

When Faith Came

A Testimony of Jesus Christ

by

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Introduction

The minister must experience what he would teach or he will find himself in the impossible position of trying to drive sheep. For this reason he should seek to cultivate his own heart before he attempts to preach to the hearts of others....

If he tries to bring them into a heart knowledge of truth which he has not actually experienced he will surely fail. In his frustration he may attempt to drive them; and scarcely anything is so disheartening as the sight of a vexed and confused shepherd using the lash on his bewildered flock in a vain attempt to persuade them to go on beyond the point to which he himself has attained....

A.W. Tozer

To the true church that is scattered around the world, grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. To those that may happen upon this book and do not yet have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, but are being called I want to share my testimony with you also. I have some “Good News”! Also the information contained in this book is copyrighted, but free for personal study and to distribute, but not sold. The Bible says, “freely you have received, freely give”, but please keep the information in it’s original context and content.

I spent many hours and nights with the Holy Ghost writing these studies for you to enjoy and to help you understand some of the wonderful mysteries in the Bible and to give you a small look into my personal relationship with my heavenly Father. I did endure some hardship while writing this though. Did you ever try to type a book with your cat climbing onto your lap and keyboard? For me, the Holy Spirit through the Gospel has turned the words in the Bible from stones of condemnation unto the bread of life. The reason I did not look to some religion for answers was because I had too many questions that religion could not answer!

I have included many Bible verses in these studies for your benefit. Please read this book in the order that it is presented and do not jump around in the different chapters. The Bible says that God builds “line upon line” and “precept upon precept”. Many of the chapters overlap with doctrine so some parts of certain chapters are repeated in other chapters to support other studies, but the chapters are not the same. Please read the whole verses presented and not just the underlined text. There is a very important reason, which I will reveal later why I provided the whole verses and other verses around them to make a point, instead of just quoting a part of each verse. I also believe that these verses will bless you also. Jesus said:

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall

find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30).

I want these studies to exhort and edify you as you walk in the Gospel of Peace. Why would a person want to continue in personal Bible studies if they didn't bring some sense of pleasure?

These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14:25,26).

Many of these things you read in this book will be different from what you hear being preached in the "new paradigm" churches that are emerging today. I welcome input from other Christians on what is being discussed here. As for the end time "new paradigm" church growth movement, your path and your doctrine have already been prepared for you by your cell church leadership. The things discussed in this study are concerning the "old wineskin" New Testament church and will serve no useful purpose in your "new paradigm" cell church building project. This book is also not written for people to use to attack the cell churches either and I do not want to try and change their beliefs with this book as per their request.

"What you see when you come to our celebrations is not our church. You need to get involved in our cell groups for at least three months. If, at the end of that time, you are still interested in becoming part of our cell group life, we will provide a Spiritual Formation Seminar for you before you become a part of our lifestyle. Just remember that we don't plan to change who we are, and we are not looking for folks who want to try to change us". **Page 385 (Where Do We Go From Here? A Guidebook For The Cell Group Church by Ralph W. Neighbour, Jr.)**

I don't know why God has some people stay in the cell churches and some leave, but there must be a God ordained reason. You are either 100% committed to the cell church structure and vision or you are eventually shut out of that congregation (excommunicated). This book is written for those that believe in the true church as the body of Jesus Christ, but just disagree that the cell / small group church is that self-proclaimed true church.

According to the Bible, the Gospel of Jesus Christ will always draw several reactions from the world when it is published. I will list some Biblical markers that help identify the true Gospel being preached. Some preachers use many different Bible translations to present their doctrine, which makes the Gospel, seem very complicated, for simplicity I use only one for this whole study and I still have not yet even begun to expose the wisdom contained inside. Also the KJV Bible is the only version of the Bible that I know of that is considered "public domain". I discuss scriptures in this book that I don't see anyone else addressing, but they should still be discussed. If they are in the Bible, they must be there for a reason. Also some things I discuss in this book, I just have a theory to

explain those doctrines and I have identified them as such. If anyone reading this book has a better explanation for those theories, then I am always open to correction, but any “better” explanation has to agree with the KJV Bible taken in proper context. If you find error compared to other Bible translations I understand, not all Bible translations agree. Let God be true and every man a liar (Romans 3:4).

As with any Bible study, always double check doctrine with your own personal Bible study, like the Bereans. I am not a pastor, and I have never been to a Bible college. I am just a Christian by the grace of God, and I do not identify myself with any denomination. Many of the things that I am sharing with the world in this book is from my personal Bible studies. At the end, when the final chapter of this book is read, I am content with the possibility that the only one that may consider these studies of any real value is me.

If the things you read in this book sound totally crazy and so different than what you have heard in the world of religion it is suppose to!

And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself (insane); much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness (Acts 26:24,25).

Most of the things I discuss in this book, I neither learned it from man nor was I taught it by man, but it came by revelation of Jesus Christ, as I explain in my testimony. The Gospel of Jesus Christ presented in the KJV Bible was the standard to which I compared these revelations too. But just what is the Gospel?

The word “gospel” means “Good News”

It is called the Gospel of Peace because it brings peace with God and peace with yourself.

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: (Romans 5:1).

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid (John 14:27).

The angels declared the Gospels purpose at Christ birth.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men (Luke 2:10-14).

The Christian still carries that same Gospel of Peace today.

And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:15-17).

The Gospel of Peace is also part of the armor of God. Only through Christ do you learn to fight a war (spiritual) with peace.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: (Ephesians 6:13-17).

Through the Gospel, you will receive an understanding of immortality.

Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (2 Timothy 1:8-10).

The Gospel will bring to you the power of God.

Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake (1 Thessalonians 1:4).

If the Gospel is hid, it is hid from those that are lost.

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake (2 Corinthians 4:3-5).

The true Gospel being preached will always be perceived as evil and blasphemous by those that are still under the Old Testament laws of Moses.

Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us (Acts 6:11-14).

***For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes* (Romans 11:28).**

***For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ* (John 1:15).**

***And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place* (Acts 21:27,28).**

You will be hated by many for publishing the true Gospel especially by those in religion. You will be persecuted for bringing the “good news” to the world that you can have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

***But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. And the gospel must first be published among all nations* (Mark 13:9,10).**

The preaching of the gospel in all nations will finally bring an end to this world, as we know it.

***And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come* (Matthew 24:14).**

To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

***And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God* (Acts 5:38,39).**

Born Again

So you want to be born again? Do you fully understand what that means? The divorce rate in the church is just as high as in the world. With all the hypocrisy and denominational fighting in “the church” and financial obligations imposed by it, why would you want to even be a part of that? I know why, because there is a drawing in your spirit toward Jesus that will not go away. When you are alone, when you are lying in bed, or driving your car it’s always there. Those who are experiencing this know who they are and this book is for you. I was there at one time. **Congratulations, The Heavenly Father Himself is calling you.** He is now ready to teach you about Him and give you an inheritance, like any good father would!

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me (John 6:44,45).

And the good news is that what I described to you is not the true church, but religion. There is a big difference! What you have in religion is people acting like Christians instead of being Christians, which I will show you how to tell the difference later. You can “join” religion; you can’t decide to “join” the church. You have to be called. In fact the very word “church” in the Greek is *ecclesia*, which means “a called out assembly”. Many people that are not truly saved “join” the church everyday. The Bible speaks of “wheat and tares” and “wolves in sheep’s clothing” in the church. You are baptized into the true church when you are born again, but you can “join” a local congregation.

The reason I am writing this book, is for the people that desperately want to please and obey God, but find themselves powerless to do it. For the people that are trying to turn from their sin and turn to Christ, but somehow always end up stumbling and falling. For the people that have come to the various religions and have still not found the peace they are looking for. For the people that life just doesn’t seem to ever come together. For the people that have spent hours in the scriptures only to find more questions than answers. For the people that wonder if they are actually saved or lost. For the people that wonder if they have been called into the divine service. For the Christians that have been driven and scattered from their congregations by the “cell / small group” church movement and are now worshipping alone in their homes. To tell the world that there is so much more to the Christian new life than “thou shall not sin”. And the greatest reason of all, to bear witness to a lost and dying world of a resurrected from the dead, Son of God, and my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I want to first discuss the problem you may be facing with choosing a religion, before I discuss the solution. As I said in the introduction, I will use many different scriptures to present my position. Please read them when they are provided. I have underlined certain points to read carefully. Please read the whole verses (not just the underlined part) and any surrounding verses to keep the scripture in the proper context. I will also mark “**points to ponder**” in certain places to just give you something to think about that may

not fit in any religion, but I just thought it is curious. Maybe you will enjoy pondering them also. As there are many different doctrines out there, all I can do is share what I found in my Bible studies and give you my testimony. Only the Holy Spirit can guide you into the truth. There are also “**religious traps**” that I fell into that I will expose in this study so you can be on the lookout for them also.

Where I believe the failure lays in most religions today, whether through discipleship, or ministry, the church is trying to create a Christian. There is one main problem with this approach. The church is not the Creator. Its purpose is to point the world to the Creator. You can teach people about Christianity (discipleship), but you cannot teach someone to be a Christian, because a true Christian is a creation of Jesus Christ working in them and through them with His Spirit and Word.

For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).

Before we get started, let me stop here briefly and address something that many people have wasted much of their lives arguing about. As this verse plainly teaches the true Christian is “created in Christ Jesus”. So if you are “born again”, you were created. Many people have spent many hours arguing the difference between evolution and creation. How you got here is really irrelevant to me, it’s where you are going that I am more concerned about. If you are going with Jesus, you have to become his creation (Ephesians 2:10). In this book I am interested more in man’s eternal destiny than man’s origin. The argument of whether man was created or evolved doesn’t apply to this discussion because it is irrelevant to man’s death. I personally believe in the fact of creation because God through my parents created me and didn’t evolve me.

Many people in religion today have also missed a very important point. A local congregation, cell / small groups, or any other person or “spiritual leader”, is not the Creator. They, like you, were not created to be the Creator either; they are also the creation. Remember Jesus is the potter and we are the clay.

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: (Colossians 1:16).

The main problem with mankind is that we have been taught our whole life that we are the Creator, that life is our creation; our life is what we make of it. I knew a woman once that was in “new age” religion. She would say, “We are all little gods, because we all have the power to create life”. Well if your reading this, my guess is that your life is a mixed up mess, like mine was, and you are sick and tired of being the “creator” of your messed up life. I have some good news there is hope, the reason why you failed at making life work, is because you were not designed to be the Creator either, but the creation. Just like you could not create a perfect natural life for yourself, you cannot create a perfect spiritual life either. I have some very good news for you! When you have finally come to the end of yourself and are serious about totally giving up on making life work, the true Creator, Jesus Christ is right now waiting for you to totally surrender your

messed up life to Him. Jesus will take away your life, but He will give you His! He will become the Creator of a new life for you. The true Christian no longer tries to create life, but they are content to live life.

And having food (bread of life) and raiment (God's robe of righteousness) let us be therewith content (1 Timothy 6:8).

And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: (Ephesians 3:9)

Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. (Luke 17:33)

This is the most vital part of answering that calling where I think “the church” has lost the gospel message. What happens usually when someone “gets saved” is “the church” starts trying to show him or her how to “act” like a Christian (discipleship) after they have said their “sinners prayer”. Many times the church is successful in this type of discipleship and ends up with a bunch of actors. The Greek word for actor is “hupokrites”. Which we translate “hypocrite”. What I have noticed when a person starts looking for peace with God the first thing they do is turn to a religion. When they do not find what they are looking for in doing Christian things, they will eventually truly surrender all to Jesus or give up. It just depends on what they heard in the Gospel message and how it was presented.

And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life (John 6:65-68).

I had not been in church for over eighteen years when Jesus called me and after my conversion, not confession (which my confession came after my conversion), it was still another six months before I went to a local congregation.

I want to stop here and address something I see many churches doing that I believe is in error. When someone has just been born again, many churches immediately try to put them in, or teach them, some sort of service or ministry in the church. The process of removing the flesh to walk in the Spirit is called “Circumcision”, which I will discuss, in greater detail later in the book.

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead (Colossians 2:11,12).

Instead of immediately trying to disciple or put a new believer into some service in the church or cell/small group training, they need to be given time to just rest in Jesus and the healing power of the cross (1 Peter 2:24,25). A tremendous burden has just been lifted off them. It is the bondage of this world (Egypt). Even the children of Israel were allowed to rest and heal when Joshua circumcised them, before they went into the promise land.

And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp, till they were whole. And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you (Joshua 5:8,9).

Now what I am more concerned about is your personal relationship with Jesus and not with organized religion or other believers or “cell/small groups”. Christian relationships are important and the Lord will send you where you are needed in the body, and He will establish those relationships.

Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts (2 Corinthians 1:21,22).

It is understood that pastors have to focus on ministry to the congregation as a whole. That is why this book is focused on the individual believer and their personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and not on the church body as a whole. If each individual member knows who they are in Christ and are hearing from the head (Jesus), then the congregation will also be strengthened.

And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:21,22).

Notice this verse says that we are built together by the Spirit, not through an organizational cell church structure. The true church is a living organism, not an organization. What I am most concerned with is that you fully understand the Gospel of Peace and that you can walk with a smile and have peace with God and peace with yourself in a personal relationship with Jesus as you walk through the troubles and trials of this world. My wish is that everyone can have a relationship with Jesus, just as close as I have and I believe you can. This is why I am against a “cell or small group leader” or some other “spiritual leader” as a mediator between you and God. Talking with God and hearing from God today is being taught as we speak to God in prayer God speaks back to us through the pastor, apostle, prophet, priest, etc. I will explain the “five fold ministry” in great detail later, because it is being grossly abused in the churches today. Please read the chapter “A Word of Warning”. How come the clergy can hear from God directly and we supposedly can’t? That denies the priesthood of the believer (1 Peter 2:9,10).

Religious Trap!!! Many cell / small group churches also claim that they believe in the “priesthood of the believer” doctrine and that is why they claim they want to “equip” everyone in the church to minister to the world. What they fail to tell you is the same priesthood of the believer doctrine that makes everyone a minister to the world also goes the other way and secures everyone in the body of Christ direct access to the presence of God and not just the senior pastor or cell group leader! Jesus said His sheep hear His voice (John 10:3-5). When someone in the church comes to you and says, “the Lord told me to tell you”, they are at that point and time declaring that Jesus does not consider you worthy of fellowship with Him so they were sent to you instead. If your only relationship with God, comes through your pastor or small group, then your relationship with your heavenly Father can never be any closer than your spiritual leaders relationship with God. The job of the pastor is to make sure the congregation has a relationship with their heavenly Father, and not to become the relationship with the heavenly Father. The true pastor’s job is to point you to Jesus, not replace Jesus. Remember the sheep are God’s flock, not the pastor’s flock.

Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand (1 Corinthians 1:21-24).

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock (1 Peter 5:2,3).

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase (1 Corinthians 3:5-7).

My prayer is that you would be “in Christ” first which already makes you a member of the true church, which is in heaven and also on earth as strangers and pilgrims!

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; (Ephesians 3:14-18).

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant,

and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:22,23).

The reason that a personal relationship with Jesus is so vital, and I cannot stress this enough, is because one day someone could throw you into prison without access to your Bible, pastor, spiritual leader, TV evangelist, Christian radio, church, or cell/small group. The good news is even though the world can take away these things, they cannot take away a personal relationship with Jesus, because that is on the inside.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38,39).

The true Comforter and your Savior is not the church, cell groups, or any other group of believers, although other Christians play an important part in your Christian experience. As a body other Christians need your gifts and they have gifts you need. But as a child of God, you are complete in Him.

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: (Colossians 2:6-10).

To understand true Christianity, you must first understand religion. What people in religion do is take their life (family, house, job, finances, car, boat, bills, and recreation) and add Jesus to that by giving him the Sunday morning, Sunday evening, Wednesday night or Sabbath day. The real relationship you are looking for is only found when you become a part of His life, and you release total control to the true Creator. If I could sum my whole testimony up in one sentence it would be this, "If you give your life to Jesus, He will give His life to you". Right now though as I will explain in my testimony, I believe He is the Creator of your circumstances that has drew you to Him. I believe God arranged the circumstances of my life so that I would eventually lay down everything for Him. You may have the freedom to make choices in your life, but God has control of whether your choices are blessed or cursed! Please read the chapter "Freewill vs. God's Sovereignty". When God chose me, He would not leave me alone until He had me. This is the meaning of biblical predestination. God decides He is going to do something with His creation and then He does it with or without our "permission".

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: (Ephesians 1:11).

It was even God's will that I was born again!

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12,13)

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures (James 1:17,18).

God determined that I was going to be His and obtain an inheritance, and arranged the events of my life to bring that to pass. The correct biblical term for this is election. I didn't deserve it, but I did accept it and rejoice in it, and my will had to be broken by Him many times for Him to accomplish this. Please read the chapter "Freewill vs. God's Sovereignty".

You also just cannot make Jesus a part of your life and experience the victory, because it would still be your life and you are still playing "creator" only this time with Jesus added. This is still religion and has no redeeming value. Jesus said:

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing (John 15:4,5)

This is what kept me from enjoying a real relationship with Jesus for so long. By saying the "sinners' prayer" and asking Jesus into my life, I never truly had to give up any of my life. My life was still in the center, and my world still revolved around me. My only responsibility as I saw it back then was to believe in the Bible and try to quit doing the things that the Bible says are wrong (repentance) and start doing the things that the Bible says are right (obedience) to receive God's blessing and eternal life.

In my mind, the only reason that I needed Jesus then was to pray to for forgiveness when I failed at this. Without a personal relationship with Jesus, I turned the Gospel from "Jesus is the way", to "Jesus showed the way", and my idea of Christianity was to keep God's commandments and to apply the spiritual principles in the Bible to my life. I didn't understand that the men of God in the Bible did the things they did because of the work of God in them, not to get God to do something for them! I was "purpose driven", instead of "Spirit led".

In those days I only knew Jesus as just a forgiver, but not a Savior. I thought that real Christianity was the result of me trying to conform to the image of Christ and He was only there to forgive me when I failed at this heavenly goal. This made me ask a question. Why did I even need any real personal relationship with Jesus since I had a Bible to take His place when He ascended up to Heaven? Religion teaches that God points out the sin in your life and then you then have to get rid of it. I didn't find out till later that Jesus could be my Savior and actually lift me out of the mess that I couldn't get

out of on my own and not to just keep forgiving me while I wallowed in my sin. So for a few years in religion, I had a personal relationship with my Bible and no other connection of any other kind to Jesus. My Christian relationship was with “the flesh made Word” and not with “the Word made flesh”. I knew a paper Jesus, not the person Jesus. I was worshiping the idea of Jesus, instead of the person Jesus. I also didn’t have any proof that Jesus was resurrected from the dead, except by what the Bible said, but I would try to witness and tell people that Jesus was alive. They would ask, “How do you know”? I would say, “because the Bible says so, and I believe that it is the inerrant, infallible, Word of God”. This would then usually lead to a problem. How do you convince somebody with the Bible that doesn’t believe in the Bible? This also would usually lead to an argument about the source of the scriptures and whether or not different translations were accurate. I also knew the scriptures where I could argue and fight with other denominations. I knew from experience that the Word of God carried tremendous power to condemn, but I didn’t find out till later that you could also edify, bless, and feed with it. I spent my early “Christian” years stuck in religion and swinging my cross instead of carrying it. The Word of God is a two-edged sword, if you are just as guilty as the person you are trying to condemn with the scripture, then that same word will cut you to the heart also, even if you are the one applying it to someone else. The Word of God is pure truth. It will reveal what is in your heart also.

If you were to take away my Bible and throw me in jail in those early religious days, you would have taken away my only contact with Jesus (except for any Bible verses that I memorized). I had always thought that the only Jesus I would ever know was through my Bible. I came to worship my Bible and not the one who the Bible was talking about. Without a very real personal relationship with a living God in this world, then the Bible becomes nothing more than a completely accurate, totally infallible, heavenly inspired history book.

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

I never really knew Jesus back then, but through my Bible I knew everything about Jesus. My only relationship with Jesus was always through another man’s experience with Him (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, Paul, etc.). I had some Mormons stop by my house one day and wanted to talk. At one point they were trying to explain to me about Joseph Smith’s experience with Jesus. My question to them is “how does Joseph Smith’s experience with Jesus change your life”?! My desire for every Christian and the reason that I am sharing this is because I want every one to have a personal relationship with the person Jesus who rose from the dead, instead of only a relationship through people professing Jesus (cell / small group leaders, spiritual parents, priests, apostles, prophets, etc.)! Another Christian or group of Christians should point you to Jesus, not replace Jesus in your life.

Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. Moreover I

call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand (2 Corinthians 1:21-24).

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase (1 Corinthians 3:5-7).

Do not ever let any “human being” or “spiritual being” act as a mediator between you and your heavenly Father. Because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ our true mediator, we all can come **BOLDLY** to the throne of grace to find help in time of need. Not when you are at your highest point of praise and worship in a church or celebration service, but when you are at home and at the lowest point in life you can always climb into your heavenly Father’s lap! With a personal relationship with Jesus, you also can have a song at midnight! This is the personal relationship that I have with Jesus and I believe you can also.

And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them (Acts 16:23-25).

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:19-22).

The apostle’s experience with Jesus spoken of in the Bible also didn’t change my life. What finally changed my life is eventually meeting the one who the Gospel was talking about and having the witness of the Holy Spirit enter in and confirm the witness of the Word which I had heard through preaching and reading in the Bible! What I want to share with you is my testimony on how I came to know Jesus through a personal relationship through the Holy Ghost and not only through words in the Bible. Which also the Bible agrees with!

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

For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power (1 Corinthians 4:20).

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 10:44,45)

I didn't know back then that one day on the road, coming home from work, I was to finally meet the very Jesus that I had loved to read about in my Bible, very much ALIVE! I was "caught away in the Spirit" and I was standing in the presence of Jesus and I had no awareness of anything else surrounding me. At that point I was judged not guilty of my sin. Then the love of God was so strong on me that I had to request the Lord to hold back His hand before he crushed me with the weight of His love. This love of God that I experienced that day was many times more intense than the love any woman could give. At that time a seed was planted in my heart and I finally "knew" Jesus instead of just knowing about Him. I will explain this in much more detail in the chapter "Marriage: Till death do us part". Also please read the chapter "The Christian Experience: From Seed to Saint". After this encounter, I now had my own relationship with Jesus instead of just building up my faith on Paul or Peter's experience. I also can now bear witness of His resurrection! In my experience, Jesus is very much ALIVE!

After this encounter with Jesus, which I had while driving alone in my car, and not in any secret church retreat or "encounter" with other believers or "cell / small groups". I was left in stunned amazement. The only words that would come out of my mouth were, "Jesus is ALIVE! Jesus is ALIVE!" I couldn't wait to tell people. The first thing I did was went and told two other people, "Jesus is ALIVE! Jesus is ALIVE!" Since they thought that I had been saved at twelve years old when I said my "sinners prayer" at Camp Joy, they looked at each other perplexed. They calmly said "we know Jesus is alive because the Bible says so". I was so excited; I said you don't understand, "Jesus is ALIVE! Jesus is ALIVE!" After being "caught away in the Spirit" and meeting Jesus on Mount Zion, I now possessed something that I never really could grasp before just reading about Jesus in the Bible. Because of this experience, I now had the SUBSTANCE of things hoped for and the EVIDENCE of things not seen! I now had FAITH!

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1).

The Bible also confirmed this experience.

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:22-24).

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God: (Ephesians 2:19).

The whole experience was like a big welcome home! I didn't want to leave. I now knew Jesus in a way that before, I could only imagine when I read my Bible! Christianity is not just a belief, but an experience also. I finally had something of substance to grab hold of in this world. At this point, my faith in the Jesus of the Bible was transformed into reality for me. I never dreamed that the relationship with Jesus that I read about in the Bible was so powerful until I had actually experienced it. As I was pondering this event the next few days, another thought hit me like a ton of bricks. If meeting the Jesus of the Bible was this real, then that means that the rest of what the Bible says should be just as real! That's one reason why I love my Bible. Even if I hadn't experienced the things that the Bible said I should, the Bible would still be true. The Bible isn't based on my experience. And my experience isn't needed to justify the Bible. On the other hand, it takes the Bible to justify my experience. If my experience did not line up with the Bible, then I would be forced to rethink my experience.

Instantly the Bible became a whole new book. All of a sudden it was like the Bible had been sealed and the bands burst off. The same verses that would curse me and condemn me before were now blessing me and feeding me. A whole new spiritual world had been opened up to me. I started to see things in the Bible, I had never seen before. I also found myself experiencing the very things that I use to read about the other disciples experiencing in the Bible.

When I was in religion, I would read about what Christian behavior is supposed to be like in the Bible. As I understood it back then, for me to be a good Christian, I needed to follow its' instructions. Now the very things that I would try to do to be a good Christian, was being done in me by someone else (Holy Spirit) (for we are His workmanship, created in Christ unto good works). I suddenly started hearing Jesus' voice in the words. I now understood what Jesus meant when he said, "My sheep hear my voice".

But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers (John 10:2-5).

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, AND NOW IS, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live (John 5: 25).

I was "dead" in trespasses and sins, but now that I had received the gift of the Holy Spirit, I was finally able to hear those beautiful "words of life".

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me,

except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life (John 6:63-68).

The Bible says that Jesus called us out of darkness (shadow of death (Luke 1:79) unto His marvelous light (light of life (John 8:12). By this time, I realized I had been chosen to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ himself would disciple me (“cell / small group” equipping teams were not needed). I also could understand things I couldn’t understand before. I now KNOW Jesus instead of just knowing about Him. After meeting Jesus, I can now stand side by side with my brother John because we share the very same testimony!

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life (I John 5:20)

I always had faith in eternal life because the Bible said so. Now I also have faith in eternal life, because when I totally surrendered all to Jesus, I got to touch the source of eternal life and feel the power of the world to come. Jesus gave this somber warning:

Search the scriptures; for in them ye THINK ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me that ye might have life (John 5: 39, 40).

Religious Trap!! I need to stop here and explain something that happened to me after my conversion experience. I pray that you do not have to experience this, but you must still be warned. When I was in the Baptist religion, I was taught that if you gave your life to Jesus, He would take away your sin, you would have peace with God, you could have liberty, power over Satan, you would receive the Holy Ghost, and you should experience the love of God, fruits of the Spirit, and at least some joy. When I finally totally surrendered my life to Jesus, everything the Baptist doctrine said would happen, did happen! Jesus actually took away my sin, I experienced for the first time ever, the peace and love of God, I no longer felt under condemnation, I felt the Holy Ghost actually enter from the outside into my body and seal my heart, and actually I did experience the agape love of God and much joy. I thought that I had now finally caught up to where all other Christians already were.

