries. According to Paul in 1 Corinthians 13,

“Love is patient, love is kind, it is not envious. Love does not brag, it is not puffed up. It is not rude, it is not self-serving, it is not easily angered or resentful. It is not glad about injustice but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things. Love never ends.”

God’s kingdom is an eternal kingdom that will never end. Those born into this kingdom are sons of light.

Sons of Darkness

As stated above, Jesus came to preach the gospel message, which is fully defined in 1 John 1:5-7,

“Now this is the gospel message we have heard from him (Jesus) and announce to you, “God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.”

The message is two-fold. First, Jesus said, “God is light.” Second, he said, “There is no darkness in Him.” The question then becomes, “If God is uncreated and there is no darkness in Him, where did darkness come from?”

There are three assumptions we believe can be derived from Genesis 1:3-4 and John 1:4,9. First, we assert that when God said, “Let

there be light” that the reference was to “spiritual light” and not the physical light that comes from the sun, moon, and stars, which were created on Day Four. Second, we maintain that that this light came from the Light (Jesus) who spoke life to create a physical universe. Third we argue that this spiritual light was good, compared to the darkness, which is evil.

If God is uncreated Light and in Him there is no darkness, where did darkness come from? Genesis 1:4 states that God separated light from darkness and called the light “day” and the darkness “night.” Again, we must insist that the reference is to spiritual matters and not physical matters since the 24-hour day/night wasn’t created until Day Four with the creation of the celestial sun, moon and stars.

Jesus’ introduction and explanation that God’s kingdom is light and in Him there is no darkness, led New Testament writers to assign spiritual light and darkness to a spiritual day and spiritual night. One of the first letters that Paul wrote, shortly after his salvation and probably less than ten years after Christ’s death, burial and resurrection, was to the Thessalonians.

The words of Jesus resonated in the ears of the first-generation church as they were consumed about his return to earth. Jesus had repeatedly told his disciples in John 7:33; 12:35; 13:33; 16:18; 16:16-19, “In a little while you will see me no longer; again, after a little while, you will see me.” A first-century author (possibly Paul) stated in Hebrews 10:37, “For just a little longer, he who is coming will arrive and not delay.” The early church understood that Jesus would return with his holy angels to judge and defeat his enemies and they would be transformed to be glorified like him.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 Paul wrote about the Day of the Lord’s return. He said,

“Now on the topic of times and seasons, brothers and sisters, you have no need for anything to be written to you. For you know quite well that the day of the Lord will come in the same way as a thief in the night. Now when they are saying, ‘There is peace and security’ then sudden destruction comes on them, like labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will surely not escape, But **you, brothers, and sisters, are not in the darkness that a thief would overtake you.** For you all are **sons of the lights and sons of the day.**”

We are not of the night nor of the darkness. So then we must not sleep as the rest, but must stay alert and sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night. But since we are of the day, we must stay sober by putting on the breastplate of faith and love and as a helmet our hope for salvation. For God did not destine us for wrath—but for gaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that whether we are alert or asleep, we will come to life together with him. Therefore, encourage one another and build up each other as you are in fact doing.”

I have highlighted this text to show what Paul said as it relates to their understanding of spiritual light and darkness and applied to day and night. He first makes the analogy that thieves do their work at night, that people sleep at night and people who drink become inebriated at night. But then he said, “You are not in darkness. You are sons of the light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of the darkness.”

Paul also said in Ephesians 5:8. “For you were at one time darkness, but now you are light in the world. Walk as children or sons of light.” His reference to being “children of light” came from Jesus’ statement in John 8:12, “I am the light of the world. The one who follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Matthew referred to Jesus when he quoted Isaiah 9:1-2, “The people who sit in darkness have seen a great light, and light has shined upon the darkness.” (Matthew 4:16; Luke 1:79). John also applied light and darkness to our deeds. He wrote in 1 John 2:7-8, 11,

“Dear friends, I am not writing a new commandment to you but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning.” (He was referring to “Love God and love one another.”)

On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

The one who says he is in the light but still hates his fellow Christian is still in the darkness. The one who loves his fellow Christian resides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him....

The one who hates his fellow Christian is in the darkness, walks in the darkness and does not know where he is going because darkness has blinded his eyes.”

John's references to light and love are a kingdom focus. God's spiritual kingdom is one of love and light. People who love are in the light but if we hate our brother, then we are still in darkness.

If God is love and He didn't create darkness, where did it come from? There are a few verses in Scriptures that provide clues of its origin and realm. Both Jesus in Luke 22:53 and Paul in Colossians 1:13 inform us that darkness is an authority or a spirit. It is a "spiritual throne" that rules over governments, organizations, religions or any institution. Paul said, "He (Jesus) delivered us from the authority of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son he loves."

Paul explained in 1 Corinthians 4:20 that the kingdom of God is demonstrated with power (*dunamis*) and it was probable that these two kingdoms or powers (kingdom of light and kingdom of darkness) will fiercely battle each other resulting in cataclysmic events as this present world comes to a conclusion.

Paul also identified these world rulers of darkness in Ephesians 6:12 as one of the enemies we battle. The Greek phrase *kosmocrators of skotus* or rulers of the darkness of this world implies that the world is the place where darkness lives. That is why John said in 1 John 2:15-16,

"Neither love the world, nor the things that are in it for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life, are not of the Father but of the world."

John tells us that in God, there is no darkness and the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and pride of life are not from Father but of the world. At the same time, John 1:10 says, "He (Jesus) was in the world, and world was created by him, but the world did not recognize him." The Greek word for world is "cosmos" and because there are so many usages of the word cosmos with seemingly different meanings the definition of cosmos has been redefined by theologians.

For example, John 3:16 states, "For God so love the world that He gave His only son that whoever believes should not perish

but have everlasting life.” As stated above, this same author wrote, “Don’t love the world because the things in the world didn’t come from the Father.” John 1:10 uses the word “cosmos” three times. “He (Jesus) was in the world, and the world was created by him, but the world did not recognize him.”

James Strong provides an elongated definition of the word “cosmos” by offering eight different definitions of the word.¹¹⁴ They include:

- Harmonious arrangement or constitution or system
- Ornament, decoration, adornment
- The Universe
- The globe or circle of the earth
- Inhabitants of the earth
- Ungodly mass of men
- Aggregate of things earthly, earthly goods endowments, riches etc.
- Aggregate of general collection of any sort (world of curses)

And while all of these seem to have definitions derived from Scriptural text, we should consider if the word cosmos (world) simply means an orderly arrangement or system created by God but polluted by the enemy. That would certainly explain John 1:10, which seemingly has three definitions for world. ““He was **in the world**, and **the world was created by him**, but **the world did not recognize him**.”

Jesus was in the cosmos, meaning he stepped into the physical realm that he created but because it was polluted, that which he created (spirit) didn’t recognize him because the light had become influenced by darkness. Although Jesus created a kingdom of light for Adam and Eve to fill the earth, their mission was thwarted because they listened to the voice of Satan instead of Jesus, who is the voice of God.

When praying to his Father, Jesus said, “I have given them your word and the world has hated them, because they do not belong to the

¹¹⁴ James Strong, “World or Kosmos” *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance* (Nashville, TN: Crusade Bible Publishers. INC. p. 1189 and Retrieved 7 July 2018, from [Biblehub.com](http://biblehub.com/greek/2889.htm) <http://biblehub.com/greek/2889.htm>. 2018.

world, just as I do not belong to the world. Just as you sent me into the world, so I send them into the world.” Earlier, he told his followers in John 15:19,

“If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. But the world hates you because I chose you out of the world.”

Paul explained to the Philippian church how people of the light should behave. In Philippians 2:14-16 he wrote,

“Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so you may be blameless and pure children of God without blemish, though you live in a crooked and perverse society, in which you **shine as lights in the world**, by holding on to the word of life so that on the day of Christ, I will rejoice that I did not run or labor in vain.”

Jesus doesn't belong to the world that he created. He created it with light and it turned into darkness. That is why he told his disciples in John 9:5, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” He also said, “Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father, which is in heaven.”

The struggle between light and darkness; good and evil is a struggle between two systems: the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world. It is a power struggle between Jesus, who is king of God's kingdom and the prince of the power of the air and rulers of the darkness of this world.

Darkness did not come from God, the Father. Jesus said there is no darkness in Him. Darkness came as a result of a rebellion that occurred in the heavenlies or the spiritual realm. It is not known when the rebellion occurred, but we assume it occurred before the creation of the world that was revealed in Genesis 1. This assumption is based upon the following:

- Darkness was on the face of the deep (Genesis 1:2) before God spoke Light or life into existence in Genesis 1:3.
- In Genesis 1:4, God saw that light was good, so He separated the light from darkness.
- He used the light to create the universe and the Garden of Eden but Satan (ruler of darkness) showed up to deceive Eve.

There are other Scriptures that suggest the power struggle started in heaven but came to earth.

- Revelation 12:7 – War broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels

fought but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.

- Jesus in Luke 10:18 that he saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven or (God's spiritual domain)
- Isaiah 14:12 – How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning. How you are cut down to the ground. You weakened the nations. For you said in your heart, “I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of the God I will also sit on the mount of the congregation, on the farthest sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the Most High. Yet you will be brought down to the depths of the pits.
- Ezekiel 28:12-17 explains that Satan was on God's holy mountain, perfect in all his ways until iniquity was found in him. He heart was lifted up and God cast him to the ground.

There is no place in God's kingdom for traitors; therefore, Satan or the Devil was cast out of heaven. He showed up in the Garden of Eden and caused Adam and Eve to fall, which brought darkness upon the earth. According to Acts 26:18, Satan's power rules over darkness but through Jesus, the peoples' eyes are opened, so they turned from darkness to light. This is the gospel message that Jesus preached, “God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.”

Darkness came into existence when Satan or the Devil sought authority in God's kingdom, which wasn't assigned to them. As a result, he established the kingdom of darkness, which is the world's system in which we live. These two kingdoms and their adherents will battle until Jesus returns. Paul said that those who walk in darkness are children of disobedience and in Colossians 3:6 he declared that the wrath of God would come to them. He also said in Ephesians 5:6, “Let nobody deceive you with empty words, for because of these things God wrath comes on the sons of disobedience.” In Ephesians 2:2, Paul noted that prior to Christ, we formerly lived according to this world's present path, blindly following the ruler of the kingdom of the air. He said that this dark ruler of spirits is now energizing the sons of disobedience.

Jesus made it quite clear the differences between light and darkness; between the sons of God and the sons of darkness. In John 8:44, he told the Jews who were trying to kill him that they were sons of their father, the devil, and do the things that he wants them to do. Jesus said,

“He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”

Jesus associated darkness with the evil things that we do, which come from the devil, the ruler of the darkness of this world. It must be understood that these spiritual kingdoms are managed by authority, whether they are the sons of God or sons of the Devil. Our thoughts, words, emotions and behavior will be influenced by one of these two authorities. As children of light, we must allow the Spirit of God rule our lives, our thoughts, our words, our emotions and our behavior. Although the monarchs of the kingdom of Light and kingdom of Darkness have superior powers, they delegate spirits to influence our lives.

Delegated Authority

Authority is a spiritual substance that must be considered when discussing the kingdom of God. This concept of spiritual substances, like authority, is not new. There are other spiritual substances mentioned in the Bible but seldom do theologians discuss them because of their lack of understanding of the spiritual realm.

Hebrews 11:1 defines faith as a spiritual substance. Faith is certainly not a physical substance because it cannot be seen with the physical senses. In fact, Paul confirmed that faith could not be physically seen. He said, “We walk by faith and not by sight.” Since there are only two kinds of substances (which we are aware) physical and spiritual, it is logical to conclude that faith is a spiritual substance.

Another spiritual substance that cannot be seen with physical sight is “glory.” Even though glory is a spiritual substance and cannot be seen physically, there were times in history when God revealed His glory to different people. He showed His glory to Moses on Mount Horeb; He showed His glory to Isaiah in the Temple; He showed His glory to Paul on the Damascus Road; He showed His glory to Stephen when he was about to be executed.

During these revelations or visions, other people were present who could not see God’s glory or hear what He said, but the person to whom God chose to reveal glory was able to see it. Human transcendence occurs when God temporarily removes the veil that separates the spiritual and physical realms; thereby allowing humans to have an interactive spiritual experience. Transcendence is interactive and occurs at God’s behest. He

also assigns angelic servants to cross over from the spiritual to the physical realm. That is why Hebrews 13:2 suggests that humans be hospitable, because they might be entertaining angels without knowing it.

We not only have the capacity to see the glory of God, there have been occasions when the glory of humans has been revealed. On Patmos Island, John saw the glory of Jesus and on the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter, James and John had the same experience. One should not assume that glory is exclusively reserved for God. I must point out that the glories of Moses and Elijah were seen with Jesus in the vision. To this end, we assume that man also has glory, which is visible in the spiritual realm. Glory can be described as the spiritual light that surrounds and exists inside each person who God creates. Technically, the glory of a person is the light of their spirit form, so when people in Scriptures who saw glory were seeing the person's spirit substance.

Because glory is a spiritual substance, it can only be seen when God removes the veil between the spiritual and physical. Paul confirmed man's glorious covering in a letter to the people of Corinth. In I Corinthians 11:7, he wrote that man is the image and glory of God while woman is the glory of man. In I Corinthians 15:40, Paul explained that heavenly and earthly bodies all have glory and verse 43 explains that glory will be visible to all when the dead are resurrected.

Theologically, this occurrence is called glorification. At that time, Jesus will return to earth in glory and mankind will have the capacity to see it. Humans will view their glorious covering that is presently invisible and all of God's creatures will experience the visibility of glory that once prevailed visibly in the Garden of Eden. The notion of spiritual death was not actually the death of one's spirit. It was the inability of mankind to experience the spiritual realm in the same way that they experience the physical realm. Adam and Eve experienced spiritual death when they disobeyed God and their spiritual senses ceased to operate in the same way that their physical senses operated.

Glory is a spiritual substance that cannot be seen through man's physical senses. But man has the capacity to see spiritual substances when God pulls back the veil to disclose such. It is important to understand that God created man to be a spirit creature. If we are spiritual creatures then there is a future potential that we can be seen as spirit creatures. When this occurs, we will be able to experience the kingdom of God in its fullest sense. Glory is the virtuous spirit of God's kingdom that existed prior to

the creation of earth. When God created Adam and Eve, he made them spirit soul and body. The body is physical while the spirit and soul are a different substance. In their original state, the spirit of a person was formed to cover the outside and inside of the human body. Today, it is invisible to the naked eye. In the garden, it seems that Adam and Eve had the ability to experience or see their spiritual covering.

It is assumed that since faith and glory are spiritual substances, which can only be seen with spiritual eyes, that authority also is a spiritual substance that God uses to maintain order and organization of His creatures and his kingdom. Authority is a spirit substance closely connected to the government of God and is recognizable in the realm of the spirit. A discussion of spirit beings and angels will ensue later in this chapter; but the present mention of a hierarchy of angels is insinuated through Scriptures with the mention of archangels. The concept of archangels and hierarchy indicates rank and order, which requires a spiritual substance called authority.

According to the Bible, all authority belongs to God. Authority is a spiritual substance that extends from God's throne as He delegates it to whomever He chooses. Because authority is a spiritual substance it is somewhat like wind or spirit. Man cannot see wind, but he accepts its existence because he sees evidence of its presence. For example, leaves moving in the trees is a manifestation of the wind. Likewise, tornados and hurricanes show devastating effects of wind but the wind itself cannot be seen. In the same manner, authority is manifested in the physical realm through rank and file positions and operates through certain powers that one manifests.

Authority exists wherever institutions are established. In fact, all organizations exhibit authority. This spiritual substance is present and foundational in marriages, families, schools, corporations, governments and churches. It also exists in heavenly realms among angels, thrones, powers, principalities and other spirit orders. Where organization and order exist, authority also exists, and all authority is delegated by God.

The kingdom of God is not a physical institution; it is a spiritual government that vests ultimate authority in the King. That is why Jesus said in John 5:28, "And He (the Father) has granted the Son authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man." Jesus also said in Matthew 28:18, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me."

When the Father delegated authority to the son, a mutual submission of that authority was required. Paul wrote in I Corinthians 15:24 that when the end comes, Jesus will submit the kingdom to God back to the Father. Verse 28 records, then the son himself will be subjected to the One who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all.

The term authority is closely linked to authorization. When one has authority, he is authorized to make decisions and determine choices. The delegation of authority is the issuance of will or volition. All soulical spirits have been given authority over self and are authorized to make decisions at will. However, making wrong choices leads to adversity.

The Creation and the Works of God

Genesis 1 and John 1 are parallel chapters that evidence the creation story. Both chapters begin with the phrase, “In the beginning” suggesting that the reader understand the time element of discussion. John 1:1-14 vividly explains that the nature and person of Jesus Christ existed prior to creation. John forcefully announced that Jesus existed with God, as God, for God, in God and through God. Jesus was life; he was light; he gives light to everyone coming into the world and he radiated light as glory for his disciples to see. Chip Dean suggests that Genesis 1 conceals the mystery revelation of Jesus while John 1 reveals the mystery that the Old Testament is a revelation of Jesus Christ.¹¹⁵

It is without debate that Hebrews 1:1-3 joined the discussion to declare that Jesus is the Word of God; he was chosen by God to be heir of all things; he created and sustains of all things, he is the radiance of God’s glory; he represents His divine essence; he cleansed the sins of humanity; he presently is mediator of Majesty. This same Jesus created the heavens and earth in Genesis 1.

The creation of the universe was manifested in six days. God is the intelligent designer of all creation and he in a logical and systematic order, He created all things that currently exist. This order reveals the thought, purpose and intent of creation. The following chart outlines the days of creation and what was accomplished on each given day:

¹¹⁵ Chip Dean, “God’s Great Mystery Revealed” Lifeway.com, Posted 01 January 2014, Retrieved 31 August 2018, <https://www.lifeway.com/en/articles/sermon-god-great-mystery-revealed-jesus-genesis-john-2018>.

Day of Creation	What was Accomplished
Day 1	Light was created, which included all elements of spiritual & physical life.
Day 2	God created space
Day 3	The globe was formed with dry land and plant life
Day 4	Time was established with creation of celestial beings
Day 5	Cold blooded animals were created
Day 6	Warm blooded animals were created to include man who was made in God's image
Day 7	God blessed and sanctified the seventh day; He rested!

On the first day of creation the words “Let there be light” were spoken and every primary element necessary to produce spiritual or physical life was created. Although time was not created until later, these elements differentiated day and night; light and darkness; good and bad. Short day theorist Dennis Lindsay¹¹⁶ and Long day theorist Reuben Katter¹¹⁷ differ in their opinions of how long each day occurred. It seems logical that time began on Day Four because prior to that, there was no way to determine time. so God did not create twenty-four-hour days until the fourth day of creation, therefore it is likely that the first three days were longer than the last four days. But one must not forget the possibilities that exist with God, which allows Him to make every day the same even though time did not exist. Since neither theory can be proven, essentially, faith is required for accepting either the short or long -day period.

On the first day, God created every element necessary for both spiritual and physical substances. On the second day God focused on the

¹¹⁶ Dennis Lindsay, *The Origins Controversy: Creation by Design or Chance* (Dallas: Christ For The Nations, 1991), p. 28-56.

¹¹⁷ Reuben Katter, *The History of Creation and the Origin of the Species* (Minneapolis, MN: Theotes Logos Research, Inc., 1967) p. 109-140.

spiritual realm by creating space, angels and spirit beings or commonly labeled “spirits.” On the third day He created the globe and plant life. It is likely that this was closely followed by the fourth day where the sun, moon, and stars and their celestial orbits began to initiate seed time and harvest. On the fifth day, God created blood for cold blooded creatures like fish and fowl. Day six was reserved for warm blooded creatures and finally man, who was created in God’s image.

Spirit Beings

The phrase “In the beginning God created the heavens and earth,” does not assert that God had a beginning. Instead, it maintains that God existed prior to the beginning of creation. The term heavens and earth are likely to mean spiritual elements and physical elements since neither existed prior to God’s creation. Jesus said in John 4 that God is spirit, so we must understand that spiritual substances were created from His substance; hence, both angels and humans are spirits. According to Hebrews 12:9, both were created by the Father of spirits.

James Dolezal explained the Doctrine of Divine Simplicity (DDS) as a God without parts. He cited the writings of Anselm, Augustine, Boethius and Thomas Aquinas maintaining that God is the first efficient cause and is undivided, uncreated and un-composed.¹¹⁸ Citing Thomas Aquinas, he contends that human souls and angels are the very least composed of existence and essence and came from God who is absolutely necessary and self-sufficient. Dolezal’s summary of God as he relates to his creation is simply that God is identical with all that is in Him and is entirely devoid of all passive potency, meaning God is not composed of parts or it would devoid him of His absoluteness.¹¹⁹

Although angelology is a common discussion and doctrine in systematic theology, Carolyn Baker suggests that it is difficult to understand angels from Scriptures because they are not the primary focus.

¹¹⁸ James E. Dolezal, *God Without Parts, Divine Simplicity and the Metaphysics of God’s Absoluteness* (Eugene, OR: PICKWICK Publications, 2011), p.1-10.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

She noted that all angelic contexts focused on God or Christ and not the angels themselves.¹²⁰ But even though the focus is not upon the angels, one can understand their nature, identity and existence by the context of Scripture. For example, Paul said in I Corinthians 4:9 that angels are able to view the activities of people. Hebrews 12:1 suggests that the men and women who died in faith are really martyrs who surround mankind in the stadium of life as they run toward the finish line.

These two verses indicate that the spirit world exists interactively with the physical world in perhaps the same way that the spirit and soul of man interactively are connected as part of the anatomy of man. Angels are invisible spirits, at least invisible to the physical world; however, there are times when angels are visible. Hebrews 13:2 warns us to be hospitable because some people have unknowingly entertained angels. C. Fred Dickerson suggested that angels have personality, spiritual properties and superhuman powers.¹²¹ Mortimer Adler described angels as minds without bodies.¹²²

The *Book of Enoch* was an account written by Enoch, the seventh from Adam, who claimed in I Enoch 18:3-71:13 that he saw angels as fiery columns descending downward from heaven going beneath the earth into the abyss.¹²³ At the same time, Enoch was concealed from the physical realm as he toured the spiritual realm escorted by archangels. The concept of concealing was the process of moving from the physical realm by moving into the spiritual realm to interact with angels.¹²⁴ It was also the state of being a spirit being and not physically visible to humanity.¹²⁵ Jesus

¹²⁰ Horton, p. 179.

¹²¹ C. Fred Dickason, *Angels: Elect & Evil* (Chicago: Moody Publishers. 1975), p. 27-48.

¹²² Mortimer J. Adler, *The Angels and Us* (New York: Collier Books, MacMillan Publishing Company, 1982), p. 3-9.

¹²³ Laurence, p. 25.

¹²⁴ Randy Delp, *The Living Enoch, Chapter by Chapter* (Cedar Hill, TX: Lifeworld Publishing, 2018), p. 22.

¹²⁵ Laurence, p. 21-22.

is also called the Elect and Concealed One who existed in God's presence before the world was created and forever.¹²⁶

The fact that archangels exist suggests a hierarchy of angelic beings. Dionysius the Areopagite who lived around 500 A.D. and Irenaeus who lived between 95 through 130 AD both constructed an angelic hierarchy. Dionysius pictured angels as "images of God, a manifestation of the unmanifested light, a pure mirror unflawed, undefiled and unstained."¹²⁷

Paul named these spirits in his letters to Ephesians, Colossae and Rome. Appendix C provides a listing of angelic or spirit beings that Paul mentioned in his writings. Appendices D follows with a hierarchy of the angelic world and Appendix E discloses the hierarchy of demonic world. Most theologians agree that angels were created prior to the creation of the world and mankind; however, it is debatable the length of time that angels and demons existed prior to the creation of earth and humanity.

Creation of the Spiritual and Physical

Presently, humans do not have the capacity to engage the spiritual realm because we do not have access to our spiritual senses. As noted before, the angelic and demonic world exist in the spirit realm, but man is currently stuck in the physical realm without access to his inactive spiritual senses. It is apparent that at one time Adam and Eve had spiritual senses comparable to their physical senses, which will be discussed later in this chapter. But before discussing the literal spiritual existence of humanity it is important to understand the spiritual environment where they lived. A description of the Garden of Eden revealed a place where both spiritual and physical realities were experienced. It was a place where man and God conversed, and it was also a place where people could talk to animals.