The next thing that happened was the religious “brethren” totally flipped the doctrine around and were suddenly declaring that I can not possibly be experiencing the things that I was and the Bible said I should be experiencing. I used to believe I had forgiveness even though I still had condemnation, but now I walk in the reality of that forgiveness and a clear conscience and no condemnation (Romans 8:1). When I said that Jesus took away my sin and I had for the first time, actually experienced a clear conscience and peace with God, then they immediately hit me with the scripture 1 John 1:8

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8).

Now all of a sudden, according to this scripture, I became a liar by declaring that Jesus actually did take away my sin. What I finally realized are the people quoting this verse to me actually didn't care if I was deceiving myself; they were using this scripture to justify the sin that was in their life. I was standing on scripture also.

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

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

For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins (Hebrews 10:2).

And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered ONE sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by ONE offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Hebrews 10:11-14).

If I agreed with the scripture 1 John 1:8 and said that I still had sin even though I was saved, then the same religious ones would then flip the doctrine around again and quote me the scripture 1 John 3:5,6.

And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him (1 John 3:5,6).

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he CANNOT sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother (1 John 3:9,10).

These verses presented to me with no explanation, left a no win situation and seem to stand in direct contradiction! At that time, I did not fully understand "the seed" that was planted in me.

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever (1 Peter 1:23).

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ (Galatians 3:16).

If you do not rightly divide the word of truth these verses will run you around in circles with much torment trying to figure it out. Be careful!!

At that time I was a new Christian and I did not have the knowledge or understood the difference between the inward spiritual man and the outward man of flesh. 1 John 1:8 was talking about the outward man, which came from Adam and 1 John 3:5-10 was describing the new inward man, which is Jesus Christ in you who cannot sin.

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever (1 Peter 1:23).

Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: (1 John 3:25-28).

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; (2 Corinthians 4:16,17).

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: (Ephesians 4:13).

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God (Ephesians 3:14-19).

The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image (Colossians 3: 10) of the heavenly (1 Corinthians 15:47-49).

Let me try to explain this another way. A woman that is pregnant with child has two different “beings” dwelling in one body. The child in her womb is a totally new creation

and a new life with a new future, separate from the mother, but for a time is dependant on the mother. The child carries half the father's nature! Please read the chapter "Marriage, Till Death Do Us Part?" for a deeper study of this union. The same Holy Spirit that placed the seed in Mary for Christ to be birthed is the same Holy Spirit that places the seed in our hearts for Christ to be birthed in us. Paul said:

My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, (Galatians 4:16).

The new inward man that is growing in the Christian is Christ himself who cannot sin. The whole Christian experience is Christ growing in us. Please read the chapter "The Christian Experience: From Seed to Saint" for a more in-depth explanation of the newbirth process. How is Christ growing in us? Jesus was the Word made flesh!

Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all (Colossians 3:9-11).

Since the Christian is "renewed in knowledge" of the Word (Jesus Christ) it is very vital for the new Christian to study and understand sound doctrine. The emotional hugging and crying of a cell / small group and "accountability partners" cannot replace the study of sound doctrine in the Christians life. In many churches today, the cell / small groups have replaced the Holy Spirit as the "comforter" of the Christian. It is in cell groups that I first heard the term "discussing doctrine causes division". Please read the chapter "A Word of Warning". Remember the "dark ages" when the Catholic Church withheld the doctrine from every one, but the clergy. The new "Christian" today could soon find themselves having to send their prayer request with money to some TV preacher or evangelist so God will bless them and answer their prayer. What is the next step from that, "indulgences"? A wise man once said, "If we do not learn from history then we are doomed to repeat it".

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: (1 Peter 2:2).

For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; (Colossians 1:9,10).

The Bible says that Jesus is the author (written Word) and finisher (Living Word) of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). The Christian's growth experience is simply the Word made flesh. Please read the chapters "Perfecting of the Saints" and "From Seed to Saint".

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect MAN, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Religious Trap!!! I also experienced a dramatic life change that was being done in me by the Holy Spirit and I was excited and joyous about this great liberty that I finally found in Jesus. Here came the religious ones again. I had one in the Baptist religion say to me, “you are walking around here thinking you are holier than everybody else, I can’t wait till the Lord pulls the rug out from under you”. I lost count of how many times the verse 1 Corinthians 10:12 was quoted me.

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall (1 Corinthians 10:12).

I could not make them understand that the changes that were being made in me were not being made by me. I wasn’t standing on my own anymore.

Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand (Romans 14:4).

The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand (Psalms 37:23,24).

They didn’t understand that what I was experiencing couldn’t be turned off by me, because I wasn’t the one that turned it on! Righteousness was a gift given to me by God for true faith in Jesus Christ. It was imputed to me by God, not earned and kept by me through perpetual good works (Romans 4:1-8).

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us (Romans 8:33,34).

What happened to me could best be explained by a story in the Old Testament. My righteousness was, as “filthy rags” that could not be cleaned so I exchanged it for His righteousness that could not get dirty.

And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he

said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment (Zechariah 3:1-4).

All the wicked one (Jeremiah 17:9) can do is accuse the Christian, it cannot condemn you because there is no condemnation to them who are in Jesus Christ (Romans 8:1). He can cause you to condemn yourself though.

And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God (1 John 3:19-21).

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself (Titus 3:9-11).

Many people wear their righteousness like a robe that can be put on and taken off at will, according to their actions as judged by the law. In the law of Moses, they were not allowed to kill any man. That is why they brought Jesus to the Romans to crucify him instead of doing that themselves.

Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die (John 18:31,32).

Before the Jews could stone Stephen, they first had to remove their religious clothes (self-righteousness) that forbid them to kill. They could put it back on later after the deed was done.

Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul (Acts 7:57,58).

If you wanted to stone someone according to the law, all you had to do was accuse them and then that persons own conscience will condemn them to death. You do not have to do any more.

For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me (Romans 7:9-11).

I hear many Pentecostals refer to the Baptism of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues. I believe that the correct phrase is the Baptism of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of a changed life! When another Baptist saw the joy and peace I was finally walking in, they took it upon themselves to tell me “you may be on the mountain top now, but don’t ever forget there is a valley on the other side”. I experienced other persecution, but it mainly came from the religious ones of the Baptist, Church of God and Church of Christ. My unsaved friends saw some amazing changes being made in me and would pull me to the side and sincerely ask me questions about my experience with Jesus. They were happier for me than the “Christian” brethren! Be careful and don’t get caught in this trap!

Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you (Acts 13:40,41).

On that day, I received a deeper spiritual understanding of the Bible than I had ever had before. I will explain this more in the chapter on “Spiritual Wisdom, Knowledge, and Understanding”. Paul also knew that there was a deeper spiritual wisdom that was hidden from the natural man and revealed only to a spiritual man (born of the Spirit). Paul called it “spiritual understanding”.

For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; (Colossians 1:10).

I will explain later in great detail this spiritual understanding, because the Bible says in 1 John 5:20 that we cannot know Jesus without this spiritual understanding.

I kept asking myself another question. If there is only one truth, why are there so many different denominations? How can so many pastors get so many “visions” out of one simple gospel of peace? What I have come to find out in my experience is, to truly understand the Bible; you have to have an interpreter, which can be none other than the Holy Spirit. You do not need special stones, crystals, golden plates, or computer codes, etc. to understand the gospel.

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ (2 Corinthians 11:3).

The Word of God brings the truth to light then the Spirit of God brings the truth to pass in the believer’s life. The same Holy Spirit that gave the apostles and prophets the knowledge to write the Bible is the same Holy Spirit that gives us the knowledge to understand the Bible. Jesus said:

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures (Luke 24:44,45).

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

When faith came.

But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed (Galatians 3:22,23).

I would like to explain what my idea of faith was for most of my “Christian” life. For years I believe I had the wrong idea about faith and the origin of faith. I always thought that faith was something that was generated by me. The Bible says that each believer is given a measure of faith, but the core of my testimony now is not about how I came to a saving faith, but about how saving faith came to me. The true saving faith didn’t come from me, but it is a gift of God. True faith is an act of God not man!

And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how HE had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles (Acts 14:27).

Growing up, I have heard many preachers and pastors speak on stepping out on faith. They would say that I must believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, which it is, and the promises it says I can have are guaranteed me if I just believe and stand on the Word. I have heard people preach what I call “name it and claim it”. This is where you pray for something and must believe that you will receive it. You have to step out in blind faith and claim it as an answered prayer, not excepting that you might not receive it. But the Bible says that exactly in the gospel of Mark:

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. (Mark 11:24)

What was I missing? I have tried this and in my experience, it might work great for everybody else, but it wouldn’t work at all for me. Am I the only one that God didn’t ever answer my prayers or are there others out there? In fact, when I would pray, I never received an answer or conformation that God even heard my prayer. I just had to have faith that He heard it. I thought that I just wasn’t generating enough faith and it was my lack of faith that was hindering my prayers. What I want to share next is some of my early “Christian” years before I actually met Jesus.

The reality of faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ would always stay just out of reach. I would liken it more to hope or “faith in faith” as I have heard one preacher describe faith. The definition of faith was supposed to be my complete conviction in the truth of the scripture that presented that faith. The concept of faith in the unseen was hard to grasp and preachers would make it ten times harder by saying that Jesus was unexplainable, and omnipresent, and omnipotent, and incomprehensible in one breath, which He is, but turn around and tell you He can be your personal Savior and your closest friend in another breath. How do you grasp something like that? Sometimes I think that these pastors with their theology degrees make the Bible out to be so complex, because if they

didn't, they wouldn't be needed. To make things worse they would add things like, "you can read the Bible a thousand times and you still will never comprehend it all because His thoughts are so much higher than our thoughts and His ways are so much higher than your ways". How do you get close to a God like that? But the Bible says exactly that in the book of Isaiah:

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:9).

The preachers and pastors were speaking biblically correct, but looking back now I wonder if some of them did not fully grasp it either and so they would make anything to do with the Lord so complex and vague that nobody else could grasp it either. I suppose that if it were as simple that a child could grasp it, you wouldn't need their PhD's in Theology. Paul also warned of these.

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ (2 Corinthians 11:3).

At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes (Matthew 11:25).

When I was under constant condemnation and dying in my sin I would search the Bible constantly to try to find something that was substance that I could grasp hold of to validate to me the scriptures in this world other than standing on my faith. How could I generate enough faith to turn faith into reality in my mind? When I would read the Bible I would pray to the Lord for wisdom and understanding. I have always heard that it was my responsibility to stand on the promises of God and I just had to yield to His leading. This was very hard to do when I didn't have the Holy Spirit leading as Peter explained while talking about Paul's spiritual understanding.

And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction (2 Peter 3:15,16).

The Bible is so big and there are so many promises of God listed. So where do I start? I tried, like probably everybody else, by starting from the book of Genesis and reading to somewhere around chapter 20 or 30 and getting lost in all the names and genealogies and receiving no peace or consolation in the scriptures and abandoning hope of understanding it. But the Lord would not leave me alone, and He continued to call me. So I attempted to start in the book of Matthew and would read to about chapter 24 where it speaks about end time events, and then jump straight to the book of Revelation to see how things turn out in the end and I would get totally mixed up. I tried some of the "how to" books written by pastors, teachers, and theologians which would almost always start with, or

end up with (you must yield, you must be obedient, or we have to learn how to, or we need to step out on faith) or some other sort of personal pronoun that would put the responsibility of making the Christian life work squarely on your shoulders. What ever happened to Matthew 11:28-30?

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30).

In the Old Testament, it was only God's chosen and sanctified priest that could bear the burden of the law on their shoulders; anybody else that tried to carry it was struck dead. That is why our High Priest Jesus Christ bore the burden of the law for the Christian! Yet there are "Christian" pastors that are standing in the pulpits every Saturday and Sunday that are still trying to get the congregation to carry the very same Old Testament law on their shoulders also! What yoke are you wearing on your shoulders?

But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers NOR WE were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. (Acts 15:5-11).

And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. (Luke 11:46)

Please understand this one point, it is not our responsibility to make Christianity work. I see many pastors trying to carry a load that they were not required to carry, so they get "burned out". Christianity is Jesus Christ's ministry to the earth. Many pastors keep forgetting we are just a part of His ministry, not the power of His ministry! The angels declared the purpose of the ministry at Christ birth, "Peace on earth, good will toward men".

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men (Luke 2:13,14).

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: (Romans 5:1).

The Bible calls it the ministry of reconciliation where mankind, not just the Jews, is reconciled back to God.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:17-19).

When I was in religion, I would pick up the Bible and read about what Christians should act like, and so I thought that by imitating the things that the people in the Bible would do, that was true Christianity. This was the whole foundation of the WWJD (What Would Jesus Do) movement. I know now that the Bible was actually just describing what people do when the Holy Spirit is at work in their life. Please read the chapter “Law or Grace?”. Obedience was simply the works that followed their faith (James 2:18). I believe that the reason that I hadn’t entered into the “rest” wasn’t because of the preaching, but the problem was in my faith like the Bible says in the book of Hebrews.

Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world (Hebrews 4:1-3).

I could always find an answer why the Lord was not answering my prayers or “moving” in my life. I can pick up most Christian books today and they are almost all written about how to apply biblical principles or imitate biblical people to somehow force God’s hand to “move” in our life. The line of thought is this, if I imitate Joseph, David, Jabez, Ruth, Esther, etc., God will have to react to me in the same way or give me the same blessing as He gave them. Each pastor would have a different angle or list of steps to follow to produce a fruitful Christian life. Today many pastors have turned into nothing more than motivational speakers. I would hear some pastors say that we must learn to love and forgive one another, or we must watch what we say, or we need to set aside a special time for prayer, and another would say we must choose to be obedient to God’s word to receive His blessing, you need to sow your seed, or we just have to believe and stand on faith. What would happen if you seemed to come up short sometimes? What if you couldn’t always be obedient? The answer of course would always be “nobody’s perfect”. Please read the chapter “Perfecting of the Saints”.

Somehow I was missing something. What was I doing wrong? Why was my faith not as good as someone else’s faith? I had asked Jesus to come into my heart and save me. I

could always confess Jesus before men. I could also claim “Jesus is my Lord”. I was baptized with full immersion in water like others. I would stay confessed up before God in sins. I would repent and ask forgiveness also. I would try to be obedient. Why could I never find true peace? Why was I constantly under condemnation of sin? I would always hear people say that as long as you are in the natural body, you will always sin. You just have to confess it and repent and ask forgiveness and try to do better next time. Other Christians would say, “the only difference between us and the unsaved is, we are forgiven”. I believe that many problems in the church today echo that same mentality. By now you can see a pattern starting to develop. As you can tell by all the “I’s” and “we have to’s” that something was missing. Where was Jesus in all this? To explain how I finally found Jesus (he actually found me) I need to go back to the beginning. This may help the “God chasers” out there. I want to now explain now is how I messed up the sinner’s prayer.

How I messed up the sinner's prayer?

Once again I must visit the past to show how I finally met Jesus. I must have prayed "the sinners prayer" asking Jesus to come into my heart and save me, a thousand times while watching my life fall apart around me. I am going to discuss this in detail in my testimony. I believe that "the church" has totally lost the Gospel of the Kingdom message.

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved (Romans 10:8)

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Acts 2:21).

Apparently confessing Jesus with my mouth or "calling on His name", didn't seem to be the problem I had with the plan of salvation, it is "the believing in the heart" was the bump in the road that I couldn't seem to get over. This is where the problem that I had the most was opening the door to let him in. I asked Jesus to come into my heart and save me many times with the "sinners prayer", but He knew my heart and I wasn't truly serious even though I thought I was. What I was doing was asking Jesus to come into my heart, yet I was still holding the door shut with my foot. This is where the "believing in your heart" part comes in. At the point when you truly believe in Jesus, then it is God that will bear witness for you! He knew I was pushing the door shut while asking Him into my heart.

And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how HE had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles (Acts 14:27).

This is very important! Whether or not you truly believe in Jesus is not determined by you, but by God! If you are really serious about totally surrendering your life to Jesus, instead of trying to make him a part of your life, God will confirm the covenant that you are making with Him and He will give you the Holy Spirit as the seal of that covenant. This process is called the "Circumcision" and it is not what most people think. Please read the chapter "Understanding Circumcision". This sealing of the Holy Spirit is a very real, very special, experience that I will never forget. It did not feel anything like a warm fuzzy, electrical impulse or emotional crying. Also, the sealing of the Holy Spirit takes place in the heart, which is the seat of the spirit. Because of this experience, my faith now is not built on the fact that I made a plea for salvation, but my faith is now built on His ANSWER to my plea for salvation. The main key that unlocks the unbelieving heart is not you, but God! You can bear witness with your mouth while God bears witness with your heart!

And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bear them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith (Acts 15:7-9).

And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul (Acts 16:14).

The reason why the Holy Ghost is not bearing witness in your life is maybe because God is still looking at your heart, waiting for a total surrender. When I was in the Baptist religion, after you said the “sinners prayer”, the Holy Spirit was something you believed you had, but the only time you felt Him was when He convicted you of sin. There was never any peace, love, joy, etc. (spiritual fruit) that I experienced, but I had enough conviction of sin for everybody in the church. I found out later, your heart can lie to you, but the Spirit of Truth cannot.

For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God (1 John 3:20,21).

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:22).

His Spirit bears witness with our Spirit now, that we are sons of God.

And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us (1 John 3:24).

The Bible says, “***His Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are sons of God***”(Romans 8:16). I still hear people that claim to be Christians say, “I sometimes question whether I am saved or not”. Many people claiming to be a Christian by saying “the sinners prayer” has never waited for the confirming by God of the covenant they are trying to make to bear witness of their sincerity, but they have been told by religion they don’t have to. The church today doesn’t need you walking in victory to complete its mission; it needs you walking in unity. The “sinners prayer” that most Christian religions use, only requires a plea for salvation as the sole bases for being saved (some add works).

Whether or not you truly “believe in your heart” and truly sincere when you pray is irrelevant to the “sinners prayer” and most religions. Just by saying the prayer, assumes you truly believe, or you wouldn’t be saying the prayer. Once again, this prayer may have

worked well for everybody else, but I seemed to always end up at the scripture where Jesus said,

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matthew 7:21-23).

This verse that you just read also seems to stand in direct contradiction to (Acts 2:21), or does it?

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Acts 2:21).

Is it possible to confess Jesus and not truly believe in Him? In the book of Acts, there were people that were even trying to do ministry in Jesus name yet they did not know Jesus in a personal relationship. Their relationship with Jesus was strictly through another man's relationship with Jesus.

Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? (Acts 19:13-15).

The Bible teaches it is the "believing in the heart", and not just confessing with your mouth, that brings salvation. It takes both as the Bible plainly teaches.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Romans 1:16).

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Romans 10:10).

I went for years hanging on to just the witness of the Word of God that is used for confession of the resurrection of Jesus, now I have the witness of the Spirit of God also for sincerely believing in the resurrection of Jesus. The Word of God declares the new covenant, but the Spirit of God seals the new covenant! The Bible calls this sealing of the covenant "Circumcision". Please read the chapter on "Understanding Circumcision". In

fact for all the people that desire to keep God's commandments, only by being "circumcised in the heart" can you even be able to keep God's greatest commandment!

And the Lord thy God will *circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live* (Deuteronomy 30:6).

Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment* (Matt 22:36-38).

As we just read in Deuteronomy 30:6, it says plainly you cannot even keep God's greatest commandment without first experiencing the "circumcision of the heart".

Religious Trap!! Many "new testament" pastors like to quote a verse in Jeremiah 17:9 and claim it as referring to the Christian who has been given a new heart through circumcision.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9)

And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: (Colossians 2:10,11).

And God, which knoweth the hearts, bear them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith (Acts 15:8,9).

How can a desperately wicked heart (Jeremiah 17:9) love the Lord and keep God's greatest commandment? It can't! It must be changed. What religion is doing is telling you to keep a "commandment of love" and then taking away any chance you have of keeping that commandment by saying you still have a wicked heart! Be watchful for this trap! It will run you around in circles.

In my experience, "Circumcision" is also a real physical experience in the heart and is felt in the chest area. The Word of God bears witness that I am a child of God, but now so does the Spirit of God.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God (Romans 8:16).

Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit (1 John 4:13).

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God (Romans 2:28,29).

And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us (1 John 3:24).

This is the part of the salvation experience that I want to mainly focus on that I was missing. It was what hindered me for so long. So instead of just asking you to pray “the sinners prayer” to be saved, I will just give you my testimony how I found peace with God and everything I could ever want and more in Jesus Christ. If the “sinner’s prayer” has worked for you, and you are content with your relationship with God, Great! But my testimony is for people that are not at peace with God. People that are weary from trying to be someone that God approves of, weary of trying to get the sin out of their life and always under condemnation. Weary of desperately seeking to please God, but somehow always falling short. If you do not have peace with God or peace with yourself, or you are not experiencing the abundant life (not in worldly possessions, but peace, love, joy, etc.) the Bible promises you should in Jesus, then maybe you may need to step back and take another look to see if you are truly in the faith like I did. Here is how the Lord showed me to tell if I was “in religion” or truly “in Christ”.

Number one: A religious person will tell you what they do for God, a true Christian will tell you what Jesus Christ has done for them. They carry a testimony of a real, alive Jesus working in them and through them. You must understand, a “cell / small group” equipping team or anybody else cannot “equip” you with a testimony. Do you have a testimony or are the only changes that are being made in your life to please God, being made by you? The reason that Jesus isn’t working in someone’s life is because they may never have given Jesus their life. I know that this is a tough question to consider, but to evaluate for yourself where you maybe at, it has to be considered.

When I talk to someone who claims to be a Christian, I am listening for one key thing. What is the foundation of their testimony? If the person says I got saved (saying the sinners prayer), then I joined the church, then I quit smoking, then I quit drinking, then I am trying to quit cussing, then my guess is that persons foundation is built on “I”. But if the person starts telling me how Jesus came and pulled them out of the things that were killing them because they couldn’t get out by themselves, and they start telling me about how Jesus totally changed their life around when they couldn’t, then my guess is that persons foundation is built on Jesus. If you listen to people speak, their mouth will tell you what is wrong with them. The mouth speaks from the heart. A person’s mouth will tell you who they are. If Jesus is in their heart, then words of life will come out of their mouth. Also, by doing Christian things does not make a person a Christian. This is why the law could not make anyone perfect in God’s eyes, because it was weak through the flesh. The law required you to become something that was totally against your nature.

Religion tells you that you are in Adam and still in the flesh and then commands you to keep a spiritual law. The problem is, a natural man (in Adam) cannot keep a spiritual law and a natural man cannot bear spiritual fruit either. You must be born of the Spirit (in Christ) to bare spiritual fruit (peace, love, joy, etc. Gal 5:22). After experiencing the Holy Spirit enter my body now the changes that are being made in my life to please God are not being made by me, but by Him working in me!

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20,21).

For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).

Number Two: Have you ever tasted of the heavenly fruit? This is very important to understand. The reason that many “Christians” are not out sowing seeds is because they may not have ever tasted of the fruit that the seeds that they are trying to sow produce. The reason some people don’t witness is maybe they don’t have one. How can you give if you don’t have? The Bible says,

The husbandmen that labors must be FIRST a partaker of the fruits. Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things (2 Timothy 2:6,7).

A true Christian works diligently to sow seeds of the Word of God, because they have tasted of the good fruit it produces. A farmer that has just eaten the best tasting apple in the world will work tirelessly to plant more of those very same seeds. The farmer knows what the fruit taste like that he is planting and this is what motivates him. If you try to do God’s will in the flesh it is very hard work, but doing God’s will in the Spirit is a very precious gift. If a farmer has never tasted of the fruit that he is trying to sow seeds to, then his heart will not be in it. In like manner, the church today through “cell / small groups” and “discipleship / equipping” courses and “servant evangelism” are trying to get people in the church to sow seeds of a fruit they may not have ever tasted or try to teach them how to operate in their “spiritual gift”, which is in direct contradiction to the Bible (1 John 2:27).

These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him (1 John 2:26,27).

You can train a seal to catch a ball on its nose, but that is not what a seal was created for. If the people resist “the work of the ministry” then there is a follow up of condemnation for not doing enough for God to fulfill the “Great Commission”. The Bible

says that the disciples were addicted to the ministry (1 Corinthians 16:15). How can you be addicted to something that does not bring some sense of pleasure? This is very important that you understand. The responsibility of making Christianity work is not yours, but God's! The Gospel of peace is a ministry of reconciliation that was started almost 2000 years ago by Jesus Christ. You are just a part of it, not the power of it!

Number three: A religious person sees the fall of man; but the true Christian sees the victory of Christ. A religious man will look at a prostitute, drug addict, or a thief and see a swine that is wallowing in the mire. A true Christian will look at the same people and see sons and daughters of God that are just waiting to happen. The true Christian knows that the transforming power to make the very changes that Jesus made in their own life, can transform that prostitute into a redeemed daughter of God and receive her as His spotless bride! The true Christian knows that the Holy Spirit can give that drug addict a better feeling than the best drugs that the world has to offer. And the true Christian knows that God will even trust a repentant thief with the keys to the kingdom of Heaven. The only requirement is that they truly die. Jesus asked Peter, "Who do you think will love me most"? Peter answered, "I guess who you forgave the most". Jesus said, "you have answered correctly (Luke 7:42,43). The worst people seem to make the best Christians when they come to the end of themselves and die.

Number four: A religious person sees a fallen creation; a true Christian sees a new creation.

I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. (Romans 14:14)

Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate (Titus 1:15).

Number five: A religious person looks forward toward death. They keep saying that when they die and go to heaven, they will finally have a true relationship with Jesus. The true Christian looks forward toward life and peace and they already have a true relationship with Jesus. For they have already died with Him (Galatians 2:20).

For to be carnally minded is death, to be spiritually minded is life and peace (Romans 8:6).

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life (John 5:24).

The Bible calls the Gospel, the ministry of reconciliation. And this word of reconciliation, I pass on to you.

Understanding the Circumcision

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you (Romans 8:9).

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again (John 3:6,7).

I wanted to include this event in my testimony because this is a very real experience! I have experienced the Holy Spirit enter into my body between two ribs and went straight to my heart and performed this operation. What I experienced came from outside my body and entered in, which means that what I experienced was not finally coming in contact with some “inner god”. As the Bible plainly teaches, I was not born with a “spark of divinity”.

That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: (Ephesians 2:12).

This event was not like receiving a revelation of spiritual wisdom and knowledge, but a real physical experience. The whole event took place in the chest area. I thought I might be having a heart attack, except for the presence of an intense joy. I don't think I have ever heard of a preacher talk about this event, but it was one of the most amazing things I have ever experienced. It was only after this experience that I became aware of a totally new spiritual world that I was previously blinded to. It wasn't until later though that I understood the significance of this event called “Circumcision”, which I will try to explain in detail here.