Creation of the Universe

Systematic theology generally begins with a biblical analysis or proof of God's existence before proceeding on to a discussion about man, salvation, the church and eschatology. Rarely do theologians expound on

¹²⁶ Ibid. p. 53.

¹²⁷ Horton, p. 183.

the actual creation of the universe and the ordered and organized processes that occurred over the seven-day period. Bible experts tend to focus on the specific time frame of the Hebrew word “yom,” meaning day, and they debate whether or not the creation actualized over a long period of time or a short seven-day week consisting of seven twenty-four-hour days.

Long day theorists base their beliefs on scientific reasoning¹²⁸ while short day theorists proclaim a twenty-four-hour period day asserting the supernatural power of God.¹²⁹ While it may be important to come to a conclusion on the time period of each day of creation, it is more important to understand what God created, when He created it, and why.

The Scriptures reveal an orderly creation of the universe. Thiessen asserts an *ex nihilo* creation, meaning God created something out of nothing.¹³⁰ He explained the concept of the Hebrew word “*bara*,” which means “to create.” The word was used in verse one, “God created (*bara*) the heavens and earth.” But during the days of creation, the Hebrew “*asab*” was used to indicate he created from things already made. He made firmament, water, dry ground and animals from something already created.

Distinguishing the two words suggests that God created every element and substance necessary for creation on the first day. This propels that notion that creating dirt has a different level of creation than creating man from dirt and substances already available. I take little notice of the two words other than to suggest it was the process that God used to create. It seems logical to think if God can create something out of nothing once, then he can do it again. In other words, God didn’t have to create all of the elements first and then from the elements make everything else. God is God. He could have spoken everything into existence with immediate results. He could have created everything instantaneously. God is God. With Him, all things are possible. I only agree with other theologians that

¹²⁸ Katter, p. 109-140

¹²⁹ Lindsay, p. 28-56.

¹³⁰ Thiessen, p. 162.

bara and *asab* are important because it was the process God seemed to use. God creates according to His decrees; He creates however He chooses.

The work of creation appears to have been with intention and purpose. Just prior to God resting, He created man in His own image, after His own likeness. Creation itself was preparatory for man's existence. On the first day, He created life or light, so man could be alive. On the second day, He created air and space, so man could breathe. On day three, He created a physical globe to provide food for man. On day four, He created time, for seedtime and harvest. On day five, He created blood, which would eventually flow through man's veins. And finally, on day six, he created warm blood animals just prior to creating man. This orderly structure not only implicates an orderly God but an orderly man, who was made in His image.

Creation of Man and Garden of Eden

All of God's physical creation was prepared for man but man was prepared for the Garden of Eden. The Bible describes the garden as situated east of Eden. It was an orchard like paradise where God met with Adam in the cool of the day. It could be compared to a Temple, which is the place where man communes with God. A question exists among students of the Bible whether or not the Garden of Eden was literal or symbolic. Joshua Tilghman, who does not agree in a literal interpretation of the Bible, maintains the Garden of Eden was a symbolic place and considers the two trees as metaphors to suggest a spiritual evolution. He stated, "The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil represents man's evolving moral nature that exists through experience."¹³¹ Those who do not accept a literal interpretation of Scripture eventually will embrace all of its contents as symbolic. Tilghman even believes the genealogies are symbolic.¹³²

¹³¹ Joshua Tilghman, "What Does the Garden of Eden Represent?" Spiritofthescipture.com, Posted 8 January 8, 2014, Retrieved 2 June 2016, <http://www.spiritofthescipture.com/id2347-what-does-the-garden-of-eden-represent.html> 2014.

¹³² Ibid.

Those who maintain a literal interpretation must satisfy the question about the two main trees mentioned in Genesis and how they are represented. People tend to lean toward a metaphoric understanding instead of a literal interpretation of Scriptures because they find it difficult to embrace things they can't explain. In other words, it doesn't make sense (physical perception) that these two trees were literal because no one has ever seen a Tree of Life or a Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Our logical course is to declare them as metaphoric trees.

I disagree with Tilghman! Just because we can't see, hear, smell, taste and touch things does not mean they are not literal. For example, God is not experienced physically, does that mean we must demean Him to a metaphoric gesture? Certainly not! We believe God exists because we believe we exist. We believe in physical fruit because we see, touch, taste and smell it. Why can't we also believe that the Tree of Life was real? The fruit produced by the Tree of Life is called "eternal life (*zoe*)." Paul called life or *zoe* a spirit and a law. In Romans 8:2 he wrote, "For the law of the spirit of life (*zoe*) in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death," intimating that life or *zoe* is a spirit and a law in God's kingdom. To that end, the Tree of Life produced literal spirits; thus, it was both literal and spiritual in the same way that God is both literal and spiritual.

The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was another spiritual tree that grew in the Garden. To better clarify its substance, I call it the Tree of Morality. Morals are about right and wrong or good and evil. The Tree of Morality was about making choices. God's requirement that Adam and Eve refrain from eating or touching the second tree expressed His intention that morality was to be determined by God and not man. When man decides what is right or wrong, it will inevitably lead to destruction. God wants mankind to be moral, but He does not want man to decide what is moral or immoral. Such decisions lead to moral relativism, which leads a society into immorality, and eventually death.

The belief in a literal Garden of Eden requires one to also believe it was a spiritual place. Therefore, it was literal and spiritual. Adam and Eve experienced the spirit realm while simultaneously experiencing the physical realm. Genesis 2 explained how both the physical and spiritual environments were interchangeable. Verse 9 described two kinds of trees.

Physical trees grew out of the ground to feed the human body. But in the middle of the Garden Moses identified two spiritual trees.

Speaking with animals seemed to be a common occurrence to the first couple. Eve conversed with a serpent, which seems illogical but so does the conversation between Balaam and his donkey. Analysing this story will help us understand how humans communicated with animals in the garden.

The non-verbal dialogue started in verse 23 when his donkey saw an angelic being carrying a sword with the intent to kill Balaam. The donkey was aware of the danger and tried to protect Balaam, so she veered off course and went into an opened field. When Balaam started beating his beast with his staff, she got back on the road. This time, the angel stood in a path among the vineyards but there was a wall on each side of the vines. To protect her rider, the donkey avoided the angel but pressed to close to the wall, crushing Balaam's foot. So, Balaam beat his donkey a second time.

Continuing on their journey, they came to a very narrow place in where the donkey could not turn left or right without falling off a cliff, so the donkey laid down rather than go forward and risk the angel killing her master. The third time, Balaam angrily beat his donkey with his staff. That is when the animal talked.

It seems logical to consider the story was allegorical except for several factors. First, Moses said, "The LORD opened the mouth of the donkey and she said to Balaam." Second, allegories generally are not concerned about specifics, yet Moses identified the animal as a female. Third, Peter authenticated the story in 2 Peter 2:16 documenting that the female donkey spoke with a man's voice. Fourth, one could consider that the story was allegorical because of the conversation and logic used by the donkey. She informed Balaam that he had beat her three times without cause. She confirmed that her actions were a means of protection without intent of causing Balaam pain or problem. The donkey reasoned by arguing her lifelong devotion and had never done this before. But the same argument could be used to explain the veracity of story having such specific details. Fifth, Moses said, "Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam and he saw the angel with drawn sword. Sixth, Moses and the angel

also had a conversation. Seventh, the men with Balaam did not have the same experience. The LORD didn't open their eyes. They didn't see the vision.

Notice the animal's behaviour was unusual. She responded in the physical realm what she saw in the spiritual realm. In Numbers 22:23, Moses explained that she saw the angel (probably a vision) while Balaam and his servants did not see it. In verse 28, after being beaten three times by his master without cause, the LORD opened her mouth, so she could speak. In verse 31 the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, so he could see the angel. In each of these verses, there was a supernatural occurrence of Balaam and his donkey having their eyes and mouths opened.

The details of this story corresponds with other stories that describe people's eyes being opened to see a spiritual dimension that cannot be ordinarily and naturally seen. Whether or not it was a vision or supernatural transcendent experience (epiphany) wasn't indicated but the actualization of the spiritual realm leads one to consider that God and angels are both spiritual and literal. In Acts 7:56, Stephen said he saw the heavens opened and he actually gazed upon the glory of God and saw Jesus standing next to him. Through a vision, he transcended the physical realm and looked into a spiritual dimension that no one else around him could see it.

Other examples of people looking into a spiritual dimension also support the physical/spiritual dimensions of the Garden. For example, the Mount of Transfiguration experience where Peter, James and John saw and heard Jesus, Moses and Elijah conversing was described as a vision. Prior to the conversation, the three disciples watched Jesus being transfigured before them. After, the Moses/Elijah conversation, they also heard an audible voice from the Father with specific instructions to listen to Jesus.

In Isaiah 6:1, Isaiah saw and dialogued with the LORD in the temple. The message God gave to him was rehearsed in Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, and Romans. It was quoted by New Testament authors more than any other Old Testament text. The spiritual dimension is real, authentic and literal; however, it is non-experiential in our physical reality unless, our spiritual senses are opened to experience it. Another Old

Testament story in 2 Kings 6:17, revealed how the eyes of Elisha's servant were opened and he saw the hill full of horses and chariots around his master. He could not see the spiritual dimension, until his spiritual eyes were opened.

In the New Testament, after Jesus was resurrected, Cleopas and his wife were returning home from the weekend activities in Jerusalem when Jesus started walking next to them. During this time, he seemed to freely transcend the spiritual and physical dimensions. In this story, he appeared to this couple in a form they didn't recognize. They were very hospitable and invited their new friend to spend the night. As they sat around the evening table, preparing to eat supper, Jesus took the bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them. Instantly, their eyes were opened; they recognized them, and he vanished from their sight. It is not clear whether their experience was a vision or whether Jesus transcendentally appeared and disappeared from their midst, but their reality was certainly spiritual in nature.

These examples explain how the physical and spiritual realms existed in the Garden of Eden prior to Adam and Eve's sin. There was a coexistence of the spiritual and physical. The physical aspect was described several ways. The garden was watered from rivers that was sourced in Eden. There were precious metals such as gold, bdellium and onyx stone located there, which indicate physicality. On the other hand, Revelation 22:1-5 describes the same location to be where the tree of life exists. In this paradise, John described a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal that proceeded from the God's throne. John noted the tree of life produced continually and was for the healing of the nations.

Believing the stories in the Bible allows us to consider both physical and spiritual realms as literal. Both dimensions coexisted in the Garden of Eden in such a way that Adam and Eve experienced and interacted in both simultaneously. This required them to have physical senses to experience the physical reality and spiritual senses to experience the spiritual dimension. Their participation in the spirit realm allowed them to interact with angels, God, and other spirit creatures. They also had the ability to communicate with animals in the spirit realm. Such was the

experience when Eve talked to the serpent. When she sinned, the ability to experience the spiritual realm was removed. The dimension still existed but she could not experience it. Good news came from Jesus and he explained a future resurrected experience when we will be like angels. We will again experience the physical and spiritual dimensions simultaneously.

In the Image of God

According to Genesis 1:26-28, “Adam was made in God’s image, after His likeness to govern and rule the earth.” To that end, he was considered the highest governmental agent on earth subjected to the governmental authority of Jesus who was appointed the king of God’s kingdom. But what does “being created in the image of God” actually mean?

There are three likely answers. Charles Hodge maintains that man’s image was like the mental, moral and social likeness of God.¹³³ J.I. Packer contends that the word image means a reflection so that man was designed to reflect God’s glory image. He stated, “Being the image of God means actually living moment by moment and day by day to reflect the nature of love and goodwill toward other people.”¹³⁴

We should consider a third theory that pertains to the theory of coexistence as it relates to the spiritual and physical images of man. We are spirit creatures that manifest physically. If God made us in His own image, then He made us to be spiritual creatures; yet, we can only see or cognitively experience the physical. The premise that man was created in God’s image is based upon the Trinitarian concept of God. While it is true that God is One and indivisible, it is also true that the Trinitarian God is spirit and Jesus was made to exist as physical person from the spiritual word of God. Therefore, Jesus is the physical manifestation of God’s word.

¹³³ Thiessen, p. 219-222.

¹³⁴ J.I. Packer, “Reflected Glory” *Christianitytoday.com*, Posted 1 December 2003, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2003/december/20.56.html> Retrieved 4 December 2016, 2003.

By faith, Mary, received God's word and the Holy Spirit caused a miraculous conception. Nine months later, the word of God became flesh. John 1:14 records, "The Word became flesh to live as a man." Referencing Jesus in Colossians 1:15, Paul stated, "He is the (physical) image of the invisible God, firstborn over all creation. In other words, Jesus is both physical (man) and spiritual (God.) The following verse 16 states that Jesus created everything that was visible and invisible; all the heavens and earth; the spiritual and the physical.

To summarize the creation story, Jesus created Light on Day One, the atmosphere on Day Two, the physical things like the globe and plant life on Day Three. On Day Four, he created time, On Day Five, he created blood and cold-water animals. And on Day Six, he created all warm blooded animals. After everything else was created, Jesus made man in His own image and after his own likeness. He created man to be both a spiritual and physical being. He created man to look like himself, when he would walk the earth 4000 years later. Verse 16 states, "All things were created for him (Jesus.)" Verse 19 states, "God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in Jesus."

These two statements indicate that everything was created for Jesus, not Adam. It also states that all the fullness of God dwelled in Jesus. Since Jesus was both physical and spiritual and He made Adam in his own image, reason dictates that Adam and Eve were both spiritual and physical creatures with abilities and senses to interact with both realms simultaneously.

Paul's message in Ephesians 1:3-14 clearly explains man's spiritual nature as an image of glory. He wrote,

"God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing, in the heavenly (spiritual) realm. He chose us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and unblemished in love. He predestined or predetermined to adopt us as his sons in grace and glory that He gave us through Jesus.

He redeemed us through his blood and forgave our sins by his grace and lavished us in all wisdom and insight by revealing the hidden secret that Christ came to reveal. This mystery is that all

spiritual things in heaven (spirit realm) and all things on earth (physical) will be revealed through Jesus.

When we embrace the word of truth (the good news of our salvation through Jesus) then we are marked with a seal of the Holy Spirit which will remain as a down payment of our inheritance until full redemption comes in the end (at glorification.)”

When Jesus returns, then man’s spiritual substance will be revealed. Apostle John stated in I John 3:2, “Dear friends, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that whenever it is revealed we will be like him, because we will see him just as he is.”

Fallen Image

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were spiritual creatures who looked differently than the rest of creation. They had both physical and spiritual images with spiritual and physical senses. They ate fruit of both physical and spiritual trees. All fruit comes from trees so when Paul described in Galatians 5:22 that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, he was suggesting that these come from the spiritual trees in the spirit realm in God’s kingdom.

Not only did Paul say these were spiritual fruit, he stated they were spiritual laws, which could not be superseded by any other law. Scientific laws can be superseded by other laws. For example, the law of gravity can be superseded by the law of buoyancy or the law of centrifugal force. Apparently in God’s kingdom, some laws can supersede others. James 2:8 mentions the Royal Law, which should be interpreted as the primary law of the kingdom. James said this law is demonstrated by loving your neighbor as yourself. The Royal Law of God’s kingdom is love.

Paul lists “love” as the first of the spiritual laws listed in Galatians 5:22-23 and in I Corinthians 13:9-13 he asserts that people can only know a partial aspect of the spiritual realm and summarized the three primary

spiritual laws that exist: faith, hope and love. He confirmed, “The greatest of these is love.”

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, something immediately occurred. Death invaded the Garden. Adam and Eve had an immediate spiritual death and a process of physical death began. Adam died about 930 years later. Physical death is easy to explain because one is able to see the physical decay of the body once the spirit and soul has left it. When physical death occurs, the spirit or breath leaves the body and the blood (soul aspect) ceases to flow. When physical death occurs, man’s physical senses cease to operate.

Spiritual death was not gradual; it was immediate. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, their spiritual senses ceased to operate. They could no longer see or hear the things that occurred in the spirit realm. Chatting with God or the angels was no longer possible. The spiritual substances that were once evident could no longer be seen or described. Man was a fallen image of God’s glory.

The first couple’s glory had disappeared. They found themselves naked, ashamed, and embarrassed, hiding from the presence of God. The fallen image needed redemption. Before the foundation of world, God chose man to be holy and unblemished in love. According to Romans 8:29-30, “God predestined man to be conformed to the image of Jesus. And those he predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified.” Man was a fallen image, no longer reflecting the glory of God. He needed someone to redeem him of his sin. He needed a Savior. He needed Jesus.

The Power of Preservation

From a biblical perspective, it is undetermined whether or not the combined spiritual/physical environment was strictly a Garden in Eden experience or whether this spiritual/physical environment existed throughout the entire globe. It seems likely that it was a global effect based upon two factors. First, the experience of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching the spiritual realm no longer existed after Adam and Eve sinned. The concept that the spiritual/physical environment was reserved

only for the Garden of Eden is unsubstantiated by the fact that Adam and Eve could only see the physical realm after they sinned. The failure to experience their spiritual senses was not an environment issue. It was an issue with man's death that occurred as a result of sin.

The second reason that spiritual death was global and universal is based upon Romans 8:18-23. In this passage, Paul highlighted the expectation of the future, the reason for man's present condition, and the extent of what was affected because of man's sin. Paul wrote, "For I consider that our present sufferings cannot even be compared to the glory that will be revealed to us. For creation eagerly waits for the revelation of the sons of God." These two statements suggest man will again be covered with the glory of God indicating a literal experience of the spirit realm, such as what Adam and Even experienced prior to sin.

Verses 20 and 21 state that man's sin caused him to be subjected to futility, but God created a hope and expectation of being free from the bondage of decay or death so that mankind could again experience glory. It is apparent from Romans 8:22-23 that man's sin caused the whole of creation to suffer because they too are not able to experience a literal spirit realm. Paul said, "All creation groans inwardly as it awaits the adoption and redemption of our bodies."

Paul made it clear in 2 Corinthians 5:2-4 that the present physical world that man experiences will re-unite with a literal spiritual realm that will be experienced. Comparing the physical and spiritual bodies, he wrote,

"For in this earthly house we groan, because we desire to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed, after we have put on our heavenly house, we will not be found naked. For we groan while we are in this tent, since we are weighed down, because we do not want to be unclothed, but clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life."

Jesus taught his disciples that his kingdom had adversaries. According to Revelation 12 and 13, there are three main enemies or adversaries to Christ's kingdom: the demonic system, the political system, and the religious system. Both of the political and religious systems are affected by the demonic system. Jesus made it clear that sickness, disease, immorality and other physical maladies were caused or influenced by the

disrupted kingdom of darkness that opposes God's kingdom of light. It is for this reason that he sent his disciples to heal the sick and tell people that God's kingdom had come to them. He told religious people, "If I cast out demons with the finger of God, then God's kingdom has come to you." The good news is that Jesus has overcome all adversity and has been given all authority of God's kingdom to those in his kingdom. Those who embrace this truth are subjects in his kingdom.

In summary, God established His kingdom prior to the foundation of the world. His kingdom is a spiritual kingdom that rules both the heavens and the earth. Jesus, who is the image of the invisible God, created man in the physical image that he would become; hence, man was made in God's image and after His likeness. The image of God is designed to reflect God's glory and His spiritual kingdom rules inside His subjects.

God chose to govern through His Royal law, the law of love. Since man was made in God's image, he was also made to love and have compassion on others. In order to reflect God's glory, man must show evidence of this love by forgiving others' offences and having compassion to help others in need. Doing so reflects God's glory.

When man embraces the king and adheres to the laws of God's kingdom he is marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit. Those who are marked, will again experience the spirit world in the future in the same manner that Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden prior to their sin. This extraordinary event will occur when King Jesus returns to earth in his glory. At that time, the church will see him as he is for they will be glorified like him.

CHAPTER FIVE

KINGDOM ORDER

The Law is Spiritual

When questioned about his kingdom authority, Jesus told Pilate in John 18:36, “My kingdom is not of this world.” The meaning of his statement is quite clear. Jesus was not a competing kingdom to overthrow the Roman authorities, his kingdom was a spiritual kingdom, but what does that mean? In Romans 7:14, Paul explained the distinction. He wrote, “For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.”

Understanding the entire context of the *Epistle to the Romans* is essential to understanding Chapter 7:14 through Chapter 8:14. But commentary of the text begins in Romans 1:1. In typical form, Paul introduced himself,

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God, which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures concerning His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh and declared to be Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead, through whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among the nations for His name among you also are the called (elect) of Jesus Christ.”

The introduction included his name, function, title and purpose. His purpose was to preach the gospel of God, which Paul explained was a declaration of the humanity and divinity of Jesus Christ. From a human perspective, he declared Jesus to be the Messiah and Lord of David’s earthly kingdom but from a heavenly (spiritual) perspective, Jesus was the

Son of God. His kingdom authority or power was revealed when the Spirit of holiness raised him from the dead.

After introducing himself and his mission, Paul wrote that his epistle was to all who are in Rome, who are called to be saints or the holy ones of God. He greets them with his typical greeting of “Grace and peace from God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ.” Understanding the greeting is critical to understanding Romans 7:14 through 8:14. Paul used this same greeting in all his letters, whether they were written to churches or individuals. These included his messages to the Ephesians, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, Romans, Corinthians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus and Philemon.

It seemed to be a normal greeting among Christians because both Peter and John used the same greeting; albeit, on occasion the greeting was grace, mercy and peace. Oftentimes, the conclusion of the New Testament epistles was a grace blessing of “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you or your spirit. This benedictory blessing is found in the letters to the Romans, Corinthians, Philippians, Thessalonians and to Timothy. John also closed the *Book of Revelation* with the same blessing, “The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.”

Having “early church” mindset regarding words helps us understand why the authors introduced and closed their letters as they did, using grace and peace. When Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world,” he conveyed the concept of a spiritual kingdom or better understood, a kingdom of spirits.

Prior to writing my last book *The Study of Spirits*, I researched the Bible and listed every Scripture where the word “spirit” was used. Paul and the other Jewish authors embraced the Old Testament understanding that humans are spirit creatures who are influenced by good and bad spirits. David said all angels are “spirits” and are sent to us as messengers from God. They understood that grace and peace are both spirits.

Zechariah 12:10 called “grace” a spirit and Hebrews 10:29 explained that grace is an emotional creature that can be insulted. When people continue to sin after Jesus has given them a spirit of grace to stand

against sin, it is insulting to the spirit of grace. Paul also identified “peace” to be a spirit in Romans 8:6 when he wrote, “To be carnal (flesh) minded is death but to be spirit minded is life and peace. Mercy is also a spirit. That is why Jesus said, “Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy.” In other words, if we let mercy work through us, then mercy will always come to us.

The words grace, peace and mercy are not just vocabulary words, they are spirits. When these words are written or spoken, the speaker or writer is actually imparting the spirits of grace and peace. The first century church understood the spirit realm entirely differently than we do. Their paradigm of God’s kingdom simply meant that it was a kingdom of spirits or spiritual kingdom and these spirits were sent to those who would inherit or possess God’s kingdom. They understood the adjective spiritual to mean “about spirits” or “that which is of spirit substance.”

Paul and the New Testament church also understood that humans are spirit creatures. Paul wrote in Romans 1:9, “I serve God with my spirit by sharing the good news about Jesus. Paul even said in Romans 1:11, “For I long to see you that I may impart to you some “spiritual gift” so that you may be established. The term Greek words *charisma pneumatikos* is translated the grace gift of spirits or better understood, the grace endowments that come from spirits.

Paul concluded his introduction in verse 16 by declaring, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God to save everyone who believes: both Jew and Greeks.” He explained that God’s righteousness is revealed from faith to faith.

Following the introduction of the epistle, Paul wrote a discourse about a generation of people who once knew God but failed to give Him thanks. They suppressed the truth, which caused their hearts to become darkened. This resulted in God giving them over to the lusts of their hearts, so they began to serve the creature rather than the Creator. God gave them over to vile passions to the extent that they did not retain the knowledge of God and were filled with every kind of evil.

Paul declared in Chapter Two that they would be judged; however, the goodness of God could draw them to repentance. The Bible identified “goodness” as a spirit, which influenced people to repent but if they resisted the goodness retained hardened hearts, then God’s goodness would leave them to face the wrath of God on the day of judgment.

But to those who received God’s goodness would also receive eternal life. And when they received life, they would seek God’s glory, honor and immortality by being patient and continuing to do good. He contrasted this group of followers with those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth. Paul said they will find themselves suffering the tribulation and anguish because of their evil doings.

After laying out the choices, he declared that the teaching was for both Jews and Gentiles. He further stated that the righteousness of God doesn’t come by the Jewish law but rather through the law of faith in Jesus Christ. It comes to everyone who believes. Paul followed with an explanation about justification. Again, he said it didn’t come through Moses law but justification comes through the law of faith. This means everyone (Jew and Gentile) can obtain salvation through the law of faith simply by believing that Jesus is the Son of God.