The Bible speaks of crossing over to a new world, a new birth and a new creation. No longer in the “flesh”, but in the “Spirit”, no longer “in Adam”, but “in Christ”. This transformation event that the Bible is talking about is called Circumcision. It is the term the Bible uses for removal of the flesh. The term used for transforming the natural body into the spiritual body is called the “Quickening” (Romans 8:11).

To understand circumcision you have to understand the source of the flesh that is being circumcised (removed). The natural man is made up of two types of flesh: The flesh of the heart, and the flesh of the physical body. The Jews and many other religions still to this day circumcise the flesh of the physical body as a seal of righteousness, but I want to focus on another circumcision that has to do with the heart. It is the circumcision of the heart that translates you into the spiritual world.

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God (Romans 2:28,29). (Matthew 22:37)

And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live (Deuteronomy 30:6).

The Bible says in Deuteronomy 30:6, that it is only by circumcision of the heart that we can even keep God's greatest commandment. The reality of this event that I experienced on the road in my car is what caused me to love and worship God, because to love Him, I had to have something of substance to love. True love to me is not loving or worshipping the idea of God, but God Himself. In fact I could never truly worship God unless the flesh of the heart had been removed by circumcision, and I was translated into the realm of the spirit.

For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh (Philippians 3:3)

But the hour cometh, and now is, when true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23,24).

Since the Christian is "in the Spirit", I want to address spiritual worship briefly. When Jesus found me, I didn't have my "garment of praise: on, but I was at the lowest point in my life. At the weakest point of my life was where I found His strength and presence, not during my highest point of praise and worship like is being taught in many churches today as they try to rebuild the Old Testament temple complete with Davidic praise and worship. I actually heard one preacher say that we need to be like Queen Esther and find out just what the king likes us to wear to come in his presence. In fact, just by looking on the Internet for "cell churches", the first page of churches I looked at had a church with this statement listed describing it as "a cell church focused on pursuing the presence of God through worship, praise, discipleship, preaching, and servant evangelism"! This now seems to be the general way that most Protestant denominations have reverted to in their "Christian" walk to seek God's presence. This type of "Christianity" teaches techniques for the "seeker" to practice the presence of God.

What I have found out is the only thing that God requires for you to come into His presence, is if your are clothed in His righteousness that was given you as a free gift for your faith in Jesus Christ His Son! In my experience, my praise and worship became a result of being in His presence, and not something that had to be done to get into His presence. The Bible plainly teaches that we can come BOLDLY to the throne of grace during the time of our greatest need, not when we are at our highest point of praise and worship.

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:15,16).

What I hear being preached in some churches today is praise and worship to unlock the presence of God. This doctrine is taken from the book of Psalms.

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name (Psalms 100:1-4)

This was the acceptable Old Testament way of entering the temple courts. In the New Testament, I have found another way, other than praise and worship, into God's presence that I don't believe many churches today know about from what I hear being preached on TV and on the radio. I believe that all the main denominations that are out there today have totally missed this and seem totally blinded to this simple truth. Feel free to share it with anyone you know that are in these denominations that might have a problem with getting in to God's presence with praise and worship. This may shock many in religion today, but it works without praise and worship and it will get you into the holiest (God's presence). It has worked for me and I believe if you try it, you to can even learn to live in God's presence!

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:19-22)

But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2:13)

In my experience, it is the blood of Jesus alone that has gotten me into God's presence. I want to clarify something here. When a Christian talks about being in God's presence in this world, they are referring to direct access to the throne of God through the Holy Spirit because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to open that door of fellowship.

For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father (Ephesians 2:18)

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ (Galatians 4:6,7)

Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all

was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: (Hebrews 9:6-8).

And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles (Acts 14:27).

In my experience also, I have never found a veil between God and me that I have to go behind to enter into the “holiest”. I have found a dress code though that God does require before you can come into His presence. I have heard it preached that we must wear the “garment of praise” to get into God’s presence. God may have required the “garment of praise” from everybody else, but all God has ever required me to put on, was the robe of His righteousness that was a free gift for faith in Jesus Christ. His robe of righteousness that I wear was given me so I don’t see my nakedness or shame. Because of this robe of righteousness, I no longer look at me as naked and shameful and neither does God! Through the blood of Jesus, my fellowship with God has been eternally restored! Because of the sacrifice of Jesus to cleanse all of God’s creation with His blood, God already looks at me as spotless.

And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: (Colossians 1:20-22).

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see (Revelation 3:18).

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool (Isaiah 1:18).

The gift of righteousness given to me is not for God’s benefit, but for mine. I understand that my righteousness is as filthy rags and cannot be cleaned, so I exchanged it through faith for His righteousness that cannot get dirty! Believe it or not, but I even walk in God’s presence sometimes wearing a T-shirt and shorts, but I also am clothed in His righteousness, and He accepts me without praise and worship! This then causes my praise and worship. This is very different than what is being taught in many religions today.

Since this flesh removal operation (Circumcision) takes place inside the body, in the heart, I am curious how cell / small groups are trained to pull this off in their “equipping” process. Why is circumcision so important? Because it is a covenant and the seal of righteousness that God had ordained. The Word of God declares the covenant, but the Spirit of God seals the covenant. All of the promises of Abraham hang on this one covenant.

Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: (Romans 4:7-14).

The Jewish priest of the Old Testament did not understand that the true seal of circumcision God gave Abraham was in the circumcising of the heart, in the spirit, from the very beginning. They would take and circumcise the physical body of the male children as a sign of righteousness. In the New Testament, it is our High Priest Jesus Christ that circumcises the heart of the born again believer as a seal that they are righteous by faith.

Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: (Romans 15:8).

Since New Testament circumcision is an operation that Jesus does in the heart, women are also able to partake of this covenant also, and they can be heirs of the promises of Abraham. This is why the Bible says in Jesus Christ there is neither male nor female, Jew nor Greek, etc. The Old Testament dealt with human beings (born of the flesh), the New Testament deals with spiritual beings (born of the Spirit). This event of circumcision also marks the beginning of your eternal spiritual journey as a new creation.

And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; (Colossians 2:10-13).

What I have seen also in the church today is the practice of taking a new believer that has just been born again and trying to plug them into some ministry. If any pastors end up reading this then please give the new believers time to rest and heal and enjoy the liberty and freedom in Jesus before trying to place them into some ministry. Even in the Old Testament, the people were allowed to rest and heal after the circumcision before they journeyed any farther!

Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised. For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: unto whom the LORD swore that he would not shew them the land, which the LORD swore unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey. And their children, whom he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised: for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way. And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp, till they were whole. And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you (Joshua 5:5-9).

If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day (John 7:23)?

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matthew 11:28,29).

Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works (Hebrews 4:1-4).

The new believer has just had the reproach of the world (Egypt) rolled off them. Let them rest and heal and not immediately usher them into a ministry. God will call them to a ministry when He is ready (Galatians 4:1,2).

My prayer life

The “Circumcision” event also marked the beginning of a new experience of communicating with God. Something started happening to me that I have not heard any other person or pastor discuss. I will not explain this experience in great detail, because people may try to imitate this to validate something that may be missing in their spiritual walk, which is of no real value to God or them.

I didn’t understand until later what this was, but if anybody else has experienced this I would like to know. I experienced the Holy Spirit interceding to God for me in a totally different way than through a “tongues prayer language” or a thought out petition to God, like when I pray for people or needs. Once again I always experience this in the chest area and not as a thought out prayer in my head. The seat of the Spirit is the heart, not the head, but we do have a spiritual mind also.

Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. (1 Corinthians 1:21,22).

And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8:27).

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. (Galatians 4:6).

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. (Romans 2:28,29).

When you are “wounded in the spirit” from rejection or betrayal from another person you experience a “heartache” not a “headache”. If you ever have had a broken relationship, you know what a “broken heart” feels like. This spiritual prayer language is a similar feeling to that. Coincidentally, Jesus said he came to heal the broken hearted, so this may be a part of the ministry of the Comforter also.

I can experience this at any time of the day or night, and after it is over, one of two things happen. I either receive a revelation in my mind, which I assume is an interpretation, or I receive comfort. Since this experience comes from my chest area and not out of my mouth, I can carry on a conversation with someone, do a task, or normal day-to-day activities without being hindered by it. I know when it starts, and I know when it ends, but people around me are not aware of anything different. When people use a “tongues prayer language” everybody around them is aware of it.

Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? (John 14:22).

And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? (Luke 24:31,32).

Sometimes the feeling is long, sometimes its short, I can only describe this experience like Paul did. It is not a moaning or groaning sound or any other audible sound. It is a groaning of the heart, which feels similar to a “heartache” with no noise being made. I have many friends that have a “prayer language” that they pray in, that sounds similar to speaking in tongues. Paul spoke of this type of prayer language to the Corinthians.

For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful (1 Corinthians 14:14).

I have never experienced this vocal type of prayer language spoken of in 1 Corinthians, but I believe that what I am experiencing is a different type. It is described in Romans as a spiritual prayer that cannot come out of the mouth (uttered).

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8:26,27).

The Bible specifically points out that the tongues that were spoken at Pentecost came “as the Spirit ***gave them utterance*** (out of the mouth)”, which is what the tongues prayer language does also, for the ones I have heard sound very similar.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:4).

But in the verse in the book of Romans, the Bible says, “***the Spirit prays with groanings that cannot be uttered***”. This verse in Romans cannot then be talking about the same tongues prayer language Paul spoke of in I Corinthians 14:14 or any prayer language that comes out of the mouth. I don’t know if I will ever develop a tongues prayer language, but I am satisfied with this one until then. Once again, if anybody has experienced this type of prayer language, I would like to know. I have not heard of anybody else ever speaking about this same experience.

Some people ask me how the Lord speaks to me. Does He use an audible voice? The best way that I can explain this is when Jesus wants to reveal something to me, He overrides my thought process with His thoughts. I can be doing a task or thinking about something in everyday life, but when Jesus is ready to talk, He stops every thought and takes over my attention and starts giving me revelation. I have heard other Christians say that they have to get alone with God or have a “prayer closet” or “secret place” to hear from God. I think that’s great that they have found a place to talk to God, but in my experience, when Jesus is ready to show me something, He will reveal it to me regardless of where I am at or what I am doing.

Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? (John 14:22).

Just like the Bible says, He makes sure I can easily understand it (James 3:17). I haven't had to ever use a verbal language or special tongue to talk with Jesus, or Him with me. He just takes your thoughts captive to His thoughts (1 Corinthians 2:14-16).

While I am on the subject, I would like to describe what the rest of my prayer life is like. After my conversion and tasting of the heavenly fruit and feeling the power of the world to come, I had a long list of prayers and petitions that I thought it would take to finally start to straighten out my messed up life. As time went by, the list got shorter and shorter. What I noticed though was I wasn't receiving the things that I was praying for, but Jesus was taking away the desire for those things, until all that was left was Him. My prayer experience now is not always me telling God what I need, but God telling me what I need. I also have found the one prayer that is guaranteed that cannot be consumed on your own lust and desires. It is the prayer you pray for someone else. The Bible says in James 4:2,3 why we don't receive the things we pray for sometimes.

Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts (James 4:2,3).

The Bible says that the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends (Job 42:10). The Bible also says to seek another man's wealth or wellbeing (1 Corinthians 10:24).

I also want to share about another experience that I now have that I didn't have before. Since the circumcision event I have been able to communicate with other Christians in a spiritual language that I haven't heard any pastors speak of. The words I use are of the English language, but when I talk about spiritual things to another Christian and a non-believer that doesn't have the Holy Spirit as an interpreter listens in also, they say things like, "Wow, that's deep" or "I can't grasp that" or "you are speaking over my head". Paul in 1 Corinthians speaks of this spiritual language or tongue.

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: (1 Corinthians 2:6,7).

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2:12-14).

I have many friends that are in Pentecostal churches that speak in tongues that is some other language than English. I can't understand what they are saying unless they or

someone else interprets. They claim this language as evidence of being baptized in the Holy Ghost, but did Paul agree with this?

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way (1 Corinthians 12:27-31).

I have never spoken in this type of tongues as they do, but being “born of the Spirit”, I can speak about spiritual things in the Bible using plain English that many people receive with joy in their heart as “deep” revelation. Is not this spiritual communication also a result of the Holy Spirit as we read in 1 Corinthians 2:12-14?

I want to share another interesting experience that I have. Now that I could hear Jesus’ voice, he spoke to me constantly.

Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice (John 18:37).

When I go to bed, I sense His presence, and He talks to me when I am asleep (Job 33:14-18), when I wake up he is there, all day long he is there. In my experience, I have not been able to escape Him!

Once again, when a Christian talks about being in the presence of the Lord in this world, they are referring to direct access to the Father through the Holy Spirit that indwells them, until their physical body is quickened to enter that spiritual world.

For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; (Romans 1:18,19).

I became a prisoner of Jesus Christ. But one day all the revelations did stop. One day I didn’t hear his voice anymore. Then the next day came, and He was again silent. I could always feel His presence, but He would no longer speak. I went into a panic! What could I have done that could have made Jesus stop speaking to me? Since I was not under conviction for any sin, I started to ask for forgiveness for anything that I might have done that would cause a break in fellowship. I didn’t fully understand then that my total fellowship with God was based solely on the blood of Jesus and not on my obedience or disobedience. The next day came and I still did not hear His voice. By this time I thought that He might have given up on me and I was really down. The next day, the revelations started again just like always, but then Jesus revealed what had happened.

Jesus used that experience to show me that the reason He was fellowshiping with me and showing me the mysteries of the kingdom, was not because of anything that I was doing, whether good or bad, but just because He wanted to! This taught me a valuable

lesson. No matter what I tried to do, good or bad, I could not manipulate God. He was fellowshiping with me because He wanted to, not because He had to. Talk about feeling special! That experience made me feel like my purpose in life and my relationship with Jesus, was the most important purpose ever bestowed upon man. I also realized that He must also do this with all of His disciples. This has happened other times since then, but I don't panic anymore and the revelations eventually return.

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: (Philippians 1:3-6).

I have also heard people say that they have bound God to His Word. By speaking the Word of God, they believe that they can control the actions of God or force God's hand to move in their life by applying His Word. This might work great for them, but in my experience, I have not found anyway to manipulate God with His Word or otherwise. If I don't "allow" God to do something in my life, He does it anyway. If I "allow" God to do something He doesn't. I have never found anyway to eclipse God's sovereignty. In my experience, God decides to do something in my life and then does it, whether I "allow" Him to or not. How can the vessel tell the potter how to create it? If I stray from God's will, he steps in against my will with correction of disobedience, not condemnation of sin, because condemnation of sin always demands the death penalty, and that has already been paid in full by Jesus Christ.

What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost (Luke 15:4-6).

A shepherd that has a sheep that goes astray doesn't slaughter it when he finds it, but carries it back to the flock, REJOICING!

An example of this is, if you found your child playing with a loaded gun, you would step in as a parent and take away the gun whether your child wanted to "allow" you or not. It would be your duty as a parent if you loved that child not to let them continue in destructive behavior. In fact the Bible says that God corrects and chastens the sons and daughters whom he receives. If you are without this correction, then the Bible says that you are not even children of God.

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons (Hebrews 12:5-8).

These scriptures also prove that sons and daughters of God can be disobedient and still be sons and daughters. This is because we are sons and daughters of God by the new birth, not by obedience. The obedience comes as a result of the new birth. The divine order is first receiving a heavenly Father, before receiving correction from your heavenly Father. This is just like your natural children, they didn't chose you as their parent, whether born naturally to you or adopted into your family, you chose them. My heavenly Father knows how to make better decisions for my life than I do. I have already experienced a messed up life created out of my decisions. It was a living hell.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:1-3).

***The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.* (Proverbs 15:24)**

Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations (Isaiah 14:9).

Point to Ponder: I want to share a unique thing that I uncovered in my Bible studies about the prayers of the saints in Revelation. I know that when the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, it goes directly to God. The Holy Spirit being one of the Trinity, it cannot go anywhere else. But do our personal prayers go directly to God also?

And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints (Revelation 5:8).

I have one question. Why do the twenty-four elders have the saint's prayers in vials? Could this be the reason that some think they have to pray to other saints instead of through Christ? I just thought you might find that interesting, but don't dwell on it. What I do in prayer when I have a petition to God is I go to the throne of grace through the Holy Spirit in Jesus name.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

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

The Bible does say that our prayers can be hindered also.

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered (1 Peter 3:7).

The Bible also says that the answer to our prayers can be hindered.

Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days (Daniel 10:12-14).

Understanding the Kingdom of God

The Bible speaks of keys to the kingdom of God. I will show you how to find them. To understand the Gospel of the kingdom of God you must know three things. Where do I start?

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”(Matthew 6:33).

Herein this following passage lays the first key to the kingdom of God, which is the GIFT of righteousness. Please read the chapter “Law or Grace” for a more in-depth study on the gift of righteousness.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are new. And all things are of God, who hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

Second thing, what is the kingdom of God?

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Romans 14:17).

This is something that must be experienced. Righteousness, peace and joy states of being that are opposite condemnation, anger, and sadness. You can tell people that you have righteousness, and peace, and joy, but if you don’t truly have it, then that will eventually manifest in the fruit that your life bears. A natural man cannot bear spiritual fruit (Galatians 5:22)! A pastor can tell me, “ you now have the Holy Spirit” all day long after I said my “sinners prayer” or after they laid hands on me, but if I am not bearing any spiritual fruit, then I know deep down something is wrong. I had a Church of God pastor hit me on the forehead three or four times at a revival while telling me “You Got It!”, “You Got It!”, “You Got It!”. I went home that night and “I didn’t Got It!”.

Third thing, Where is the kingdom of God?

And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! For, behold, the kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:20,21).

The abundant life and the kingdom of God that the Bible is talking about in this verse is on the inside and allows you to go through the tribulation on the outside (natural

world), where you will experience trials and sufferings (I John 4:4). Please read the chapter “Baptism of Fire”.

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world (John 16:33).

What I was always seeking first through the gospel was to get to Heaven when I die and not to experience the peace and joy of a personal relationship with Jesus in this world. If you have to die a physical death to have a relationship with Jesus, then you worship a god of the dead and not the living.

I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine (Matthew 22:32,33).

There is a kingdom of God in the spiritual world that is also referred to in scripture as the “kingdom of heaven” that I want to explain how it is entered also. Please read the chapter “The Spiritual World” for a more in-depth study of the “kingdom of heaven”.

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God (Luke 13:28,29).

But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God. And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem (Luke 9:27-31).

How do I enter the kingdom of God in the spiritual world? You must be born of the Spirit first. You have to become a man-child. Please read the chapter “The Christian Experience: From Seed to Saint”.

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not ENTER into the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:1-3).

He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:11-13).

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot ENTER into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:3-6).

Many in the church today are running around claiming to be doing “Kingdom work”. What exactly is “Kingdom work”? Simply, it is the attempt of the church to establish the kingdom of God on earth.

And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth (Luke 11:2).

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:18,19).

Is such a thing possible? As we have read in the first part of this chapter, we know through scripture that the kingdom of God can be accomplished on the earth in the individual believer through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Luke 17:20,21). What about establishing the kingdom of God in power on earth? Why would Jesus tell the disciples in Matthew 6:33 to seek a kingdom FIRST that Paul later would say that “flesh and blood” cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 15:50). Apparently establishing the kingdom of God first in the heart of the believer gives access to the “kingdom of heaven” in the spiritual world. Instead of “flesh and blood”, could “flesh and Spirit” inherit the kingdom?

And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them (Luke 24:36-43).

There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord

from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:45-57).

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever (1 Peter 1:23).

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you (Romans 8:11).

Jesus said that He has given Peter the keys to the kingdom of heaven. You need to know just what are those keys are because any true Christian also has access to those very same keys, not just Peter as I will show you!

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:15-19).

The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath (Proverbs 15:24).

Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: (Gal 1:3,4).

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1-3).

As we have seen, the first key that the Christian has been given is the gift of righteousness through faith in the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ. Now

because of Jesus sacrifice on the cross of Calvary, we have permission to enter the kingdom of God.

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which HE hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:19-22).

The next key for entering in the kingdom of God is the **Key of Knowledge**.

Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the KEY OF KNOWLEDGE: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered. And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things: Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him (Luke 11:52-54).

But what kind of knowledge is the key? As we just read earlier, we know that we have to be born again by the Holy Spirit to enter into the kingdom (John 3:5,6) so that would mean that the Key of Knowledge is spiritual knowledge. Paul explained it nicely in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16.

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no

man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:6-16).

Once you have the spiritual knowledge to enter the kingdom of God you also get spiritual wisdom because that is the principle thing that teaches you how to use the spiritual knowledge and spiritual understanding also.

Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her (Proverbs 4:5-8).

Once in the kingdom of God, you can now eat of the tree of life! But what is the tree of life?

My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace (Romans 8:6). She is a TREE OF LIFE to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her. The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew (Proverbs 3:11-20).

Through faith we understand that the worlds (natural and spiritual) were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear (Hebrews 11:3).

Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, (Ephesians 1:15-18).

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. (1 John 5:20).

For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual

understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; (Colossians 1:9,10).

As you can see by Proverbs 3:18, the “tree of life” is wisdom and the tree is located in the paradise of God (Revelation 2:7).

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God (Revelation 2:7).

Did Paul ever get to eat of the wisdom of the tree of life in the “paradise of God”?

It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful (not allowed by the law) for a man to utter (1 Corinthians 12:1-4).

And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us (Acts 6:8-14).

And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place (Acts 21:27,28).

Whereof I (Paul) was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According

to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: (Ephesians 3:7-11).

As I explain in the chapter “A Word of Warning”, when I was in a cell / small group church, I first heard the phrase, “discussing doctrine causes division”. As you can see by these scriptures, if you throw sound doctrine out of the church and “embrace all faiths”, and focus on praise and worship ministries, you also throw out every key to the Kingdom of God! In fact ignorance is even a mark of a beast (Psalms 73:22)! Without sound doctrine you have nothing left that is truly “Christian”.

The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew (Proverbs 3:19,20).

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee WISE UNTO SALVATION (tree of life Proverbs 3:18) through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Timothy 3:13-17).

Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in KNOWLEDGE after the image of him that created him: (Colossians 3:9,10).

Satan deceived Eve into believing that the tree of the “knowledge of good and evil” was actually the tree of life (wisdom Proverbs 3:18) after God told Adam that the tree of the “knowledge of good and evil” was the tree of death (Genesis 2:17)! It is very dangerous to have knowledge, but no wisdom on how to use that knowledge. Which tree are you eating from? Please read the chapter “Freewill vs God’s Sovereignty”.

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Genesis 2:17).

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden (Genesis 3:4-8).

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ (2 Corinthians 11:3).

In fact God gave man the path back into the kingdom, hidden in the curse that was placed on Adam!

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return (Genesis 3:17-19).

God cursed the earth for Adam sake, but later God removed the curse from the earth.

And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease (Genesis 8:20-22).

Later through faith in Christ the curse from man was removed. Under the curse, Adam had to earn a living from toiling in the earth. When Jesus Christ came that changed.

Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you (Matthew 6:30-33).

The first step on the path back into the kingdom of God is death (Romans 12:1) and resurrection (Colossians 3:1-3), but instead of dying in Adam, we die in Christ. You have to get passed the Cherubims (angel) with the flaming sword guarding the entrance. The mercy seat under the Cherubim's was where the sacrificial blood was poured. The victory over death is through death (cross of Calvary)! In fact, the Kingdom of God can be summarized as the place where life overcomes death.

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: (Hebrews 9:27).

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:21,22).

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I LIVE; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain (Galatians 2:20,21).

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith (Romans 1:16,17).

And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead (Colossians 2:10-12).

Also you can see by the curse that was placed on the woman, the newbirth process to enter back into the kingdom of God also contains suffering.

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee (Genesis 3:16).

And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 14:21,22).

My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, (Galatians 4:19).

Part of the curse also placed on woman was that her husband should rule over her. The Christian also is submitted to Jesus Christ as the head and He rules over us. Please read the chapter "Marriage: Till Death Do us Part?" for a deep study into the marriage union.

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God (1 Corinthians 11:3).

But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in

childbearing (newbirth), if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety (1 Timothy 2:12-15).

The “good news” that I am going to share with you in the rest of this book is it is not your job to get yourself into the kingdom of God. That is the ministry of Jesus Christ alone.

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:” (Colossians 1:13)

Jesus Christ is the door by which you leave yourself. The Holy Spirit is the porter that opens the door to the kingdom of God within (John 10:3)(Luke 17:21). This is the victory of the Gospel. It is not about what you do, but about what He has done for you. You are within the kingdom of God or without the kingdom of God. The reason that I wasn’t experiencing the victory in Jesus, after I said my “sinner’s prayer”, is because I kept trying to fight a battle that had already been won! The victory over sin is won by faith. The obedience will follow the faith. Jesus is the only way I found of entering in the Kingdom. All I can do is point you to the door (Jesus) and tell you how I entered in, but I cannot open the door for you. But He can! The calling that I spoke to you at the beginning of this testimony is actually a knock at the door. You don’t have to be a “God chaser” like some think to find Jesus, because if you are feeling that knock, He has already found you.

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me (Revelation 3:20).

And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how HE had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles (Acts 14:27).

Will you answer the door? I finally did, as I will share in my testimony.

The Gifts

What I want to share here is a brief chapter on the same gifts that are given to every Christian. You have been given so many gifts as a child of God, but the preaching of these gifts have given way to the teaching of ministry gifts. I think these gifts are even more important to understand, because they belong to all true believers!

Holy Ghost: *And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 10:45)*

Righteousness: *For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:17)*

Repentance: *And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (2 Tim 2:24-26).*

Grace: *Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. (Ephesians 3:7)*

Eternal Life: *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23)*

Faith: *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: (Ephesians 2:8)*

Understanding: *And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. (1 John 5:20)*

Belief: *And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; (Philippians 1:28,29).*

My Testimony

This then is my testimony:

My “Christian” experience growing up in a Baptist church was probably like most children at that time. I learned about Jesus through stories in the Bible and through pictures on felt boards. The first time I “felt led” to respond to the “gospel message” was at summer camp one day when I was twelve years old. I did not fully understand it, but I didn’t want to miss out on anything that important. The pastor asked everyone that wants to be saved to repeat the sinner’s prayer after him. It is the same prayer that most Protestant denominations use today. I liked the “sinner’s prayer” because I never had to release control of my life. It was really easy also, because all I had to do was say the “sinners prayer” and admit that I was a sinner. Then I had to thank Jesus for dying for me and believe that he was alive because the Bible said so. I then asked Jesus to come into my heart and save me. I thought I was very sincere when I said this. I was told that because of this, the Holy Spirit had come to live inside of me forever and I was now saved and I could go to Heaven when I died. After my public confession that Jesus Christ was my Lord and Savior, I was then baptized by full immersion in water.