Paul argued that Abraham believed God and proved it by circumcising his sons. As a result, he received the promise of the covenant that God made with him. He added that Abraham’s faith occurred prior to Moses’ law; hence, Abraham’s obedience to circumcising his sons was a seal of righteousness that came through faith. Paul further explained that God’s promise about Abraham’s seed would not come through Moses’ law but through the righteousness of faith. Continuing to explain the gospel, Paul wrote “The law of Moses brings forth death but (the law of) grace comes from Jesus Christ.

In Romans Five, Paul concluded that we are justified by a spirit of faith, which is accompanied by a spirit of peace and grace. By faith, we have access to the spirit of grace where we stand rejoicing and hoping for the glory of God. And because of this promise, we are not bothered by tribulations because we know that tribulations produce perseverance, which produces character, which produces hope and hope keeps us

thinking about God's love that is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

At this point, I want to stop and reexamine the words that Paul used by reflecting upon my previous book, *The Study of Spirits*. Before writing the book, I listed all of the spirits mentioned in the Bible and found that Paul's gospel message in Romans 4 and 5, whereby he described our salvation, contained a litany of spirits that come to us from God. They are faith, grace, hope, glory, perseverance, character and love. The only adverse spirit mentioned was "tribulations," which are difficulties and problems that Satan brings our way to prevent us from adhering to the laws of the kingdom. Paul recognized Satan's strategy and said that by overcoming tribulations, we would receive perseverance, character and love.

In the middle of Chapter Five through the middle of Chapter Seven, Paul discussed the laws of sin and death and how faith, grace, righteousness and eternal life are spirits or laws that are given to us through Jesus Christ. Paul used the concept of slavery to help the Romans to understand the spirit realm. He told them in Romans 6:16-23 that they were once slaves to sin (a spirit from the devil) but because Jesus freed them from that slave owner, they now have become free from sin and slaves (servants) of God and the fruit of our service is righteousness and everlasting life. He concluded by saying, "For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

During this whole section thus far, I have provided textual background of Paul's message to the Romans to bring us to the content found from Romans 7:14 through 8:14. Paul began by making the assumption that all the readers apparently knew and understood at the time. That knowledge seems to have dissipated or fallen through the religious cracks of subsequent generations. He wrote, "**For we know that the law is spiritual.**" In other words, the statement "the law is spiritual" was common knowledge during the first century. But to us, it seems to be a ministry because we understand the terms "law" and "spiritual" differently than they did.

First, let's discuss the word "spiritual." What does it actually mean? The Greek word for "spiritual" is *pneumatikos* and although it is translated

spiritual, it actually means “of or about spirits.” It should not be too difficult to understand the definition based upon other words that ends with “al, ual or ial.” For example, beneficial means “of benefits,” financial means “about finances” and physical means “about physics.” Most words ending in “ual” are adjectives to describe someone, something or somewhere. So sexual is about sex; intellectual is about intellect; contractual is about contracts and spiritual is about spirits.

When Paul wrote, “For we know that the law is spiritual he was speaking in terms that the church could understand. He was saying “For we know that the law is about spirits.” When we use the term “spiritual,” we tend to shy away from saying it is about spirits and often define it as something non-physical. And while that may be true, it really doesn’t define *pneumatikos*.

Second, the word “law” has two definitions.¹³⁵ The primary definition is defined as a system of rules that regulates the actions of people. The secondary definition (depending on how it is used) is a statement of fact, deduced from observation to the effect that a particular natural or scientific phenomenon always occurs if certain conditions are met.

All laws are based upon authority. For example, traffic laws in one state may differ from traffic laws in another state. The federal laws are different from state and local laws because there are differing authorities establishing them. The laws of the United States are much different than the laws in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Spiritual laws would follow the second definition in that they are established facts about spirits that are consistent and do not change. Paul introduced the concept that spirits are actually laws and supported his supposition in multiple passages.

Spiritual Laws

Spiritual laws are like any other laws. They are based upon authority. God has established spiritual laws in His kingdom that never

¹³⁵Merriam Webster, “Law” merriam-webster.com online dictionary, Retrieved 8 July 2018, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/law> 2018.

change. Satan is another authority with established laws that never change and the text from Romans 7:14 through 8:14 discuss three different authorities: the authority of God, the authority of the devil and the authority of self. Beginning in verse 21 Paul lists these spiritual laws.

- The **law of God** in our inner being (spirit) makes us want to do good even though evil is present.
- Another law (I will call it slavery or bondage) exists in our flesh.
- This **law of slavery or bondage** battles against the **law of our mind**.
- This law of slavery or bondage makes us captive to the **law of sin** that exists in our members.
- The **law of the spirit of life** in Christ Jesus sets us free from other laws.
- The **law of sin** and **death** must submit to the law of the spirit of life.

In those seven verses (7:21-8:2) there are six laws mentioned with three different authorities as seen below.

Law or Authority	God	Devil	Believer
	Law of God	Law of Slavery or bondage	Law of our Mind
	Law of spirit of life	Law of Sin	
		Law of Death	

After explaining these three authorities, Paul adds another governmental authority in verse 13 and discusses the Law of Moses. He said that this law was instituted for the purpose of finding eternal life and to make the Jewish people righteous. But Paul said, “The Law of Moses only weakened the flesh and could not make us righteous or give us freedom.

Jesus told the Jews in John 5:39, “You study the Scriptures because you think you can find eternal life in them. But actually, those Scriptures were about me.” Paul wrote in Romans 8:3, “When God sent Jesus Christ in the likeness of sinful flesh, He condemned or judged sin so even though

sin is still in our members, the spirit or law of grace is greater. So with the law of our minds we serve God and walk according to the God's spiritual laws." He said, "If you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit, we put to death the deeds of the body, we will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God."

Paul went on to say that with the law of our minds we must choose whether we will yield to the spirits of God or the spirits that come from the Devil. He wrote, "We didn't receive the spirit of bondage that tried to draw us into sin; instead, we received the spirit of adoption where we cry out to our Father because the Holy Spirit will let us know that we are God's children."

When we first discussed the concepts of a kingdom, I said that every kingdom (whether physical or spiritual) has five aspects:

- Every kingdom has a focal point of authority (King)
- Every kingdom has a domain or boundaries over which the king rules
- Every kingdom has servants
- Every kingdom has laws that bring order
- Every kingdom has a succession plan.

Jesus is king of God's kingdom. His spiritual domain reigns over everything he created whether visible or invisible. His servants are those angels, humans and spirits that adhere to his voice. The spiritual laws of his kingdom are given to us by the Holy Spirit to bring order, first to our own personal lives and then those things over which He gives us authority. If God give gives us authority over a family, then the family will have order if we submit to the laws produced by the spirit.

If God gives us authority in the workplace, over businesses, educational institutions or governmental positions, we must submit to the Holy Spirit so God's order can be established in our families, churches, businesses, schools and governments. Since every kingdom has a succession plan, we understand that it is God's good pleasure to give us the kingdom laws that govern it. Paul said in Romans 14:17, "...the kingdom of God is about righteousness peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

Jesus introduced his kingdom teachings in Matthew 5 by announcing the many blessings upon those who seek his kingdom laws. Notice from verses 3 through 9 he mentions some of the spiritual laws that govern his kingdom. They include: humility, sympathy (mourn), meekness, righteousness, mercy, purity and peace. You will notice that I used sympathy instead of “mourn” because mourning as we know it is not what Jesus was referring to.

There are three Hebrew and three corresponding Greek words that are translated mourn and typically these words are used when grieving or lamenting at funerals or when a loved one dies. All three of these Greek words are used in the *Gospel of Matthew*.

- The first word, *κοπτο* pronounced *kop'to*, is found in Matthew 24:30 and means to beat one's breast in grief.
- The second word, *τηρονεο* pronounced *thray-neh'-o*, is found in Matthew 11:17 is a loud wailing and moaning, the type of deep mourning that people display when a child or spouse dies.
- The third word, *πεντηεο* pronounced *pen-neh'-o*, is the word Jesus used in Matthew 5:4 and it has two meanings. It could mean to mourn or to mourn for someone else.

The translators simply used mourn because it could mean to mourn out of personal grief or to mourn for others who are taken advantaged of or persecuted. The best word to translate in this case is “sympathy” because it seems to imply Jesus' meaning. When we sympathize with others, we will mourn or defend their causes. If we sympathize with the needy, poor or disenfranchised, it means we defend the weak. Jesus explained that when we defend the weak, we will be comforted. The word comforted is *parakeletos* and means to walk along side of. It is the same word Jesus used when he told his disciples that he would send the Holy Spirit. When we have sympathy for others and defend the weak, then the Holy Spirit will help us to help them.

These spirits that Jesus mentioned in Matthew 5:4 are spiritual laws of his kingdom and when we activate them in our lives, there is a corresponding blessing. The chart below shows the spirit or spiritual law and the corresponding blessing that comes when it is activated. It is a sowing and reaping effect.

Chart Showing the Operation of Spiritual Laws

Spirit or Law	Result of the activated law
Humility	Blessed by the kingdom of Heaven
Sympathy	Blessed with a Comforter or Holy Spirit to help others
Meekness	Blessed because of the inheritance or possession we will obtain
Righteousness	Blessed with being spiritually satisfied and fulfilled
Mercy	Blessed by receiving mercy from God and others
Purity	Blessed to see things from God's perspective
Peace	Blessed to be a child of God

The blessings do not stop by simply engaging these spiritual laws. Jesus said if we are persecuted for the sake of righteousness we are blessed by the kingdom of Heaven. If others speak evil of us, persecute us and insult us, then we are rewarded in heaven or God's spiritual realm. The kingdom of God is all about how to pursue God and how we respond to others, especially when we are offended or being disadvantaged.

Perhaps the best biblical evidence that spirits are actually laws is found in Galatians 5:22-23. Paul listed nine fruit of the Holy Spirit. Each one is called a spirit in some other biblical texts. The exceptions are kindness and self-control or moderation, however, if all of the others are named spirits, then these two are probably spirits, even if they are not so named in the Bible.¹³⁶

Remember spiritual fruit of the Holy Spirit are actually spirits produced by the Holy Spirit. After listing the spiritual fruit love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness and moderation (self-control) Paul wrote, **“Against such, there is no law.”**

¹³⁶ Delp, Study of Spirits, p. 43.

The Royal Law

Prior to listing these spiritual laws, Paul noted in Galatians 5:14, “The whole law can be summed up in a single commandment, **“You must love your neighbour as yourself.”** When he used the term “whole law,” to what was he referring? Was it the Old Testament Law of Moses found in Leviticus 19:18, “You must not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the children of your people, but you must love your neighbour as yourself?” Or was it the Royal Law that King Jesus instituted in the New Testament.” James 2:8 states, “If you fulfil the Royal Law, found in Scripture, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself, you are doing well?” It appears that Moses and James were referencing the same law of love.

See the chart below describing the correlation between Moses’ law as described as The Royal Law.

If you love	You will
God	Have no other gods before Him
God’s Spirit	Not make physical images to portray God, who is Spirit
God’s Name	Not use it in vain
God’s Promised Rest	Honor and keep holy the Sabbath Day
Parental Authority	Honor your parents (it produces longevity)
Your neighbour	Not murder
Your neighbour	Leave his wife alone
Your neighbour	Not steal from him
Truth and integrity	Not perjury yourself in court
Your neighbour	Do not covet his possessions

This chart unveils how love is the primary motivation of all ten of the commandments. Perhaps that is why Jesus said, “I have not come to destroy the law but fulfil it.” That being said, we do not need to choose whether Paul was referencing the Old Testament Law or the New Testament “Royal Law.” Perhaps Paul was referring to both and not making a distinction between them.

John is the disciple who had the distinction and acclamation of being the apostle of love, but Paul gave us deep insights about love from a “kingdom perspective” because of his focus on “spiritual laws.” The other New Testament writers also emphasised love. James quoted Leviticus 19:18 in his love message to the church, but the title, The Royal Law, referenced Jesus’ kingship. Jesus taught that his Royal Law was what the Old Testament Law fully intended. Paul also explained that our actions of adhering to the Old Testament law was based on this Royal Law of Christ. He noted in Romans 13:9, “For all the commandments about adultery, stealing, coveting and all the others are summed up in the one statement, “Love your neighbour as yourself.”

Paul listed spiritual fruit in Galatians 5:22-23, beginning with love. It is the very nature of God, who is spirit, light and love. Without love, we can’t operate in true faith. In Paul’s discussion in Galatians 5:6 about whether circumcision should be a litmus test of Christianity, he wrote, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith through love.” Paul also said explained that love is the source of all spiritual fruit. In 1 Corinthians 13:4, he asserted, “Love is patient and kind.” Such assertion indicates that patience and kindness flow from the Royal Law of love.

He also said in 2 Corinthians 8 that the kindness and blessings, which came from the churches of Macedonia, should also be in the Churches of Corinth. He added, “I am not requiring it, but I am testing your love to see if you display kindness and generosity.” Again, love is what produces kindness and generosity. Paul noted in Ephesians 4:1-2 that love was the essence of God’s nature that produced humility, gentleness, patience and peace. The Royal Law will created human order and prevent chaos.

Human Order and Chaos

Adam and Eve's disobedience in the Garden of Eden brought crisis, chaos and calamity upon the earth. Prior to that time, Adam and Eve lived and experience a glory that covered the earth as water covered the sea. Their sin caused suffering in this present age, not only to humans but to animals and the rest of God's creation. Paul said in Romans 8:19-20 that all creation was subjected to futility and earnestly awaits its redemption. Paul noted in verse 27, "For we know the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now."

Paul interjected that in the Garden, Satan deceived Eve, which led to a separation of love. Her love for God and His word was divided or fragmented because she obeyed the word of Satan instead of God. Her actions brought calamity to the planet. Immediately, God's kingdom of light that existed without difficulty was challenged with the kingdom of darkness whose ruler was evil. Sin came into the world and into the flesh of humanity causing rival spirits to compete for authority. Throughout history, humanity continued to fall prey to demonic forces until love came to prove its power. Jesus, who is love, overpowered the kingdom of darkness by willingly submitting to the cursed cross. He could have called ten thousand angels to free him from the crucifixion, but he demonstrated love, which destroyed the power of darkness and the works of Satan.

Paul confirmed in Romans 8:37-39 that through Christ, nothing could separate us from the love of God. He listed various spirits namely: life, death, angels, principalities and powers. He said that these spirits that presently exist or those that will exist in future could not separate us from God's love. He asserted that the things (spirits) of a higher realm (heavenlies) or the lower depths (hades) no longer had power and authority over us; hence, nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. But how did man survive prior to Christ's appearing?

Government

All kingdoms have government. God's kingdom, Satan's kingdom and all earthly kingdoms have government because authority is the only agency for order. God is the God of Order. Every aspect of His creation is

orderly. The universe and all of its celestial elements declare God's order. The botanical and zoological creation declares His interconnective order. For example, oxygen, which is produced by plants, is required for animals to breath. And plants, which require carbon dioxide to exist, is produced by zoological creatures. Even the human anatomy declares His order and every element of our bodily functions are maintained by His order. God is a God of order and government is established by His authority.

Authority is a spiritual substance that God uses to produce and maintain order. The Greek word *exousia* means authority, which Paul mentioned in several letters to the churches. In Colossians 1:16 he said all spirits were created by Jesus; whether visible or invisible, whether thrones or dominions, whether principalities or powers – all things were created through him and for him.” The word “principalities” is *arche* and means that which is first, while “powers” in this passage is *exousia*, which really should be translated authorities. New Testament authors often interchange the two words because they are so closely linked. If one has “authority” then he has “power” to function. If one exhibits “power,” then an authority is behind it. They are like twin spirits; when you see one, you see the other.

The chief priests and elders in Matthew 21:22-26 asked Jesus, “By what authority do you do these things?” Jesus knew their intentions and replied. “If you answer this question, I will tell you whether my authority comes from a human or divine source.” Then he asked, “Was John's baptism from a divine or human origin?” The political pontiffs refused to answer. If they said, “human” then the people would turn against them because they liked John. If they said divine, then they have to agree with John and be baptized. So, they remained silent. Jesus confirmed by his actions that *exousia* and *dumimis* (authority and power) are interlinked.

They are so interlinked, that the translators translated *exousia* as power in Colossians 1:16, they translated it as authorities in Colossians 2:15. In the same passage, In the same passage, Paul mentioned the same two spirits *arche* and *exousia*, which were two kinds of evil spirits that Jesus disarmed and defeated on the cross. There also seems to be a connection or linkage between principalities and authorities. But we must understand

that *arche* and *exousia* can be good spirits, because archangels are cited in Scripture as helping various people. Plus, all authority (*exousia*) comes from Jesus. Professor Mike Massa is a favored teacher at Christ For The Nations. He and I were discussing spirits in my office when he suggested that marriage is an *arche* spirit. He also noted that creation is an *arche* being battled by evolution and the church must engage strategies to defeat the spirit behind evolution. We must understand that spirits were created by Jesus; however, the rebellion of Satan led him to establish a kingdom of darkness filled with dark spirits of *arche*, *exousia*, *dunimis* and *cosmokrators*. These are spirits at work for Satan to battle King Jesus and the spiritual forces of God's kingdom of light.

Life is filled with influencing spirits that are both good and bad. Good spirits work in behalf of Jesus while evil spirits combat and work against Jesus and his kingdom. Both the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness have authority and hierarchy because all spirits were initially created by Jesus. So how did good spirits go bad? The speculation of fallen angels and the warfare in heaven between archangel Michael and his angels with the Lucifer/Satan and his angels brings to light that all angels were created for good but spirits that rebel against God must be put down and destroyed. The question arises, "If Jesus disarmed these spirits on the cross, why are they still active and operating?"

We must understand the two actions of Jesus. At his incarnation, he came to earth as a human, in order to destroy the works of Satan. His second coming will judge and abolish all that is evil. He came the first time to give us authority over evil; he will return to rid the universe of evil. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:25 that Jesus reigns from heaven until he puts all enemies under his feet. The last enemy is death. When he returns, then death, hell and the grave will no longer exist. He will destroy them all leaving the kingdom of darkness totally destroyed. According to verse 24, he will then deliver the kingdom of God back to his Father after he puts an end to all opposing rule, authority and power.

All human and earthly governments are affected by the spiritual realm and the spirits that influence them. According to Isaiah 14:2, Lucifer, the fallen archangel not only influenced the nations, he conquered them. In

Ezekiel 28:11-16, the prophet spoke against the King of Tyre revealing how he was influenced by the same Satan who was in the Garden of Eden that seduced Eve.

On another occasion, the prophet Daniel had received a heavenly message about a great war. In the third year of Cyrus' reign, he decided to go on a "fast" along the Tigris River. Others were with him and were frightened away although they did not see the vision that Daniel received. The heavenly creature told Daniel,

"From the very first day that you applied yourself to understand the vision, I have been trying to get the interpretation to you but the prince of the kingdom of Persia was opposing me for twenty-one days."

There are three possible interpretations to his statement. First, the Prince of Persia had supernatural powers to prevent angelic forces from doing their jobs. Second, there was a supernatural force of evil working against God's servant to get the message to Daniel. Third, the story was fictional and has no relevance or merit.

The second explanation seems plausible indicating there are behind-the-scenes work of spirits in a higher dimension that seem to influence that what occurs in the physical dimension. In Numbers 22:22, we are given a behind the scenes view of what happened in the spirit realm as it relates to our decisions. The Midianites were afraid of the Israelites because of their invasions and acquisitions of other countries. King Balak of Moab heard of Balaam's prophetic powers and sought his services to curse Israel.

In verse 12, God specifically told Balaam not to go with Balak's leaders. But Balak thought money and power was what Balaam wanted, so he sent more leaders with greater influence to urge Balaam. Instead of believing what God said in verse 12, Balaam prayed again to see what else God would say. In verse 20 Moses wrote, "God came to Balaam that night and said, "If the men have come to call you, get u go with them; but only speak what I tell you." One must ask, how can God change His mind from verse 12 to verse 20. There are three options given to explain the discrepancy. The first option, the story was fictional, conceived in the mind

of the author. Second, God didn't really tell Balaam to go. It was another spirit posing as God's voice. Third, God told Balaam to go because he didn't listen to his first verse.

I believe the story actually happened to show us what occurs in the spirit dimension when we make decisions that are undesirable to God. It is not my intention to suggest that God seeks to kill us when we don't obey. On the contrary, His love is patient, kind, gentle, peaceful and good. Numbers 22:22 stated that God's anger was kindled or stirred up because Balaam went, and an angel opposed Balaam and tried to kill him. This might suggest that the second voice Balaam heard was actually not the voice of God. Also, the fact that God said, "If these men come to you, then you go with them" might suggest it wasn't God's voice because God knew that the men were there. We must question, "Does God tell someone to do two different and opposite things?"

We must not overlook that God told Abraham that his lineage (through Isaac) would produce offspring as the sands of the seas and the stars of the sky. Yet, God told him to kill his son, Isaac. From Abraham's perspective, God told him to do two opposite things. Should he obey the first word and spare his son, or should he obey the second voice and kill his son. Hebrews 11:19 explained that Abraham reasoned that God was able to resurrect Isaac; hence, he told his armor bearers, "You wait here, the lad and I will return."

When the angel, who stood against the prophet Balaam, revealed himself, he said, "I would have killed you had your donkey not protected you. Apparently, the donkey could see the angel when Balaam couldn't, which causes one to inquire about animal intuitiveness. The story of the angel and Balaam, Daniel's angelic visit and other prophetic messages helps us to have insight into the spirit realm.

If there are spiritual forces working behind the scenes, producing emotions, influencing decisions etc. then it might explain the divisiveness that prevails in politics. In Judges 9:23, God sent a divisive evil spirit to stir up hostility between Abimelech and the leaders of Shechem making the leaders of Shechem disloyal to Abimelech. The explanation of God sending a divisive spirit was because Abimelech murdered Jerub-Baal's seventy half-

brothers. This division led to a war between Abimelech and the rest of the Israelites, which ended when Abimelech was killed by the millstone of a woman and the sword of his armorbearer.

Activities in the spirit realm are revealed at times in Scripture. In 1 Kings 22:23 and 2 Chronicles 18:22, a story was told about a behind the scenes event that occurred when God decided to avenge the death of Naboth. King Ahab's wife, Jezebel secretly plotted to have Naboth killed because he refused to give or sell his adjoining property to the king. After Naboth's death, the Lord said, "I am ready to bring disaster on you and destroy you." A meeting convened in heaven with God on His throne and a heavenly assembly surrounding him. Through a vision, the prophet Micaiah was allowed to eavesdrop on the meeting and heard God ask, "Who will deceive Ahab that he will attack Ramoth Gilead and die there?" Micaiah said that different spirits presented ideas but then a lying spirit stepped forward and said, "I will be a lying spirit in the mouths of his prophets," The Lord responded, "Deceive and overpower him. Go out and do as you have proposed."

It is not clear how these behind the scenes spirits actually influence our emotions and behavior, but Scriptures maintain that distressing murderous spirits caused Saul to attempt murder on his armorbearer, David. Lying spirits were used to get Ahab to Ramoth Gilead where he died. Psalm 78:8 recorded how unfaithful spirits keep people from following God. Spirits of prostitution that are mentioned in Hosea 4:12; 5:4 caused Israel to commit "spiritual adultery" against God.

According to Isaiah 61:3, a spirit of heaviness causes us to be oppressed or depressed when a spirit of death or destroying spirit was used in Jeremiah 51:1 to judge people and countries. The firstborn children of humans and animals in Egypt were killed when a spirit of death or destroying spirit entered the land. It is very clear, spirits (good and bad) influence our thoughts, words, emotions and behavior.

Government is based upon authority and authority is a spirit from God that brings order and organization. Government is different in each country and it is based on a system of preference. Democratic governments are based upon the will of the people. Oligarchies are

governments based upon the will of a few rich, powerful leaders. Monarchal governments have a single leader. These governments can be led by good kings or evil dictators and their motivations are revealed by their historical records.

The Kingdom of Israel was very powerful under the leadership of David. Although his personal life identified character flaws, he was considered a great king because his motivation was to lead God's people into greatness. After the death of David, his son, Solomon, ruled Israel but he failed to obey the word of the Lord about having treaties with foreign countries and he made covenant marriages with family members of foreign countries. His actions determined his downfall. The gods of these foreign women led him astray, which prompted God to divide the nation of Israel into two tribes: the northern tribes and southern tribes.