Now that I had gotten “saved”, I put my Bible in a drawer and didn’t touch it again for about 12 yrs. I now thought that I just had to stand firm in my faith of my prayer for salvation and he would make up the difference where I came up short. What I experienced from that point though was a life that was nothing like the biblical “Christian” life. In fact what I experienced after I said my “sinner’s prayer” was pretty much the exact opposite of the Christian life. I must be the only person in history that has messed up the sinner’s prayer. My walk through life became a path of damnation and not salvation!

I never experienced the peace with God or the abundant life. I would say to myself that I was saved for years because I said the “sinner’s prayer”, but when I looked at my life it was getting worse and worse. I could always confess Jesus and be happy when someone else would get saved (by saying the sinner’s prayer), which helped me believe I was saved. But I would not see the victory or any spiritual fruit in my life. Through this I learned a very important truth through my Christian walk that I believe to be the main stumbling block to experiencing the Christian victory the Gospel is talking about. The Bible says that if we believe in Jesus, then He will become the Lord and Savior of our lives, along with many gifts and promises. I trusted in the Gospel as it was presented to me and said my sinner’s prayer, but I never actually experienced any of those life-changing things. According to religious doctrine, this is where my faith had to come in. I just had to believe that I had something even though I never felt or experienced it or the Bible would be in error. Since the Bible told me I had all these things for believing in Jesus Christ, then I must have them even though I wasn’t experiencing them. I didn’t find out till later that I spent my early religious years believing in something that I never had even though the Bible said I did. How is this possible? Of course the Bible was never in error at anytime as I said before, but I was in error.

Search the scriptures; for in them ye THINK ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life (John 5:39,40).

I want to expose this stumbling block here. When I actually did finally totally surrendered all to Jesus, then I actually did experience everything the Bible said should happen. Now every scripture that I considered from my actual life experience to be in error, I now found the same scripture to be completely true in my new life experience with Jesus Christ. Please do not spend your life locked into some religion going through life wondering why you are not experiencing the victory of the Gospel. Stop and examine yourself to see if you actually really believed in the first place. Please read the chapter “How I messed up the sinner’s prayer”. This is the path I walked in my spiritual journey; maybe what I have learned can help someone else.

My whole Christian experience I only knew Jesus as a “forgiver”, but not a “Savior”. What I was always seeking first through the Gospel was to get to Heaven when I die and not to experience the peace and joy of a personal relationship with Jesus in this world. If you have to die a physical death to have a relationship with Jesus, then you worship a god of the dead and not the living. I didn’t know then, that if I truly surrendered all, Jesus would take over my life and save me from the things that were destroying me. If I would become weak in my life, then Jesus would become strong. Jesus said that he came that I might have life (first) and that more abundantly.

I want to also write briefly about repentance, because that is the starting point. I have found two types of professing “Christians” with two separate ideas of repentance. Those that come to the foot of the cross, they haven’t been crucified with Christ on the cross, they are still “alive” and “in control” of their lives. So repentance to them is trying to get the sin out of their life to restore fellowship with God. This is self-repentance. This is what Judas done after he betrayed Jesus. He knew he was under condemnation for betraying Jesus, and tried to give the money back to ease his conscience, but this still did not bring peace with God or peace with himself and he hung himself.

Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself (Matthew 27:3-5).

But those that are truly crucified with Christ, their idea of repentance was a desperate desire to turn from their sin, but were powerless to get it out of their lives. They needed a Savior, and not just a forgiver, to take over their lives and get the victory over sin that they could not get themselves. Repentance for the Christian is a desire to turn from sin, but the true Christian repentance doesn’t come from the Christian! Like faith, it is a gift from God!

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death (2 Corinthians 7:10).

And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life (Acts 11:15-18).

Paul wrestled with this same problem in Romans 7 before crying out “***o wretched man that I am, who can save me from the body of this death***”? In the next chapter of Romans, Paul turns the whole mess over to the Holy Spirit who wins the battle of sin for him.

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live (Romans 8:13)!

Some people have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. As you can see the power to live a godly life comes from God! The drug addict or the alcoholic is not wanting to know that there is someone that will keep forgiving them when they sin, or a church that will hold them accountable or some person or “cell or small group” to cuddle and cry with them. They want to know about a Savior that has the power to destroy the addiction that is destroying them and not just to keep forgiving them as they wallow in it.

The Christian overcomes sin only through the blood of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit and not through their own determination to quit sinning. That person’s spirit may be willing but their flesh is weak!

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16).

Preachers are saying, turn from your sin and turn to Christ and then preaching on ten steps on how you can do it through your own self-determination and the power of your flesh. If our flesh had the power to overcome our sin, we wouldn’t need Christ! That’s like telling a drowning man to swim to shore to be saved, if he could swim to shore, He wouldn’t be drowning! The Bible says that it is Jesus that turns us from our sin.

Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities (Acts 3:26).

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

But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore HE is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:24,25).

The drug addict like the drowning man, needs a Savior to come to them where they are and save them from whatever is destroying them, for they are earning the wages of their sin which is death. They are in bondage and dying in their sin. They are in a process that is called self-destruction. What Jesus actually saves you from is yourself. Remember that death came by man, not by God.

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead (I Corinthians 15:21).

Let me explain my early Baptist life using a football analogy. At a football game, you may have thousands of fans cheering for the team to scores points, but after the game is over, only the team goes home with the trophy. The fans just go home. I came to realize later I was cheering for a team that I wasn't even on. And at the end of the game, everybody else would have gone home with Jesus; I would have just gone home.

I had also always been taught by the Baptist that if I sinned, then all I had to do was come to the foot of the cross or to the alter to receive forgiveness, which I could, but then I would go right back out into the world and be back in the same shape again. I could always come back to the cross over and over and receive forgiveness though.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:10).

But I never experienced the peace with God or the abundant life. My whole "Christian" experience became one of conviction of sin and then repenting of it, in a never-ending cycle as I tried to get the sin out of my life, with Jesus forgiving me in between. This is not the victory in Jesus that the Bible talks about. I never experienced a "remission of sins" which is one of the true signs of living the Gospel. I didn't understand till later that if you have to choose every day to "do good" or be obedient to God, then your "base state of being" is one of evil. You are simply an evil person, trying to do "good". What Jesus does through the Holy Spirit is change your base state of being from evil to good and the Christian life is simply walking in the Spirit and good works follow as a result.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).

The battle of sin is not won by anything you do; it is won by what Jesus did! The sacrifice of Jesus gives us the victory over the sin penalty, and the indwelling Holy Ghost gives us the victory over the sin desires.

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16).

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God (Romans 8:13).

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (Romans 8:9).

I still held on to my faith that I had called on Jesus and I was saved. The question would still keep popping up though over and over again in my mind, am I really saved or not, but I would fight back the thoughts and try to stand on my faith and deny those thoughts. Since the Holy Spirit was not bearing witness that I was saved, then all I had to cling to was the witness of the Word. I started watching TV programs about end time Bible prophecy. At the end of the program I would find myself praying the “sinners prayer” again and again, with as much conviction that I could muster, each week with the host of the show, just to make sure I hadn’t missed any words. I didn’t understand till later that it wasn’t the sinner’s prayer that saved me. It was His answer to my prayer, yet I hear many pastors saying “repeat after me this prayer” and then declaring that person saved whether they actually truly believed in Jesus or not. Just believing in the prayer brought the salvation. This is one reason that I am writing about this. I still see many people in church that are supposed to be “saved”, that keep praying the “sinners prayer” when the pastor makes an altar call. Yes, I confess, I looked around sometimes during the altar call when the pastor said “for every eye to be closed and every head to bow”. But this makes me think that I may not have been the only one that has wrestled with this. Finally I gave in to the thoughts that I might not be saved and after examining myself to see if I was truly in the faith, I ended up at the conclusion that I wasn’t saved and eventually I started thinking that I might have done something and could not be saved. I want to state this very clearly! I don’t believe I had lost my salvation; I never had it to begin with!

I finally got to the point in religion that I told God that I could not quit sinning and I was tired of being constantly under condemnation. If he wanted me to stop sinning then he would have to stop me Himself or send me to hell. I told God that if He could do anything with what was left of the life I messed up, then He could have it, but I was through trying and I gave up.

This was what God had been waiting for all the time! I didn’t fully realize until later that what I actually did was offer myself a total living sacrifice (Romans 12:1). God had drawn me back to the cross with my guilt of sin that I could not escape from no matter how obedient or repentant I was. I had finally come to the end of myself. God then judged my heart and knew that I was finally serious about a total surrender. After I finally surrendered all, suddenly all hell broke loose in my life, but all Heaven grabbed hold! I was in the bonds of sin, but now I am in the bonds of the Gospel. Jesus took my captivity, captive! Like Paul said, “I am a prisoner of Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:1).

And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent

me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears (Luke 4:17-21).

Paul even said in the book of Philippians that he was trying to apprehend that which had apprehended him (Philippians 3:12).

The Holy Spirit entered in my body between two ribs and God confirmed the covenant with the seal of the Holy Spirit. Immediately the condemnation for sin for not truly believing in Jesus stopped (John 16:9) and the confirming with the seal of righteousness began and I became at peace with God. Jesus said:

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove (convict) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; (John 16:7-9).

The Holy Spirit's job also changed from condemning of my sin to a witness of Jesus' righteousness that I was now wearing by faith in Jesus Christ.

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable (unconvictable) in his sight: (Colossians 1:21,22).

And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by ONE offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Hebrews 10:11-14).

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: (Romans 5:1).

Lets now examine this. By explaining this whole experience to a Baptist pastor, they would say that I was saved at age twelve when I said my "sinners prayer", but I then went out into the world to wallow with the swine, like the "prodigal son". I just needed to get back in church, get an "accountability partner", join a cell / small group and rededicate my life to the Lord and repent and try to quit sinning. A Church of God pastor would also agree that I was saved at age twelve when I said my "sinners prayer", but that I lost my salvation. I just needed to get back in church, get an "accountability partner", join a cell / small group and rededicate my life to the Lord and repent and try to quit sinning. They both would assume that since I prayed the sinner's prayer, I had truly believed. They never questioned my sincerity. The only one that has ever questioned my sincerity in saying the "sinner's prayer" was God and me.

Now I will stop at this point to analyze this. What went wrong with my early “Christian” life? The harder I tried to make the Christian life work, the worse life would become. God did not answer any prayers, but when I prayed things usually got worse. If I ever got a step ahead, it would not be but for a moment and something would come along and knock me two steps back. Why did my life not show any fruits of salvation? Why was I not at peace with God? Why no “abundant life”? Where was the victory over sin? What was I missing?

I didn’t find out till after my conversion, God’s purpose behind this. As I said before, you may have the freedom to make choices in your life, but God has the control over whether your choices prosper or not.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified (Romans 8:28-30).

I believe that He controlled my circumstances to bring me to the point of total surrender to Him. God had done this very thing before! It was His way of separating me from the world and to get me to the point of total surrender to Him and forsaking this world. Let me share a quick story.

God did this same thing to the children of Israel when they were under the bondage of Egypt. In the Bible, Egypt is a representation of the world. When this started out, the children of Israel were getting fed and had a simple life under the protection of Egypt. But they were still in bondage and they didn’t have the freedom to serve God, because they had to serve Egypt. Egypt was their source of life. They prayed for a deliverer to free them from the bondage of Egypt. Now when God finally sent Moses to deliver them from bondage, God knew that they were not ready to truly forsake the life in Egypt to follow Moses across the wilderness to a promise land. In fact, even when they were out of Egypt into the wilderness, they wanted to go back to Egypt when things got tough. So God turned up the heat until they hated their life in Egypt. If you read the story, the more the children of Israel would cry out for salvation, the harder Pharaoh would make life on them. It finally got to the point that Moses questioned the Lord about this.

And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all (Exodus 5:22,23).

Finally after several plagues on Egypt and cruel bondage imposed on the children of Israel by the Egyptians, Pharaoh had enough of the plagues and told Moses to take the people and go. It seemed like their prayers for deliverance were finally answered. The LORD then did a very unique thing. The Bible says that the LORD hardened Pharaohs heart so he would not let the people go. And the LORD hardened Pharaohs heart again and again until He knew the children of Israel were in such distress and misery (like you

may be in now) that they were finally ready to completely forsake Egypt and follow Moses into the wilderness, to a promise land (Exodus 4:21, 7:13, 9:12, 10:1, 10:20, 10:27, 11:10, 14:4, 14:8,).

By now you must be saying, “what has that story got to do with how I came to the point of total surrender to Jesus” and why is God controlling my circumstances? In the Old Testament, God used Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt toward a promise land (natural)(Canaan). In the New Testament, Jesus delivers the sinner out of the bondage of this world and leads them to the promise land (spiritual)(Beulah - Isaiah 62:4). All the time I was saying the “sinner’s prayer”, God was judging my heart to see if I was really ready to totally forsake this world to follow Jesus to a better one. Like the children of Israel, God knew that there was still something in my heart that was not ready to leave behind this world even though I was confessing Jesus with my mouth. I think that there is a major flaw in this prayer for salvation. In the “sinner’s prayer”, I was asking Jesus to become a part of my life instead **of me becoming a part of His life.** I was asking Jesus to come live in my world, while Jesus was asking me to come live in His world. The Bible speaks of more than one world existing on one earth. There is a natural world and a spiritual world. Please read the chapter “The Spiritual World”.

Through faith we understand that the worlds (plural) were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear (Hebrews 11:3).

I had what I call the “tithing mentality”. As long as I gave Jesus 10% of my life; maybe Sunday morning and Wednesday night or keeping the Sabbath; the rest of my life was mine. I liked this arrangement with God because I never had to release control.

Religious Trap!!! In religion I didn’t have to really be “born again” in the Spirit as a “new creature”, because I was always taught that I was not a “new creature”. I just had to pretend that I was “born again” and a “new creature”, but in reality as most religions will tell you they are born “in Adam” and stay “in Adam” until the day they die because they are still in a physical body (Adam). I will address this later in this book because this error can be straightened out if you understand the difference between the flesh of the heart and the flesh of the physical body. This is the same place where the Jews missed it with the circumcision ritual of the flesh of the physical body to attain righteousness. Paul even taught that the physical body isn’t the source of sin and the physical body has been cleansed also.

Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s (2 Corinthians 6:18-20).

And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye,

blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man (Mark 7:20-23).

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:19-22).

And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith (Acts 15:8,9).

To hear most in religion today describe the Christian as being born in the flesh, live our life in the flesh, and die in the flesh. There is a popular religious phrase used by many, “the only difference between us and the unsaved is we are forgiven”!

This is one reason I think so many religions like to use the “sinner’s prayer”, because it doesn’t require you to forsake this world at all. People like this also because you just add Jesus to what you already have and try to live better. For this reason I would always keep back part of me from a total surrender. Why forsake this world if I didn’t have too to be saved? I thought that I could serve God and the world. What I came to find out is you cannot go and stay at the same time (Luke 9:62). I also had always kept a thought in the back of my mind that a total surrender to Jesus, would mean that He would make me sell everything I owned and buy a bicycle and pedal from door to door handing out Bible tracks, or He would make me shave my head and enter a monastery or stand in the airport or on the street corner witnessing to people.

What God did with the circumstances of my life, like He did to the children of Israel in Egypt, brought me to the point to where the thought of totally forsaking this world and doing those things for Jesus, was better than the life I was “living”. It wasn’t until after a total surrender to Jesus that I found out that all the things I was worrying about wasn’t what He wanted from me at all. I found out the ministry of the Gospel is a gift, not a chore! Although I did lose many worldly things, I gained many spiritual things. The reason why I believe God cursed the work of my hands and never let me prosper in this world, was because if my life in this world was working for me, and I had everything I wanted in this world, then why would I want to forsake this world to follow Jesus anywhere?

So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:33)

What did Satan offer Jesus in the temptation in the wilderness? Satan offered success and fortune in this world. Why did Satan through Peter try to stop Jesus from experiencing the suffering of the cross?

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and

be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men (Matthew 16:21-23).

I will reveal some snares of Satan later in the chapter “Decision Time”. Satan’s tactics haven’t changed; he still offers man all the pleasures of this world to keep him from forsaking all to follow Jesus. It would be contrary to Satan’s plan for him to curse your life in this world because that would just drive you to Jesus. Satan already tried that with Job. Today, Satan is still trying to stop you from going to the cross like he tried to stop Jesus. Satan’s best course of action, to keep you from a total surrender to Jesus, is to give you material success and pleasures in this world where you would have no need to forsake your life to follow Jesus to a better life. Why should you, if this life is working?

And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Mark 8:34-37).

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2).

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve (Matthew 4:8-10).

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward (Hebrews 11:24-26).

I also would like to stop here and briefly address an error that is being taught by many religions today. What I have heard is that worldly prosperity is the abundant life that Jesus promised.

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly (John 10:10).

And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth (Luke 12:15).

Jesus states plainly that man's possessions are not the abundant life. If you are reading this and your life is a mess, and nothing seems to work out right, it may just be that God has chosen you for something very special and is separating you from this world and is drawing you to Him, where He can give you the true riches through Jesus Christ. All God is waiting for is for you to finally come to the point of totally surrendering all.

Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? (James 2:5).

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: (I Corinthians 1:26-28).

And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living (Mark 12:41-44).

Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, of father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. (Mark 10:28-30)

Notice how Jesus specifically went to the poor and unsuccessful with the Gospel of eternal life and the promise of a better life, and not to the rich and successful who had a great life in this world. Jesus said,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, (Luke 4:18).

Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached (Luke 7:22).

Decision Time

Now we come to the point where you have to make the same decision I did. The decision to finally surrender all to Jesus is very serious. Because, if you pretend to die with Jesus, which is what I did when I said the “sinners prayer” at age twelve, then you will also pretend to live with Jesus, which is what I did for the next eighteen years. Jesus explained this when he said that some people would even praise and worship him without giving Him their whole heart.

He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men (Mark 7:6,7).

The spiritual “newbirth” isn’t symbolic or pretend. What you are about to do if you truly mean it, is end your life, as you know it. There is no way back, at least I haven’t found it. Some preachers also preach that we should “practice” the presence of God. When I was in religion what I would do is “practice” the presence of God as many in the church do today. I had never experienced His presence so instead I just pretended to be in it. This is also not the victory.

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable (1 Corinthians 15:19).

If you are drawn by religion to ease a guilty conscience, you will then join a church and be taught by man (spiritual leaders, cell groups, small groups, etc.) how to act like a Christian. The responsibility of becoming like Jesus will be placed squarely on your shoulders by the church leadership. This is also not the victory. You will go through life trying to act like a Christian instead of being one. What I have found out is acting like a Christian is the hardest thing you will ever do, but being a Christian is the easiest thing you can do. Because a true Christian is created by Jesus Christ in you through the power of the Holy Spirit. Many people in religion have a form of godliness but deny the power there of. The power to live a godly life comes strictly from God. Jesus said

Now ye are clean through the word, which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing (John 15:3-5).

When I talk about a total surrender, I am not talking about surrender to “the church” or “cell / small group” or a “pastor” or any other man or group, for they did not die for your sins. Only Jesus Christ can be your Savior. No person or group can stand as a mediator between you and God, but Jesus Christ. The church has never replaced a personal relationship with Jesus. God has opened the veil of temple to every Christian through the

sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ. Your salvation is a personal covenant between you and God through Jesus Christ, not a corporate covenant.

But just how much of your life do you have to sacrifice? How committed was Abraham in sacrificing the life of Isaac? Abraham had the knife in his hand and would have killed Isaac unless an angel had not stopped him. Isaac was not a sacrifice for sin like Jesus, but a sacrifice of faith in the resurrection power of God, like we are to offer our lives as a “living” sacrifice (Romans 12:1).

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure (Hebrews 11:17-19).

Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable (Hebrews 11:11,12).

Abraham had the faith that God could have resurrected Isaac from the dead if he did kill him! Abraham was so committed to sacrificing Isaac that the Bible in Hebrews 11:12 says that Isaac was “as good as dead”! People that are about to commit suicide are so close to a miraculous breakthrough to a beautiful spiritual world and new life in Jesus Christ, if only they would offer themselves as a “living” sacrifice to God instead of choosing physical death. They have actually come to the end of themselves.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (Romans 12:1).

When Jesus died on the cross for you, He laid down His own life. No man took it from Him! Because of the actual sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, you can offer yourself a “living sacrifice” to God, but offer the blood of Jesus in place of your own to pay the death penalty required for sin. The blood of Jesus, the spotless Lamb, is the only sacrifice that God accepted for your sin. Remember it was the sacrifice for your sin that God required to be spotless, God knows you are not. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. Sacrificing your money, time, job, house, etc. will not do it.

Do you believe that God can also resurrect you from the dead and let you walk in a new and living way if you truly give your life to Him? All it takes is the faith that Abraham had which was a complete, total surrender. You just have to surrender all, and God will judge your heart and decide if you really are serious. Just like Abraham and Isaac’s experience, God has already provided a sacrifice (Jesus) for you. If you want to die in Christ to be able to be resurrected to walk in a new and living way, but don’t know how or what to pray then try this prayer;

Lord Jesus, I offer what's left of this life that I have made a mess of to you as a total living sacrifice. I do not want to be in control anymore. Please take my life and use it to help others. I offer you my life for your use as you see fit, but I trust only in your blood that you shed for me in place of my own that the law required for the penalty of my sin. If you see that I am still holding on to even a small part of this world, then reveal it right now so that I may also lay it down as a total sacrifice. Please judge my heart now and if you find me sincere. Bear me witness and confirm this covenant with the seal of the Holy Ghost. In Jesus Holy name I pray this prayer. Amen

After I prayed a very similar prayer, I had my “road to Damascus” experience where I was “caught away in the Spirit” and I felt the Holy Spirit enter in and seal me for all eternity. My faith in Jesus now is not built on the fact that I made a plea for salvation, but on His ANSWER to my plea for salvation.

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him (Luke 11:13)?

I want to make something very, very clear at this point. It is not the prayer that I prayed that saved me. It was a total surrender of the heart to Jesus, like Abraham sacrificing Issac. Just like the “sinner’s prayer” I prayed when I was twelve, this prayer will not work for you either if your heart is not serious and God is the only one that is judging your heart for sincerity. I do not want people to start reciting this prayer that I prayed and assume they are now saved. That is the same problem I had with saying the “sinner’s prayer”. Wait for the confirming of the covenant by the Holy Spirit. Do not worry that you might not realize it when it happens. It will be the most dramatic, intense experience of your life. Please read the chapter “Understanding Circumcision” for a deeper explanation of this experience. If you are not experiencing any fruits of salvation, then there is a good chance you still are not saved and a stranger to God.

That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: (Ephesians 2:12).

If you want to show God your personal faith in Him and “bring fruits meet for repentance”, one of the few places in the Bible where God says, “prove me” is with the tithe. Since I wasn’t part of a local congregation, I anonymously donated the tithe to the local homeless kitchen. Do not just tithe once and stop, but continue and you may be surprised at just what happens as a result! I tithe today not because of a command to tithe, but I give to the church willingly. Someone has to help pay the bills of the church and other Christians sometimes are in financial need. I also like having a building to fellowship with other Christians that protects us from the weather. I would still fellowship with them in the rain, but a warm building is a lot nicer! But even today as a child of God, I cannot escape the fact that I am still free.

And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free (Matthew 17:24-26).

The person that gives the tithe according to the law (Malachi 3:7-10) is on the path of obedience. On the other hand, the person that gives their money to the poor is on the path to perfection!

Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me (Matthew 19:16).

If you do decide to donate money to the poor, you need to do this in secret. There is another important reason other than receiving praise from men why you need to give in secret. If you openly give to the poor and needy, even in your own family, they come to look at you as their “savior” instead of Jesus Christ. If you have a family member that always stays “in need” financially and you want to give them money, find a creative way to do it without them knowing where it came from.

***But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly* (Matthew 6:3,4).**

If you are finding it difficult to let completely go of the things of this world to follow Jesus, there is a reason! You are caught in a snare of the devil and I will expose it to you. We are not ignorant of Satan’s devices. You are caught in one of these two traps. “The Monkey Trap” or the “Hog Farmer”. The “Monkey Trap” analogy exposes material desires. The “Hog Farmer” analogy exposes physical addictions. Only Jesus can set you free from both:

“The Monkey Trap”

Once I heard about a trap that was used by some tribes in Africa to catch monkeys. Whether it actually is used or not, I don’t know, but it still makes a good analogy to describe the snare of sin. What would happen is the natives would cut a hole in the side of a hollow log just big enough for a monkey to get his hand in the hole. They would then place some fruit in the hole. What would happen is the monkey would see the fruit in the hole and reach in the hole to get the fruit. Once the monkey grabbed the fruit, then its hand with the fruit in it would be too big to pull out of the hole. The monkey was then trapped until; he either turned loose of the fruit, was freed by someone, or killed and eaten by the natives. I wonder sometimes if the other monkeys would stand around and try to talk it into letting go of the fruit?

In this analogy, what was the strength of the trap? Was the small hole in the hollow log the thing that had the monkey trapped? No! Then it must be the fruit that was used as bait! No, the fruit, although it was beautiful and desirable, was not the trap. What made the trap work was the monkey's desire of the fruit! The strength of the trap was in the monkey's desire of the fruit. What triggered the trap was inside the monkey and not on the outside!

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death (James 1:13-15).

And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth (Luke 21:34,35).

Man is so busy looking for sin on the outside that he cannot see the trap on the inside, which is his desire of the world. Man sees the world and all it has to offer and tries to fulfill his heart's desire. By the time man realizes that he is snared, then his desire of the fruit (world) is so strong that he cannot turn loose. In a desperate attempt for freedom, man will usually turn to religion for deliverance because he still doesn't want to surrender all to Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:20). So instead of turning loose of the fruit (world), man prays to God to work a miracle in his life by making the hole bigger so he can get his hand and the fruit out of the trap!

For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition (1 Timothy 6:7-9).

And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God (Luke 12:15-21).

So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:33).

The Bible speaks of the king's highway that the Christian walks that leads to the New Jerusalem. I will discuss this more in the chapter "The Spiritual World". This highway is full of poor people that are rich in faith. On this highway everybody walks. Many TV evangelists will probably hate me for telling you this, but there is no luxury class sedans allowed on this highway.

And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall WALK there: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away (Isaiah 35:8-10).

Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? (James 2:5-7).

Here is just an interesting note also about the king's highway if you plan to walk on it. This king's highway that goes to Mount Zion and the New Jerusalem points to the north spiritually. But many in the church today are running wide open down a highway that is heading toward the east spiritually. Churches today are even starting to embrace eastern philosophies like "Christian Yoga", chanting mantras, and embracing "all faiths" for the sake of unity of man.

Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge (Psalms 48:1,2).

Your pastor may promise you material riches in this world, but in the kingdom of God those material goods will never help you get to the "next" level.

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ (Philippians 3:7).

Please turn to your neighbor in the pew and tell them, "the Bible says that we are never going to get promoted to the "next" level if we keep heading to the east spiritually".

For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south (Psalms 75:6).

There is a highway to hell that does allow you to take all your worldly goods with you though (Ecclesiastes 5:10-17).

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me (Matthew 4:8,9).

Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows (1 Timothy 6:5-10).

“ The Hog Farmer “

Here is another analogy that I heard a preacher talk about to describe the snare of physical desires. I would mention his name but last I saw him, he was at a cell church and I don't know if he would want his name mentioned in this book. I thought that this was a good analogy though, but I want to expound on that even more. In this example, if a hog farmer that raises hogs on a big farm wants to get a hog to a small pen for slaughter, he will put a few ears of corn into his pockets and go out into the woods in search of the hogs. When he finds them, then the farmer starts dropping a few kernels of corn on the ground for the hog to eat. The farmer never gives the hog the whole ear of corn or it would take the ear of corn and go back out into the woods. He leaves a trail of a few kernels at a time for the hog to eat as he walks back to the slaughter pen. The hog will follow the trail of a few kernels of corn all the way to its slaughter. The thing that the hog never realizes while it is eating the kernels is, it will never get to taste the whole ear of corn before its killed. In other words it will never be satisfied as long as there is an anticipation of something better just up ahead.

I thought that was a good analogy to explain a snare of Satan, but let me explain further. Does it ever seem to you that the things you are doing (intimate relationships, drugs and alcohol, material goods, etc.) never seem to satisfy, but for a moment? Is there always a constant desire that the lifestyle you are in is leading to something better, but you just never can seem to get close enough to grasp it? Some how that abundant life always stays just barely out of reach. Then it could be that you are being led back to the pen for the slaughter.

But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it finished, bringeth forth death (James 1:14,15).

As long as man is blinded to the trap on the inside and looking for sin on the outside, he will never be free and eventually die in his sin. You have to understand where this desire comes from to ever get free. The Bible says that the source of sin is a wicked heart.

The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9)

Jesus also taught about the source of sin in the gospel of Mark.

And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand: There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable. And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man (Mark 7:14-23).

The trick is the heart blames everything for the cause of man's sin, but itself!

For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God (1 John 3:20,21).

The heart tells your mind that I am good deep down and it's the world that is the cause of your sin. So man has attacked what he perceives to be the source of the sin that is destroying him and he tries to remove what is tempting him. For years the church has attacked the alcohol establishments, adult bookstores and abortion clinics and tried to rid the community of them. The church has failed to realize that if there were not a desire for alcohol, there would be no liquor stores. If there were not a desire for pornography, then there would be no adult bookstores. If there were not a desire for abortion, then there would be no abortion clinics.

A doctrine similar to this has also become very prevalent in the church today. It is called "deliverance ministries". Actually what "deliverance ministries" have become is the same thing as "confessionals" that are still used by the Catholic Church today. According to deliverance ministries, what use to be considered by the church as "acts of the flesh" which are overcome by the Holy Spirit has now become "demonic spirits" that have attached themselves to the Christian and they must be delivered by a special "deliverance ministry" or an "intercessory prayer team". Some even teach that a Christian that has been "born again" still can walk in "generational curses" as a child of God! What are "works of the flesh"?

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are

contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law (Galatians 5:16-23).

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another (Galatians 5:13).

The Bible does speak of the Christian as warring against spiritual wickedness and demons, but the Christian already has the victory through the indwelling Holy Spirit, and doesn't need a "deliverance ministry".

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4).

In actuality this is just another way the heart came blame something other than itself for sin. The heart says, "that I am good deep down but it is a demon that has attached itself to me that is causing me to sin. If you get rid of the demon that is causing you to sin, then I will be good from now on". Do you know where true "deliverance" comes from?

Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed (John 8:34-36).

Some religions have approached the problem of desire from the opposite direction. Instead of trying to rid the community of what they perceive as causing the sin, they withdraw themselves from the world. Examples: Religious communities, monks in monasteries, etc. The Christian should not hide from the world, but be a light shining in it! Jesus had a different desire on the inside than the world, and nothing on the outside could change that! Jesus ate his dinner with drunks and prostitutes. The solution to the problem can only come from a new heart, and a new heart can only come from faith in Jesus Christ!

And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith (Acts 15:9).

There are some pastors that claim the Christian still has a wicked heart even after they are saved. They need to go back and read Jesus' words:

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God (Matthew 5:8).

Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate (Titus 1:15,16)

Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart (2 Timothy 2:22).

I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean (Romans 14:14).

Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:22,23).

For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God (1 John 3:20,21).

I am just showing these traps to you so you can see if you are in one. If you are, then you cannot free yourself. You need a Savior to set you free.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first (Matthew 19:23-30).

You have to surrender all!

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul (Mark 8:35-37)?

So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:33).

Did you answer the knock on your door by Jesus and are you now in spiritual union through the Holy Spirit with Jesus Christ? Are you walking in the light looking toward eternity? GOOD MORNING!!! It is a new day, and one day with the Lord is as a thousand years. Welcome to the world of the Spirit! I want to now share with you some things that have helped me on my journey in the spiritual world. If you are still rejecting a total surrender to Jesus Christ, then stop right here, because these tools I am going to share will have no useful purpose in a natural life. You need to go back to the bondage of Egypt. You may need more suffering in this world before you are truly ready to surrender all to Jesus. Please understand, you cannot go and stay at the same time.....

And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 9:57-62).

But for you that have truly died in Christ then it's time to go on and leave death behind. There is a resurrection from the dead waiting for you ahead. Remember it is only appointed for men once to die. You were crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20) and He took your eternal judgment. Let's go on unto perfection.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1-3).

The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath (Proverbs 15:24).

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame (Hebrews 6:1-6).

If anything you have heard in my testimony that I just shared, has changed your life, then you missed it. What you read in this book may have refreshed you, but my experience with Jesus Christ cannot truly change your life. Please understand this is my

testimony with Jesus Christ. I shared my testimony with you in the hope that you too will meet Jesus Christ and have your own personal experience with Him. The thing that would bless me most is hearing your testimony of how Jesus Christ has changed your life also.

Understanding Eternal Life

Many today are turning from the Gospel of Jesus Christ or embracing other religions because I think they do not understand it. If you truly understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ and still reject it because of unbelief or other reasons, then I understand, but I still want to share with you the “Good News”.

Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region (Acts 13:46-49).

But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve (John 6:64-71).

The main purpose of the Gospel the Bible says is, “to bring immortality to light”. I will mainly stay on the doctrine of immortality. Paul explained it in a letter to Timothy when talking about Jesus,

But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (2 Timothy 1:10).

The “resurrection from the dead” doctrine is considered a foundational doctrine for the young Christian so it must be discussed and understood.

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment (Hebrews 6:1).

The first thing the Christian needs to understand is that death is the enemy of the Christian, not the friend.

The last ENEMY that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:26-28).

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all (Ephesians 1:18-23).

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: (Matthew 28:16-19).

The victory over death is something that mankind has chased ever since death first came upon man through knowledge (Genesis 3:3). Adam was created in a physical body that was capable of living 930 years; because of sin that life span of the physical body was greatly reduced (Psalms 90:10). What I want to discuss in this chapter is why cannot that death be reversed through the awesome power of God? I think many people that have read the Bible also have pondered this question, but then just block it out because it sounds just too unbelievable. This is a study that I have wanted to do for some time. I have always believed that God has ultimate power over everything. I believe that with God all things are possible so that faith has freed me at least to explore the possibility of the impossible! Either God can overcome death or He cannot. If I have missed this in this study of immortality presented here, I have lost nothing, but if this is what the Bible is really referring to, then that would also be very good news to a lost and dying world and should be addressed and discussed.

But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (2 Timothy 1:10).

I believe the victory over death is through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Baptism is symbolic of that victory over death and the resurrection to walk in a “new and living way”.

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead (Romans 12:1). And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that

liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death (Revelation 1:17,18).

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20,21).

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:51-57).

I am going to cover the “Baptism of Fire” in a later chapter but I want to discuss here briefly the “doctrine of baptisms”. The “doctrine of baptisms” that is spoken of in the book of Hebrews is one of the most controversial subjects among Protestant religions. It’s symbolism in water baptism, power in the baptism of the Spirit, and sufferings in the baptism of fire has been argued from one end of religion to the other. Right here is as good a time as any to approach an argument that will most surely arise between two verses that seem to contradict each other. One verse has “baptisms” as plural, and the other has “baptism” as singular.

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment (Hebrews 6:1,2).

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all (Ephesians 4:4,5).

The whole process of dying in Christ is called “baptism” as we read previously in the epistle of Romans, chapter 6. The death to this world actually occurs in three stages. Jesus was baptized with water, then power (Holy Spirit), and then suffered to the cross! I want to make something very clear here. The only reason Jesus agreed to water baptism was to suffer in all points like the people he came to save. Jesus needed no repentance of sin!

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went

up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Matthew 3:31-17).

The baptism of repentance. (baptism of water)

Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19:4,5).

The baptism of sufferings. (baptism of fire)

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; (Philippians 3:10).

The baptism of power. (baptism of the Holy Ghost)

For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence (Acts 1:5).

Since we have seen an overview of the baptism or the “death process”, we will now take a look at the quickening or “life process”. First we have to know what starts the quickening process also called the “resurrection from the dead”. It is accomplished in three stages also. It starts with a seed that has been sown in each believer’s heart by hearing the Word of God. Peter spoke of this in the Bible.

First stage is the seed planted. Then the seed has to die to start growing.

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever (1 Peter 1:23).

But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: (1 Corinthians 15:35,36).

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me (Galatians 2:20).

It is of extreme importance to realize that we are born again of an *incorruptible* seed. What happens when an incorruptible seed is sown in a corruptible body? It raises it from the dead!

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption (1 Corinthians 15:42-50).

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you (Romans 8:10,11).

As you can see, this is a very powerful seed! A seed that is so powerful that it can change a natural body that is corruptible into a spiritual body that is incorruptible! Where did this seed come from?

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ (Galatians 3:16).

The seed that is being resurrected in us is none other than Jesus Christ himself! The seed is growing Christ in us. This “spiritual newbirth” doesn’t make us “Christ” it makes us “in Christ”. This is the reason we don’t have to chase Christ all over the earth as he warned us in the Gospel of Mark.

And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things (Mark 13:21).

That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring (Acts 17:27,28).

We are in Jesus and he is in us! You are either within Christ or without Christ.

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness (Romans 8:9,10).

If we are in Jesus, then He is resurrecting us from the dead and that would make us a part of Jesus' body as John wrote about, because Jesus is the resurrection!

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?(John 11:25).

Paul said that the suffering that the Christian goes through is like a pregnancy.

My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, (Galatians 4:19).

I would like to get input from other Christians about the immortality doctrine that I present here to see if they see these same things in their studies. The Bible says some people think they have eternal life when they really do not.

Search the scriptures; for in them ye THINK ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life (John 5:39,40).

For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you (Acts 13:36-41).

And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction (2 Peter 3:15,16).

Immortality doctrines are not new. Many religions have them. The Egyptians supposedly had one, but if they did then they lost it, because when Joseph died, the Egyptians embalmed him and put him in a coffin, which was their manner of burial then. The Egyptian sorcerers could turn their staffs into snakes, but they could not resurrect a physical body (Exodus 7:11).

For the Egyptians buried all their firstborn, which the LORD had smitten among them: upon their gods also the LORD executed judgments (Numbers 33:4).

Today when they open Egyptian tombs, they still find dead Egyptians, which means their rituals did not have the power to accomplish a bodily resurrection. Joseph

understood this and also looked forward to the bodily resurrection of Jesus as his victory over death and not the embalming rituals and tombs of Egypt.

And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt (Genesis 50:24-26).

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out (Luke 13:28).

But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt. And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you (Exodus 13:18,19).

The carrying of the bones of Joseph by the children of Israel out of Egypt was symbolic of a bodily resurrection from this world. This is a theory I have that there were other teachers of immortality doctrines spoken of in the Bible that came and went.

Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God (Acts 5:34-39).

Did Jesus and the apostles really preach an immortality doctrine that was just too unbelievable that it was rejected by so many?

And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life (John 6:65-68).

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine (Matthew 22:29-33).

Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? (Mark 12:45-47).

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it (Matthew 7:13,14).

Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? (John 21:20-23).

Jesus said that we are suppose to take up our cross and follow him, because “it is appointed unto men once to die and then the judgement”, but we are already crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20) and then judged.

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord (1 Corinthians 4:2-4).

And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses (Acts 13:39).

The Christian is today judged by the very one that took their judgment! How is that for “good news” and complete redemption?! You cannot improve on that type of eternal security; all you can do is rest in it! Halleluah!!

For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent

me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life (John 5:21-24).

The reason that I wanted to briefly discuss “eternal judgement” is because it is one of the foundational doctrines that the Christian must understand on the path to “perfection”.

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment (Hebrews 6:1,2).

The Bible also says that the Gospel that Paul preached was so radically different from what the people were hearing being taught in the Jewish temples that they claimed that it turned their world upside down.

But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; (Acts 17:5,6).

Did Paul preach a doctrine about the resurrection from the dead?

And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? (Acts 26:6-8).

That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles. And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself (insane); much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian (Acts 26:23-28).

Could the purpose of the Gospel really be to transform the natural body into the spiritual body? No longer flesh and blood, but “flesh and Spirit”.

And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts

arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet (Luke 24:36-40).

Jesus said unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? (John 11:23-26).

The Bible says that if we are “in Christ”, then we are in the resurrection, because Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life”. Many verses in the New Testament speak of us being risen with Christ now, not in the future.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1-3).

And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; (Colossians 2:10-13).

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: (Ephesians 2:4-6).

As you can see, when the Holy Spirit enters into our mortal body, He brings the immortal life of Jesus to a body that was once dead in trespasses and sins and starts the resurrection process. A Christian’s eternal life starts at the point the Holy Spirit enters into him or her. That is why the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Life. All that is left after the renewing of the mind is the redemption of the mortal body which the Bible calls the “quickening” (Romans 8:11). The born again believer now has the ability to walk through this life “in a new and living way”!

Now that you have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in you and you are in the realm of the spirit, your mind can be renewed and transformed into a spiritual mind where you can understand spiritual truth that will make you free from the bondage of this natural world.

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their

understanding (1 John 5:20), that they might understand the scriptures, (Luke 24:44,45)

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace (Romans 8:6).

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:12-16).

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (Romans 8:9).

Romans 8:9 says that true believers have the "Spirit of Christ". Once received in our hearts, the Holy Spirit then gives us the ability to understand immortality as presented by the Gospel.

But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (2 Timothy 1:10).

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Hebrews 2:14,15).

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace (Romans 8:6).

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life (1 John 5:20).

As we just read Romans 8:9 says that we have the "Spirit of Christ" and 1 Corinthians 2:16 says that true believers have the "mind of Christ", then all that's left is for the Holy Spirit to redeem is the mortal body to complete the resurrection process and achieve immortality!

. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you (Romans 8:11).

As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly (1 Corinthians 15:48,49).

The Holy Spirit is the power of the quickening process. The Word of God brings the truth to light, and then the Holy Spirit brings the Word to life in the believer.

Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake (1 Thessalonians 1:4,5).

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:12,13).

Is such a thing possible? Could a total spirit, mind, and body resurrection be possible?

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and BODY be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it (1 Thessalonians 5:23,24).

With God all things are possible. Could the Gospel really be talking about a complete immortality in 2 Timothy 1:10? To a lost and dying world, that would be “Good News”! Paul explained the purpose for the Gospel in a letter to Timothy when talking about Jesus;

But is NOW MADE MANIFEST by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (2 Timothy 1:10).

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Hebrews 2:14,15).

Your eternal life started when the Spirit of Life entered your body when you first truly accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior. It was a gift of God (John3:16). The “renewing of the mind” is but one part of your Christian walk in immortality.

Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: (Colossians 3:9,10).

Many religions believe in a resurrection after physical death. In fact this is the most common way of entering into the spiritual world and this is the way most Christians enter

into the Kingdom. Even though I am discussing the translation of the mortal body, the Christian should not fear physical death either.

For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do (2 Thessalonians 5:9-11).

For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living (Romans 14:7-9).

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep (2 Thessalonians 4:13-15).

There are many saints that have died a physical death throughout the history of this world that are with Jesus now. This was proven at the cross when Jesus said to the thief that was crucified with him and experienced a physical death, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise", and also when Stephen was stoned.

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked (Revelation 3:18). For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:1-8).

When a Christian talks about being in the presence of the Lord in this present world, they are referring to direct access to the Father through the Holy Spirit that indwells them, until their physical body is finally quickened to enter that spiritual world.

For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; (Romans 1:18,19).

Notice this verse says that the Christian has access to the Father through the Holy Spirit and not through the Pope, priests, pastors, apostles, prophets, cell / small groups, spiritual leaders, etc.

For the Christian, physical death is referred to in the Bible as “sleep”, because they may be awakened at any time. The unsaved dead are always called “dead” in the Bible.

These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep (John 11:11-13).

And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God (Luke 9:59,60).

There are also several instances where men of God overcame death in other people in the Bible. There is even one unique instance in the Bible where a dead prophet resurrected someone from the dead!

And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year. And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet (2 Kings 13:20,21).

I have a theory that this may be the reason that some occult religions practice human and animal sacrifices and some drink out of human skulls believing they can absorb that persons “wisdom” or “life force” through some ritual. On the other hand, when someone gives their life to Christ, then their “life force” is taken by God already and it is non-transferable.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1-3).

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (Galatians 12:1).

Any “wisdom” that the Christian has comes from God. No one is ever going to “absorb” the knowledge (gnosis) of God through drinking out of a human skull, because common sense would tell you that the wisdom of God doesn’t come from man, it comes from God! They may “absorb” some weird disease though!

John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven (John 3:27).

Some people also offer their soul for sale as a joke, but the Bible does say that souls can be traded and lost, unless they are “hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3)! The Christian has been bought with a price and no longer for sale!

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matthew 16:26).

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s (1 Corinthians 6:19,20).

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Peter 1:18,19).

Why don’t believers in the church today go around raising people from the dead like Jesus commanded the disciples (Matthew 10:8)? Does the church today still preach an immortality doctrine that the Gospel is suppose to “bring to light” as spoken of in 2 Timothy 1:10 or have they given up on it? Paul preached it.

Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (2 Timothy 1:9,10).

And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide. Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand (Acts 4:1-4).

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:51-56).

I have never heard a pastor preach the resurrection from the dead of the believer in small detail. All I have ever heard preached is that as a result of the gospel the Christian dies and goes to Heaven. The Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament was the stewards of the revealed “will of God”, which was the law. The Christians are the stewards of the “mysteries of God”, which is the path to immortality.

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Corinthians 4:1).

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (1 Corinthians 2:6-8).

Point to Ponder: Could the believer actually be saved from the penalty of sin, which is death? But why then do Christians still die if the penalty of sin, which is physical death (because it requires a blood sacrifice for atonement), has been paid by Jesus once for all? Let’s look at death in more detail. Death was the ministry of Satan and death is also the enemy of the Christian. From the Bible, what do we understand about death?

Death was defeated by Jesus.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Hebrews 2:14,15).

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:21,22). And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death (Revelation 1:17,18).

Death came by man, not God!

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (Romans 5:12).

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20,21).

Victory over death was revealed by the Gospel.

Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (2 Timothy 1:9,10).

Death first appeared in this world by knowledge. Physical death in this world came secondary as a result of that knowledge.

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Genesis 2:16,17). Adam didn't die a physical death until 930 years later, which is the end result of the fall in the garden (Genesis 5:5).

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:23).

The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:56,57).

But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death (Romans 7:8-10).

Why do people think that physical death is the first death when the Bible plainly teaches that until we are saved and the Holy Spirit (Spirit of Life) enters us we are considered walking dead already?

And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead (Matthew 8:21,22).

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness (Matthew 23:27).

Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: (Ephesians 2:5,6).

God did not desire Adam to die (because He warned Adam about the tree of knowledge of good and evil) or even His creation to perish.

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved (John 3:16,17).

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Genesis 2:16,17).

The Bible says Jesus now has the keys of hell and death (Revelations 1:18). In fact part of Jesus' ministry on the earth was raising people from the dead just like Lazarus. The apostles also continued in that resurrection ministry by resurrecting people from the dead. Jesus even sent the disciples out to raise people from the dead!

And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give (Matthew 10:7,8).

But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive (Acts 9:40,41).

Let me try to explain it this way. The Bible speaks of the law of sin and death. Can this law be broken? You have to understand the law of sin and death to ever understand the cross of Calvary and immortality and what the law of the Spirit of Life brings.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2).

The law of sin and death means that if you sin, that sin carries the death penalty. When you sin, someone has to die. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins, which shows that the death that is required for the penalty of sin is physical death (shedding of blood), which Jesus paid when he sacrificed his body and blood. Jesus didn't have to die a physical death, because he committed no sin, instead he chose to die a physical death for our sin (John 10:17,18). As we saw, sin and death entered the world through man, not God.

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned (Romans 5:12).

Sin is a disease that attacks the spirit, soul, and body. No man that is breathing air today has ever completed the full sin process though, because the Bible says sin when it is finished, brings forth death. This is called the law of sin and death.

Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death (James 1:15).

This is just like cancer when it is finished, brings forth death, and AIDS when it is finished, brings forth death. But what if you could find a cure for sin and that can stop its process of destruction and put it into “remission” before it finished its full course (death)? Could there really be something powerful enough to put sin into remission?

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:26).

Point to Ponder: The Bible teaches that we are to FIRST seek the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33) and then Paul says, “flesh and blood shall not inherit the Kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 15:50). Why would Jesus tell the disciples to seek a Kingdom FIRST that Paul would later state that “flesh and blood” couldn’t inherit? Could the crucifixion on the cross and resurrection of Jesus spoken of in the New Testament really contain enough redemptive power to restore and make alive the mortal body? The Bible says that the “grave” was defeated by Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:55). The grave held the physical body!

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:55-57).

Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: (2 Timothy 2:8).

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Let’s look at the Bible and see.

Excluding the special translations of Enoch and Elijah lets look at the rest of the Old Testament believers that looked forward to a bodily resurrection, but had to die a physical death because they were still “in Adam”. Jesus had not shed his blood for their sin, so they had to still pay the death penalty. All animal sacrifices could do was temporarily cover sin, but not take it away so they couldn’t enter the kingdom of God. It is appointed unto men once to die, and they could not be “crucified with Christ” like the Christian can today. They could not be “born again” in the Spirit, like every New Testament believer has the ability to. They looked forward to the cross of Calvary as their victory over the

grave. At the resurrection of Jesus, they were rewarded for their faith with a bodily resurrection!

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many BODIES of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many (Matthew 27:52,53).

This makes me ask a question. Why didn't these saints receive new bodies instead of resurrecting the physical body? I have a theory that this is why the early church resisted cremation and always demanded a "Christian" burial. Why is there even a doctrine in the Bible called "redemption of the body" (Romans 8:23) if the body will not be redeemed? Why were not their souls placed into brand new bodies and the physical bodies left in the grave? Ashes to ashes, dust to dust? What if someone took water and poured it on the dust and made clay? Then could a skilled potter take that clay and make a new vessel? What would have happened to Adam's physical body if he did get to eat of the tree of life? Because of this verse (Matthew 27:53), there is another question that just begs to be asked! So I will ask it.....

Could the resurrection of Jesus, that the Bible says has the awesome power to reach all the way back to the beginning of mankind, overcome death and resurrect the physical bodies, complete with flesh and bone (for the Bible says that "the graves were opened"), of the Old Testament believers who died a physical death ALSO reach 2000yrs into the future with that same resurrection power of that day and translate a mortal body of a New Testament believer and keep their bodies from seeing corruption? Could the Christian be a partaker of the same resurrection and power of that same event almost 2000 years ago?

And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some (2 Timothy 2:17,18).

Did Jesus plainly teach eternal life in a physical, but glorified body?

These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all FLESH, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him (John 17:1,2).

For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 5:4,5).

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you (Romans 8:11).

In the Old Testament, the Bible says that the source of life was in the blood, but in the New Testament believer, their source of life comes from the Spirit of Life (Holy Spirit). The same Holy Spirit that resurrected the physical body of Jesus (remember the tomb was empty) dwells in every true believer. Could this be the interpretation then of the events that took place on the Mount of Transfiguration, when Jesus was seen by the disciples, standing and talking with Moses and Elijah (Matthew 17:1-9)?

Point to Ponder: Notice that Moses was standing in “paradise” in a body before the other saints came out of the graves after Jesus’ resurrection. And the Bible says that death only reigned until Moses!

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come (Romans 5:14).

Could Moses have also experienced an earlier bodily resurrection in a redeemed and glorified body or was he in a totally new body? The Bible says that Michael the archangel disputed with Satan for the body of Moses (Jude 9). Why would Michael do this if Moses body were to return to dust and get a new body? The Bible also says that no man knows where Moses’ sepulcher is (Deuteronomy 33:5,6).

Could Moses be a representation of all the believers that entered into the kingdom by death, like the thief on the cross, and Elijah is a representation of those believers that enter into the kingdom through translation of the mortal body like Paul spoke of (1 Corinthians 15:51-57)?

Paul taught of a natural body and a spiritual body in (1 Corinthians 15:44). What is the difference? The Bible tells us that God is a Spirit, but mankind is flesh. Jesus was both.

And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet (Luke 24:36-40).

In Jesus dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9). Jesus came in the same flesh body we are in. Jesus was called the Son of God and Son of man. Spiritual death was abolished when we received the Spirit of Life (Holy Spirit) when we are first saved. Water baptism is symbolic of that victory, but not the power of that victory, as some believe.

For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:17,18).

Physical death is abolished when we receive the quickening of the Holy Spirit after He finishes His redemptive work in us (Romans 8:11)!

Point to Ponder: What is the spiritual world like, that is suppose to be the new home of the Christian. It is called by many “the world of the dead”? Please read the chapter “The Spiritual World”. There are other ways to enter the spiritual world besides physical death that is spoken of in the Bible that I will list in that chapter. The Christian can and is exhorted by Paul to study the spiritual world because that is the new home of the Christian and we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. These scriptures also stand in contradiction to the pastor’s that say “you can be too heavenly minded to be any earthly good”.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1-3).

(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: (Philippians 3:18-20).

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:1,2).

You can see the same parallel when Peter took his eyes off Jesus and looked at the storms around him and started to sink in the water. That is why the Christian looks on things above and not on the things on the earth, because Jesus is now up above! The earth is where the storms are! Whether you walk on water or sink in it depends on which way you are looking.