The division led to an ongoing civil war. History records nineteen kings that led the northern tribes and historians named them as evil kings because they did evil in the sight of the Lord. Judah had twenty kings and only eight of them were considered good: Asa, Jehoshaphat, Josash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah and Josiah. These kings made attempts to remove the idols of the land, but the other kings did evil in God's sight and failed to remove the idols. I contend that the kings were led to make ungodly decisions by evil spirits. The hearts of the kings motivations were revealed by their decisions and their decisions were prompted by spiritual forces in an unseen world.

The order of all governments, whether they are political, corporate, religious, financial and family governments are prompted by the spirit realm. Even the government and rule of our own personal lives are sourced by the spirit realm. Our decisions reveal our hearts and our decisions are prompted by good and bad spirits. We choose which spirit that we listen to, that which comes from God or that which comes from the Devil.

Morality

Government determines what is right and wrong; good and evil; righteousness and unrighteousness for their constituencies. In 1992,

Singapore issued a law against selling and chewing gum in public and those caught could be fined or imprisoned.¹³⁷ Most laws are designed to protect the entire populous, but some laws fail to protect all. For example, abortion laws protect the right of a pregnant mother but it doesn't protect the life of the baby. In Utah, if a woman commits a crime in the presence of her husband, the blame goes to her husband.¹³⁸ This is an extension of the law of Moses found in the Old Testament.

The basis for politics is to set policy and those who are empowered to do so are able to form rules, laws and regulations to their own liking. The first law found in the Garden of Eden was about "morality." God told Adam and Eve, "Do not eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil or you will die." Today, we would call it the Tree of Morality. God certainly wants his people to be moral, but He doesn't want them to determine morality or decide what is right and wrong. It seems obvious that societies who determine what is right and wrong will usually suffer a spiritual death and find themselves outside of God's favor. Moral relativism will destroy a nation.

In the early days of civilization, the only immoral action was murder, taking the life of another human. Paul wrote in Romans 5:13 there was no accounting of sin, yet sin existed in the world, which resulted in death. When Moses established a written law, the concept of righteousness was introduced. Those who kept the law were righteous and those who failed to do so were considered unrighteous. These principles about laws are not only true for politics, they are also true for God's kingdom. Those who embrace God's government (spiritual laws) will embrace righteousness and those who fail to embrace Jesus as king embrace unrighteous. Righteousness is spirit or law from God. It is not determined by our actions or behavior. Paul said in Romans 9:31 that Israel sought after the law of righteousness by obeying certain laws and rules but in Romans 10:4,

¹³⁷ Wikipedia, "Chewing gum ban in Singapore", Retrieved 4 09 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chewing_gum_ban_in_Singapore 2018.

¹³⁸ Kurt Hanson, "Utah's Weirdest laws" *Daily Herald* Posted 10 November 2016, https://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/of-utah-s-weirdest-laws/collection_be55aa9b-9fd8-5d7c-b9b4-dd6784ba4320.html Retrieved 4 September 2018.

he confirmed that Christ is the end of Moses' law, which resulted in righteousness for everyone who believed in him.

The kingdom of God is not about keeping a set of laws. One simply needs to recognize that Jesus is the Son of God and is king of His kingdom. Those who do so are considered righteous. John explained that this was the “kingdom of God” message that Jesus preached. He wrote in 1 John 4:5-9,

“This is the message which we have heard from him (Jesus) and declare to you that God is light and in Him is no darkness. If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

As such, the Father and Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to lead us in that which is right. Embracing Jesus as King and being led by the Holy Spirit is all we need to obtain eternal life. We will discuss the work of the Holy Spirit in the next chapter in our discussion about extending the kingdom.

Boundaries

Every kingdom has boundaries and they are easily defined. By looking at a geographical map, it is easy to see the boundaries of countries. The same is true regarding God's kingdom. Since His kingdom is spiritual, we must surmise that the boundaries in His kingdom domain are spirit substances. Most kingdoms have competing kingdoms vying for authority. God's kingdom is no different. He has enemies (spirits) that try to disrupt, disguise and destroy our relationship with the King.

Evil spirits from the kingdom of darkness seek authority and control in our lives in their feeble attempt to pluck us from God's kingdom of love. Paul asked a question in Romans 8:35, “Who can separate us from the love of God? Will trouble, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness or danger or sword separate us from God's love? He concludes, “I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels or heavenly rulers, nor present powers or future powers, the higher realm or lowest realm or any other creature will be able to separate us the love of God in Jesus our Lord.

The boundary of God's kingdom is from love to love. It is a kingdom of light, a kingdom of spirits and a kingdom of love. It is out of God's love that everything flows. Paul said in I Corinthians 13:13, "These three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul said that the fruit of the Spirit is love, followed by other spirits that are in God's kingdom: joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faith and temperance. All of these flow from God's love, which is the Royal Law. He explained in I Corinthians 13:4-5 that love is patient, kind, humble, peace yielding and is not self-serving. Love is all about God and other people. He told us to pursue love and be eager to help others by using gifts from the Spirit. Everything not motivated by love will eventually perish.

Kingdom Order Throughout the Centuries

The term "kingdom order" has always existed because God has always been orderly. When He created the material universe, He established it with His spiritual order and demonstrated it in the Garden Eden. To understand God's kingdom, we must understand that God created this Garden to be both spiritual and physical substances. His creation: botanical, zoological, human and celestial are spiritual and physical. God is spirit, and nothing exists without God. And just because science focuses on the physical, it does not negate a metaphysical existence. Creation is orderly. Everything God created in Genesis 1 came from His kingdom of light. He said, "Let there be light." And John 1:4 explains that light to be life, the substance whereby all living things exist.

The Garden of Eden revealed both the physical and spiritual realms. The first couple existed in both. God is spirit, and He walked with Adam in the cool of the day. God showed them two "spiritual trees" that were located in the middle of the Garden: the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Both were spiritual trees that produced food for the spirit realm. Adam and Eve recognized both the physical and spiritual realms until they sinned, at which point, they were unable to see their spiritual covering (glory) and found the need to cover their nakedness. Suddenly, there was a division between the spiritual and physical. Man's senses were able to experience the physical realm, but he seemingly died to

his spiritual senses and could no longer see, hear, taste, touch or smell the spiritual realm. That was bad news because the serpent who deceived Eve could no longer be seen or heard, leaving humans powerless to overcome his dark spiritual rule.

In Genesis 3:15, God told Adam and Eve that the restoration of the spiritual glory would occur through the seed of woman. Her seed would crush the head of Satan. From that time, the order of human government was instituted with fathers passing on their authority to their sons. Adam had three sons mentioned in Genesis: Cain, Abel and Seth. Cain was the firstborn but forfeited his authority to rule the earth because he yielded to the spirit of murder and killed his brother, Abel. Adam then passed his authority to Seth, who began a long patriarchal lineage that concluded with Noah. Three children were born to Noah: Shem, Ham and Japheth and Shem was selected to introduce the Messiah.

The sages of Israel view Shem as the king of Jerusalem and identify him as the same Melchizedek that is mentioned in the *Book of Hebrews*.¹³⁹ Bible Charts and Maps LLC produced a chart based upon a historical timeline of biblical dates that reveal Melchizedek was the King of Jerusalem at the same time that Shem was alive. Supposedly the patriarchal father, Abraham, paid tithe to Shem as a fatherly honor. Although Melchizedek is named in “first person”¹⁴⁰ in the Torah, it is likely a title of a Kohen or priest because the Medrash records that he was preceded in priesthood by Adam; hence, Shem was given the blessing of the priesthood by his father, Noah. This might be reason enough to explain why *Rabbinic Commentarians* explain why Melchizedek is sometimes associated with Shem.

Levitical Order

The father-son order was replaced by a brotherly system, where the brothers of the tribes of Israel subjected themselves to Aaron and Moses

¹³⁹ Amazing Bible Timeline in World History, “Melchizedek and Shem” Posted 27 May 2011, (Austin, TX: *Bible Charts and Maps, LLC*) Retrieved 5 September 2018. <https://amazingbibletimeline.com/blog/melchizedek-and-shem/> 2018.

¹⁴⁰ Wikipedia, “Maharzav” (Rabbi Zev Wolf Einhorn; ?–1862; Lithuania), to Leviticus Rabbah 25:6, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melchizedek#cite_ref-55 Retrieved 5 September 2018.

who were of Levi's lineage. Only a few people were designated to be both king and priest. Melchizedek or Shem was labeled both king and priest followed by the deliverer Moses who established a brotherly system, where he found conflict and rebellion at the onset.

God called for such a system to separate the priesthood from royalty. Initially, God wanted a kingdom of priests where he could rule through the High Priest and Samuel was such a priest from the Kohathite clan (1 Chronicles 6:3-15) but the people did not want his sons to rule over them and requested that he name a king like other nations. At this point in history a division between Church and State occurred and a three-tiered structure of prophet, priest and kings governed the religious, political and spiritual aspects of Israel. History revealed only three have had that designation. First, Moses was a Messianic delivered who led the Israelite people from Egypt to Canaan. His kingly role was unquestioned, but he diversified his power, sharing it with Aaron, his brother, who served as the first high priest. Prior to the diversification, Moses was prophet, king and priest of Israel.

David was the second person in Jewish history to be prophet, king and priest. Most people understand his prophetic calling and royal installation but fail to realize his priestly work. Yet in Psalm 110:1-2 he wrote, "Yahweh said unto my Adonia, 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies, your footstool.'" In retrospect, theologians recognize this verse applied to Jesus but those living in 1000 B.C. considered David the warrior priest who was able to hear God for the Jewish people.

Christ's Apostolic Order

Melchizedek, Moses and David not only predated Jesus, their lives were prophetic indicators of Christ's calling, mission and service. Jesus introduced a new Apostolic Order. Hebrews 3:1 begins an explanation of this order by stating, "Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus." The early church not only considered him the prophetic Word of God, they also called him King of Kings and the High Priest of our confession. He introduced a new apostolic order after the order of Melchizedek where a patriarch lineage was re-established for fathers and sons.

Jesus constantly referenced God as his heavenly Father who sent (apostle) him to earth to destroy the works of the enemy and prepare for the redemption of the saints. He is not only the Royal King of God's kingdom, Hebrews 7:25 confirms that he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. These actions depicted the actions of a priest who was a mediator and intercessor for the people. His apostolic order was priestly in nature and explains our service to others as we seek to be like him.

One of the most unique and misunderstood verses as it relates to God's kingdom is found in Luke 22:28-30. In one of his final discourses with his disciples, Jesus said,

“You are the ones who have remained with me in my trials. Thus, I grant to you a kingdom, just as my Father granted to me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

This verse references two kingdoms: one that the Father granted Jesus and the one that Jesus granted his disciples. There are several things to consider when discussing these two kingdoms.

First, we must ask, are these two different kingdoms or are they the same kingdom? It is likely that Jesus is referencing another kingdom. As previously noted, all kingdoms have a focal point of authority, so it seems logical that Jesus is the only king of God's kingdom. According to 1 Corinthians 15:24, he will rule until he destroys all enemies, including death, and then at the end, he will deliver the kingdom to his Father. There does not seem to be a place in this scenario where Jesus shares his kingship with the disciples.

There is a logical consideration that Jesus was referencing something he had said to Peter at Caesarea Philippi. In Matthew 16:16, Peter publicly stated that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus responded by saying, “Your name is Peter (meaning little rock) and upon the huge rock of a statement you made, I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.” Then Jesus said, “And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven and what you loose on earth will be loosed in

heaven.” Theologians consider that the keys of heaven represents the authority but there is a big difference between keys of the kingdom and the king who gave the keys.

In the Old Testament, kingdoms were passed from one generation to another from fathers to sons, but they understood that God established and eliminated kings. According to Daniel 4:25, Nebuchadnezzar lost his power to rule for seven years because he failed to understand that the God Most High is ruler over human kingdoms and gives them to whomever he wishes. Nebuchadnezzar previously told Daniel about a vision he had and the prophet explained in 4:17 that the vision revealed seven years of isolation for the king until he learned that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men. God gives it to whomever He will and set over it the lowest of men.

In 1 Kings 11:34-37, God referenced Solomon when he told Jeroboam,

“I will not take the whole kingdom from his hand. I will allow him to be ruler for the rest of his life for the sake of my chosen servant David who kept my commandments and rules. I will take the kingdom from the hand of his son and give ten tribes to you. I will leave his son one tribe so my servant David’s dynasty may continue to serve me in Jerusalem, the city I have chosen as my home. I will select you; you will rule over all you desire to have and you will be king over Israel.”

The early church certainly understood that the Jesus’ constant reference to his Father in heaven was an acknowledgment of His heavenly kingdom that was ruled by His son, Jesus. They surely understood his statement, “It is the Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” It had nothing to do with the kingly position; it had everything to do with the laws of the kingdom that would bring favor to them. That is why Hebrews 12:28 states, “Since we are receiving an unshakable kingdom, let us give thanks and through this let us offer worship pleasing to God in devotion and awe.”

What kingdom were they receiving that was so “unshakable?” Paul explained in Romans 14:7, “The kingdom of God is not meat or drink but righteousness, peace and joy.” Earlier in Romans 9:31, Paul mentioned a

“law of righteousness” and in Galatians 5:22-23, he mentions nine laws that govern us through the Holy Spirit. They are the laws of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faith and temperance, which is commonly called self-control or moderation. Paul said there are no greater laws than these. They are unshakable.

In Romans 7:14 through 8:2, Paul listed other spiritual laws. The law of God and the law of the spirit of life. He contrasted those laws with other spiritual laws of evil, sin, bondage and death, which exist in the kingdom of darkness.

Jesus is king of God’s kingdom. He gives us the keys or authority to act in his behalf and the Father is pleased to give us these laws to rule our lives. This is the unshakeable kingdom mentioned in Hebrews 12:28. But the kingdom that Jesus gave his disciples was a different kingdom. Their kingdom would place them in authority over the twelve tribes of Israel.

Being king was about making decisions. The Twelve were given a kingdom (sitting on twelve thrones) to make decisions about the nation of Israel. It was an oligarchical kingdom not monarchical. Their first major decision occurred in Acts 11 when they had to determine whether or not the Gentiles could receive the Holy Spirit in the same manner that the Jews did. Four chapters later, they were again assembled to discuss and adjudicate whether or not the Gentiles were required to be circumcised like the Jews. Officiating as the leader of the Apostles, James sent a letter in behalf of the apostles and elders in Jerusalem that the Gentiles who were coming to Jesus were not required to be circumcised but they were to abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled and from sexual immorality.”

The apostles of Jesus had been given a kingdom to rule over the nation of Israel to make decisions about salvation. The church was not the kingdom of God, it was the kingdom given to the apostles. These were two different kingdoms. It was in the Upper Room in Jerusalem when Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke, and said, “This is my body, which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me. Then he took the cup after supper and said, “This is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for

you.” Baptism and Communion became the ordinances of the church that all followers of Jesus must adhere to attain salvation.

The disciples then began to argue over leadership and who should be made the king of this new kingdom, but Jesus explained that their kingdom would be different. He said, “The kings of the world exercise authority over the benefactors but you should treat leadership differently. Those who govern must serve. That is when Jesus said, “I bestow upon you a kingdom, just like my Father bestowed upon me that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Jesus explained to them that all kingdoms of the world whether they are political, religious, education, financial etc., were given to leaders so they could fellowship in the Holy Spirit to lead and make decisions for their kingdoms. Successful businesses, churches, corporations and political leaders are only truly successful by God’s standards if they submit to the laws of the God’s kingdom. Leaders must lead in righteousness, peace and joy. They must demonstrate love, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faith and temperance. By adhering to the laws of God’s kingdom, we are able to eat, drink and fellowship with him.

Presence of the King

God’s kingdom had order from the beginning, but it was disrupted by rebellion and sin. The purpose of this section is to explain the redemptive work of Jesus that returned God’s order to humanity. It will discuss the imminent presence and royal function as king. It will highlight his incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension and then explain the concept of salvation as understood by any kingdom

In Matthew 4:17 Jesus said, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near.” John the Baptist preached the same message in Matthew 3:2, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near.” How can these Scriptures, which seeming contradict, be reconciled? How God’s kingdom be here but it isn’t? The obvious solution is to understand that Christ’s kingdom is a spiritual kingdom. It is a kingdom made of spirits or spiritual substances.

To that degree, we must also conclude that we are physical beings in a material world, but we also exist as spirit beings in a spiritual world.

Similarly, the nature of the king is both spiritual and physical. The presence of the king existed in spirit prior to his incarnation, death, and resurrection. Thiessen compared Jesus to other religious leaders who existed. He stated, “Buddha (B.C. 563-484) Confucius (B.C. 551-478) and Mohammed (A. D. 570-632) were significant primarily for their teaching; but Jesus Christ is significant primarily for His person. He is indeed central to Christianity.”¹⁴¹

The Athanasian Creed attempted to explain the nature of Jesus with the following statement, “The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated: The Holy Spirit uncreated. The Father immeasurable, the Son immeasurable: The Holy Spirit immeasurable. The Father eternal, the Son eternal: The Holy Spirit eternal. And, nevertheless, not three eternal; but one eternal.”¹⁴² This detailed explanation was necessary to explain the identity of Jesus Christ as both the nature of God (spirit) and man (physical.)

John Collins pointed out that Jewish monotheism finds it difficult to embrace Jesus as the pre-existent Son of God without violating traditional Jewish monotheism.¹⁴³ He suggested that those embracing the deity of Jesus did so for one of three reasons. First, angelic figures are prevalent in the Old Testament and the Prophet Daniel identified God as the Ancient of Days. Daniel saw in a vision and recorded in Daniel 7:13-14 that he saw one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He came to the Ancient One, Who presented to him dominion, glory and kingship that all people, nations and languages should serve him. Collins noted that 1 Enoch 46:1 provided a similar description but stated the

¹⁴¹ Thiessen, p. 138.

¹⁴² Horton, p. 145.

¹⁴³ John Collins, *Encounters with Biblical Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), p. 179 – 185.

Ancient of Days, the son of Man and Lord of Spirits met before the sun and the stars.

A second reason the early church could embrace Jesus as deity is found in their understanding of some literature that human beings can be exalted as a god. Collins noted that Daniel prophesied in his twelfth chapter and predicted that the righteous martyrs would shine like the brightness of the firmament and those who turn others to righteousness would be like stars forever and ever. Collins also noted that 1 Enoch 104 clarified the imagery quoting, “You will shine like the lights of heaven, and the gate of heaven will be opened to you...for you will have great joy like the angels of heaven... for you will be companions to the host of heaven.” Furthermore, Jesus told the Sadducees in Mark 12:25 that when the dead are resurrected that they would be like the angels.

A third reason that first century believers found it easy to embrace Jesus as divine was the residual Greek understanding and concept of Word or Reason. Proverbs 8:22 records that Yahweh created wisdom before He ever created the physical world. Before He created the depths and before He drew a circle on the face of the deep, He created wisdom. The Greek word “logos” suggests something more than spoken words. Imbedded in the concept of “logos” or words are the thoughts, reasoning, or ideas that are communicated. It is within this context that John could confidently write, “In the beginning was the word (logos) indicating that thoughts creative ideas and reasoning are spiritual substances that existed before the actual creation; Jesus pre-existed as God’s Word.”

In conclusion, we surmise that Jesus is both spiritual and physical. God is spirit, humans are physical, and Jesus is both. The physical materialization of God’s Word occurred at the incarnation; thus, “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” He is Immanuel, God with us. He is the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He is the expressed image of God.

The Incarnation

The birth of Jesus is recorded in Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 2:1-20 and John 1:14. But there is an Old Testament passage that is often overlooked

as it relates to Christ's incarnation. Psalm 2:7-8 provides a conversation that occurred between Yahweh and Jesus.

“Yahweh said to me, ‘You are My son! Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me and I will give you the nations for your inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possession.’”

According to the text, this conversation occurred either at Jesus' conception or at his birth, depending on one's definition of the beginning of life. Jesus stated in John 3:16, For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.”

Psalm 2:7-8 highlights the story of the incarnation and postulates the obvious, that the Father and the Son had a relationship prior to the incarnation. John 17:5 substantiates that relationship with Christ's prayer to his Father, “And now, O Father, glorify me together with Yourself, with the glory, which I had with you before the world was. Jesus pre-existed in “spirit form” prior to his physical incarnation as a baby. The immaculate conception addresses many complications regarding Christ's birth.

The virgin birth was necessary to explain the divine birth. If the blood of an earthly father was found in Jesus DNA, that would eliminate the divine miracle of the immaculate conception. Horton defined incarnation as, “The act by which the eternal Son of God became a human being without giving up his deity.”¹⁴⁴ Thiessen noted that Jesus had a divine nature but argued he also had a human nature as seen in his human birth, human development, human nature, human name and human desires like hunger, weariness, and thirst.¹⁴⁵ Jesus even declared his human deficiencies when he said, in John 5:19, 30 “By myself, I can do nothing.” The incarnation of Jesus gave him the ability to understand the limitations of man, the temptations of man, and human death experience. All of these were necessary to redeem mankind from sin.

It also gave those who heard him the ability to understand God's kingdom and the power to overcome the kingdom of darkness. Jesus

¹⁴⁴ Horton, p 646.

¹⁴⁵ Thiessen, p. 299-302.

explained his spiritual kingdom through parables and stories but he demonstrated kingdom authority by the things he did such as heal the sick and cast out demons. He explained to the disciples their power and authority over dark demonic forces and sent them into cities to prove it.

Jesus said that he was sent from heaven to preach the gospel of the kingdom and to heal people. He gave his disciples the same commission. Through his instruction, demonstration, and authority the first century church understood that his kingdom can be manifested on earth as it has been established in heaven. This understanding allows his followers today to change physical situations through spiritual empowerment.

Resurrection

If the incarnation was the implementation of the word becoming flesh, then the resurrection is the implementation of the flesh being revived and retaining the former form as the word. Actually, the word did not die, the flesh did. At the resurrection the physical and the spiritual were united to create an altogether new creation, a glorified body. To fully understand the tri-unity of God, one must understand that God never changes. Jesus has always been the word of God. He was the word that spoke creation into existence. He was the word that became flesh and dwelt on earth as a human. He is still the word of God that was resurrected from the dead. Today, he speaks as a mediator to the Father for believers and speaks to his servant believers as the ultimate authority of His Father's kingdom. Jesus is an example of mankind's future. He is the first-fruits of the resurrection. Humans are spirit creatures but after death and resurrection, they will also be glorified beings.

At the resurrection, humans will exist in a similar environment as the Garden of Eden, an activated physical and spiritual existence where. Paul detailed the transition in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44,

“So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.”

John best explained a glorified human with a quote from I John 3:2,

“Dear friends, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that whenever it is revealed we will be like him, because we will see him just as he is.”

Salvation

What is salvation? When does it occur? How does it happen? Soteriology is the study of salvation. Thiessen said, “When we come to the doctrine of salvation natural theology completely fails us. It can only teach us that there is a God; He is the Creator; He is sovereign, and we are responsible to him.”¹⁴⁶ At the same time, anthropology teaches us that man is sinful and needs someone to save him from sin.

Jesus admitted that his sole purpose for coming to earth was to preach the gospel of the kingdom and specifically to the Jewish people but intrinsically embedded into the title Christ or Messiah is the Jewish understanding that their king would indeed save them from their sins. At birth, Matthew 1:20-21, the angel told Joseph that Mary’s conception was from the Holy Spirit. The angel said, “She will give birth to a son and you will name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” This fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14.

The Jews were looking for a Messiah, but their search was to find an anointed leader like David who would deliver them from their enemies but also put them back in right relationship with God. The Jewish people collectively knew they had broken the commandments of God, which resulted in their suppression under foreign governmental authorities instead of exercising self-rule under a Jewish king. The Jewish understanding of forgiveness of sin was seen in whether or not they had favor with God. They had no idea that the full forgiveness of sin required the death, burial and resurrection of the Savior. God kept this a secret until afterwards. Paul explained in I Corinthians 2:7-8 that God intended for His people to have glorified bodies but kept it hidden. He wrote, “None of the rulers of this age understood it. If they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

¹⁴⁶ Thiessen, p. 274.

To the Jews, salvation was a king who delivered them from their enemies, so they would have the freedom to worship and serve God as they pleased. They were a kingdom of priests. When other kingdoms interfered with their way of life and worship, they considered themselves out-of-favor with God and the need of deliverance.

Thiessen noted that God's plan of salvation culminated in the death of His son, his resurrection to life and an ascension into heaven where he rules with ultimate authority and appears before God in behalf of the believer.¹⁴⁷ The processes of the Old Testament law with the multiplicities of sacrifices, offerings, feasts and Sabbaths became types and shadows of the real salvation that occurred through the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.