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world (John 16:33).

The purpose of the Gospel is to get the rest of the world to focus on the one above (Jesus). If you are walking and looking at the light from above your path is lighted in front of you. Darkness is behind you in your shadow, because darkness cannot exist between you and the light. If you were to turn around and focus on the things on the earth, then you would be stumbling in darkness as you are now walking in your shadow with the rest of the world who have their backs turned to the light (Jesus) also. The Bible speaks of the “Light of life” and the “shadow of death”. Which way are you walking?

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life (John 8:12).

And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel (Luke 1:76-80).

The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matthew 4:16,17).

Let me explain it this way. Picture yourself out in the middle of a big field at night in deep darkness. You cannot see your hand in front of your face. Off in the distance, someone turns the light on at a house. How hard is it to walk to that light? That is why many churches refer to themselves as “lighthouses”. When you are facing the light from above then it is reflecting off of you toward all those that are walking toward you with their back to the light.

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: (1 Peter 2:9).

With your face shining in the light, they see you as a light bearer in the darkness that they are facing. People stumbling along in spiritual darkness will come up to you and want to know what you are looking at that is making you shine in a dark world. Now is your chance to point them to that same light, where they can walk with you. And they can now point someone else that is stumbling in darkness to that same light!

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

That is why the Christian focuses on the things above. They are not trying to neglect the work of the ministry on the earth. There is a reason why many churches don't want you looking up. How can you build a pyramid on earth if you are focusing on a church in heaven?

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we

have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. (2 Corinthians 4:3-7).

In the Christian, God has turned on a spiritual light in our hearts. While the world stumbles in “outer darkness” the Christian walks in “inner light” and we can bear witness of that light (Jesus) to others who are searching.

Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him (John 11:9,10).

Spiritual Wisdom, Knowledge, and Understanding

Even though we have covered death in some detail in the chapter “Understanding Eternal Life”, I still would like to explore the subject even deeper. To understand the Gospel, you have to understand eternal life. This spiritual understanding comes by the Holy Spirit (Spirit of Life). And to understand the need for eternal life, you have to understand death also. As we already saw, it was the *knowledge* of good and evil that brought death to man, so we know that death first appeared as a “*state of mind*” because it came by knowledge, as Paul also taught in the New Testament.

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Genesis 2:17).

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Romans 8:6).

The reason is, man can now judge and condemn himself worthy of death.

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead (1 Corinthians 15:21).

The mystery of all doesn't get any simpler than what I am getting ready to explain.

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3).

The Bible says that God created the heavens and the earth and said all things were very good.

And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day (Genesis 1:31).

The only thing that has changed is how we perceive in our mind God's very good creation.

I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean (Romans 14:14).

Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled (Titus 1:15).

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself (Titus 3:10).

I want to also stop here and address something that many in the secular world claim that there is no such thing as good or evil or that good and evil is “relative”. The Bible plainly states that good and evil existed already when man was created because the tree of the knowledge of it was in the Garden of Eden when Adam was placed there (Genesis 2:8,9). But the knowledge of good and evil was reserved for God alone. God is the Creator of the world, and only God has the right to judge His creation good or evil. The thing that the Bible says is evil in this world now is the imagination of man’s heart.

And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart (Genesis 6:5,6).

And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease (Genesis 8:20-22).

And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand: There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable. And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man (Mark 7:14-23).

This carnal state of mind also is keeping you separated from a true peaceful relationship with God and eating of the tree of life, just like Adam hiding from God in the Garden of Eden with his new found “knowledge”.

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in YOUR mind by wicked works, yet now hath he (Jesus) reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: (Colossians 1:21,22).

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Genesis 2:16,17).

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works (Genesis 2:16,17); or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God (Revelation 2:5-7).

And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. (Acts 18:5,6)

Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. (Acts 13:46-48).

This is why one of the doctrines of Christianity is “renewing of the mind”. Only the TRUTH will renew the mind. That is the duty of those who have passed on into the spiritual mind as Paul declared in 2 Timothy.

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will GIVE them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

Many in the church today have a “double mind”. Paul wrestles with a “double mind” in the Book of Romans chapter seven and then explains how he got the victory through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit in chapter eight. This allowed him to transcend into the “spiritual” mind and peace with God. The “double mind” is one that is both carnal and spiritual, like the human mind is divided into consciousness and sub-consciousness.

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace (Romans 8:6).

The source of the spiritual consciousness is in the heart, not the head.

And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8:27).

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:22).

Through the Gospel, the believer's mind is brought into one pure consciousness. This is called the "renewing of the mind".

Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience (1 Timothy 3:9).

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God (Romans 12:2).

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:14-16).

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? (1 Corinthians 3:1-5).

If you are wrestling with a "double mind" then be of good cheer, there is victory over the "double mind" in Jesus. In Romans chapter seven, Paul fights the same battle in his mind and in defeat he declares himself "carnal and sold under sin". The Christian on the other hand is **spiritual** (Galatians 6:1) and **bought with a price** (1 Corinthians 6:20)(1 Corinthians 7:23)! All Paul is showing in these scriptures is the futility of the power of your flesh and your own determination to get the victory over sin. It is simply a rebuke to those who use works for salvation in their doctrine. A carnal man cannot keep a spiritual law, and a carnal man cannot bear spiritual fruit. Here is a simple rule of thumb to keep from getting the two confused. In the New Testament, good works are associated with rewards in heaven for the Christian while salvation is associated with faith (Matthew 6:19,20). It really is that simple.

For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If

then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil, which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. (Romans 7:14-25).

Paul finally yields the whole mess over to the Holy Spirit in Romans chapter 8 and gets the victory by the Holy Spirit that he could not get in the flesh. After Paul experienced this amazing truth, he then later rebuked the Galatians for doing the very same thing!

Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? (Galatians 3:3)

How did Paul finally come to this spiritual knowledge of the truth? Jesus said “*ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:32). How do we get that spiritual understanding and knowledge of truth then? Jesus said:

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. (John 16:13).

The Christian has a Holy Spirit, not a seminary, to guide us into the deeper wisdom of God.

And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. (John 6:65-68)).

John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven (John 3:27).

And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. Therefore speak to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do

they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their eyes are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. (Matthew 13:10-17)

As you can see by all three of these scriptures that you just read (John 6:65,66)(John 3:27)(Matthew 13:10-17), this spiritual understanding is a **gift** that is given by God.

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath GIVEN us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life (1 John 5:20).

Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may GIVE unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all (Ephesians 1:15-23).

The best way that I can explain the need for this spiritual understanding is with a communication I had with a person from an eastern religion that was not associated with Christianity. That person came up to me in a parking lot as I was getting into my truck and wanted to talk about spiritual matters. I stayed in touch briefly with them and found that person to be quite committed to their search of “self-realization”, but I still got to explain to them why Jesus Christ was the way to get the answers I was looking for. I used terminology that they would be familiar with. I would refer to the Holy Spirit as my “spiritual guide” which is still very Biblical.

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will GUIDE you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. (John 16:13).

For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father (Ephesians 2:18).

The person seemed focused on the "knowing of self" and the search for "Absolute Truth". I think that many people wonder why they are in this world and what is their purpose in life by the amount of sales on books written about your "purpose" in this world.

A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself (Proverbs 18:2).

The "knowing of self" is a very dangerous undertaking that people venture out on. If they don't know where to look for the right answers then there are plenty of "spiritual leaders" that will give them some answers, which may sound good, but usually brings them into some sort of spiritual or natural bondage to the teacher. All I did was show that person where I found the answers I was looking for. The following is a summary of that communication. I responded to that person like this:

"The "knowing of self" is great if you can find the answers you are looking for in yourself. Many people find out a lot about themselves through meditations, but I wasn't searching for the "knowledge of self", I had finally come to the end of myself. I was searching for the "knowledge of God". I came to the conclusion that to completely understand the creation of "myself" and why I was created, I had to look at me through the eyes of my Creator, which is knowledge higher than "myself". And as the Bible teaches:

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8,9).

So now I was faced with a problem. How can I attain knowledge higher than myself by an act of myself, which is what worldly meditation, is? I knew through worldly meditation, all I could ever attain was the highest knowledge of myself. There is a wall between the natural and spiritual world, which became what I call the "self barrier". Somehow I had to break through this "self barrier" or have someone already on the other side to carry me into this realm of Absolute Truth so that I may know God and the higher thoughts. Please read the chapter "The Spiritual World". I came to the same conclusion that they did. I needed a "spirit guide"(Holy Spirit). I knew I needed someone who had been there already to guide me. I knew this was my first step. Now I had another problem, I didn't know of anybody that had been in this "spirit" realm, but Jesus and the apostles and prophets. I decided to study how they did it. Could I get God to send me a "spirit guide" to take me into this higher knowledge that I may know Him.

John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven (John 3:27).

Paul had found a way to this higher dimension through the Way (Jesus Christ). If Paul could do it as he told about his experience then possibly so could I.

It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for man to utter. (2 Corinthians 12:1-4)

As you can see, Paul got a chance to look at himself from the outside, without the distortion coming from the "self" on the inside. In the spiritual realm, Paul could finally see the complete revelation of himself.”

What I was searching for and what I think everybody starts searching for from time to time is “the meaning of life” or “why they were created”? In other religions I have seen a continuing theme that keeps coming up is the desire to attain “self-realization”. So once again I responded to that person like this:

“Maybe I can offer some help in your journey for “self-realization” from what my “spirit guide”(Holy Spirit) has shown me. There are many teachings and many human spiritual leaders in the world and they can provide wisdom to a certain extent, but I believe the wisdom and knowledge you are seeking and what I was seeking goes deeper than what a human spiritual leader can provide. Let me explain it this way using the physical body as an example.

If you want to know what your body looks like, you can look at a lot of it and see, but there are some parts of your body that are impossible to see without the aid of an outside source. If you want to know what your face looks like you use a mirror so you can see for yourself. I could stand in front of you and try to describe to you what you look like, but then your idea of your appearance would come strictly from my perspective or another person’s perspective. Since you couldn't see your face without a mirror, I would be your only source of information about how you look. I could give general knowledge to you, like "you have a nose" or "your eyes are blue" and "your eyebrows are brown", but even with my best description of you, it still couldn't answer for you the “Absolute Truth” of what your face looks like. You also would have no way to know whether I was telling you the truth or not. You would always carry some doubt with you in the back of your mind and wonder if I even told you the truth. You have to see for yourself to ever attain any true peace and an honest answer for what you look like. To get the complete picture of what you look like, you have to have some help and so it is with your spirit.

A "spiritual leader" or in the Christian religion "a pastor, prophet, teacher, etc." can each give their opinion based on their experience in spiritual matters or on what they have learned through their studies of the scriptures, but as with the body analogy, then all of your or my spiritual guidance would still be filtered through their perspective. A person can learn through experience, but you cannot teach experience. This is why I did not seek out a pastor or any other human being to teach me the deeper spiritual truths. I

sought out all of my wisdom and knowledge of who I was (self-realization) and what my purpose is from my Creator.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him (James 1:5).

To guide me in my quest for Absolute Truth, I used the same “spirit guide” that Jesus said to use. This is very important! Even Jesus didn't teach his disciples everything, but left the deeper spiritual teaching to another source.

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come (John 16:12,13).

God sent His own Spirit to guide me and teach me about the Absolute Truth. This spirit guide entered into my body several years ago, and took over the job of my spiritual teaching and I no longer sought man for spiritual guidance. When this Spirit entered in me immediately a spiritual light was turned on in the distance and my life since then has been a simple walk to it.

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: (1 Peter 2:10).

As I get closer to the light, my path becomes more clear and brighter. See one day somebody could take and throw me in jail without access to a Bible, pastor, or a spiritual leader and I would still grow in knowledge of the Absolute Truth and even though I would be bound up in prison, I could be totally free in the spiritual realm. Each and every day I stand in awe of this magnificent spiritual kingdom of God that has been opened for me! My prayer for you is that your complete spiritual wisdom and knowledge will come from your Creator and not your religion. Only He can truly show you the reason He created you and your true purpose in the universe, both spiritual and natural. Only by looking at yourself through the eyes of your Creator, like looking in a mirror, will you come to the complete "self-realization" you seek.

Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:17,18).

I now want to discuss something briefly that I see very rampant in the church today. Some pastors believe they can teach you your God given purpose in life, I cannot. I can though point you to the one that can show you if you want to be “Spirit led” instead of “purpose driven”. Please understand that only Jesus Christ can tell you who you are in Christ. Once you know Jesus and had the experience of His touch, nobody can ever tell

you any different. The Holy Spirit will show you your true “purpose” and it will flow beautifully with the other people in the true church that the Holy Spirit has also shown.

These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. (1 John 2:26,27).

Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand (2 Corinthians 1:21-24).

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. (Galatians 1:11,12).

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. (John 6:44,45).

Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: (Ephesians 1:8,9).

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: (Ephesians 1:17).

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother (Galatians 1:15-19).

The words may be preached by man, but the understanding of the words comes from God. This level of experiential spiritual knowledge is partaken of only by an invitation from God.

The Spiritual World

To really cover this immortality doctrine in depth, I will have to explore a little into the spiritual world as presented plainly in the Bible. If God did not want us to know about the spiritual world, then there would not be so many references to it in the Bible. In fact, the wisdom in the Bible came from this spiritual world!

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal (2 Corinthians 4:17,18).

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1-3).

This study on the spiritual world I want to break down into five parts. Biblical references to this spiritual world, the heavenly Jerusalem (City of Gold), the world of Jesus, the significance of the spiritual world to the Christian, and different modes of entry into the spiritual world.

To start with, the Bible speaks of two worlds existing on one planet, a natural world and a spiritual world. A world above and a world below. One world is visible to our eyes and one is invisible to our eyes, or is it? A world that exist between heaven and earth.

And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy (Ezekiel 8:3).

The Bible even says that this present world is not reality in Hebrews 11:3. This world is only a shadow of what is real. Please read the chapter "It's About Time" for a deeper study into that world.

Through faith we understand that the worlds (plural) were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear (Hebrews 11:3).

For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding (1 Chronicles 29:15).

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal (2 Corinthians 4:17,18).

The word “worlds” used in Hebrews 11:3 does not translate into “planets” in the Greek. We can also see a distinction made between “earth” and “world” in the book of Psalms.

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

Where can instances of the natural world and spiritual world existing together on the earth be found? I want to take a look at several examples although there are many more. The first one that I want to look at is the story of Balaam and the donkey.

And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. And God’s anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him. And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way (Numbers 22:21-23).

By reading this story we can see that there was an angel that was standing in front of Balaam that he could not see, but his donkey could. As the story continues, God gives Balaam the ability to see with his eyes into the spiritual world. This story also tells about how God gave the donkey the ability to talk to Balaam. If the Lord tarries, I may write a chapter one day on talking to animals, because they were created for fellowship with man. As we will see in many of the stories in the Bible, when the Lord releases our eyes, we can see into the spiritual world and according to this story, apparently animals can also.

Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face (Numbers 22:31).

Since much of these stories contain instances of interaction with angels, the Christian needs to know the correct course of action to follow when encountering an angel. Even though Balaam bowed to the angel, the Bible says that the angels are our fellowservants and helpers. The Bible plainly states that they ***are not to be worshipped*** by the Christian. In fact the Bible says if you do fall on your face and try to worship an angel, the angel is just going to tell you to get back up again. We and the angels are fellowservants, and both have our own jobs to do for the Kingdom. The Bible also says we shall even judge angels (1 Corinthians 6:3).

And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10).

And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God (Revelation 22:8,9).

Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God (Colossians 2:18,19).

Angels also have a tough job to do sometimes (Daniel 10:13). The Bible says that we should even entertain angels when possible.

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares (Hebrews 13:2).

The second story is about Elisha at Dothan.

And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan. Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha (2 Kings 6:13-17).

Once again we can see a spiritual invisible world of angels operating on the same planet earth with us, but invisible to the naked eye until God gives us spiritual vision. Elisha the prophet could see the angels, but his servant could not until the Lord did release his eyes. Science and medicine calls these experiences “hallucinations”. People refer to hallucinations as seeing something that isn’t there, but what if the men of God were seeing something that is there? Can these “hallucinations” of angels interfere with the affairs of this world? Yes they can! One “hallucination” from God slaughtered an 185,000-man army!

For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this. Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD. For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David’s

sake. And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand; and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh (2 Kings 19:31-34).

Now I want to move into the New Testament and look at the Mount of Transfiguration.

And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them. And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus (Mark 9:2-4).

This story reveals much about the world of Jesus. In this story, Jesus not only could see into the spiritual world but he could operate in the spiritual world, because he was born of the Spirit as well as born of a woman. We see also that Peter, James and John could see into this spiritual world with their eyes also.

What body was Jesus in when he stepped into the spiritual world to talk to Moses and Elijah? The same body that later shed blood and died on a cross for you and me (Hebrews 2:14,15)! This story in the Bible was showing that Jesus was the door between the spiritual and natural world. The Bible says that only his raiment and his countenance changed not his body. We also see Jesus could vanish and reappear and walk through a closed door in the same flesh and bone body that hung on the cross! Remember the tomb that held the physical body was empty after the resurrection!

And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet (Luke 24:36-40).

And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight (Luke 24:30,31).

And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you (John 20:26).

Could a disciple “born of the Spirit” also vanish and reappear in a flesh body like Jesus?

And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no

more: and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea (Acts 38-40).

By looking at these different examples in the Bible, we can see that your flesh body that you are in, like Philip, can operate in the spiritual world and the eyes you are reading this with can see in the spiritual world when you are empowered by the Holy Spirit that dwells in you (Romans 8:11). How about a prophet?

And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy (Ezekiel 8:3).

The Bible says that the prophet Ezekiel was taken into the spiritual world by a “lock of his hair” which would also have to mean that the physical body of the prophet could exist in the spiritual world when kept by the power of God (Ephesians 2:6). Paul said flesh and blood couldn’t inherit the Kingdom of God, but what about flesh and Spirit as Jesus showed.

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot ENTER into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again (John 3:5-7).

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (Romans 8:9).

The Bible says that the Christians are not “in the flesh” but “in the Spirit” yet the Christian is still in a physical body. Which means you can be a spiritual man in a physical body.

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted (Galatians 6:1).

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? (1 Corinthians 3:1-5).

This proves that “the flesh” that is keeping the Christian from access to the spiritual world is not the flesh of the physical body. Please read the chapter “Understanding Circumcision”. In the natural man the blood is the source of life. In the spiritual man, the

Holy Spirit is the source of life. The Bible speaks of our natural bodies being quickened into a spiritual body by that same Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11). What is the difference between a natural body and a spiritual body? Lets take a look at what a spiritual body looks like. Both Adam and Jesus were in a physical body of flesh and blood like us (1 John 4:2,3)(Hebrews 2:14-17), yet one was considered a natural man and one was a spiritual man!

And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening (living) spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven (1 Corinthians 15:45-47).

First the Bible says that our spiritual bodies will be like the angels body.

For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven (Mark 12:25).

What do the angel's bodies look like? They look just like us! All through out the Bible, there are stories about angels appearing as men. They could eat food just like us (Genesis 18:8, 19:1-3). According to the Bible, these angels are currently walking about among us.

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares (Hebrews 13:2).

All through out the Bible you see instances where angels interacted with men and women. So how could you tell if these spiritual beings were human or not, even though they are in a spiritual body that looks just like our natural body? If they didn't want you to know they were spiritual beings, then you couldn't tell.

And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him (Luke 24:15,16).

There is also a difference between angels and unclean spirits and demons. In the Bible, angels of God never possessed people because they already had a body of their own which the Bible says appears like men. To possess men, these angels would have to leave their own habitations. Spirits or demons on the other hand need a human or animal body as a host to possess. One thing that mankind I think keeps forgetting, is that the human being is a host species, but Jesus Christ is the Lord of hosts. The physical body can be indwelt by more than one being as plainly taught through out the Bible. It is compared in the Bible to an empty vessel that needs to be filled. Two or more beings can indwell one body. For example, women that are pregnant with child have two beings indwelling one body, their life and the life of their child. As a host species, an unclean spirit or the Holy Spirit can indwell you. Each spirit brings their powers with them to dwell in your body. In the case of being indwelt by the Holy Spirit we find instances of super strength in the story of Samson and the ability to tell the future in John 16:13. But

Satan also has an imitation. In the case of an unclean spirit or demon, we find also instances of super strength in Acts 19:16 and the ability to tell the future in Acts 16:16-19.

The last and most important example that I want to look at is the heavenly Jerusalem (City of Gold). Abraham also knew of this spiritual world because he looked for this spiritual city!

By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:9,10).

But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city (Hebrews 11:16).

And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain (Zion), and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, (Revelation 21:10).

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:22-24).

And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 8:11).

First question that must be answered is what does the heavenly Jerusalem look like? The Bible calls it a “city of gold”. I think King Solomon tried to make the earthly Jerusalem comparable to the heavenly Jerusalem by overlaying many of the things he built with gold. In three different verses we find that the Golden City is transparent and invisible to our natural eyes. If it was in front of us we could look right through it.

And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; (Revelation 21:10,11).

And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass (Revelation 21:18).

And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass (Revelation 21:21).

Notice that the “pearly gates” are on the New Jerusalem that descends out of Heaven and they are all made of one pearl. Who is that one pearl that makes up the gates through which we must enter the Golden City?

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it (Matthew 13:45).

So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:33).

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, (Philippians 3:7,8).

Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God (Luke 18:22-25).

For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content (1 Timothy 6:7).

I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture (John 10:9).

Through Jesus Christ the pearl of great price (because He will cost you your life Romans 12:1, but He will give you His life in return, Galatians 2:20), the saints can enter the gates of the kingdom of God!

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last (Luke 13:28-30).

Did Jesus, as the door between the natural world and the kingdom of God, open the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem at the Mount of Transfiguration and let the disciples look in? At the entrance to the gates of the cities in the Old Testament was where the elders always communicated and discussed city business. You should see the same pattern with the heavenly Jerusalem.

But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God. And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem (Luke 9:27-31).

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount (2 Peter 1:16-18).

If the kingdom of heaven is “at hand” as Jesus taught, then the wall of the city could be right in front of your eyes in a spiritual world and you would never know it just like the angel that stood before Balaam, that he could not see. Could the gate to enter the City of Gold be right in front of your eyes also? Could people live their whole lives in this world just outside the walls of this spiritual city?

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie (Revelation 22:14,15).

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation (Job 14:13,14); That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: (Acts 17:24-27).

What is the key that will open the gates to the Golden City and the kingdom of God? Please read the chapter “Understanding the Kingdom” for a more in-depth study of the keys.

Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the KEY OF KNOWLEDGE: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered (Luke 11:52).

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and

depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God (Ephesians 3:14-19).

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of THE FAITH (not the unity of all faiths), and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: (Ephesians 4:11-13).

As we have just discussed, the question that must be answered is where is the Golden City located? The Bible gives several verses that describe its location. Through the Holy Spirit we have access to the Golden City in the spiritual world.

And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, (Revelation 21:10).

The heavenly Jerusalem always appears at a mountain. What mountain is that and where is that mountain located?

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:22-24).

And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them (Revelation 20:9).

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches (Revelation 3:12).

His foundation is in the holy mountains. The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah (Psalms 87:1-3).

The New Jerusalem is a spiritual city, which the Bible refers to as the “city of gold”. For this study, I will refer to it as “the Golden City”. The Bible says that it is through Jesus Christ alone that the Christian has access to the New Jerusalem, because Jesus is the only way to the Father! But the Bible also points out a very real location of a very real Golden City in the spiritual world.

Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away (Isaiah 51:11).

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; (Ephesians 2:19).

For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it (Psalms 132:13,14).

As we have already seen, the Golden City is located on Mount Zion in the “sides of the north”.

Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge (Psalms 48:1-3).

For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south (Psalms 75:6).

The Christian should study the heavenly Jerusalem and Mount Zion, because in the Spirit we have been there, we are there now, and we shall return there!

Been there: **But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:22-24).**

And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah (Psalms 87:5,6).

Are there: ***Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: (Ephesians 2:5,6).***

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1-3).

Return there: **Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall RETURN, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain**

gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away (Isaiah 51:11). I have one question about this verse. How can the redeemed return to someplace they have never been before, unless of course, you have had the experience of being there before?

So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more (Joel 3:17).

For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; (Ephesians 2:18,19).

On Mount Zion “up above” is where the Bible says the throne of God is. The gate of Judah, which tribe Jesus is from, is even the middle gate on the north side of the city (Ezekiel 48:31).

Before Jesus was born in the flesh, there was a strict Jewish sect called the Essenes that lived in an area called Qumran that looked to the north for Mount Zion and the throne of God. They had a library that contained ancient scriptures and books of the Bible. Because of their faith and study of the scriptures, whenever they buried someone, they would bury them with their head facing to the south so in the resurrection they would come up out of the grave facing the throne of God on Mount Zion in the north.

And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many (Matthew 27:52,53).

Today, because of Jesus we can enter in the Kingdom of God by any direction!

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God (Luke 13:28,29).

The Bible says that Jesus is now at the right hand of the Father on Mount Zion with “the church of the firstborn” (Hebrews 12:22-24)(1 Peter 2:6), but he will return one day with the church to Mount Olivet on the east to set up a millennial kingdom on earth (Zechariah 14:4) (Jude 14,15) (Revelation 19:11-16). The first time Jesus came from Mount Olivet he rode a colt and came from the east (Luke 19:28-40), the second time Jesus comes to earth, He comes to Mount Olivet and He comes on a white horse (Revelation 19:11-16). Between these two appearances on Mount Olivet, Jesus comes “in the air” from above without setting foot on the earth, to receive the remaining part of the church that is still on earth (Luke 21:28)(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Jesus always returns to earth from the east, but seems to dwell in the north (Mount Zion)(Hebrews 12:22-24).

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

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; (Ephesians 3:14-18).

The Bible also speaks of a false Messiah coming between the first and second coming of Jesus to earth. The Bible says that Mount Olivet is where Jesus returns to, and not where He spiritually came from! That is plainly taught to be Mount Zion, the throne of God, not Mount Olivet to the east of Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22-24).

The Bible doesn't speak of Mount Olivet in the spiritual world as it does Mount Zion. If you are looking for the return of Jesus and believe in the "rapture" then you are looking for his next appearing "in the air". If you do not believe in the "rapture" then you are looking for the next appearing of the Messiah to set foot upon the earth on Mount Olivet to set up a thousand year reign.

During his ministry, Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven is "at hand". Many in religion have always placed the coming of the heavenly Jerusalem in the future, because it is at the end of the book of Revelation that John saw the Golden City descend out of Heaven and take a position between heaven and earth. The city does appear in the future, but what if it appeared in the past or present also? For John to be taken somewhere and shown the Golden City descend from heaven would have to mean that the future already exists somewhere possibly in another dimension for John to be taken and shown it descending and then came back and wrote about what he saw. Please read the chapter "Its About Time" for an explanation of this spiritual dimension.

How does the heavenly Jerusalem relate to the earthly Jerusalem? One example, the earthly Jerusalem supposedly had a garbage dump outside the city that burned with fire called Gehenna. The city could see the smoke from the burning. Did the heavenly Jerusalem also have such a place within sight of the city? Which side of the city was this burning pit on?

He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death (Revelation 21:7,8).

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie (Revelation 22:14,15).

The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the

smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name (Revelation 14:10,11).

The Bible speaks of an eternal “lake of fire”, but some verses in the Bible also seem to refer to a hell on earth where people “burn” in passions and lust and exist in misery, torment, and sorrow. The unbelievers are referred to as “walking dead in trespasses and sins”. Could the Bible be referring to two “hells” a natural and a spiritual? The Bible speaks of hell as being “outer darkness”. Could this “hell” be referring to those living in spiritual darkness (outer darknes) and torment in this world until they finally die in their sins? Are they then delivered up later, judged and cast into an eternal lake of fire?

And the sea gave up the dead, which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:13-15).

The Christian walks in this world with “inner light” and has already been justified and judged “not guilty” by faith in Jesus Christ (Galatian 2:20). Jesus has already freed us from a “hell on earth” and spiritual death and is resurrecting us now to walk in a new and “living” way. I may do a future study on “hell on earth” if the Lord tarries.

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death (Revelation 1:18).

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live (John 5:24,25).

Jesus was also crucified at the earthly Jerusalem in the natural world, which is spiritually called Sodom (natural city) and Egypt (natural world).

And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified (Revelation 11:8).

And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem (Luke 9:30,31).

Jesus also spoke of both earthly and heavenly Jerusalem in his earthly ministry.

Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem (heavenly). O Jerusalem, Jerusalem (earthly), which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! (Luke 13:33,34).

I have a theory that Jesus went to this mountain and the heavenly Jerusalem several times during his earthly ministry.

And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray (Luke 9:28): and when the evening was come, he was there alone (Matthew 14:23).

And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, (Mark 3:13,14).

The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he (John 4:19-26).

Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone (John 6:14,15).

Why is the heavenly Jerusalem so important to the true Christian? It is the Christians new home and “newbirth” place. This is where we rule over the earth from.

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:22-24).

And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah (Psalms 87:5,6).

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: (Ephesians 2:4-6).

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Galatians 3:1).

Many religions through out history worshipped the sun as the light of the world, but the Christian walks in a light that the sun cannot provide.

And THE CITY HAD NO NEED OF THE SUN, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life (Revelation 21:23-27).

And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever (Revelation 22:5).

Point to Ponder: I want to stop here briefly and explain the difference between spiritual days and natural days. Natural days “lighted by the sun” go from morning to evening, light to darkness, day unto night, life unto death, etc. Spiritual days “lighted by the Spirit” go the opposite direction, evening to morning, darkness unto light, night unto day, death unto life, etc. When the world was first created in six days, the Bible says that the evening and the morning were the first day, and the evening and the morning was the second day, etc.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day (Genesis 1:1-5).

Days can be used in other ways in the Bible instead of just to describe a twelve-hour period of sunlight. It can also be used to describe a time of spiritual enlightenment.

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star

arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:19-21).

Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, (Ephesians 1:15-20).

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us (2 Corinthians 4:3-7).

But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (2 Timothy 1:10).

The children of Israel started all their days in the evening and then they go to morning in this same pattern. There were some that were in the house of Judah that turned their faces toward the star that rose in the east, which we call the “sun”. God punished them for this!

Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these. And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east (Ezekiel 8:15,16).

These verses may be referring to people that follow eastern religions as a “guiding light” instead of people that actually worship the sun. Today there are many churches that build their church buildings with the congregation facing to the east also and some build them facing to the north. I have wondered if churches do this just out of pure coincidence or is this done as a representation of which direction the “new paradigm” spiritual light comes from? The reason I wonder is because some churches are embracing very eastern philosophies like yoga and calling them “Christian”. Coincidentally, the KJV Bible uses the word “orthrinos” to describe Jesus as the “morning star” in Revelation 22:16.

I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star (Revelation 22:16).

According to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, word "orthrinos" used in Revelation 22:16 means the "north star". The Greek word for the sun (east star) is "helios". Some Bible translations have translated the word "morning star" to mean Lucifer who is called "son of the morning" in Isaiah 14:12. Lucifer may have been an angel of light at one time, but Jesus Christ has always been the true light. As you can see in this following verse (Isaiah 14:12-16), Lucifer was not allowed in the congregation "in the sides of the north" upon Mount Zion even though he was allowed upon the holy mountain (Ezekiel 28:14), so any light coming from the Golden City cannot be coming from Lucifer.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this THE MAN that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; (Isaiah 14:12-16).

In the natural world there are only two main lights that shine out of darkness (night). That would be the "moon" and the "north star". Regardless, the light that shines out of the New Jerusalem on Mount Zion is Jesus Christ alone.

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it (Revelation 21:23,24).

This is very important! I just shared this information because I found it interesting in my own Bible studies and I thought you might also. In no way should the Christian ever turn to worshipping the north star, the sun (east star), the moon, or any of the host of heaven as a representation of Jesus. Jesus is described as a Lamb many times in the Bible, but Christians do not go around worshipping sheep! At least I hope not!

The New Jerusalem is also part of our inheritance through Abraham. Please read the chapter "the Old Testament Church".

For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the

mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free (Galatians 4:22-31).

What did Jesus have to say about the spiritual world? Jesus himself said that the spiritual world was his world and not the world in which we live, so the Christian should spend time learning about it (Colossians 3:1-3).

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence (John 18:36).

Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world (John 8:21-23).

The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath (Proverbs 15:24).

And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world (John 8:23).

What significance does the spiritual world have to the Christian? Jesus himself said that the new home of the Christian is the spiritual world! It is the world of our Father.

If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you (John 15:19).

I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father (John 16:28).

For years I have heard pastors say that we need to stay away from the spiritual world, that it is “the world of the dead”. The pastors would say that “we can be too heavenly minded, to be any earthly good” which is in direct contradiction to Colossians 3:1-3.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1-3).

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace (Romans 8:5,6).

But when I surrendered all to Jesus and died (Romans 12:1), the spiritual world now became my world also and I became a stranger and pilgrim to this world (John 17:16). Paul even desired this spiritual world over the natural world (Philippians 1:23). Jesus said in John 18:36 that his kingdom was not of this world and then Jesus said that the Christian is not of this world also in John 15:19. Paul reaffirms this in Colossians 1:13!

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: (Colossians 1:12,13).

When talking about the spiritual world, everybody focuses on an evil aspect because they associate it with death, but what about the opposite? In the spiritual world, which is the world of Jesus, you have Jesus on the right hand of the Father, the heavenly angelic host, the church of the firstborn and all the saints that have already crossed over.

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:22-24).

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; (Ephesians 2:19).

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, (Ephesians 3:14,15).

What do all these beings have in common? They are alive!

But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine (Matthew 22:31-33).

If all the ones with Jesus are “alive”, then where does death exist? Death exists in this present world in which we claim to “live”! Christians are the living that are walking among the dead of this world. Jesus reaffirms this when he told his disciple “to let the dead bury their dead”. The Bible also speaks of the unsaved as returning to “their dust”.

And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead (Matthew 8:21,22).

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

The Bible says that the wages of sin is death and eternal life through Jesus Christ is the gift of God.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:23).

This verse says that death has to be earned (wages) and eternal life is a free gift of God for believing in Jesus Christ (John 3:16), yet in this world people are trying to earn life and accepting death as free. This is exactly opposite to the Gospel! The Bible says that death is the enemy of the Christian.

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death (1 Corinthians 15:26).

That is the curse that Adam was under (Genesis 3:17-19)!

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace (Romans 8:6).

The natural man is looking forward to death (as in Adam all die), while the spiritual man is now looking forward to life and peace (as in Christ all shall be made alive) because they have already passed from death unto life at the cross (Galatians 2:20)! What is your focus? It is only appointed unto men once to die then the judgment.

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: (Hebrews 9:27).

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord (1 Corinthians 4:1-4).

Some religions teach that Jesus was dragged into hell and fought with demons for three days and then was resurrected. What does the Bible say happened? When Jesus gave his life on the cross, where did his spirit go? Did it go to hell after the crucifixion or directly into God's hands!

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost (Luke 23:46).

Following the same pattern as Jesus and taking up our cross like He commanded us to follow Him, we offer our life to God as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1). Does our spirits then go to hell or a place called purgatory, or do they go directly to the Father like Jesus?

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1-3).

The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath (Proverbs 15:24).

Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) (Ephesians 4:8-10).

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, THIS DAY is this scripture fulfilled in your ears (Luke 4:18-21).

When I died with Christ (Galatians 2:20), He took my judgment and God said, “that I deserve to live” (Justification of life). People that did not die with Christ still await a future judgment (Revelation 20:11-13).

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death (1 John 3:14).

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life (John 5:24).

I want to also briefly discuss other religions because there have been many gods and goddesses worshiped through out history that men believe rule from this spiritual world. These other god’s almost always follow the same design. When man creates a god to worship, he usually makes them in male and female forms to relate to his image. The Bible says that God is a Spirit (John 4:23) and Jesus said that a spirit has not flesh and bones (Luke 24:39). So by this we can conclude that God does not have a flesh and bones body, which kicks out any idea that any of humanity is God (Ephesians 2:12). But the Son of God, which is Jesus Christ, was divinity and did have a physical body.

Foreasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Hebrews 2:14,15).

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9).

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world (1 John 4:1-3).

Does Jesus want us to follow Him into this spiritual world?

Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. (John 13:36,37).

Why couldn't Peter follow Jesus even to the point of physical death? Because Jesus had not died on the cross to open the door into that spiritual world for him! To enter the world of the Heavenly Father, you have to have a Heavenly Father!

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber (John 10:1).

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3).

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God (John 20:17).

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) (John 7:38,39).

The Bible speaks of several modes of entry into the spiritual world, which I will discuss later, but the only way into the spiritual world for the Christian is through THE WAY, which is Jesus.

And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I

am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me (John 14:4-6).

After Jesus died on the cross and the disciples received the Holy Ghost, they then became “spiritual” or “born of the Spirit” and they could now follow Jesus into the spiritual world.

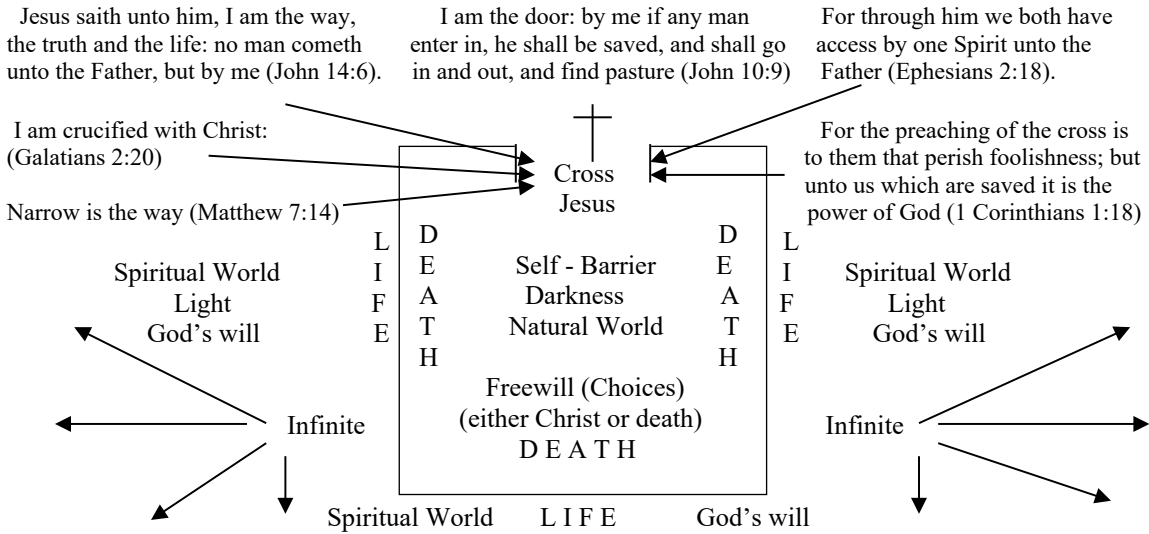
Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: (John 20:21,22).

Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me (John 21:19-22).

Today the Christian should follow Jesus and enter into that spiritual world through the cross of Christ alone. Jesus did say, “follow me”, not through religious rituals, or mystical practices, but through His death on the cross. Many people have changed the gospel from “Jesus is the way” to “Jesus showed the way”.

And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it (Mark 8:34,35).

I will try to show how to transcend the natural and spiritual worlds through the cross of Christ by drawing a diagram. This may make it easier to understand.



Natural man lives his life in a box. How does man escape the box of the natural world in which he is trapped? The only way is through the cross without dying an actual physical death. The true Christian dies through someone else's physical death (Jesus).

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Hebrews 2:14,15).

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain (Galatians 2:20).

What the "free moral agent" claims as their source of freedom (freewill) is actually the power of the box that has them trapped! Are you living in the box and held captive by the natural world? Jesus can set you free (Romans 8:18-23), even if your all powerful "freewill" cannot!

But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) (Ephesians 4:7-10).

The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath (Proverbs 15:24).

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death (Revelation 1:17,18).

When man is “living” in the natural world, he is trapped there until he dies. The natural world (Egypt) in which man “lives” becomes his coffin.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal (John 12:24,25).

Many people try forms of meditations and techniques to learn or gain access to this spiritual world. Since meditations and techniques are an act of yourself applied to yourself, reason would then have to conclude that the farthest you can possibly go with meditation is to the end of yourself. There is where you find the self-barrier that is the wall that has you trapped in this world. Some religions have finally figured this out and the futility of self-meditation so they have instead turned to seducing spirits for knowledge of the spiritual world. Those that die with Christ are set free from the box to live life eternal. We cross that self-barrier through Jesus Christ (the veil of the temple Hebrews 10:20).

Since death is what exists in the natural world and eternal life is what exists in the spiritual world then focusing on life in the natural world, would be the same as focusing on death! Now can you see how dangerous one little phrase can be, “You can be too heavenly minded to be any earthly good”.

He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal (John 12:25).

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace (Romans 8:6).

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1-3).

Once again, you can see the same parallel when Peter took his eyes off Jesus and looked at the storms around him and started to sink in the water (Matthew 14:25-31). That is why the Christian looks on “things above” and not on the things on the earth,

because Jesus is now up above! The earth is where the storms are! The purpose of the Gospel is to get the rest of the world to focus on the one above (Jesus).

Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me (John 12:31,32).

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world (John 16:33).

Many in the churches today are running around looking for “accountability partners” to help them achieve the “victory” over this world. What would happen if everybody looked to Jesus sitting up above as the one they are accountable to?

But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way (Romans 14:10-13).

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord (1 Corinthians 4:1-4).

I want to share here at the end of this chapter about different ways into the spiritual world. Be not deceived, if Christians do not teach their children about the spiritual world, then there are other religions that will. Some believe that Solomon, who was given the wisdom of God (1 King 4:29), mixed that wisdom of the spiritual world together with the different religions that his wives turned him to and built “high places”(1 Kings 11:4-8). Many of those “high places” remain today.

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak (Ephesians 6:10-20).

(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; (2 Corinthians 10:4,5).

For example, let's look at witchcraft and sorcery since it is a very old religion and it is making a very strong comeback today, especially with children because they are easily enticed with the promise of supernatural power. I want to also stop here briefly and set the record straight as many Christians are associating the sacrifice of the lion in the Chronicles of Narnia with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. In the movie, it portrayed the evil witch as killing the good lion by stabbing it with a spear. When she stabbed the lion, you could see it's eyes go dim as if "evil" just killed "good". Jesus was already dead before the soldier stabbed him with the spear!

But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water (John 19:33,34).

Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father (John 10:17,18).

The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus was God's plan from the beginning, not Satan's (Hebrews 2:14-18). It wasn't "evils" plan to kill Jesus, because Satan even tried to stop Jesus from going to the cross through Peter! Satan knew that through death, Jesus would destroy him, who at that time had the power of death (Hebrews 2:14,15).

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men (Matthew 16:21-23).

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8).

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the

power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Hebrews 2:14,15).

The power to resurrect the lion from the dead was also presented as a more powerful “deep” magic overcoming an evil magic. The Bible doesn’t make a distinction between “good” magic and “bad” magic, but it condemns all magic! Jesus was resurrected from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit, not “deep” magic and so are we!

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you (Romans 8:11).

Witchcraft spoken of in the Bible pre-dates Solomon and goes at least back to the captivity of Israel in Egypt and probably even further. The Egyptian sorcerers could turn their staffs into snakes, which proves that sorcery and witchcraft do have some power that they can tap into, but they do not have ultimate power. Why would some one want to walk in the power of witchcraft when they can walk in the power of God through Jesus Christ?

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you (Matthew 6:33).

For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power (Romans 8:20).

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

What kind of power did the men of God have access to in the Bible?

Power over fire.

He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God (Daniel 3:25).

Power over water.

And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus (Matthew 14:25-29).

But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed. And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim. Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it (2 Kings 6:5-7).

Power over physical weight.

And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill that is before Hebron (Judges 16:3).

Power over time.

And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz (2 Kings 20:11).

Power over the sun and moon.

Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day (Joshua 10:12,13).

Now you know why Christians worship the God of Israel (Jehovah) instead of the sun and moon. According to the Bible, Joshua an Israelite man that was walking in the power of the God of Israel (Jehovah) commanded the sun, which was considered one of the most powerful Egyptian gods, to stop in place.

Power over weather.

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

Power over death.

But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive (Acts 9:40,41).

Power over animals.

And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, (Hebrews 11:32,33).

And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook (1 Kings 17:4-6).

And he went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head. And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them (2 Kings 2:23,24).

The Bible also speaks of several modes of entry into the spiritual world which means the Christian cannot deny they exist if they believe the Bible. I will just share them briefly and I will not go into an in depth study of each. For more study on the spiritual world, please read the chapter "It's About Time". I have already discussed THE ONLY WAY (Jesus) for the Christian. You have to first go through the cross. But after you are "born of the Spirit", you now have access to these different modes of entry when you learn how. It is important to note that, "men of God" were the ones that were experiencing all these different modes of entry into the spiritual world that the Bible speaks of.

Visions

But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: (Acts 11:3).

It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter (2 Corinthians 12:1).

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: (Acts 2: 16,17).

Trances

The word trance in the Bible is “Ekstasis” in the Greek, which translates to “a displacement of the mind”. This is where we get the word “ecstasy”.

On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: (Acts 10:10).

He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: (Numbers 24:16).

Ladders

This is an interesting little way into heaven. Could this be the mode of entry that Jesus was referring to in John 10:1?

And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; (Genesis 28:10-13).

Out of body experience

It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter (2 Corinthians 12:2).

Translations

Notice how Enoch had a testimony that he pleased God before his translation.

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God (Hebrews 11:5,6)

How can we please God today?

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen (Hebrews 13:20,21).

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: (Colossians 1:3).

Caught away in the Spirit

And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea (Acts 8:39).

So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns (Rev 17:3).

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne (Revelation 4:1,2).

Chariot of Fire

And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven (2 Kings 2:11)

Dreams

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: (Acts 2:17,18).

For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword (Job 33:14-18).

Hearing Voices

And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth (1 Samuel 3:10).

And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times (Numbers 22:28).

And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah (1 Kings 19:11-13).

And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden (Genesis 3:8).

It still amazes me how much knowledge can be gleaned from a KJV Bible that everybody seems to be forsaking for newer and “easier” translations. I have really enjoyed doing this Bible study about the spiritual world and sharing it with other Christians, but science and medicine believe they already have Christianity figured out.

“In temporal lobe epilepsy, there may be an intensification of the patient’s emotional reactions (peace, love, joy, etc.), vague preoccupation with moral and religious issues, a tendency to write excessively, and sometimes aggressiveness”. **Page 137, 11th Edition Harrison’s Principles of Internal Medicine. (Words in parentheses added).**

Perfecting of the Saints

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment (Hebrews 6:1,2).

I believe that the doctrine of perfection is one of the most misunderstood doctrines in the Bible. To understand what the Bible is talking about when it refers to perfection; you must understand how the term is used. The word “perfection” used in the Bible refers to the believer becoming “mature” or coming to a “full age”, complete. But man in his natural understanding, looks at God and says, “I will never be like God so I can never be perfect”. Perfection to man is attaining a God like state. With this attitude, man has an excuse to except all sorts of garbage and behavior in his life because after all, “Nobody is perfect”. But man has missed a very important point here.

Let me explain it with an analogy that a friend of mine thought of after I explained to him the perfection doctrine. Man was created for fellowship with God. Man was not created to be God. That is like an apple looking at an orange and saying an orange is perfect. I will never be an orange, so I can never be perfect. But an apple was not created to be an orange! The perfect apple is to become all that it was created to be! The same way the perfect Christian is simply to become all that they were called and created to be.

How did man ever come to the point that he thinks that he should be like God? To find that out we must go all the way back to the Garden of Eden when man ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This idea that man could be like God actually came from GOD!

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken (Genesis 3:22,23).

Common sense would dictate that if God wanted man to actually become a god like Him then God would have told Adam to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and not forbid it. The Bible plainly states that we are to grow up to be a perfect MAN in Christ, not to become a perfect god or a “little god”. There is a big difference between becoming a “man of God” or a “godly man” and a “Man-God”.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Once again, for the Christian to become biblically “perfect”, means for him to become all that God called and created him to be.

But how do we attain the perfection spoken of in the Bible? Very simply, our “perfection” is the ministry of the Holy Spirit and cannot be achieved by us as Paul explained to the Galatians, but it can be achieved in us like it is written in the book of Hebrews?

Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh (Galatians 3:3)?

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen (Hebrews 13:20,21).

But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. (1 Peter 5:10)

What did the apostles think of us becoming perfect?

For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this we wish, even your perfection (2 Corinthians 13:9).

Finally, brethren, farewell, Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you (2 Corinthians 13:11).

(Most important) What does Jesus think of us becoming perfect? It is not only His will, but also His prayer!

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me (John 17:20-23).

Point to Ponder: What I am going to share in the rest of this chapter is just a theory I have for anyone that might want to study this farther. I am not declaring this theory as “sound doctrine” until I do more research on this, so study this with discernment.

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put

away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known (1 Corinthians 13:9-12).

I would like to share here a study and explain the reason that I think Paul finally attained “perfection” after he said he still hadn’t attained it in the book of Philippians. As Paul states in Philippians 3:11, perfection to him was attained at the resurrection of the dead. Please read the chapter “Understanding Eternal Life”.

If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you (Philippians 3: 11-15).

So at what time is the Christian resurrected from the dead? We know by reading Galatians 2:20 the point when we died.

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me (Galatians 2:20).

As the Bible teaches in many others verses that the Christian is going through a resurrection process now, to walk in the Spirit and a new and living way. The Bible says that if we are “in Christ”, then we are in the resurrection, because Jesus said, “ I am the resurrection and the life” in John 11:25,26.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1-3).

And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; (Colossians 2:10-13).

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we

shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. (Romans 6:5,6)

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death (1 John 3:14).

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life (John 5:24).

If the word “perfection” as we have seen in this study means “mature” or “of full age”, and means becoming what God called and created us to be, then like Paul claims we attain that when God finishes resurrecting us. Does God ever do this?

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20,21).

The Bible says that we are to become perfect through patience. From my experience, learning patience just takes time.

But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing (James 1:4).

But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you (1 Peter 5:10).

In the verse in Philippians 3:14, Paul declares that he is pressing toward the “high calling of God in Christ Jesus”. Did Paul ever attain his “calling”? To answer this you have to know what Paul’s “calling” was? You do not have to look any farther than the book of Romans or 1 Corinthians!

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Romans 1:1).

Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, (1 Corinthians 1:1).

By these two verses, you can see that Paul’s “calling” is to be an apostle. Did Paul ever achieve his “calling”? Yes, he plainly declares that he has attained apostleship when he revisits Corinth the second time in the second epistle to the Corinthians. Coincidentally at the end of 1 Corinthians in chapter 15 is where Paul explains the resurrection of the dead.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia: Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 1:1,2).

I believe that Paul left a little trail that showed his growth process and ours, from the point of being called to the point of maturity (perfection). Please read the chapter “The Christian Experience: From Seed to Saint”.

This trail starts at Philippians 1:1 where Paul calls himself a “servant” of Jesus Christ.

Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: (Philippians 1:1).

What stage of growth is the “servant” representative of? The Bible says that a “servant” is no different than a child in Galatians 4:1,2.

Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father (Galatians 4:1,2).

The Bible claims the purpose of the five-fold ministry spoken of in the book of Ephesians is to take the Christian from being a child in Christ to becoming a perfect man in Christ.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: (Ephesians 4:11-15).

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known (1 Corinthians 13:9-12).

Did any of the apostles including Paul ever come to the point that they knew all that they were suppose to know or did Paul always just know part of what he was suppose to know? Paul says that through his teaching the church should know the “manifold wisdom of God”!

Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: (Ephesians 3:7-11).

What about Luke?

It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed (Luke 1:3,4).

So at the beginning of Romans, Paul is declaring himself a “servant” or child called to be an apostle, which we know he became and that was his perfect calling in Christ.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Romans 1:1).

When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ (Romans 15:28,29).

The Christian experience: From Seed to Saint.

Now after all those scriptures you have finally realized you are dead in Christ (Colossians 3:1-3). Now the process to resurrect you from the dead begins.

But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: (1 Corinthians 15:35,36).

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal (John 12:23,24).

In the Christian religion, if you are just coming to the foot of the cross or to the altar, then you haven't been crucified with Christ. Your seed has not even started growing! How can you be resurrected from the dead unless you first die? How can you ever die at the foot of the cross? When you come to the foot of the cross and then go back out into the world you never get to cross over to the promise land. The promise land was on the other side of the Jordan River (river of death). When does the believer die so the seed could be quickened and start growing?

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me (Galatians 2:20).

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world (Galatians 6:14).

The process of resurrecting you from the dead will end with you becoming mature, which the Bible calls "perfection". Please read the chapter "Perfecting of the Saints". When we are born of the Spirit when we are first saved, then we are newborn babies in a spiritual world and also have to grow in the spirit and knowledge of our Heavenly Father just like Jesus (Luke 2:40). The individual believer becomes a man-child. Some believe this term "man-child" is referring to the corporate church, I believe that it is referring to the individual believer. A man-child is a natural man and a spiritual child in the same body.