To answer the three questions at the beginning of this section: "What is salvation; When does it occur; How does it happen," is not easily defined. Salvation is of the Lord, meaning he determines who is saved as well as how, when and where. The time of salvation is also complex because there are various Scriptures that declare the timing of salvation. Some Scriptures reveal we have been saved (indicating past tense), others indicate that we are being saved (indicating present tense) and others suggest we shall be saved (indicating future tense).

For example, Ephesians 2:8-9 says "For by faith, you have been saved through faith. It is a gift of God." The indication is that salvation has already occurred, it is not something we earn but rather salvation (Jesus) is God's gift to us. Philippians 2:12-13 says something different, Paul wrote that we are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, suggesting it is not a done deal. It is a process of sanctification. Also, Matthew 10:22, Mark 13:13 says, "He that endures to the end shall be saved." This suggests that our salvation is a future thing, not something that is presently happening or something that has already happened. So, how do we reconcile these texts.

¹⁴⁷ Thiessen, p. 278.

There are three dimensions to salvation: past, present and future and these all relate to the tripartite nature of mankind. We are spirit, soul, and body. When we embrace Jesus, he gives us grace that totally saturates and covers our spirit. Therefore, we have been saved. But with our soul (mind, will and emotions) we must continually to be renewed by God's Spirit. Paul said in Romans 12:2 that we are transformed from the world by the renewing of our minds. This is a constant sanctification. Finally, at the resurrection, when Jesus returns and redeems our bodies we shall be saved.

Let's begin with the spirit. Believers who accept Jesus have been saved by grace through faith. The term grace indicates a special favor, or gift to the saved, but the word faith also indicates a response of humanity to the call of salvation. Repentance is necessary for salvation and is an act of mankind responding to the acts of God. Human salvation occurs when God calls, and man's responds to that call by faith; however, faith is not merely a mental agreement, it is a heart response to the love of God. It is the goodness of God that leads people to repent.

When we embrace Jesus, grace covers our spirit, but sin still exists in our body. Paul said it like this in Romans 7:21-8:2 "There is a law of evil, sin and death that exists my members (flesh.) This law wars against the law of my mind, tempting and driving me to do what I don't want to do." When we embrace Jesus, God covers our spirit with his grace and the law of God lives inside us, keeping our spirit alive in Christ. Evil, sin and death seeks to overcome God's grace in our lives but according to Romans 5:20, when sin abounds, grace much more abounds.

Paul asked and answered three questions in Romans 8:31-39. First, he asked, "Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? The answer is, "Whenever charges are presented against us, God justifies us because grace has covered our spirit." The second question, "Who shall condemn us?" His answer simply explains that no condemnation is placed against us by God because Jesus died, was resurrected and now sits with his heavenly Father making intercession in our behalf. The third question is, "Who shall separate us from the love of God." Paul explained that tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and sword could not do it. In fact,

through Christ we are more than conquerors. Nothing can separate us from God's love.

The sanctification process is the saving of our souls. We die daily to our own desires that God's can live in us. We must take on the mind of Christ and be humble. We must respond to people in the manner that Jesus told us in Matthew 5. We must love those who hate us pray for those who despitefully use us. It is a constant battle to overcome the tendencies of evil and sin that exist in our bodies, but we must, through our volition, dedicate to serve Jesus instead of serving ourselves.

The salvation of our flesh does not occur until Jesus returns. Romans 8:22-23 explains that his return will bring about a glorification of all creation. Paul wrote,

“For we know that the whole creation of groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. And not only they but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption the redemption of our body.”

Paul explained that we were saved (spirit) in this hope but we won't see it until our bodies have been glorified. In 1 John 3:2, the apostle wrote, “It has not been revealed what we will be, but we know when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Believers are saved in their spirit, they are being saved in their soul and when Jesus returns, they shall be saved spirit, soul and body.

CHAPTER SIX

ECCLESIASTICAL ORDER

The Purpose of the Holy Spirit

The term “ecclesiastical order” is synonymous with the church order. And although the church has leaders, pastors, programs and activities, unless the Holy Spirit has ordered them, they are simply human functions. It is imperative that the Holy Spirit is actively involved not only in individual followers of Christ but also the collective gathering of his church.

In the same way that Jesus has always existed with the Father; likewise, the Holy Spirit has always existed with them. The term “Holy Spirit” is only found three times in the Old Testament but is the predominate name used to identify God’s spirit in the New Testament. There are many names and titles for God in the Bible. Appendix F lists thirty-two different recorded names or titles for the Holy Spirit. Actually, the Holy Spirit is his singular name. The other titles provide identity, function, purpose, and scope of the Holy Spirit’s work and influence.

Much can be said about the person of the Holy Spirit, but this chapter will discuss the two primary functions or purposes of the Holy Spirit in the church. These will be discussed in two sections: the internal work of the Holy Spirit and the external work of the Holy Spirit. Both sections will review how and why the Holy Spirit operates in us.

Internal Work of the Spirit

The primary work of the Holy Spirit is internal. This internal spiritual work in people occurs to those who respond to His urgings, promptings and intentions. It must be understood that everyone has God’s Spirit living in them as explained in the two Hebrew words *rumach* and

neshamah. The word *neshamah*¹⁴⁸ is the word breath and when referenced as the breath of God it identifies the Holy Spirit. The breath of God is described in Isaiah 30:33 as a hot wind kindling a flame and in 2 Samuel 22:16; Psalm 18:16 and Job 4:9 as a destroying wind and in Job 32:8; Job 33:4 as a cold wind producing ice. And while the most common interpretation of *neshamah* is breath, the same word is also used when interpreting wind or spirit. Likewise, the word *ruwach* means spirit and is interpreted as breath or wind.¹⁴⁹

The Greek word *pneuma*¹⁵⁰ is the corresponding Hebrew word of *ruwach* with the same interpretations that include spirit, breath, wind, breeze, and mind. Conclusively, the Holy Spirit of God is somehow connected to man's spirit breathing mechanism. God breathed His spirit into man's nostrils and man became a living being; hence, man is required to breathe in order to live.

There are several translations for Genesis 2:7 but KJV and BBE have the most common. They read, "God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul (*nephesh*)." Other translations like NRSV, NKJV, NASB, NLT and NIV state. "Man became a living being." The ESV records, "Man became a living creature." The Hebrew word *nephesh* is quite often translated soul; albeit, the words soul and life are interchangeable in the Old Testament.

As noted, Genesis 2:7 states, "Man became a living soul (*nephesh*)." but Leviticus 17:11 also uses *nephesh* but it is translated life. "The life (*nephesh*) of the flesh is in the blood." These texts suggest that there is a linkage between the spiritual and physical. Moses obviously understood that connection. Notice that he did not write that the life was the blood, but rather the life is in the blood. In this text it appears that Moses was

¹⁴⁸ James Strong, "Neshamah" *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, (Iowa Falls, IA: World Bible Publishers, 1962), Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary, p. 81.

¹⁴⁹ James Strong, "Ruwach" *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, (Iowa Falls, IA: World Bible Publishers, 1962), Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary, p. 107.

saying the *nephesh* is the breath/spirit (air or oxygen) in the blood that gives life to the brain and touches every cell in the human body. To this degree, it seems logical that God's Holy Spirit is in all breathing creatures that gives them life.

For humans, the work of the spirit has a far greater and deeper meaning. The Holy Spirit operates in us to produce God's nature. John 20:19-23 describes a scene when Jesus revealed himself to the disciples and showed them the nail pierced evidence of his crucifixion. Afterwards, Jesus gave them a commission saying, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent me, I also send you." Then Jesus breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

Immediately after breathing upon them, Jesus said, "If you forgive the sins of any they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." It is evident from these statements that the primary work of the Holy Spirit is to help us forgive other people who hurt us or bring an offense. The Holy Spirit helps believers to overcome offenses.

Jesus also informed his disciples in Luke 11:13 that God responds to our requests by giving us the Holy Spirit. He said, "If you, being evil or earthly, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give you the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him. In this verse, Jesus wasn't saying that we need to ask the Father for the Holy Spirit. Instead, he was saying that the Father will give us the Holy Spirit to in response to our requests.

For example, if people ask the Father for patience, He will give them the Holy Spirit who will produce the fruit of patience as noted in Galatians 5:22, but the individual must yield to the spirit of patience by denying selfish gratification. If a person asks Him for direction, the Father will give him the Holy Spirit as a guide, but the person must be attentive to His guidance. Even if someone asks God for finances, the Holy Spirit will provide ideas on how to make money but typically, the person must also do things (such as work) to obtain the needed finances. The Father's

¹⁵⁰ James Strong, "Pneuma" *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, (Iowa Falls, IA: World Bible Publishers, 1962), Greek Dictionary of the New Testament, p.

answer to our request is always the Holy Spirit. If we want love, we will encounter unlovable people, persecution or situations for love to be activated. Paul said in Acts 14:22, “We must enter the kingdom of God through many tribulations.

Jesus said in John 14:16 that he and the Father would send the comforter (Holy Spirit) to forever abide in believers. Paul further explained how the Holy Spirit works in us. In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul listed some of spirits that are produced in believers. The Holy Spirit gives each of these spirits as we yield to him and not to the selfish desires within us.

We often say that love is an emotion, but actually love is a spirit from God that produces the emotion. Love is a spiritual substance from God that not only lives inside us, it is linked to peace, patience, joy, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faith and temperance that live in us as light in God’s kingdom. But these are not the only spirits that the Holy Spirit produces in us. There are other Scriptures describing spirits that come from the Holy Spirit. Second Corinthians 5:5 names confidence as a spirit produced by the Holy Spirit; 2 Corinthians 3:17 identifies liberty or freedom as another spirit; 1 Corinthians 2:4 states that power is a spirit produced by the Holy Spirit.

The fruit of the Spirit can also be misappropriated by those who seek self over God and darkness over light. For example, the Holy Spirit gives us love, but 1 John 2:15 states, “If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father, the love of the Father is no longer working in us.

It is important to understand that power is a spirit. Jesus said, “You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you. Power (Greek word is *dunimisi*) is produced by the Holy Spirit and seems to have a far greater authority than words. According to 1 Thessalonians 1:5, Paul’s message came to Thessaloniki with power, not just words. Also, Isaiah 11:2 names “power or might” as one of seven spirits of God.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:12 that we should be eager or zealous for the demonstration of spirits that come from the Holy Spirit because they are given to edify the church. In that passage, he referred to the spirit

of prophecy and Revelation 19:10 identified the testimony of the Jesus as the spirit of prophecy.

Another spirit that comes from the Holy Spirit is the “spirit of life.” In 2 Corinthians 3:3-6, Paul said the Holy Spirit gives us life and in Romans 8:2, he said it was the “spirit of life” in Christ Jesus that sets us free from the law of sin and death, which exist in our (members) bodies. In Revelation 11:11, John also called life (*zoe*) a spirit.

In 2 Corinthians 3:9, Paul stated that the ministry of the Holy Spirit produces righteousness. And in Romans 9:31, he called righteousness a law or spirit that is produced by the Holy Spirit. In Romans 1:3-4, holiness is called a spirit and Paul said that the Old Testament prophets predicted that Jesus would come in the spirit of holiness and spirit of power. When Jesus returned to his Father, they sent the Holy Spirit to humanity, so we too could operate in the spirit of holiness and power. Romans 14:17 explains that Jesus is king of God’s kingdom, but he sent the Holy Spirit to govern our lives. Paul said, “The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy that come from the Holy Spirit.”

The church must focus on the work of the Holy Spirit. We must recognize and demonstrate the spirits that He brings to us. The Holy Spirit produces the fruit of the spirit named in Galatians 5:22-23: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faith and moderation. They also include the spirits of righteousness, holiness, power, sonship (adoption) encouragement, hope, life, liberty, prophecy, confidence, meekness, truth, mercy and glory. These are all recognized spirits in the New Testament.

The lack of understanding spirits and how they operate in our lives has hindered the church from accurate discernment. The psalmists of the seventeenth century apparently recognized mercy, truth and love as spirits, which is evident from the anonymous hymn, *Spirit of Mercy, Truth and Love*, which has been published in eighty-nine hymnals since 1774. Their lyrics are as follows:

Spirit of mercy, truth, and love,
O shed thine influence from above,
and still from age to age convey
the wonders of this sacred day.

In every clime, by every tongue,
be God's surpassing glory sung;
let all the listening earth be taught
the acts our great Redeemer wrought.

Unfailing comfort, heavenly guide,
still o'er thy holy church preside;
still let us all thy blessings prove,
Spirit of mercy, truth, and love.¹⁵¹

This song was first used in a Catholic Mass as a Plain Chant and was initially ascribed to Samuel Webbe of London, England in 1740 AD. It is obvious that many of the Reformers understood the spirit world differently than we do today. According to Paul in Romans 7-8 and Galatians 5:24, spirits were laws from the Holy Spirit to govern our lives as citizens of God's kingdom. These spiritual laws are deposited internally to help us live a loving, holy, peaceable, joyful, righteous and liberated life in Jesus Christ. These are the laws of God's kingdom that should rule us from within.

Erickson correctly noted that the Holy Spirit is a person and not a vague force suggesting a personal relationship is possible.¹⁵² He also said, "The Holy Spirit is fully divine and should have the same respect and honor as the Father and the Son." The Holy Spirit was present at Creation, was operative through Old Testament prophetic ministry, and even provided the skills to men who built the temple. Joseph had a special spiritual gift of administration and the Holy Spirit endowed Samson with a special power.

The lyrics of Psalm 143:10 describe the psalmist's understanding of how God's Spirit instructs and guides people. David noted in Psalm 51:11 that God's presence abided in him through the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit of God that works sanctification in believers and this same Spirit is a truth gauge claiming the title, "Spirit of Truth." He guides believers into all truth.

¹⁵¹ Tina Schnieder (ED), "Spirit of Mercy, Truth and Love," *Dictionary of American Hymology*, (Hymnary.org, 2007) Retrieved 8 September 2018, https://hymnary.org/text/spirit_of_mercy_truth_and_love 2018.

¹⁵² Erickson, p. 787-821.

As noted earlier in this chapter the Holy Spirit is only mentioned three times in the Old Testament: The first time, it is used in a song that David sung, which is recorded in Psalm 51:11, “Do not cast me away from Your Presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.” The second place is Isaiah 63:10-11 when the prophet referenced the Israelites who were guided through the wilderness by the Angel of His Presence. He wrote, “They rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit.” In both places, there is the identification of the Holy Spirit as God’s. The incarnation of Jesus also identified God’s Presence for the thirty years he lived here. And although Jesus and the Holy Spirit are two persons in the godhead, they are equal with the Father and make up the identity of God.

Daniel 7 reveals the Father and Jesus as two persons in the Godhead and is the only canonical text, except some of the Psalms such as Psalm 2:7 and Psalm 110:1, that identified the Son of God/Son of Man prior to the incarnation of Jesus.

The non-canonical writing of *The Book of Enoch* was a composite of the writings of Enoch, Noah and a post-exilic Jewish scribe. In *1 Enoch* 48:2-3, the prophet Noah explained what he saw as he was escorted by an archangel through the spiritual realm. He wrote, “In that hour was this Son of man invoked before the Lord of Spirits, and his name in the presence of the Ancient of Days.” Later, Enoch explained that the Ancient of Days, Son of Man and Lord of Spirits (identifying the Trinity) existed prior to the creation of the world. The Old Testament is considered Jewish literature and many verses describe God, His Word and His Spirit as a Trinity that existed prior to creation. This Old Testament Trinity is re-identified as Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the New Testament.

External Work of the Holy Spirit

Jesus breathed upon his disciples and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” He followed this demonstration with the words, “Those who you forgive will be forgiven but if you retain the sins or offences of others, they will be retained.” This statement obviously explains that we choose which spirits we receive. We can receive the spirit of forgiveness that comes from

the Holy Spirit or the spirit of unforgiveness that the Devil filters through the human self.

Jesus said that we have the choice to embrace spirits from God or spirits from the Devil. The Holy Spirit is given to help us live according to God's kingdom. To that end, the Holy Spirit comes at salvation to help us internally. When we embrace Jesus, we are birthed by God's Spirit who lives in us. Jesus breathed on his disciples with instructions to receive the internal work of the Holy Spirit. Afterwards, he told them to go to Jerusalem and await the promise of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 2, one hundred and twenty believers awaited in an upper room until God demonstrated his presence with a rushing mighty wind and tongues of fire. We often call this empowerment, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, based upon the statement that John the Baptist made to his disciples, "He (Jesus) will baptize believers with the Holy Spirit."

What is the purpose of the Holy Spirit baptism? When does it occur? What is the result? These questions insinuate that there is a difference between the internal work of the Holy Spirit that helps the individual and the outward expression of the Holy Spirit's work that helps others. Although the Holy Spirit lives and breathes in and through us, to give us eternal life and to distribute spirits that help us internally, there seems to be another aspect and purpose of the Holy Spirit to help us to help others. The baptism of the Holy Spirit can be identified as an impartation of authority and power to the believer. This impartation is necessary for the believer to understand the concept of authority in the spirit realm.

Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is within you." And although Jesus was given God's ultimate authority, he gives us authority to extend God's kingdom beyond ourselves. In Luke 9:1-10, Jesus gave his twelve disciples power and authority in the spirit realm. This authority was to drive out demons and cure diseases. Jesus gave them specific instructions about where to go, where to stay, what to take with them and what to leave behind. He instructed them on what to do and what to say. He also instructed them on how to respond to people.

Later, in Luke 10, he sent seventy-two more disciples out into cities that he planned to visit. Again, he gave them specific instructions as well as the authority over demons in the spirit realm. When they returned, Luke 10:17 recorded, “Then the seventy returned with joy saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name,’ to which Jesus responded, ‘Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.’”

After the resurrection and just prior to his ascension, Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 28:18, “All authority has been given me” and just prior to this, in John 20, Jesus breathed on them and said, “As my Father sent me, I also send you.” Power comes with authority. When Jesus delegated his authority to his disciples, he also gave them the ability and power that accompanies authority.

Luke recorded the words of Jesus in Luke 24:49, “Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you. But wait in Jerusalem until you are endued with the power from on high.” They waited for the baptism of the Holy Spirit for about ten days and during the Feast of Pentecost, it happened. The Holy Wind (Spirit) of God rushed into the room where the people were sitting, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. This power from on high was their authority not only to overcome the demonic forces of the kingdom of darkness, but to help other people. Peter explained to the inquisitive people what had happened. He said in Acts 2:33, “Therefore, being highly exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he (Jesus) poured out this which you now see and hear.”

Jesus realized his disciples needed the authority of the Holy Spirit to give them power to heal the sick, cast out demons and to do the works of God. Even Jesus needed the Holy Spirit to help him. At his baptism, the Father sent a dove to signify that the Holy Spirit had descended, and that Jesus had been gifted with the power and authority to overcome the demonic world.

Jesus’ ministry was only effective through the power of the Holy Spirit. According to Luke 4:1, he was full of the Holy Spirit, which helped

him endure the temptations of the Devil and to help other people. In John 5:19, 30, Jesus explained that he could do nothing without first seeing or hearing that which came from God's Spirit. Jesus confirmed this notion by saying in Matthew 12:25-27 that he casts out evil spirits by the Spirit of God. The authority of the Holy Spirit empowers people to do the works of God. There are three basic works of the Holy Spirit. (1) Draw people to Jesus. (2) Help people internally to live by the Royal Law as citizens in the kingdom. (3) Help people to help others. The Holy Spirit continually works in us to reproduce kingdom citizens and to externally work through believers to help others.

The charismatic gifts of the Spirit mentioned in Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 are spirits given by the Holy to enable us to help others. In Romans 12:6-8, Paul lists prophecy, serving, teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership and mercy as evidences of these spirits working through people to help others. In 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, he cites other spirits from the Holy Spirit whereby believers are able to help others. These include: wisdom, knowledge, faith, various healing and miracle gifts, prophecy, discernment of spirits, tongues and interpretation of tongues. In verse 7, he said these are produced in people to benefit all of the church.

In Ephesians 4:11, Paul lists ministries that operates through people as they are led by the Holy Spirit. He calls them apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. The Christian Church embraces some or all of these offices, depending on the church or denomination. But the emphasis of the charisma in each office is based upon the work being done by the Holy Spirit in the leaders to benefit all of the church.

According to Paul in 1 Corinthians 12: 28, the apostle was the first and greatest gift, probably because apostles were the ones who God endowed to lead and establish order in the church. The prophet was second because he was gifted with the ability to see the condition of the church and where the church should be going. The third was the teacher because teachers bring the proper balance in the church. The works of the pastor and evangelist are not mentioned in this text because the pastor and evangelist usually operated in the spiritual gifts that followed the teacher. They include: miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments,

diversities of tongues. The Holy Spirit deposits spirits in us for an internal work, but He also distributes spirits through us to help others.

Holy Spirit Order in the Church

The Holy Spirit brings life to the Church! He distributes spirits or gifts to people and produces power to help others. Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 16:18, “I will build my church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” As mentioned in the previous chapter, Jesus gave the Holy Spirit to believers to empower them for his service. This verse suggests that he also gives the church keys or authority that we might gain access to that power. Authority itself suggests access. The vice president of a company does not need permission to gain access to the offices of one of his managers. His authority gives him that access. The key of God’s kingdom is the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowers the believer individually and the church corporately.

Ladd believed that the church was created by Holy Spirit¹⁵³ and as such is the Temple or residence of God. This seemed to be Paul’s understanding by the use of the word temple when referencing the church. There are two Greek words that are translated temple. The Greek word *hieron* is used to identify the entire temple grounds while the Greek word *naos* is used to identify the inner sanctuary commonly called the “Holy of Holies.” It was in this inner sanctuary that the Ark of Covenant was placed and where Moses communed with God. The Jews understood *hieron* to be the house of God, but the *naos* was where God lived.

When comparing the church to the temple, Paul said, “Do you not know that you are the *naos* of God?” When Jesus referenced the destruction of the temple, he always referred to the *naos* or the residence of God. In Revelation 21:22, John explained that the Father and the Lamb (Jesus) are the *naos*; hence, there was no need of a temple in heaven.

¹⁵³ George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), p. 587.

The Understanding of “Church”

Jesus used the Greek word *ecclesia* only twice. He said in Matthew 16:18 that he would build his church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. In Matthew 18:17, he gave the disciples specific instructions on how to adjudicate offenses between people in the church. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus used the terminology of authority in the kingdom and in Matthew 18:17, he explained processes on how to use one’s authority in the church. In both, he recited the phrase, “Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

These two verses provide seven basic understandings about the church. First, the church belongs to Jesus. Second, the church has governing authority, without necessarily being the kingdom of God. Third, the church is a spiritual entity connecting heaven and earth. Fourth, the church will have difficulties and battles. Fifth, the church has been delegated to humans to maintain order among kingdom believers. Sixth, the church should view itself as victorious over demonic forces. Seventh, there is a connection between the Church and the Kingdom of God but one must not be confused to think they are one and the same.

Erickson suggested that the cognate terms in other languages provide a correct understanding of the church. The Greek word *kuriakos* and German word *kirche* both mean “belonging to the Lord.”¹⁵⁴ Thiessen taught that the church should be viewed in two senses: the universal sense and the local sense.¹⁵⁵ Both the local churches and the universal church belong to Jesus.

The New Testament provides metaphoric descriptions of the church, which helps one to know what the church should look like. And while pictures do not define an object they can express how relationally the church is connected to Jesus. These metaphors are building, body, bride,

¹⁵⁴ Erickson, p. 954.

¹⁵⁵ Thiessen, p. 407.

flock, priesthood, garden and family. Appendix G provides a chart that explains the seven metaphors of the church.

The body describes the unity that should exist in the church; the building explains the indwelling presence of God. The picture of the bride describes the intimacy between Jesus and the church and the sheep allegory explains the provision shared. The branch addresses the union or connection between Jesus and the church while the priesthood concept emphasizes the service nature of the church. Although these six are truly metaphors because we are not actually buildings, bodies and brides. The seventh metaphor is actually not a metaphor, it is our identity, for the men of women of God are sons and daughters of the Most High.

When providing an understanding of the church, one must describe the nature, purpose, and picture of the church. But also, it is equally important to describe what the church is not. The church is not the kingdom of God, nor it is a spiritual or mystical identification of the nation of Israel.

The Church and the Kingdom

After 2000 years of existence, it seems that the church has lost their original focus. Pastors tend to accentuate the growth of the church instead of extending the kingdom. Church growth is Christ's responsibility, kingdom expansion is our responsibility. We expand the kingdom when we focus on the king and tell others about him. We also expand the kingdom when we adhere to kingdom laws or Holy Spirit laws that governs or rules our personal lives and when obey Him to help others.

The New Testament uses two terms: kingdom of God and kingdom of Heaven, to describe the same thing. Matthew predominately used the phrase kingdom of heaven while other authors used the phrase kingdom of God. Thiessen suggested the kingdom of heaven can be considered an earthly kingdom during the millennium, a spiritual kingdom right now and possibly a mixture of the two, which he called Christendom.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Thiessen, p. 406.

It seems to me that God intentionally revealed his kingdom in both ways. The kingdom of heaven identifies the realm and spiritual nature of the kingdom, while the kingdom of God emphasizes the ownership and authority in the kingdom. They are not two different kingdoms but merely the expression or perspective of two different authors.

Likewise, we should not be confused to think the church and the kingdom are synonymous. The church belongs to Jesus and is comprised of people who are called out from the kingdom of darkness. It is made-up of servants in God's kingdom. The name "church" is given to the servants in God's kingdom because we have called out of the world and given a specific mission. Just prior to ascending to the Father, Jesus declared the church's responsibility. We must extend God's kingdom by adhering to the spiritual laws and by preaching and teaching others about Jesus and the good news or gospel he brought. Jesus said that this gospel would be preached until the end of the age

The Church and Israel

There are varying views about the relationship between the church and Israel. Postmillennialist, David Chilton postulates a Dominion Concept that Israel broke God's covenant resulting in God rejecting empirical Israel.¹⁵⁷ He teaches that the church has now become spiritual Israel of the New Testament and is a continuation of the Old Testament. Thiessen counters the belief with the concept that the call and mission of Israel was included in the decree of God prior to creation and Israel's rejection of God resulted in a temporary suspending of their empirical role on the earth. But according to the election of grace, they would be grafted in again to the natural root fulfilling Paul's declaration that all Israel would be saved.¹⁵⁸

Ladd offered a neutral view seeking to reconcile the concept of "spiritual Israel" without embracing David Chilton's Rejection of Israel theory. He surmised that there is a difference between empirical Israel and

¹⁵⁷ David Chilton, *Paradise Restored* (Fort Worth, Dominion Press, 1987), p. 77-82.

¹⁵⁸ Thiessen, p. 159.

spiritual Israel. He asserts that empirical Israel of the Old Testament is still a national entity and the church is “a type” and spiritual. He situationally uses the *Book of Hosea* to define the difference. Ladd pointed out that Hosea 1:9, declares Israel as “not by people” but later in Hosea 2:23 in the day of salvation, “I will say to “not My people” that you are My people and they shall say, “Thou art my God.” Ladd concludes that God has not irrevocably cast away his people and the church consists of both Jews and Gentiles. The true circumcision consists of those who worship God in spirit and truth and yield to the glory of Christ Jesus. He maintains that God does not shut the door to Israel after the flesh. His findings are consistent with Paul’s writing in Romans 11:19, “The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.”

The Mission of the Church

It also seems consistent to say that the mission of the church is the commission of the church. The Great Commission is found in five passages of Scripture: Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:44-49, John 20:15-23 and Acts 1:5-8. Each of these passages provides certain aspects of the church’s mission. Matthew 28:18-20 requires the leaders to make and baptize disciples, and then teach them to observe the commandments of Christ. Mark 16:15-18 identifies the disciples as believers and suggests proof of their belief will be found in their casting out of demons, speaking with new tongues, healing the sick while not being threatened by evil. Luke 24:44-49 and Acts 1:5-8 give instructions about what to do as it relates to receiving the power of the Holy Spirit and then where they should go to become witnesses of their faith. After receiving the Holy Spirit, they were to start in Jerusalem, proceed to Judea, then Samaria and continue until they had reached ends of the earth.

Finally, there is another passage of Scripture found in John 20:15-23 that outlines the mission for leaders of the church. He told Peter to tend the sheep, feed the sheep and to follow him. Christ requires nothing beyond these basic rudimentary tasks.

So to summarize the requirements, the church must make disciples, baptize disciples, and teach disciples to obey Jesus. They must demonstrate the power of the Holy Spirit with supernatural manifestations and they

must consider the nation of Israel (Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria) and extend the message of Christ around the world. Lastly, they must realize the church and the sheep belong to Jesus. Their responsibility is to simply tend the sheep, feed the sheep and follow the Lord in all things.

The Ordinances of the Church

One way to follow the Lord and obey what he taught is to honor and participate in the ordinances he prescribed. The church uses two terms: ordinances and sacraments to describe the ceremonial observation of the grace conveyed between Jesus and the church. The term ordinance suggests that the re-enactments of the gospel message are merely symbolic of the fact that Christ lived, died, and was resurrected from the dead. In like manner, we too must die to self, be buried and then come to new life.

Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy and other protestant denominations use the term sacrament to suggest the experience is not symbolic but the conveyance of grace to the individual. The seven sacraments of the Catholic Church are baptism, confirmation, holy communion, confession, marriage, holy orders, and anointing the sick. Most evangelical churches recognize only two ordinances: baptism and communion, suggesting these are the only direct orders from Jesus to his disciples and they are the only two that emphasize the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Evangelicals practice more than baptism and communion. Depending upon the denomination, some or most of these seven sacraments are practiced and/or considered ordinances.

On Earth as it is in Heaven

The objectivity of the church can be found in the prayer Jesus told his disciples to pray. He told the disciples in Matthew 6:9 and Luke 11:2 how to pray. He said, “Pray in this manner, ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...’” These simple words describe how the church is to manifest God’s heavenly kingdom onto the earth. The terms heaven and earth are significant because they quantify the spiritual and physical realms. Heaven is a spiritual realm filled with spiritual substances and governed by

God's kingdom. Earth exists in a physical realm that is interconnected with the spirit realm.

When Jesus performed supernatural healings, miracles and deliverances, the activities were first initiated in the unseen spirit realm. Paul explained the concept in 2 Corinthians 4:13, "And in keeping with what is written: 'I believed, therefore I have spoken.' we who have the same spirit of faith also believe and therefore we speak." Paul understood the faith message was to believe God's word that has been established in heaven so it will be manifested on the earth. Paul also explained in Romans 3:27 the law of faith.

A law, by definition, is something that happens every time when the conditions are set. For example, there are many laws of physics as it relates to motion. The law of gravity is constantly active and as long as a physical object is heavier than the weight of the air, the law of gravity works every time that object is released into the air. Similarly, in the laws of mathematics any number multiplied by zero equals zero; any positive number multiplied by a negative number is always a negative number and when two negative numbers are multiplied, the result is always positive.

Spiritual laws also work every time. The law of faith requires three things. It requires a word to be spoken, that word is believed and then the word is manifested. Jesus is the author and finisher of faith, which means he begins and completes faith. He begins faith with the word and finishes it by manifesting a person's belief. If someone hears and believes that word, then Jesus completes or manifests that word through power of the Holy Spirit. Man's faith comes by hearing, believing and responding to the word of God. This law works every time.

The law of righteousness also works every time. According 1 John 1:5-9, when we confess our sins, then Jesus is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from unrighteousness. We are able to walk in the fellowship with other believers of light because the blood of Jesus cleanses us from our sins. The law of righteousness is established in us when we are born again. It is also important to note that grace is a spirit that covers our spirit when we are born again.

According to Romans 5:1, we are declared righteous when we embrace Jesus to be the Son of God. It is an act of faith on our part and the result of that embrace is peace with God. Not only are we declared righteous, we also receive a spirit of grace that becomes a covering of glory to our spirit. This spirit of grace wards off evil and sin that is in our flesh as it that engages the battle in our minds. Hebrews 10:29 encourages us to continually obey the Lord and not give in to the temptations of the flesh. When we continue to sin, we insult the spirit of grace.

The laws of the Holy Spirit are given to us to receive the benefits of God's kingdom. It is the Father's good pleasure to give them to us. This is what Paul meant when he said, "The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

Prayer and Fasting

Prayer and fasting are disciplines of the church that teach us to deny self, take up our cross and follow him. Many of the prayers that I hear today do not sound like self-denial, cross bearing or the same obedience that we read about among first century Christians. The early church did not consider prayers to be a celestial shopping list. The purpose of their prayers was to synchronize their spirits with God. For example, Simeon's prayer in Luke 2:29 was a response to God's word. The Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ. That word, from the Holy Spirit placed him into a waiting posture. Luke confirmed it by writing, "He waited for the Consolation of Israel." This Greek phrase *παράκλησιν τοῦ Ἰσραήλ* or "*paraklesin* of Israel" means Israel's comforter or consoler. It was one of the first century titles for the Messianic deliverer who would free them from Roman oppression. Jesus' followers readily understood his comments in John 14:16 when he told them, "I will pray to the Father and He will give you **another** Consoler or Comforter (*parakletos*) who would be with them always."

Simeon was waiting for the Messiah because the Holy Spirit had spoken to him. The synchronization of our lives is explicitly revealed in Luke 2:27. The Holy Spirit led Simeon into the Temple at the same time that Joseph and Mary brought baby Jesus to the Temple to present ceremonial sacrifices, which were required by Jewish law. When Simeon

saw the newborn son, the Holy Spirit must have revealed to him that the Baby Jesus would be the Messiah. Simeon took Jesus in his arms and prayed:

“Now according to your word, Lord, let your servant depart in peace, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all people. (He will be) a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel.”

Simeon’s prayer was a response to what the Holy Spirit had previously revealed. It was a petitioned prayer for his spirit to be freed from his body, since God’s words had been fulfilled.

When Mary and Joseph completed their worship rituals and sacrifices, they left the Temple. On their way out, they met Anna, an eighty-four year old widow who gave herself to serve God by continual prayer and fasting. Luke 2:38 states that the widow saw the new born child and began to tell everyone about this baby, Jesus, who would be the Messiah, the redemption of Jerusalem. Prayers are designed to sync our spirits with the Spirit of God.

In 1 Timothy 4:3-5, Paul revealed an early church practice of honouring or giving money to widows who had no other means of support. Acts 6 discloses the first initiative of the church with the selection of deacons. The widows that Paul referred to followed Anna’s practice of spending day and night in prayers and supplications. Paul laid out requirements to Timothy about the support of those widows.

- She must be over sixty years old and the wife of one husband.
- She must have a good reputation of doing good works and children.
- She had to be hospitable to lodge strangers
- She had to wash the saints feet
- She had to cure the ills of others
- She had to diligently follow the Lord doing good works.

Continual fasting and praying kept these widows hearts in tune with the Holy Spirit.

Although Jesus taught us to cast out demons with words, according to Matt 17:21 and Mark 9:29, he said prayers and fasting were necessary to

free some people from demonic possession. It seems that denial of selfish and personal physical needs is a way to focus on the spiritual; hence, discerning of spirits is easier when people focus on the spirit realm.

Jesus prayed all night in Luke 6:9. Perhaps it was his way to stay connected to his Father in order to find direction and guidance, because when the sun came up, he called his disciples and named twelve to be apostles. Later, he gave them authority and the keys to his spiritual kingdom. Acts 1:14 records 120 of Christ followers met in a room simply to pray and offer supplications. During prayer, Peter announced the need to replace Judas, who had betrayed Jesus and later committed suicide. After giving specific instructions and qualifications of his replacement candidate, they selected two men: Joseph and Matthias. They cast lots and Matthias was selected. While still in prayer and supplication (Acts 1:14,) the Holy Spirit descended in cloven tongues of fire and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues.

Acts 3 reveals another story about Peter and John who were on their way to daily prayers. They saw a lame man begging alms at the Gate Beautiful and Peter healed the man. Instantly, the man went walking, leaping and praising God, into the Temple. The miracle caught the attention of the religious leaders and the next day Peter and John were called before the Sanhedrin to answer questions about the healing. The Council asked, “By what power or by whose name have you done this miracle?” Peter was full of the Holy Spirit and answered them with great boldness. After a discussion, the Council commanded Peter and John to discontinue talking and teaching in the name of Jesus. The two leaders went back to where the church had gathered and offered this prayer,

“Lord, you are God, who made heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them. By the mouth of your servant, David, you said, ‘Why did the nations rage and the people plot vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand and the rulers were gathered together against the LORD and against His Christ.’

For truly, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles and the people of Israel came against your holy servant, Jesus, whom you anointed, both to do whatever your hand your purpose had predetermined. Now Lord, look on their threats and grant your servants the boldness to speak your word and stretch out your

hand to heal and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of your holy servant, Jesus.”

They prayed for more boldness, to heal people and to perform signs and wonders. It seemed that their greatest need was to have boldness to do the work of the Lord in the midst of persecution. Apparently, they considered boldness to be an endowment from the Holy Spirit and not from their own personality. The Sanhedrin Council even recognized Peter and John’s boldness in Acts 4:13 as they preached Jesus. But Peter’s prayer, requested more boldness to speak God’s word and to heal those in need.

I am not suggesting that making personal requests is wrong. There are actually three kinds of petitional prayer mentioned in the New Testament. Zechariah, in Luke 1:12, prayed for his wife, Elizabeth, to produce a son. She had exceeded the age of childbirth and he was without a child to carry his lineage. Responding to his prayer, an angel appeared with the announcement of a son whom he was to name, John. Their son was born six months before Jesus and became the forerunner of Christ.

Jesus spent much time in prayer. John 17 revealed a personal prayer and provides insights about how Jesus prayed. First, his prayer was intimate. He spoke to his Father as if he was next to him having a conversation. Second, he confirmed his mission and told his Father that he had finished the assignment. Third, he requested to experience the presence (glory) of his Father and after making this request, he prayed for his disciples. Fourth, he didn’t pray that they would escape physical reality but rather that the Father would keep them from the evil one who strategically perpetuated difficulties. Fifth, he prayed that these leaders would be one as Jesus and his Father are one. Sixth, he prayed that the Father would separate them from the world, so they could receive truth. Jesus not only prayed for his immediate disciples but for those who would be discipled. Seventh, he again prayed for unity of the whole church, so the world may believe that the Father sent Jesus. Eighth, Jesus prayed that the church would see his glory that he had with the Father from the foundation of the world. Ninth, he prayed that the love of the Father would be in his church. Tenth, he prayed that the church would accept his love and allow him to be in the church. There was nothing selfish in these

ten requests. In summary, Jesus wanted the intimacy of his Father and he wanted his followers to experience that same intimacy.

In Philippians 1:19, Paul solicited the prayers of the church to grant him deliverance (salvation) and the supply of the Holy Spirit. The early church took seriously the words of Jesus when he said, “If you will ask the Father for something, He will give you the Holy Spirit.” They utterly depended and submitted to the Holy Spirit. In the Philippian letter, Paul also prayed for boldness to obey the Holy Spirit in order to do the work of the Father. His prayers of thanksgiving for the Church of Philippi as noted in Philippians in 1:3-7 was his normal distinctive style of writing. It is clear that the expansion of the church was through the direction of the Holy Spirit. Paul said, “Pray without ceasing and in everything give thanks, because this is God’s will concerning you.” The will of God in heaven is for the church to stay connected to the Holy Spirit so His will could be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Paul also asked the Ephesian churches in Ephesians 6:16 pray specifically for him. After instructing them to use truth, righteousness, peace, faith and salvation as their armor to fight opposing spirits, he wrote,

“Praying always, with all prayer and supplication, in the Spirit, for the saints and for me, that the Holy Spirit would give me the words to boldly make known the mystery of the gospel and to speak boldly as I should.”

Twice in this prayer, Paul asked for boldness.

His letter to the Church of Colossae revealed his dependence upon God. Paul wrote to the saints and told them that he had been praying prayers of Thanksgiving ever since he heard about their faith in Christ. He closed the letter in 4:2-3 encouraging them to pray and to especially pray for him that God would open doors for the word to speak the mystery of Christ.

Paul opened his letter to the Church of Thessaloniki with a prayer of thanksgiving for their work of faith, labor of love and patience in hope of the coming of Christ. He told them that he prayed day and night that God would open the door for him to visit the people and perfect that which was lacking in their faith. He closed the letter with a prayer that the

Lord would make them increase and abound in love to one another and to everyone so He might establish their hearts blameless in holiness as they await the coming of Christ.

The twelve apostles realized their greatest need as leaders was to continually give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word. The ministry of the word in this case was not for sermon preparation but rather to speak to the people giving guidance and direction, which came through prayer.

Even in the *Epistle to Philemon*, Paul prayed for his slave-owner friend and in verse 22, requested Philemon to pray that the Holy Spirit would direct his steps for a future visit. Acts 12:5 records the churches' unceasing, petitional prayers that were made for Peter's release when he was incarcerated and about to be martyred. The night before Herod was to kill him, an angel visited the jail and set him free.

The early church had an utter dependence upon God for His help. Prayer was their only connection to the supernatural. It was the only means whereby they could commune and find direction from the King. Prayer and fasting was an early church discipline that certainly produced the healings and miracles, which commonly occurred.

Healing and Miracles

Jesus indicated that healing, miracles and some deliverance come from prayer. In Mark 9:28, his disciples were unable to cast out a demon but Jesus told them privately, "This kind came out by prayer." Some translations state 'fasting and prayer' but prayer was an integral part of deliverance and the supernatural.

Today, it is common to immediately start praying for people when a request is made. But the early church seemed to do it differently. Prior to healing the people, they prayed. For example, In Acts 28:8 Paul prayed for Publius' father and after praying, he healed him. Jesus commissioned his followers to preach the gospel and heal the people. I often hear people asking God to heal other people, but Jesus tells us to heal. Obviously, we can't heal on our own but if we are syncing our spirits with the Holy Spirit, we may receive directions on how He wants us to heal others.

In Acts 9, Peter visited the home of Dorcas, who lived in Lydda. When Peter arrived at her house, people had surrounded her lifeless body and grieving her death. He entered the room and did three things. First, he asked everyone to leave the room. Second, he kneeled and prayed. Lastly, he spoke to her, calling her Tabitha, which was her Aramaic name, and told her to “Arise.” Notice that Peter kneeled and prayed then he raised her from the dead. He didn’t pray that God would raise her. He prayed in order to sync his spirit with the Holy Spirit to find direction about how or what to do.

The Bible doesn’t say that Jesus prayed and then healed but John 5:19, 30 indicate that the Father and the Holy Spirit directed him as he healed people or perform miracles. On one occasion, Jesus explained how he did it. In John 5:1-9, the story was told how Jesus visited the Pool of Bethesda and saw an invalid who had been crippled for thirty-eight years. Jesus went up to him and asked, “Do you want to be made well?” The man offered an excuse as to why wasn’t healed but Jesus paid no attention to his excuse. He simply said, “Rise, take up your bed and walk.” The healing event occurred on the Sabbath, which the Jews deemed an unlawful act, so they sought to kill him for breaking the rules of the Sabbath.

Jesus told them that his Father heals on the Sabbath and he only does what his Father does. His response angered them, so they accused him of blasphemy, making himself equal with God. Jesus simply answered in John 5:19, “The Son can do nothing of Himself. He only does what he sees his Father do.” Then he explained, “The Father shows him things and will even show him greater things like raising the dead.”

In verse 30, Jesus continued,

“I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is righteous because I do not seek my own will but the will of the Father who sent me.”

These two verses reveal how Jesus performed healings and miracles. Either he saw visions from his Father or he heard the Holy Spirit tell him what to do and he obeyed. Jesus had to stay in sync with the spiritual realm and he did it through prayer.

I have experienced similar things when praying for people. On one occasion, I saw a vision of Jesus healing a woman who had cancer. She was given only a few weeks to live and I simply did what Jesus do. In a different country, I saw an image of a young lame child learning how to walk by having his feet affixed to mine. I simply did what I saw in the vision and the baby was healed.

On other occasions, I have heard the Holy Spirit tell me to do things or have the sick person to do things. When I obeyed the Spirit's voice, the healings occurred. Jesus taught us two ways to heal others: see it and hear it. But we must be cautious not to concoct the healings ourselves. They must come from the Holy Spirit.

I have learned two keys that coincide with these revelatory images and voices. First, you simply obey. Second, your motives must be right. I recall one time the Lord told me to pray for a woman who couldn't hear. He said, "If you pray for her, I will heal her." I was in Ethiopia at the time and my first thought was, "I am going to pray for her; she will be healed; people will hear about the miracle and those needing miracles will come to me. From there, I will start an international healing ministry in Ethiopia." After the sermon, I went into the audience and prayed for the woman, but she wasn't healed. Later, on multiple occasions, I asked God why wasn't the woman healed?

About three years later, I received the answer. One of my Ethiopian students visited my office. He was in the meeting where I prayed for the woman who couldn't hear. During the conversation he asked, "Do you remember three years ago, when you first visited Ethiopia? There was a woman in the audience who couldn't speak or hear.

How could I forget. He was referring to the woman that God said He would heal if I prayed for her. So, I answered in the affirmative. The student then told me, "The Lord is helping her. She is now hearing and talking."

I was so delighted to hear the good news but later questioned why God didn't heal her three years earlier. He responded by saying, "You thought the healing was about "your ministry. The healing was about her

deliverance.” At that moment the words of Jesus in John 5:30 sounded loudly in my ears. He said, “I can do nothing by myself, but as I hear, I judge and my judgments are righteous because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent me.” Jesus was saying that our motives or why we pray will determine the result. If we pray out of “self,” our motives are impure. If we pray in obedience to the Father’s will, the healing will come. I knew that she would be healed, because the Spirit said it would happen, I am saddened that my motives prevented an immediate healing and caused her to linger for two or three years with the inability of hearing and speaking.

Financial Responsibility of Kingdom Citizens

Financial responsibility of the church was first established under the Old Testament Law. Israel’s government required all of its citizens to give ten percent of their income, which was considered the kingdom tax of its citizens. The revenues were used to underwrite the Levite priesthood, whose responsibilities were to manage the Tabernacle.

Prior to occupying the land of Canaan, the Jewish people were incarcerated by the Egyptian Pharaohs. Jacob’s sons had sold their brother, Joseph, to some traveling Bedouins going to Egypt. Joseph found great favour and soon found himself as the leader of Egypt under the Pharaoh with the responsibility to manage the Department of Commerce. God had given him a vision of great peril and famine, so over a period of three years, he was able to take possession of all of the property in the land and lease out the land to the current occupants until finally, he assessed a ten percent tax that continued even after the famine.

Over the next four centuries, the Egyptians isolated the people of Israel and used infanticide to limit their growth, without success. Moses escaped infanticide when Pharaoh’s daughter found him floating down the Nile River in his mother’s attempt to save his life. The Royal Princess claimed the child as her own and raised him in the house of Royalty. When Moses grew up and learned the secret about his national identity, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter and chose to be ill-treated with the people of God than to enjoy sin’s fleeting pleasures.

At the age of forty, Moses killed an Egyptian who was beating one of his Jewish brothers and escaped to Egypt in order to spare his own life. After forty years, he returned to Egypt, at God's behest, to deliver Israel from Egyptian captivity. Within a year after the people were free, Moses set up a government that would be run by the Levites, which included his brother, Aaron. The law was to transcend the forty year period that Israel wandered in the wilderness. It was to continue after they conquered Canaan.

Prior to his death, Moses commissioned Joshua to divide the land of Canaan among eleven tribes. The Levites were not assigned boundaries but rather were commissioned to institute a sacrificial system for the people of Israel to worship God. The Israelites were required to give ten percent of their profits to the Levites. They instituted Joseph's plan.

Numbers 18:5-32 and Deuteronomy 26:1-19 outlines the laws and procedures required by the people to present their tithe to the Levites. These texts also publish the required heave of ten percent of that tithe to the high priest, which God called "His portion." In other words, God's portion of the people's tithe was 1%.

This mandate existed until the conclusion of Samuel's reign as a judge. He had appointed his sons, Joel and Abijah to rule over Beersheeba but the people told Samuel that his sons were dishonest, they accepted bribes and perverted justice. They requested that Samuel install a king over Israel, like other nations, which he did with God's approval. As a result, taxes increased to support the royal family. This division of church and state added an additional ten percent tax assessment. From that point the Jews had to pay 20% taxes.

When Jesus instituted the church, the elders and apostles continued the same process of tithing that had been established in the Old Testament. This is evident by *The Didache* which was an early teaching and constitution of the church that reportedly came from Jesus and the apostles. The original title of *The Didache* was *The Lord's Teaching Through the Twelve Apostles to the Nations*. The title itself predates Apostle Paul's leadership in the church. Chapter 13 of *The Didache* outlines the regulation about the support of prophets. This initial document of the church still required the church

leaders to be supported by the tithe of the people's income. Also, if they had a resident prophet or apostle, then 10% of the tithe went to him. If they didn't, then 10% of the tithe went to the poor. The operations of most denominations are funded by freewill offerings or by percentage of the tithe. It is considered the kingdom tax.

Gathering of Believers

The initial gathering of believers occurred during times of prayer in the Jewish Temple. Peter and John were on their way to prayer when Peter received a word of healing for a lame man who hadn't walked since he was born. Everyone recognized him as the man who daily begged at the Gate called Beautiful. Someone carried him to the gate each day to beg for alms, which was the primary occupation for the poor. After the healing, Peter was able to preach a message about Jesus, giving him credit for the miracle.

Believers also gathered in people's homes. In 1 Corinthians 1:2-13, some of the family members of church leader Chloe informed Paul of the many divisions occurring in the church. Chloe's Household would be considered a house church of the Church of God in Corinth. In Paul's epistles, he typically identified close associates. In Romans 16:5,10,14 he mentioned the household of Priscilla and Aquila, the household of Aristobulus and the household of Narcissus. These were meeting places of the church. Paul also used a lecture hall owned by Tyrannus where he taught the gospel of the kingdom for two and half years. The Greek word σχολε (pronounced *skhol-ay'*) is the derivative of the English word school.

Somewhere around 233-256 AD, church buildings were built for the purpose of worship.¹⁵⁹ The oldest known Christian church building is Dura-Europos in Syria. It is not really a cathedral, but rather a church edifice built with stone. The country of Jordan maintains that it is home of the ruins of Aqaba Church, which is considered the world's first "purpose-built" church. It dated between 293 and 303 making it older than the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and Church of the Nativity in Jerusalem

¹⁵⁹ Wikipedia, "List of oldest church buildings" Retrieved 6 September 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_oldest_church_buildings 2018.

which were built in the late 320s. The Etchmiadzin Cathedral, located in Armenia, is the oldest cathedral that was completed in 303 AD.

Prior to the building of churches, persecution pushed corporate worship into the homes of the more wealthy church leaders. Suffice to say, somewhere along the way, the buildings became more important than the people who worshipped there. As a result, buildings became known as churches instead of facilities or houses where the church met. The gathering of believers has existed since the church's inception.

Gatherings are important and should equip the church for ministry. Paul said in Ephesians 4:9-16 that Jesus sent certain gifts, namely apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip the saints to do the work of ministry. These leaders were responsible to equip the church to look like Jesus. Their responsibilities included;

- Bring unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God.
- Help the church to “grow up” and not be moved by every “spiritual teaching.”
- The leadership was to combat the trickery of men and the craftiness of evil.
- The leaders were to speak truth in love, which will help the church to grow up in all things.
- The leaders were to teach the members to work together for the edification of itself in love.

The advancement of God's kingdom comes through its servants. Jesus chose the church to be the medium that advances the kingdom and teaches the good news until he returns. We must listen to and obey the Holy Spirit so the church will become what Jesus desires.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ESCHATOLOGICAL ORDER

Theories of Eschatology

The final theological chapter of the human experience is defined by the Greek words *eschatos logos*, meaning the study or reasoning of the final things. Included in the theological studies of eschatology are ideas about the intermediate state, the second coming of Christ, the final judgment and state of humanity. When writing a systematic theology of the kingdom of God, the discussion should be more about the King and his kingdom than the final state of his subjects; albeit, the Scriptures have much to say about the end times as it relates to the people of God, since it is the hope of their life. But one should never forget the kingdom of God is not about the subjects; the focus should be on the king and His kingdom. This chapter will address the various theories of eschatology, the day of the Lord, the day of judgment and the day of glory.

William Newell claims that the *Book of Revelation* is the only prophetic book in the New Testament; therefore, the only divine and accurate account of present and future things.¹⁶⁰ He also claims the book is not sealed and can be understood only if Scripture is compared to Scripture. It appears that some of the statements of Newell are correct, but Newell's interpretation has some shortcomings, including the fact that the book was not actually canonized until 419 A.D. replacing the *Apocalypse of Peter* and leaving the first four centuries without a prophetic edict. It seems consistent then that one can establish an eschatology without the *Book of Revelation* by analysing the remaining sixty-five books.

It also seems reasonable to conclude that the vision of John on the Island of Patmos only supported what was already known about the return of the Lord and end-time judgment. We certainly do not want to eliminate

¹⁶⁰ William Newell, *The Book of The Revelation* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1935), p. v.

the *Book of Revelation* in our eschatology but rather include it with post resurrection church fathers and pre-Christian non-canonical prophetic writers of the Old Testament.

There are four primary theological views about eschatology, including the symbolic view, the preterist view, the historical view, and the futurist view.¹⁶¹ The symbolic view, sometimes called idealist, maintains that John's vision can only be interpreted symbolically in the same way other apocalyptic literature was interpreted in that day.

The preterist view was proposed by Jesuit Luis de Alcasar who lived between 1554-1613. Full preterists teach that all of the Olivet Discourse found in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 focuses upon the destruction of the Jewish temple in 70 A.D. while the partial preterists view suggests only a portion of the message referred to 70 A.D. Proponents of the preterist view are R. C. Sproul, Hank Hanegraaff, Rousas Rushdoony, Kenneth Gentry, Gary North and David Chilton.¹⁶²

The historical view of the *Book of Revelation* sees it as a panorama of the history of the Western church from the first century to the second coming of Jesus. At stake in this position is the naming of the Roman Catholic Church as the evil empire, which the Lord returns to pour out his judgments in the last days. Many popular theologians held this view including John Wycliffe, John Knox, William Tyndale, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Charles Finney, C.H. Spurgeon and Matthew Henry.¹⁶³

The futurist view teaches the Olivet Discourse and Revelation 4-19 as a prophetic message yet to be fulfilled. They maintain that the final book must be taken literally in the same way all other Scripture must be literally accepted. The futurists claim is supported by early church fathers such as Clement of Rome, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus and Tertullian and was

¹⁶¹ Kenneth D. Boa, Ph.D., *The Open Bible Expanded Edition*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985), p. 1299.

¹⁶² Patrick Zukuran, "Four Views of Revelation," *Probe For Answers* (Posted 20 April 2009) <https://www.probe.org/four-views-of-revelation> Retrieved 29 July 2016.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

propagated until Origen introduced an allegorical interpretation, which was later embraced and popularized by Augustine.¹⁶⁴ Modern proponents of this view are Charles Ryrie, John Walvoord, Dwight Pentecost, Gordon Lindsay, and novelist Tim LaHaye.

Much of the debate about eschatology focuses on the concept of the millennium. Those who hold the futurist view are called chiliasts and believe a rapture will occur prior to the millennial reign of Jesus on the earth. These pre-millennialists views are categorized by historical premillennialism (those who embrace the historical interpretation) and dispensational premillennialism (those who teach the futuristic view.)

Sub categories of premillennialism points to the rapture of the church and a seven-year tribulation period. Pre-tribulation premillennialism believes the church will be raptured or taken out of the earth prior to the great tribulation, while those on the earth will encounter seven years of tribulatory events. Mid-tribulation premillennialism believes the Great tribulation will extend for seven years and the rapture will occur in the middle of the seven-year period. Post-tribulation premillennialism asserts that the rapture will occur after the seven years of judgment. Premillennialism is the most divisive and complex view as it seeks to explain various New Testament Scriptures.

Postmillennialism, which is the belief that Jesus will ultimately return after a symbolic millennial period, is embraced by the preterist proponents. The premillennial faction identify them as a-millennialists, suggesting that they do not believe in the millennium. But postmillennialists refute that assigned name, combating their preference to be called nunc-millennialists or now-millennialists. Their view is supported by the idealist or symbolic interpretation of Revelation because they believe that Christ currently rules his kingdom on earth through his people. Nunc-millennialism or now-millennialism is also referred to as realized millennialism.

These four systems of beliefs establish an eschatological viewpoint. They didn't exist prior to Christ because modern eschatology is based upon

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

one's view of the *Book of Revelation*. It seems reasonable to think that eschatology or the study of the end-times existed long before the church was started, and our consideration of end-time events must be based upon Jesus Christ more so than his subjects. With this in mind, it seems plausible to create an eschatology that existed prior to Jesus and was perfected with the message that Jesus preached.

Canonization of Eschatology

As noted before, one's eschatology should be pre-Christian and focus on the message of the King himself. At the same time, *The Book of Revelation* is a relevant book in the Bible, canonized by the early church fathers, and should not be viewed as the primal concern of eschatology for three reasons.

First, the *Book of Revelation* may or may not have been written by John. If John was not the original writer, then it has no apostolic authority. Second, the *Book of Revelation* was not considered part of the canon until 419 A.D. replacing the *Apocalypse of Peter*. This meant that during the first four centuries, the primary eschatological view focused on the God's judgments of people's sin, and the levels of torture and pain that sinners must endure for their sins.

The Apocalypse of Peter was a story about Peter and the other apostles asking Jesus to show them what the future world looked like. In response, Jesus showed them the ominous glory of God's people, who looked like shining angels and everyone was worshipping God. After showing them the glorified state of believers, they asked Jesus to show them what would happen to those people who failed to obey the Lord. In response, Jesus showed them a squalid, and it was the place of punishment. Punishing angels tortured people because of their sins. Blasphemers hung by their tongues. Adulterous women hung by the hair of their head over a fiery murky, miry pit awaiting their fall. Also, men who committed adultery with them, hung by their feet with their heads resting in the mire.

Murderers and those who conspired with them were cast into a place that was full of evil snakes. They had been smitten by those beasts, and writhing to and fro from the punishment. At the same time, the souls

of the murdered stood and looked upon the punishment of those murderers and said: “O God, thy judgment is just.”

Women who aborted their children were sitting in a lake of filth and gore up to their necks and their children sat next to them with sparks of fire coming from their eyes smiting their abortionist mother in her eyes. Other men and women were cast into a dark place. As they burned from their waists down, they were beaten by evil spirits, and their inwards were eaten by restless worms. These were those who persecuted the righteous and delivered Christians into the hands of the political, and religious persecutors.

These were some of the punishments that Peter saw and wrote about. He also included punishments for slanderers, false witnesses, those who took advantage of the poor with heavy interest. Harsh punishments awaited the homosexuals and idolaters. We can only surmise what the church would look like if *The Apocalypse of Peter* remained canonized instead of *The Apocalypse of John*.

The third reason we should not view the *Book of Revelation* as the primal concern of eschatology is based upon another book that existed 180 years before Christ. In my book, *The Impact of the Book of Enoch on Christianity and Other Religions*, Appendix H compares at least twenty scriptures from the *Book of Revelation* that are similar or identical to *The Book of Enoch*. Since the *Book of Enoch* was written first, there are only three possible conclusions to explain these identical comparing texts. One, John copied from Enoch’s writings. Two, both John and Enoch had a similar source for their writings. Three, both Enoch and John had the same vision. If the third option applies, it lends credibility to the *Book of Enoch* also being canonized. We conclude our support that eschatology does not need the *Book of Revelation* to define it. On the other hand, *Book of Revelation* should support one’s eschatology found in other canonical texts.

My Personal Eschatology

It seems that the doctrine of eschatology has been seen throughout the centuries of the church to be an issue of divisiveness instead of unity. In John 17, Jesus prayed that the church would be one or unified; however,

many of the doctrines of the church has only brought division. The proponents of Calvinism and Armenianism has not brought unity. Instead, they have instilled discontent, descension and division. Likewise, the four eschatological theories based upon the *Book of Revelation* has not brought unity. They have instilled a division of theory, denomination and philosophy.

My personal eschatology does not focus on any of the concepts of eschatology found in the *Book of Revelation*. It is likely that the vision John recorded had nothing to do with eschatology except to declare the book is a revelation of Jesus Christ. It is a book about worship and warfare. It is a book about Christ's judgment on his three enemies. These enemies were described in Revelation 12 and 13 and revealed as the demonic system, the political system and the religious system.

My understanding of eschatology can be concluded by naming only three aspects or statements about the end-time. First, we need to look for the literal return of Jesus Christ. He is literally returning to earth. Second, his national heritage, Israel, has a place of significance in the last days. He told Jerusalem that they would not see him again until they said, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD." Jesus said that he was sent to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God to the lost sheep of Israel. He then described to his disciples that they were to preach the gospel first in Jerusalem (capitol of Judea), then to Samaria (capitol of northern tribes), and thirdly to Judea his tribal people and identity and finally, they were to spread the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth.

These directions were intentional. Jesus was a Jew; his mother was a Jew; his family members were Jews. To him, nationality was important. Although Jesus will return to earth as the Son of God, his primary mission at first was to preach the gospel to his people. Paul anticipated a revival among the Jewish people when he wrote that all Israel would be saved.

The third concept declaring my eschatology has to do with the words of Jesus. It is my opinion that the words Jesus spoke, which was written in the gospels, are completely sufficient to establish an eschatological doctrine.

What Did Jesus Say?

Matthew and Luke wrote the eschatology of Jesus. They told the story about Jesus' interaction with his disciples as they walked from the Upper Room, where they celebrated Passover, to the Garden of Gethsemane, where he was arrested. As they were walked away from the Temple Gate one could see an image of an engraved grapevine with branches embedded into the gate, Jesus looked at the grapevine and said to them, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener." This statement helped his followers to understand his Messianic mission.

There are several Old Testament passages that reference Israel as the vine including: Psalm 80:8-16, Isaiah 5:1-7, Jeremiah 2:21, Ezekiel 15:1-8, 17:5-10, 19:10-14, and Hosea 10:1. The vine was a symbolic image of Israel and specifically as they rebelled against God. Ezekiel 15:1-8 says the wood from the vine is worthless and only good for fire, which is similar to what Jesus told his followers what would happen to them in verse 6 if they did not remain with him. On the other hand, Jesus said, If you remain in me and my words remain you, then you can ask whatever you want and it will be done for you. Their obedience would do three things: honor the Father, produce much fruit and prove that they were Christ's followers."

As they left the Temple, Jesus pointed to the huge stones that supported the Temple and said, "You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down." The disciples pondered what he meant as they walked to the place where they prayed.

After getting to the top of the Mount of Olives, Jesus sat down in the Garden of Gethsemane. They could all view the beautiful Temple across the deep ravine that Jesus said would be razed. His disciples came to him privately and asked three questions about the destruction of the temple that he said would occur. First, they asked, "When will the temple be destroyed and the huge stones be demolished? Second, "What will be the sign of your coming?" And third, "What will be the sign of the end?" In other words, "What is your eschatology?"

There are two things that we should know about Jesus' answer that will help us understand why he said what he said. It has been over two thousand years since he answered them, so in retrospect, it is easier to explain his answers. The first thing we should know is that Jesus answered their last question first. The last question was, "What will be the sign of the end?" And that was the first question that Jesus answered.

The second thing that we should know is the message of the Messiah has always been about judgments. The Old Testament prophets pointed to the time when the Kingdom of Israel would be re-established and what would happen at that time. Included in their predictions were the judgments against the people of Israel, because they continually disobeyed God and found themselves judged.

Ezekiel clearly explained the types of judgments that would be upon Jerusalem, or any country who sinned against God. In Ezekiel 14:12-21, he described four kinds of judgment. (1) Political judgment, represented by the sword, which was used for fight wars. (2) Economic judgment in the Bible was indicated by famines. (3) Usually wild animals represented spiritual judgment, as seen in the beasts of Revelation 12 and 13, where John described the three enemies of Christ. They were illustrated by a dragon, a beast from the ocean and a beast from the earth. These three beasts represented the demonic, political and religious systems, which were the only enemies that Jesus faced on earth. (4) Physical judgment in Ezekiel was represented by plagues, could be any kind of pestilences or even weather-related storms, floods, earthquakes, etc. that causes physical destruction and death.

When Jesus began answering the disciples three questions, he started by pointing to all of these judgments that were mentioned in the Old Testament and said, these things are going to happen, but they are only the beginning of birth pangs, indicating the birthing of a new age.

He warned them about being deceived, even by those who claimed that Jesus was the Messiah. He said, "Be cautious that no one misleads you." He predicted that people would come, and name Jesus as the Messiah, but they would mislead many. He predicted that people in the church would be deceived by religious systems and indicated that it is a type of spiritual

judgment. Then Jesus mentioned wars and conflicts in kingdoms and told them not to be concerned because those things would happen. Jesus said it wasn't a sign of his coming or a sign of the end, but it was a political judgment that would occur until he returns at the end of the age. Jesus also said economic judgment would come, which is demonstrated by famines etc. And lastly, Jesus talked about physical judgment, which was illustrated by earthquakes etc. Jesus said these four judgments: spiritual, political, economic and physical judgments would occur, but it was only the beginning of the birthing of the eternal age.

After listing these four types of judgments, Jesus said the following things would occur right up until the time of his return and the end of age. They include: persecution, martyrdom, deceptive false prophets, lawlessness and church people waning from his kingdom. He explained that these temptations would be like an onslaught from the devil, but those who endured to the end would be saved. Finally, he answered the disciples third question. He said, "And the gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole earth as a testimony to the nations of the world and THEN the end would come.

After answering the last question about the end of the age, Jesus answered their first question about the destruction of Temple and described an event that possibly occurred around 70 A.D. He referenced Daniel 9:27; 11:31 and 12:11 and used the term "abomination of desolation." Prophet Ezekiel, Daniel's contemporary, also used the term in Ezekiel 33:29; 36:34. Gordon Lindsay suggested that period of time could be two-fold. First, it occurred in 168 BC when Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the temple of God but that was only a type of the anti-Christ that would come and be destroyed at the end of the Great Tribulation.¹⁶⁵ Lindsay's initial point should be embraced because the time period of Antiochus Epiphanes had already lapsed and Jesus referenced a Gentile leader, who would sometime in the future destroy the physical Temple, stone by stone.

¹⁶⁵ Gordon Lindsay, *The Prophecies of Daniel* (Dallas: Christ For The Nations, 1985), p.88-89.

The preterists suggest that the event Jesus referenced must have occurred under the command of future Emperor Titus, with Tiberius Julius Alexander¹⁶⁶ as his second-in-command. They besieged and conquered the Jerusalem, which had been controlled by Judean rebel factions since 66 AD, following the Jerusalem riots that occurred in the same year and the Judean Free Government was formed in Jerusalem.

Lindsay maintained that it will be a future event, just prior to the second coming of Christ, as stated in the context. He listed six reasons for his belief. The last of which seems to be critical to his supposition. In Matthew 24, 29-31, Jesus used the word “immediately.”

“Immediately after the suffering of those days, *the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven will be shaken.* Then, the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn. They will see *the Son of Man arriving on the clouds of heaven* with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet blast, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

Leon Wood agrees with Lindsay and emphasizes that the time immediately preceding the return of Jesus is commonly called by premillennialists, “*The Great Tribulation.*”¹⁶⁷ And while the premillennialists suggest *The Great Tribulation* is a seven year period, Jesus does not give a date or time period. He did tell the people to pray that the abomination of desolation not occur in the winter months because of the extreme difficulty people would have fleeing to the mountains of Judea but his statement “this is only the beginning” indicates that *The Great Tribulation Period* started at that time but would not end until immediately prior to his return.

It seems that Jesus was more concerned with the people at the time than he was the Temple. He told the people living in Judea to flee to mountains and spoke of the urgent nature of the attack, cautioning everyone to flee quickly and not to worry about getting personal

¹⁶⁶ Wikipedia, “Siege of Jerusalem (70 CE)” Retrieved 15 September 2018 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_\(70_CE\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_(70_CE)) 2018.

¹⁶⁷ Leon Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), p. 315.

belongings. He said the women who were pregnant or those who were nursing would have a difficult time. Then he said something following those warnings that might suggest the timing of the invasion. He said, “Pray that this doesn’t happen in the winter or on the Sabbath because it would intensify the problem and it would cause greater suffering than what has ever been experienced.” The mention of a season and a day doesn’t sound like Jesus was referencing seven years of tribulation.

Luke 21:32-36 also included Jesus’s admonition to pray for strength to escape the travesties in order to stand before the Son of Man. Both of these are consistent with his prayer in Matthew 5:13 and Luke 11:4, “Deliver us from evil.”

The Great Tribulation was first named in the *Book of Enoch* by Methuselah as he narrated his father (Enoch’s) memoirs. He wrote in 1 Enoch 1:1

“The following was Enoch’s prophetic blessing over the elect and righteous, who will be living in *The Day of Tribulation*, when all the wicked and godless will be removed.”

Also, in 1 Enoch 79:3-6, the prophet Enoch called it the *Days of Sinners*. He recorded in his memoirs a more vivid description of what would occur. He wrote:

In the days of sinners, the years shall be shortened. Their seed shall be backward in their prolific soil; and everything done on earth shall be subverted and disappear in its season. The rain shall be restrained, and heaven shall stand still. In those days, the fruit of the earth shall be late and not flourish in their season and in their season the fruits of the trees shall be withheld. The moon shall change its laws and not be seen at its proper period. But in those days shall heaven be seen, and barrenness shall take place in the borders of the great chariots in the west. Heaven shall shine more than when illuminated by the orders of light; while many chiefs among the stars of authority shall err, perverting their ways and works.

In Chapter Four of *The Epistle of Barnabas*, the apostle used the same quote from 1 Enoch 79:3-6 as it related to the church’s battle against the Judaizers. Jesus also inserted a portion of the quote from the *Book of Enoch*. He said in Matthew 24:22, “And if those days had not been cut

short, no one would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, those days will be cut short.” Although Jesus didn’t credit Enoch for the quote, Barnabas did and he called it Scripture.

It is important to understand that the persecution of the church first started with the Judaizers, so the church naturally viewed them as the enemy and the beginning of the end times and Christ’s return. Jesus mentioned *The Abomination of Desolation* as a significant time of the ongoing warfare and persecution with the destruction of the temple.

The prophets of the Old Testament predicted the same events speaking of celestial shakings when the sun would be darkened, the moon not give its light and stars fell from heaven. Jesus predicted in Matthew 24:29-31 that the following would happen just prior to his return.

“Immediately after the suffering of those days, *the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven will be shaken.* Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn. They will see *the Son of Man arriving on the clouds of heaven* with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet blast, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

Jesus’ message about his second coming is analysed as follows:

- A great suffering of God’s people will occur from the beginning of the church age until the time of his return. Thus far, that period has been over two thousand years.
- After the great suffering on earth, a celestial fallout would occur including the darkening of the sun and moon and falling stars.
- The sign of the Son of Man would appear in the heavens causing all the tribes to mourn.
- People will actually see Jesus as he returns. They will see his power and they will see his glory.
- A loud trumpet blast will sound and Jesus will send his angels to the north, south, east and west to gather his elect.

There are other things Jesus mentioned in verses 36-44. First, no one knows when it will occur, not even the angels. The secrecy of Christ’s coming rests with the Father alone; however, there would be clues. Second,

Jesus coming would occur similarly to the days of Noah and the flood. It came when everyone was going about their normal lives. For example, two men would be working in the field. One would be taken and the other left. Two women would be grinding grain with a mill. One would be taken and the other one left. Third, Jesus will return, when we don't think he will; therefore, we must be ready and expectant.

After giving several parables to remind his followers to stay ready, Jesus expounded on his second coming in Matthew 25. He said,

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate people from one another like a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.”

The phrase “come in his glory” illustrates how Jesus will appear. He appeared in the same way that he appeared to Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration. The phrase “having angels with him” fulfills the prophetic word of Jude 1:14-15, which was a quote from 1 Enoch 2:1, Jude wrote:

“Now Enoch, the seventh in descent beginning with Adam, even prophesied of them, saying, ‘Look! The Lord is coming with thousands and thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all, and to convict every person of all their thoroughly ungodly deeds that they have committed, and of all the harsh words that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.’”

Jude quoted the exact text of Enoch except for one phrase. Enoch wrote, “He will execute judgment upon all and destroy the ungodly,” which Enoch referred to the destruction of the Nephilim and their progeny. Jude said at Christ's second coming, he would do two things. First, he would convict every one of their ungodly deeds they have committed. Second, he will convict ungodly sinners of the words they have spoken against him. He failed to mention that Jesus would destroy the ungodly. Presumably, this referred to the fallen race of angels, who rebelled against God and his kingdom.

Jesus provided a picture in Matthew 25 about how he would adjudicate people. He declared blessings upon those who will inherit the

kingdom. These are people who fed the hungry, provided water for the thirsty, provided shelter to the stranger and clothing to those who were without. It also included caring for the sick and those who were incarcerated. These people received eternal life. Likewise, those selfish people who only cared about themselves and none other, would receive eternal punishment.

The question of the timing of Christ's return was also addressed in Mark 13:32. Jesus said, "But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." While Matthew said no one on earth or in heaven (people and angels) knew the time of Christ's coming, Mark included the fact that not even Jesus knew the time when he would reveal himself in glory.

Luke had no more clues about Christ's coming but he used two phrases that validated other texts. In Luke 17:25 he called the Age of Sinners, mentioned by Enoch, as the Times of the Gentiles. Secondly, he listed all the heavenly and earthly calamities and said, "So will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed." In other words, Jesus may not necessarily come a long distance from a heavenly planet. He may simply be revealed in the spiritual realm as an appearing and unveiling of the spirit world.

The doctrine of the coming of the Lord has been debated throughout history but there are three things that remain consistent in both the Old and New Testament. It will be the day of the Lord; it will be a day of judgment; it will be a day of glory.

The Day of the Lord

The eschatological debate only intensified when Jesus came onto the scene and throughout the New Testament era. The Old Testament prophets understood the concept of the last days' judgment as an event when God would come to earth to wage war against the ungodly and those who opposed Israel. They preached that it would be a dreadful time of celestial anomalies that would occur just before the Lord would come in his glory.

The Old Testament prophets had much to say about the final judgment. Joel 2:28-32 stated that Yahweh would pour out His spirit in the last days and then he would show wonders in the heavens and earth. The sun would turn to darkness and the moon into blood just before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. And those who call upon His name would be saved.”

In Acts 2:17, Peter announced that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the subsequent adoration of God by the disciples in unknown languages was a sign that end times had arrived but they only experienced the revival of the spirit and not the final destruction of the world and the return of the Messiah.

The *Book of Revelation* is a written vision explaining from a heavenly perspective how Christ’s coming will completely destroy his enemies even symbolically naming them in Revelation 12 and 13 as the demonic system, political system and religious system. But the vision fails to provide the time of this occurrence. The understanding of the day of the Lord from an Old Testament perspective included the Messianic leader described as the son of man who would bring justice to the land and judgment upon evil doers.

Jesus consistently told us that the day of his return was secretly hidden in the knowledge of the Father. Perhaps the wisdom of not knowing the day or hour was to keep the church in a state of preparedness. Jesus kept saying that we must be ready and prepared. One must ask, “What kind of judgment should we prepare?”

Day of Judgment

One of the most prolific Messianic scenes of the Old Testament is found in Daniel 7:1-8. In a vision, the prophet saw four huge beasts come up out of the sea and one by one they were identified. Daniel wrote in verse 7-10,

“While I was watching, thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His attire was white like snow; the hair of his head was like lamb’s wool. His throne was ablaze with fire and its wheels were all aflame. A river of fire was streaming forth and proceeding from his presence. Many thousands were ministering

to him; Many tens of thousands stood ready to serve him. The court convened, and the books were opened.”

Daniel said he kept watching until all the beasts were destroyed even though they were permitted to live for a while. The vision continued and in verses 13 and 14, Daniel wrote:

“Then coming in the clouds of the sky, one like a son of man was approaching. He went up to the Ancient of Days and was escorted before him. To him was given ruling authority, honor, and sovereignty. All peoples, nations, and language groups were serving him. His authority is eternal and will not pass away. His kingdom will not be destroyed.”

Daniel watched the vision play out before him, where the Ancient of Days was seated on a blazing throne while a millions (angels) ministered to Him and a hundred million (people) stood before His court as the books of judgment were opened. Isaiah 13:9-11 announced a similar message that the day of the Lord would be a dreadful time when the Lord would punish the world for its evil and the wicked for its iniquity.

Like Daniel, Enoch had a vision of the day of judgment and said it would affect ungodly people performing ungodly deeds in an ungodly way and against those who speak against the Lord. Collins pointed out that the *Similitudes of Enoch* uses the word messiah or “anointed one” with reference to the son of man who was called the righteous one. *1 Enoch 48:2* said the Ancient of Days, son of Man and Lord of Spirits were together before the sun, moon, and stars were formed. The herald of the Trinity was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were written about 160 years before the birth of Jesus. This strengthens the notion that the early church believers understood the divine nature of Jesus at least in the last forty days after the resurrection.¹⁶⁸ I agree with Collins that the understanding of God’s judgment of the end of the world was predicted before Abraham.

Jude, the brother of Jesus, quoted *1 Enoch 2:1* saying,

¹⁶⁸ Collins, p. 172.

“Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousand of His saints to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

The early church disciples embraced the ascension of Jesus with a common understanding that he would return again and when reviewing the events surrounding the day of the Lord, they turned to the Old Testament. Obadiah 1:15 stated the day of the Lord would come against Edom and all nations and they would reap what they had sowed. Joel 1:15 declared that the day of the Lord would come as destruction from the Almighty.

Ezekiel 30:3 declared the day of the Lord to be a judgment against many nations including Egypt, Ethiopia, Chad, Libya and Lydia bringing a total desolation. Amos 5:18 confirmed that the day of the Lord would be a time of weeping and wailing and full of darkness and not light. He said it would be like a man fleeing from a lion and running into a bear. People would not be able to escape the day of Judgment.

Zephaniah 1:7, 14 prophesied that the day of the Lord would happen quickly. The Minor Prophet used the Hebrew term *gibbor* or mighty warrior, to describe the ones who would cry out. This is the same description that Moses gave the Nephilim who were mentioned in Genesis 6:4, referencing the population of giants that are assigned for judgment. Zephaniah described the day of the Lord as a day of judgment and distress. It would be a day of devastation and desolation. It would be day of darkness and gloominess. It would be a day of clouds and thick darkness. It would be a day of trumpet and alarm and would bring distress upon men because they sinned against the Lord.

Isaiah 13:6 described the event as a day of wailing because of the destruction that would come from the Almighty. The stars of heavens and the constellations will not give their light, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give light. Isaiah said that Yahweh would shake the heavens and cause the earth to move out of its place. It will be a day of wrath of the Lord of Host.

Zechariah 14:1 announced the day of the Lord would come when Yahweh gathered all nations against Jerusalem and the Lord would fight against those nations as he sets his feet on the Mount of Olives causing an earthquake. Verse 9 declares at that time, the Yahweh would be King over all the earth.

The Old Testament prophets predicted the total destruction of the enemy. They announced that the day of the Lord would be a day of judgment. But they also said it would be a day of glory.

Day of Glory

The Scriptures seem to conflict as to what will happen when the Lord returns. Some prophets announce a day of wrath and judgment while others proclaim it to be a day of glory. These two contrasting announcements do not conflict but rather compliment Jesus' eschatology. The day of the Lord will be a day of wrath and judgment upon the evil world; it will also be a day of glory for the people of God.

In Matthew 16:27, Jesus stated, "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels and then He will reward each according to his works. Jesus also said in Matthew 24:30 that the Son of Man will appear in heaven and the all the tribes of the earth will mourn and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Quoting Enoch, Jude said that Jesus would come with multiple ten thousand saints, but one must consider the nature of these "saints." There are two options in the debate about their identities. Those maintaining pre-tribulation premillennial views suggest they are the redeemed believers who have been raptured from the earth and return with Jesus to fight against evil? Included in this number would be deceased believers who have died in faith. They too will accompany Jesus on his return? The opposing argument suggests they are angels or servants of God who will come with Jesus. We ask, "Who are these holy ones that will accompany Jesus when he returns?"

The word "saints" comes from the Greek word *ἅγιος* (pronounced *ha-gee-ab-gos*) and it means holy ones. It is easy to understand

why believers would be called saints because God requires them to be holy. Both Old and New Testament Scriptures (Leviticus 11:45; 19:2; 20:7, 26; 21:8; 1 Peter 1:16) quote Yahweh's command for His people to be holy as He is holy. Notice that God didn't say "Do holy as I am holy," He said, "Be holy as I am holy." His demand suggests that humanity has an intrinsic ability to be holy, but it also suggests that humanity has the ability not to be holy.

The idea of holiness is a separation of one thing from another thing. God is holy because He is above everything else. Traditional scholars suggest that believers are holy because they are separated from the world. It seems to me that God's orders to be holy was more than a separation from the world. He asserts that the word "holy" is a spiritual term contrasted by the flesh that man contends with daily. I surmise that God's command for His people to be holy was a command to be spiritual and not fleshly. When man tries to separate himself from the world on his own, the result is a certain legalism that is contrastingly different than the spiritual life God wants believers to live. When man lives by the spirit and not the flesh, his life will be full of joy, peace, and righteousness. He will be holy.

While it is true that God's people are called saints or holy ones, Daniel 8:13 also documents that angels are saints or "holy ones" identifying the very nature of angels as holy spirit beings. Jesus' brother in Jude 1:14-16, confirmed Enoch's prophecy by saying, "Look! The Lord is coming with thousands and thousands of his saints, to execute judgment on all, and to convict every person of all their thoroughly ungodly deeds that they have committed, and of all the harsh words that ungodly sinners have spoken against him." It seems logical that the identity of the holy ones were angels for the following reasons. First, Enoch's story was an engagement with angels and the historical documentation of a fallen angel called Nephilim. It would only seem natural for Enoch to consider God coming to earth with his angels to fight against other angels.

Second, the purpose of their descent was to execute judgment on all, and to convict every person of all their thoroughly ungodly deeds that they have committed, and of all the harsh words that ungodly sinners have spoken against him. The only reason glorified saints would need to come

with Jesus would be to serve as witnesses at a trial when people are being convicted of their ungodly deeds and harsh words they spoken against God. It seems inconsistent that the Lord would need men as witnesses since he knows the hearts of all men.

Third, Jesus said in Matthew 16:27; 24:31; Mark 13:27,41 that he would send his angels to gather all the elect and to gather all of those who have caused sinned and broken the Royal Law to be judged and held accountable for their actions. In closing his letter, Jude prayed that the Lord would keep his people from stumbling and present them faultless before the presence of his glory.

The theological term for this day of glory is glorification. Paul confirmed the occasion in 1 Corinthians 15:51-54 when he said that in a blink of the eye moment, the dead would be raised incorruptible and all believers would be changed. At this time, mortal bodies become immortal, that which is corruptible will become incorruptible and bodies that have been buried will be raised in glory, the natural body is buried because of weakness but the spiritual body is resurrected and glorified in power.

John explained in his second letter, “Dear friends, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that whenever it is revealed we will be like him, because we will see him just as he is. And everyone who has hope and is focused on him purifies himself, just as Jesus is pure.”

When Jesus was on earth, he prayed to his Father in John 17:5, “Glorify me with Yourself with the glory I had with You before the world was.” This request seems simple, but it helps believers to not only know the relationship that Jesus had with the Father before his incarnation but also the kind of relationship believers will have with them at glorification.

When Jesus returns as king, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, all creation, with the exception of the fallen angels and those influenced by them, will be redeemed. The consummation of the age will occur as documented by Paul in I Corinthians 15:24-26,

“Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, when he has brought to an end all rule and all

authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be eliminated is death.”

It will be a time of change. It will be an experience of immortality. It will be a complete feeling of purity. It will be an utter sense of incorruptibility. It will be an experience of light and glory that presently exists in the unseen spirit world. It will be heaven on earth.

CONCLUSION

The Systematic Theology of the Gospel of the Kingdom must focus on six primary biblical concepts: (1) the eternal message and divine nature of the king, (2) the establishment and order of the kingdom, (3) transitioning the king from heaven to earth, (3) a functioning Holy Spirit, (5) obedience of the servants to the king and (6) the consummation of the kingdom. Understanding the gospel of the kingdom is necessary to understanding the message or good news that Jesus preached. I began this book with a discussion about the existence of God and concluded with the culmination of His kingdom.

Chapter One presented a theological foundation. Chapter Two discussed the realm of kingdom, which includes the universe, man, angels, demons, authority, order and the appointment of a king. Chapter Three discussed the incarnation, resurrection and salvation of Jesus. Chapter Four explored the necessity of the Holy Spirit, and his relationship with the angelic world as well as the church. Chapter Five focused on the purpose of the church and its responsibility to extend God's kingdom on earth. Chapter Six finalized a discussion about the end of all things from a kingdom perspective.

God's kingdom is a kingdom of light; it is a kingdom of love; it is a transcendent kingdom of peace. It is a spiritual kingdom, comprised of spirits. It is a kingdom ruled by spiritual laws dictated by the king. The kingdom of God is all about overcoming evil with good, resisting temptation by obeying the king. The kingdom of God provides the believer with a measurable power and authority from the Holy Spirit to cast down internal evil imaginations or to cast out demonic influences in other people.

The kingdom of God is about man ruling his own spirit to conform to the will of the Holy Spirit.

Today's church discussion about salvation focuses upon how to be saved, who saves and when are we saved. I do not believe that was the message Jesus preached. The word "salvation" in the Greek is the same word for "deliverance." Jesus came to deliver us from the Kingdom of Darkness into the Kingdom of Light. The only message Jesus preached was the gospel of the God's kingdom. His apostle John told us in 1 John 1:5,

"This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all...If we walk in the light as He is in the light then we will have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Simply put, salvation is not about getting people to heaven; it is about us embracing the King and walking in the Kingdom of Light; thereby, getting heaven into us.

When the Kingdom of God is operative, sickness and disease is replaced with healing; chaos is replaced by peace; curses are changed to blessings and division turns into unity. The Kingdom of God is an eternal kingdom ruled by an eternal Lord for His own benefit and pleasure. The message about the kingdom is what Jesus brought to earth. The Father sent Jesus to preach good news and to teach the gospel of the kingdom. It is the same message Jesus told his disciples to preach and just prior to returning to heaven he said, make disciples and teach them to obey what he commanded. In Matthew 24:14, Jesus preached one final message. He said, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come."

THE END

APPENDICES

- A. Comparing Councils of 325 and 381

- B. Chart 1 – Functions of Man’s Spirit and Soul
Chart 2 – Breakdown of Emotion

- C. Paul’s listing of Angelic and Spirit Beings

- D. Hierarchy of the Angelic World

- E. Hierarchy of the Demonic World

- F. Thirty-two Names of the Holy Spirit

- G. Seven Metaphors of the Church

APPENDIX A

Comparing Councils of 325 and 381

First Council of Nicaea (325)	First Council of Constantinople (381)
We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible	We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father (the only-begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father	And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God begotten of the Father before all world (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 (both in heaven and on earth)	By whom all things were made;
Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made man;	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 suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven;	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 shall come to judge the quick and the dead.	From thence he shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead.
	Whose kingdom shall have no end
And in the Holy Ghost	And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets
	In one holy catholic and apostolic Church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remissions of sins; we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.
But those who say: “‘There was a time when he was not;’, and ‘He was not before he was made;’ and ‘He was made of nothing’ or ‘He is of another substance’ or ‘essence’ or ‘the Son of God is created’ or ‘changeable’ or ‘alterable,’” they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic Church.	

APPENDIX B

CHART 1 – FUNCTIONS OF MAN’S SPIRIT AND SOUL¹⁶⁹

SPIRIT	SPIRIT	SPIRIT	SOUL	SOUL	SOUL
<u>Conscience:</u>	<u>Intuition</u>	<u>Communion</u>	<u>Volition</u>	<u>Intellect or Mind</u>	Emotion Chart 2
Deut 2:30	Matt 26:41	Luke 1:47	Ps 27:12	Ez. 24:25	
Ps. 34:18	Mark 2:8	John 4:23	Ps 41:2	Prov. 19:2	
Ps 51:10	Mark 8:12	Rom 1:9	Ez. 16:27	Ps. 13:2	
John 13:21	John 11:33	Rom 7:6	Deut 21:14	Ps. 139:14	
Acts 17:16	Acts 18:5	Rom 8:15	Ps 35:25	Lam 3:20	
Rom 8:16	Acts 18:25	Rom 8:16	Num 30:2	Prov. 2:10	
I Cor. 5:3	Acts 20:22	I Cor. 6:17	I Chron. 22:19	Prov. 3:21,22	
2 Cor. 2:13	I Cor. 2:11	I Cor. 14:15	Jer. 44:14	Prov. 24:14	
2 Tim 1:7	I Cor. 16:18	I Cor. 14:16	Job 6:7		

¹⁶⁹ Nee, *Spiritual Man*, p. 33.

APPENDIX B

CHART 2 - BREAKDOWN OF EMOTION

<u>Emotion -</u>	<u>Emotion -</u>	<u>Emotion</u>
<i>Affection</i>	<i>Desire</i>	<i>Feeling and Sensing</i>
I Sam 18:1	Deut 14:26	Luke 2:35
Song 1:7	I Sam. 20:4	I Sam. 30:6
Luke 1:46	Ps. 84:2	2 Kings 4:27
Job 33:20	Ez. 24:21	Judges 10:16
2 Sam 5:8	Ps. 42:1	Job 19:2
Zech 11:8	Is 26:9	Is 61:10
Deut 6:5	Matt. 12:18	Ps 86:4
Job 10:1		Ps 107:5
Ps. 107:18		Ps 42:5
		Ps 116: 7
		Ps. 119:20
		Prov. 16:24
		Is. 55.2
		Jonah 2:7
		Matt 26:38
		John 12:27
		2 Pet. 2:8

APPENDIX C

PAUL'S LISTING OF ANGELIC AND SPIRIT BEINGS

Greek Name	Description	Col. 1:16	Col. 2:15	Eph. 1:21	Eph. 3:10	Eph. 6:12	Rom. 8:38
αρχηγε	<u>Chief of rulers, archangel</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
εξουσια	Authorities or those with delegate authority	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
δυναμις	<u>Mighty powers or those empowered to do miracles and wonders</u>	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
τηρονοσ	Thrones or political leaders of those in authority	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
κυριοτεσ	<u>Dominions or those involved in political</u>	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
κοσμοκρατορ σκοτοσ	Rulers of darkness of this world	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
πνευματικοσ πονερια	<u>Spirits of sexual perversion</u>	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
αγγελοσ	Angels or messengers or those sent with a message	No	No	No	No	No	Yes

APPENDIX D

HIERARCHY OF THE ANGELIC WORLD

Over God's Kingdom	Greek Name	Description
Angel of Jehovah	ἄγγελος LORD (Angelos Yahweh)	In O.T. An angel or messenger who brought messengers to God's people. Not mentioned in N.T. could possibly be Jesus or Holy Spirit
Archangels	Ἀρχηγε (Arche)	Chief angels who govern other angels
Authorities	Εξουσια (Exousia)	Angelic spirits delegated to influence authority on earth
Dominions	Κυριότητες (Kureeot'ace)	Those angels who influence specific areas on earth or in heaven
Powers	Δυναμεις (Dunameis)	Protecting angels Spirits that produce miracles and supernatural activity or even destruction against God's enemies
Thrones	Θρονους (Thronoi)	Angels that influence individuals to establish kingdom principles i.e. "throne of grace." Grace is a spirit. Angels are spirits.
Angels	Ἄγγελος (Angelos)	These convey encouraging messages to believers

APPENDIX E

HIERARCHY OF THE DEMONIC WORLD

Kingdom of Darkness	Greek Name	Description
Devil or Satan	διάβολος or satan	The Devil means accuser and Satan means adversary and they oppose the work of God. At one time the Devil was Lucifer, which means Day star but rebelled against God and was cast from heaven
Archangels of evil	Αρχηγε	Chief Ruler or principalities of darkness that govern other spirits
Authorities of evil	Εξουσια	Delegated authority from Devil or Satanic archangels
Rulers of Darkness of this world	κοσμοκρατορ σκοτοσ	Those evil spirits that influence specific strongholds and addictions
Prince of the Power of the Air	Δυναμισ	The powers that cause environmental calamity, tornadoes, hurricanes earthquakes etc. They also work in the people who are disobedient to God
Sexual spirits of perversion	πνευματικος πονερια	Spiritual pornea that includes perversion, wickedness and immorality
Demons or evil spirits	Δαιμόνιον	These are bad angels and have become messengers of Satan to discourage believers

APPENDIX F

32 NAMES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT¹⁷⁰ **

1. Breath of the Almighty - Job 33:4
2. Counselor and Comforter - John 14:26-29; 15:26 and Romans 8:26
3. Spirit of Counsel - Isaiah 11:2
4. Eternal Spirit - Hebrews 9:14
5. Free Spirit – Psalm 51:12
6. God – Acts 5:3-4
7. Good Spirit - Nehemiah 9:20 and Psalm 143:10
8. Holy Spirit – Psalm 51:11; Luke 11:13; Ephesians 1:13, 4:30
9. Lord - 2 Corinthians 3:16-17
10. Power of the Highest – Luke 1:35
11. Spirit of Might = Isaiah 11:2
12. Spirit of Adoption – Romans 8:15
13. Spirit of Burning Isaiah 4:4
14. Spirit of Judgment - Isaiah 4:4; 28:6
15. Spirit of Christ – Romans 8:9; 1 Peter 1:11
16. Spirit of Glory- 1 Peter 4:14
17. Spirit of God -Genesis 1:2, 1 Corinthians 2:11; Job 33:4
18. Spirit of Yahweh – Isaiah 11:2; Isaiah 61:1
19. Spirit of Grace – Zechariah 12:10; Hebrews 10:29
20. Spirit of Knowledge – Isaiah 11:2
21. Spirit of Truth – John 14:17, 15:26
22. Spirit of Life - Romans 2
23. Spirit of Understanding – Isaiah 11:2
24. Spirit of Wisdom - Isaiah 11:2; 1:17
25. Spirit of the Living God – 2 Corinthians 3:3
26. Spirit of Prophecy - Revelation 19:10
27. Spirit of the Father – Matthew 10:20
28. Spirit of the Fear of the Lord – Isaiah 11:2
29. Spirit of the Lord (God) - Acts 5:9
30. Spirit of the Son - Galatians 4:6
31. Spirit - Matthew 4:1; John 3:6; 1 Timothy 4:1
32. Spirit of Revelation - Ephesians 1:17

** It must be noted that this list of names are not actually names or identities of the Holy Spirit. He has one name (Holy Spirit) but several titles and functions. For example, Spirit of Father and Spirit of the Son and Spirit of God are all mentioned but these merely define divine connection. Truth, life, grace, and glory are all called spirits in the Bible. They are not the Holy Spirit but rather are spirits that He produces.

¹⁷⁰ E. Lee, “Thirty-two names of the Holy Spirit used in Scripture” *The Speaking Mom*, Retrieved, 6 September 2018. Copied: (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers/Rose Publishing, 2008) <https://www.thespeakingmom.com/32-names-of-the-holy-spirit-used-in-scripture/> 2018.

APPENDIX G
SEVEN METAPHORS OF THE CHURCH

IMAGE	METAPHOR	SCRIPTURE	DESCRIPTION
Building	Temple of God	I Cor. 6:19; I Cor. 3:16	Indwelling
Bride	Bride of Christ	Eph. 5:25-27; Rev. 21:2; Isa. 45:5; 2 Cor. 11:2; Mark 2:19:20	Intimacy
Sheep	Flock of God	John 10: 1-18	Provisions & Calling
Branch	Garden of God	John 15:1-8	Union
Servants	The Priesthood	I Peter 2:5-9	Service
Body	Body of Christ	I Cor. 12:27; Rom. 12:1-5	Unity
Relationship	Family of God	Rom. 8:14; Gal. 3:26; John 1:12	Identity

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Randy Lee Delp has taught the Bible and Christian literature for over forty years. As an educator, pastor, author, business man and out-of-the-box thinker, his interests and insights into first century literature led him onto a discovery about the *Book of Enoch*, which opened another realm of understanding about the spiritual world and the primary doctrines of Christianity and other religions. His doctoral dissertation has helped others to understand the *Impact of the Book of Enoch on Christianity and Other Religions* and his paraphrase of *The Living Enoch: Chapter by Chapter* brings life and insights that makes sense.

His Christian background and personal experiences with the spirit realm led Dr. Delp on a search to learn what the Bible had to say about spirits. His recent book, *The Study of Spirits* brings sanity to the idea of a co-existing spiritual realm and authenticates one's belief in God by explaining why we react and respond to adversity.

This new book, *Systematic Theology of the Kingdom of God* presents a theological discourse about the identity, rule and spiritual existence of God's kingdom. It discusses the unrevealed and revealed things about God, explains the Trinity in such a way that it is believable and reveals the spiritual laws that we should live by. It features all the aspects of any Systematic Theology book but applies them to the message Jesus was sent from heaven to explain, "The Gospel of the Kingdom of God."

This book is a book of "order," featuring chapters about the Supernature of God, the Creation of the Kingdom, Kingdom Order, Ecclesiastical Order and Eschatological Order. The freshness of his message is the goodness of God that leads us to repent.