And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:3).

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby (1 Peter 2:2).

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe (Hebrews 5:12,13).

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? (1 Corinthians 3:1-3).

And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him (Luke 2:40).

Because you are “in the Spirit” in knowledge only, you are starting out as a spiritual baby in a brand new world and a brand new life, which means you now have to learn about this new spiritual world.

Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in KNOWLEDGE after the image of him that created him: (Colossians 3:9,10).

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1-3).

Before you can do the Fathers business, you must learn the Fathers business.

Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father (Galatians 4:1,2).

The Bible says the “beginning of wisdom” is the fear of the Lord (Psalms 111:10). If the “beginning of wisdom” is the fear of the Lord, then the “end of wisdom” should be the love of the Lord!

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us (1 John 4:16-19).

Ideally you should be hearing the voice of Jesus in the words of scripture and you should have received a spiritual understanding, so all I am going to do is share some of

what I have discovered in my growth in this spiritual world. This study is meant to exhort and edify the new believer and confirm the things that the Holy Spirit maybe showing you.

In this chapter I would like to explain the transformation process that a believer goes through to get from the point of first truly believing in Christ (babe in Christ) to the “fullness of the stature of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13). This is the growing process that all Christians go through and I believe that it is the most misunderstood. You will never get there by your sheer determination to get there. I also would like to talk about the seed that is planted in the believer. If you listen to what is being preached in churches today, the only seed spoken of as relating to a Christian anymore is money given to ministries. The seed that I am going to explain is a seed that is sown in the heart of the believer and the growing process it goes through to the point that it can produce fruit. This seed has nothing to do with money, but it has everything to do with the believer in Jesus Christ. What is the seed?

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ (Galatians 3:16).

The Bible also says the seed is the Word of God and the Bible calls Jesus the Word made flesh. How is the seed planted? When someone first hears the Gospel and truly surrenders all to Jesus, there is a union formed between the believer and Christ through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit then plants a seed in the heart. That seed is Christ. All the seed needs to grow Christ in the believer is to be planted and watered. Contrary to popular belief today, you do not lose your Christianity or the Holy Spirit each night and have to rededicate your life again each day when you wake up. In fact you do most of your spiritual growing at night when you are in natural sleep. When Paul said, “I die daily”, he was referring to the outward man perishing as the inward man is growing. “I” of self is being replaced by Jesus in the believer. Like John said, “I must decrease and He (Jesus) must increase (John 3:30). You do not replant the seed each day or it never will have time to spring up and grow! If you have to keep replanting the seed each day that may mean your life is actually stony ground and the seed can never take root (Matthew 13:18-23).

And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how (Mark 4:26,27).

I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6,7).

There is a popular analogy of an acorn that is used by many preachers to explain this unconscious growth of the believer. Inside an acorn is a whole oak tree. The acorn knows just what to do to produce an oak tree if it is just planted and watered. The seed that has been sown in the believer’s heart knows just what to do to create Christ in the believer.

The Christian must first become one Spirit with Jesus Christ to become complete and reproduce. That is the first step.

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God (Romans 7:4).

But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: (1 Corinthians 15:35,36).

Notice how the Bible uses this discourse about marriage to describe the believers union to Christ. You can walk side by side with your wife all day long but you will never be able to reproduce until you become one with her. In like manner, you can walk side by side with Jesus, but you can never reproduce until you become one with Him. The Christian can live a single life and be half flesh in this world but complete in Spirit because they are complete in Jesus.

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: (Colossians 2:9,10).

Instead of an actual union of one Spirit with Jesus, Christianity is being taught today as just a covenant where you vow to be faithful to Jesus' teachings and Biblical precepts, but you remain a separate individual from Christ. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 6:17,

But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit (1 Corinthians 6:17).

What I am discussing here is the personal relationship that the believer experiences with Christ when they are born again and not the great end time event known as the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, where the church as a whole body is together with Jesus. Many people know about Jesus through reading the Bible, but unless you know Jesus in a personal spiritual union then no newbirth can result. No seed was ever planted in the person's heart and no newbirth ever resulted in the person's life.

The same Holy Spirit that planted the seed in Mary for Christ to be born is the same Holy Spirit that plants the seed in our hearts for Christ to be birthed in us. Christianity is a spiritual newbirth experience. When a woman is pregnant, then there are two separate beings and lives existing inside her body. The mother's life and the life of her child. Even though they both exist in one body, the child is a separate creation from the mother and carries half of the father's nature, which makes the child a totally new creation and a new life. In like manner the new spiritual man that is growing inside the Christian when they are joined to the Lord by the Holy Spirit is manifesting the attributes of the Father, and is also a new creation. Paul said in Galatians 4:19, ***I travail in birth again till Christ be formed in you.***

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? (2 Corinthians 13:5).

And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha (Romans 9:29).

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ (Galatians 3:16).

As Paul told the Galatians when he said, “I travail in birth again till Christ be formed in you”, the Christian experiences travail during this spiritual new birth process. I explain this travailing in birth in greater detail in the chapter “Baptism of Fire”.

Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD (Jeremiah 1:4-8).

One day Jesus will tell many that he never knew them. Are you absolutely sure you “know” Him or do you just know about Him? If not, please read the chapter “How I Messed Up the Sinners Prayer”.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matthew 7:23).

The Bible’s use of the word “knowing” is used many times to describe the marriage union where a seed is planted.

And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD (Genesis 4:1).

Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God (Luke 1:34,35).

Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in

bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain (Galatians 4:8-11).

Please read the chapter “Marriage: Till Death Do We Part?” for a deeper study of the marriage relationship as compared to Christ and the believer being joined through the Holy Spirit. To understand the Christian “newbirth”, I want to first explain the difference between a Spirit, a human being, and a combination of the two, which is a spiritual being. The Bible says that God and man were totally separate beings, but they could communicate and fellowship together (Genesis 3:8-10). God is divinity, and man is humanity, but with Jesus Christ, you had a totally new creation! With Jesus, you have a divine human being. He was born of a virgin woman, but with God as his Father.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 1:18).

The Bible says that Jesus was the firstborn of many brethren.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren (Romans 8:29).

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, (Hebrews 2:10,11).

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God (John 20:17).

Jesus came in the flesh but was born of the Holy Spirit or a spiritual being. This is why Jesus never had to be “born again”. Jesus was already “born of the Spirit” from the virgin Mary’s womb.

And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly (1 Corinthians 15:45-49).

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all

their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people (Hebrews 2:14-17).

What kind of “new creation” would every born again believer joined to the Lord through the Holy Spirit be then? A human being which was “born again” by the power of the Holy Spirit or a spiritual being! We now also have a heavenly Father.

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure (1 John 3:1-3).

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (2 Peter 1:2-4).

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:12,13).

Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment (Revelation 20:15): because as he is, so are we in this world (1 John 4:17).

The Bible says that the Son of God, which is Jesus Christ, was divinity and also had a physical body. Remember it was God’s plan, not man’s, that Jesus came in the flesh (John 3:16).

Foreasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Hebrews 2:14,15).

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9).

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit

that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world (1 John 4:1-3).

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:14-16).

The same Holy Spirit that planted the seed in Mary for Jesus to be birthed, is the same Holy Spirit that planted the seed (Galatians 3:16) in us for Christ to be formed in us.

My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, (Galatians 4:19).

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever (1 Peter 1:23).

Notice here that Jesus was born of the Holy Ghost, yet he still had the Holy Ghost descend on him 30 yrs later with power in the form of a dove and remain. The Bible does not speak of Jesus doing any miracles until after that event.

*Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, *Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased (Luke 3:21,22).**

This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him (John 2:11).

He then turned water into wine. Our spiritual newbirth as new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17) should then parallel Jesus' life. What was Jesus life like growing up?

And the child grew, and waxed strong in the spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him (Luke 2:40).

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him (Hebrews 5:8,9).

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man (Luke 2:52).

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; (Ephesians 4:13,14).

The Bible says that Jesus grew in wisdom and knowledge of God before He started ministry.

Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things (John 8:28).

Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all (Colossians 3:9-11).

The divine order is first receiving the knowledge of the ministry before receiving the power for the ministry.

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; (Romans 12:6,7).

Jesus also endured suffering. Jesus was “born of the Spirit” from Mary’s womb but was not given the power of God and released into ministry until the Holy Ghost descended on him when John the Baptist baptized him. Even the disciples followed this same pattern.

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me (John 6:44,45).

When the disciples walked with Jesus, they could not understand some of the parables either that Jesus taught to the people and they would ask Jesus to reveal them to them also. The disciples didn’t initially have the Holy Spirit like we do today to reveal the deep spiritual truths of those parables because Jesus was not yet crucified.

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come (John 16:13).

(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) (John 16:39).

The disciples were not “born of the Spirit” until after Jesus crucifixion and resurrection when Jesus met them and breathed on them when they were locked in a room. This happened BEFORE the upper room at Pentecost.

Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: (John 20:21).

When man was first created, God breathed the breath of life into Adams nostrils, not his heart.

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

When man was recreated (new creation) or “born again”, Jesus breathed on the disciples, he breathed the Spirit of Life into their hearts and their spirits were quickened (made alive) and they became a new creation. They became spiritual. Humanity was not originally born with a “spark of divinity” (1 Corinthians 15:45-50). Jesus said, “you must be “born again” (born of the Spirit).

That at that time ye were WITHOUT Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and WITHOUT GOD in the world (Ephesians 2:12).

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life (John 6:63).

Adams source of life came from the outside in the air that he breathed, but the Christians source of life as a new creature comes from the inside by the Holy Spirit (Spirit of Life) that dwells in their heart.

And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit (1 Corinthians 15:45).

After Jesus breathed on the disciples and they received the Holy Ghost, they finally had an interpreter in their heart and they could understand the deeper spiritual truths of the scriptures and learn the mysteries of the Kingdom. They now had access to the “tree of life”. Jesus said that some would try to climb up some other way (John 10:1). There are many people that take a broad way and try to gain access to the “tree of life” or “Christ consciensness” by climbing up to it thru meditations or rituals (i.e. Kaballah, Yoga, New Age, etc.), like climbing a ladder to different levels seeking “enlightenment”

or the “higher self”. The “born again” Christian has access to the throne of God and the “knowledge of God” through the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:18,19). Even though the disciples were now born of the Holy Spirit when Jesus breathed on them, they still had to be baptized by the Holy Ghost forty days later with the power for ministry. This power for ministry came at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) AFTER they finally understood the spiritual aspect of the scriptures.

And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? (Luke 24:31,32).

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high (Luke 24:44-49).

And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul (Acts 16:14).

Once again we see the disciples go through the same growth pattern as Jesus. Jesus also when he was growing in wisdom and knowledge was working a regular job as a carpenter as he was growing in wisdom of his Father’s Kingdom.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man (Luke 2:52).

Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things (John 8:28).

As we can see again, the spiritual newbirth and growth of Jesus in us should follow the same pattern. We are born of the Holy Spirit when He plants the seed in our hearts. The young Christian can now understand the deeper things of the spiritual world and the Father’s Kingdom. This knowledge is still hidden from the natural man in plain sight (1 Corinthians 2: 9-16). Once we grow in spiritual wisdom and knowledge of the Father (1 Peter 2:2), then we are baptized in the Spirit at the appointed time to give us power to accomplish the ministry the Father has called us into. Please read the chapter “Perfecting of the saints”.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: (Ephesians 4:11-15).

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known (Ephesians 4:9-12).

I also think many people do not understand the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. I hear many Pentecostals and Charismatics claim that they have the baptism of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues. The purpose of the baptism of the Holy Ghost was not so someone could just speak in tongues. It was to provide the power and anointing for ministry.

We can also see the growth process of the Christian when compared to building a temple, with the Shekinah Glory of God filling the temple (our body) after it is finished.

Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: (Colossians 1:25-28).

How is the temple of the body built? When someone presents the Gospel to another person that the Father is drawing and they first truly surrender all to Jesus Christ, the cornerstone of the temple is laid at that point. 1 Corinthians chapter 3 explains this building process in more detail. The Bible says,

According to the grace of God, which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:9-11).

As you can see by this verse, the believer in Christ is built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ the cornerstone. The Word of God is like stones placed in the temple. The apostles and prophets brought the Word of God, then Holy Spirit gave us the understanding of it.

But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (2 Timothy 1:10).

What happens when someone receives the first deep revelation of spiritual truth, a stone in the temple is laid. The Bible says that God builds line upon line and precept upon precept (Isaiah 28:9-12). When the believer grows in spiritual understanding then more stones are laid in that temple. What many in the church do today though, when they first get a spiritual revelation out of the scriptures, is they immediately think that God has called them to preach. They will then join a seminary and place some sort of man's religion on top of what the Holy Spirit is revealing them out of the scripture. They will then go into ministry or preaching without a firm understanding of the big picture. That is why you have so many denominations out of one truth. What many fail to realize is a temple is not ready for service until it is FINISHED. When the temple is finished, then it is dedicated, and the Glory of God fills the temple and it was now ready to minister to the people. In fact the Lord's Prayer (also called the Apostles prayer) was basically a shorter version of the same prayer that Solomon prayed when dedicating the temple (1 Kings 8). It was a temple dedication prayer.

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen (Matthew 6:9).

And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel (1 Kings 9:3-5).

In the Old Testament God sanctified the house, in the New Testament God sanctifies the believer!

Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place. For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually (2 Chronicles 7:15,16).

And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:11).

I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me (Acts 26:16-18).

Maybe what I have shared here will help exhort and edify you in the good news (Gospel) of Jesus Christ and also confirm what you have found in your own personal Bible study.

Bible Study Tips

After I realized I had spent my whole “Christian” life, lost in the study of end time prophecy, I dug deeply into the Bible to find some answers for myself in day-to-day living. All I found was more questions. You don’t ever want to get to the point that I did where I not only realized I was not saved, but I also started thinking that I might have done something and could not be saved. When you are in this fallen state, you will search the Bible desperately for help of any kind. But until I came to a point of total surrender to Jesus, the eternal truths that I was seeking were sealed and no preacher could open them for me as Isaiah the Prophet taught.

And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: (Isaiah 29:11-13).

It wasn’t until the Holy Spirit entered into me that I now had an interpreter. It takes the same Holy Spirit that gave the apostles and prophets the knowledge to write the Bible to interpret the deeper spiritual truths. We know by scripture (2 Peter 1:20) that prophecy came spiritually and not naturally.

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

Paul reaffirmed this and explained the spiritual interpretation of the scripture plainly in 1 Corinthians 2.

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are

foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 6:16).

This spiritual understanding is essential to understanding the deeper truths. Jesus said, “these words I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life”. Paul exhorted us to “rightly divide the word of truth”.

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame (1 Corinthians 15:34).

And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly (Acts 18:24-26).

If the word of truth can be “divided” as Paul claims, then that would mean that the word of truth could be understood in two ways “naturally” and “spiritually”. Some religions interpret the scriptures naturally and some interpret the scriptures spiritually and some religions use a mixture of both. That is why you have so many different denominations out of only one truth. But which way is the correct way to interpret scripture, so we can be profited by it?

For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it (Hebrews 4:2).

In Hebrews 4:2 it says that the only way that the gospel will profit man is if they “mix it with faith”. Is faith then “natural” or “spiritual”?

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear (Hebrews 11:1-3).

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit (John 3:6-8).

By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible (Hebrews 11:27).

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal (2 Corinthians 4:17,18).

When you read the scriptures do you hear stones of condemnation or the bread of life? If you are reading the scriptures while still “in the flesh” (naturally) you should be receiving condemnation from them, because Jesus Christ condemned sin “in the flesh”!

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace (Romans 8:3-6).

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself (Titus 3:9,10).

And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles (Acts 13:44-46).

If you are reading the scriptures “in the Spirit” (spiritually), then they should be edifying and feeding you.

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are SPIRIT, and they are life (John 6:63).

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, (Ephesians 1:17,18).

As we can see by this verse John 6:63, Jesus even said that these words are “spirit and life”. Paul said the “carnal mind” equals death and the “spiritual mind” equals life and peace.

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace (Romans 8:5,6).

Why then do pastors that interpret the scriptures “naturally”, call Christians that interpret the scriptures “spiritually” as evil and label them Gnostics? The word Gnostic simply means “one who knows”. Agnostic means “one who doesn’t know”. I know why.

But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now (Galatians 4:29).

I believe that all true Christians can understand the things I am sharing in this book with the assistance of the Holy Spirit and not just a select few “super” Christians. If someone can understand the scriptures “spiritually” then that just means that they have the Holy Spirit revealing it to them. It doesn’t get any more complicated than that. The Bible says that no man can receive anything except it be given him from heaven (John 3:27).

Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us (2 Corinthians 4:1-7).

Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice (John 18:37).

The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said. And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so (John 18:19-22).

I am going to share with you some of my Bible study practices that have helped me, but first you need to have some tools. I am going to assume that you already have the Holy Spirit as an interpreter, because this is a critically necessity. Without the Holy Spirit, you never will understand it as Peter warned, even if I explain it to you.

And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction (2 Peter 3:16).

This may sound legalistic, but I only use the King James Version Bible in my studies. In spite of what some pastor's say, I have found that all Bible translations are not the same. Some translations have been reinterpreted so the natural man can "understand it easier". Jesus said, "If the gospel is hid, it is hid to those that are lost". If you cannot discern spiritual truth in one version, then you will not be able to understand it in another man's interpretation of it.

I use four main sources in my studies, the Holy Spirit as my "spirit guide", a King James Version Bible, a Franklin computer pocket KJV Bible, and a Strong's exhaustive concordance that lets me know what each word in the Bible means in Hebrew or Greek. I also use the Old and New testament in KJV on cassette tapes for studying while I am asleep, which is one study practice that has worked surprisingly well for me, which I will explain now. It will be a good starting point, after you receive the Holy Spirit.

One of the first things the Lord showed me was a little passage in the book of Job. I have heard that the sub-conscience mind never sleeps so at night while sleeping, people play recordings of subliminal messages to absorb in their minds. Everyone thinks that "new age" practitioners, scientists, or some psychiatrist dreamed up this practice, but the truth is, this practice was revealed in one of the oldest books of the Bible. This is how God would speak to man through their sub-conscience mind when man's conscience was shut down during sleep and it would not be able to inject error or man's natural judgment into the message.

For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword (Job 33:14-18).

When God revealed this passage to me, I went out and bought the KJV Old and New Testament on cassette tapes and played them on my tape player while I slept at night. I did this for six years, over and over. I just turn on the tape player and go to sleep. I was utterly amazed at what revelations would surface during the day when I was awake. Scriptures would assemble together in ways that I had never even imagined they would fit, and I would be stunned at what was being revealed. I can safely say in my experience, that the wisdom that is in the Bible is not of this world. I also could talk to

somebody and a scripture would come to mind that was perfect for the situation that I would need to apply it to. Because of the technology advancement of recording devices, this is a study tool that mankind never had access to until the past several years. The only way anybody that was living in the past could have experienced this type of study, is if they had someone read the Bible to them while they slept.

One of the first things that the Lord showed me after my spiritual conversion was the vision of what my future would be and what life and immortality was all about. I knew where I was going now and my life now had purpose, but I didn't know how to get there from where I was. God always declares the end from the beginning.

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

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: (Ephesians 1:3-9).

I now want to share with you what I have experienced in Bible study using a jigsaw puzzle as an analogy. The Bible to me was like a big puzzle. God had shown me what the "picture on the cover of the box" (life and immortality) is suppose to look like (2 Timothy 1:10), but how must the verses be arranged to match the "picture on the cover of the box"? It is one thing to have a vision, it is quite another to watch that vision come to pass. The Word of God brings the truth to light; the Spirit of God brings the truth to pass.

When I first started studying the Bible, I could assemble some of the simple familiar verses that fit neatly together. This is like assembling all the side and corner pieces in a puzzle. Now I would take other scriptures and start meditating on them and trying to connect them to other verses until they finally fell into place. This brought me stunning revelations. I would also come to verses that would not fit in my understanding anywhere, and after awhile of studying them, I would set them to the side and find other verses to meditate on. This is very important! When you come to a verse in your Bible studies that you have no idea where it fits in the bigger picture, LEAVE IT ALONE! The last thing the world needs is another denomination. The reason why you have so many different denominations, out of one Truth, is because when people come to verses that they can't make fit anywhere, they trim the verse to fit into a spot where it was not designed to fit. Because of this, every verse that is then tied to that one would also be in error. When you get done learning the doctrine, then the denomination looks nothing like

the “picture on the box”. The reason that the verse may not fit now is because not enough of the puzzle is completed for it to fit perfectly. The verse that it is suppose to connect to is not in place yet in your understanding! The Bible says that God builds line upon line and precept upon precept. What I do is set the verse aside until more of the other scriptures fall into place as I grow in understanding. Then every so often, I will pull out the verse and meditate on it. Eventually it will finally fall perfectly into place. If it doesn't, I put it to the side again and wait for more of the puzzle to be completed. Some verses it took two years of revelations before they finally fell into place in my understanding.

What I see is many pastors today that cannot work the puzzle (The New Testament) so they change the “picture on the box” instead, and claim that God is doing a “new thing” or a “new paradigm shift”. Some are just simply giving up on the New Testament and writing a whole new Bible. This practice is becoming more and more prevalent. This is why I don't believe these “new thing” people fully understand what the New Testament is offering mankind, because if they did truly understand the big picture, then they would not want a “new thing”. In fact, if they did get a glimpse of what the New Testament really was offering, they would gladly run back to the cross like I did, but this time they would truly die (forsaking all). Paul said that through his preaching the church might know the manifold wisdom of God! How can you add more knowledge to the “manifold wisdom of God”?

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, (Ephesians 3:8-10).

I now want to visit the topic of meditation for a minute. The Bible says to meditate upon the scriptures. The Christian type of meditation is different from the world's type of meditation that is popular in today's culture and different religions. Like I explained earlier in the puzzle analogy, Christian meditation is pondering on a revealed Bible truth until it fits into its proper place in the bigger picture. The world's idea of meditation is trying to attain a knowledge and thought process higher than themselves, by an act of themselves. This is an impossible task, because the most they can ever accomplish with this type of meditation, is attaining the highest knowledge of ones self. The problem is man is limited by, and can go no farther than his imagination. This type of meditation is great if the answers you are looking for are in yourself, but I realized one day that I did not have the answers in myself. Mankind has hit the “self-barrier”. Please read the chapter “Understanding Eternal Life” and “The Spiritual World” on how to overcome this self-barrier. The true Christian does not have this problem of restriction to knowledge and thought processes that are higher than man is capable of thinking. We have found a way through the “self barrier” to the higher wisdom and knowledge of God. The true Christian goes through a mediator that has already went before us, which is Jesus Christ.

Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; (1 Timothy 2:4,5).

John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven (John 3:27).

Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: (Colossians 3:9,10).

I want to take a moment and address a very dangerous trend that is growing in “the church” today. Many pastors and teachers, and now apostles and prophets are trying to take the place of the Holy Spirit (Spirit of Truth) concerning the deeper revelations in a disciple’s life, instead of being a supporter of what the Holy Spirit is showing the disciple. I can teach people some of the things I know according to the purpose of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), which is what I am doing with this book, but unless you have the Holy Spirit you can never understand what I am sharing. That is why the Bible says that it is God that teaches you. The pastors, teachers, prophets, etc. are to work with God they do not replace God. The pastors and prophets and teachers have no power to make you understand what they are saying, all they can do is speak the words.

And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: (Isaiah 29:11-13).

Just because a pastor speaks the Word of God doesn’t mean they have the power to make you understand it. If they are faithful godly pastors, then it is acceptable to show them respect and minister to their needs also.

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon (1 Corinthians 3:5-10).

But never forget!!! ***John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven (John 3:27)***

No matter how good they are, the pastor or teacher doesn't have the keys to your understanding, only God can unlock the scripture for you.

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, (Ephesians 1:17,18).

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life (1 John 5:20).

Even Jesus himself didn't teach his disciples everything, but left the deeper spiritual teaching to another source!

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come (John 16:12,13).

The main goal of the church should be to exhort and edify the believer and make sure that every member in the body was hearing from the Head (Jesus). God will grow the believer.

Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand (1 Corinthians 1:23,24).

The Bible says, ***“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14).*** If your “spiritual leader” is a human being, then the best in life that a disciple can hope for is to become like their “spiritual leader”. If I had trusted my spiritual teaching to a pastor, apostle, prophet, or cell group leader, then my relationship with my heavenly Father could never be any closer than my spiritual leaders relationship with God. Now that in its self is a scary thought! The Bible does speak of being under governors and tutors until the time appointed of the Father, but never forget that the true Christian is still a creation of Christ (Ephesians 2:10).

Now we come to the most important study tool of all. Prayer! If you do not understand something, then ask God.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him (James 1:5).

Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints (Ephesians 1:15-18).

Law or Grace?

In this chapter, I would like to address the main struggle that many people in the church wrestle with. Are we under the Law, Grace, or both? I want to first share with you many verses dealing with Law and Grace so you can see what the Bible has to say. To understand the Gospel these verses that follow are vital, so please read them. This is basic simple foundational Christian doctrine so this is not really for pastors, teachers, etc. They should already know this.

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe (Hebrews 5:12,13).

In this study on Law or Grace I mainly want to show the difference between using the law as a list of rules to be followed to become righteous verses the Christian becoming righteous only by gift for faith in Jesus Christ. But before we get deep into this study on Law or Grace, I want to first show how the Christian already fulfills the Ten Commandments by just being a Christian! Many look at the Ten Commandments as a list of rules to follow to become “holy” and try to achieve that end result through obedience to them, but actually the Ten Commandments are just a description of the Christian’s current state of being as born of the Spirit! A natural (in Adam) man cannot consistently keep a spiritual law and a natural man cannot bear spiritual fruit. Fulfilling the Ten Commandments is a state of being, not just doing.

Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law (Romans 3:31).

Thou shalt have no other God’s before me.

As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him (1 Corinthians 8:4-6).

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images.

For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device (Acts 17:28,29).

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Jesus Christ is our Sabbath and our eternal “holiness” comes from the indwelling Holy Spirit!

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30).

For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works (Hebrews 4:2-4).

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: (Colossians 1:21,22).

Honor thy father and mother.

For I was my father’s son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live. Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her (Proverbs 4:3-8).

Thou shalt not kill.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)(2 Corinthians 10:3,4)

And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village (Luke 9:54-56).

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God (Romans 7:1-4).

Thou shall not steal.

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; (1 Timothy 6:17).

Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's (1 Corinthians 3:21-23).

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ (Philippians 3:7).

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. The Christian bears true witness through the indwelling Holy Spirit (Spirit of Truth).

A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful witness speaketh lies (Proverbs 14:25).

I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true (John 5:30-32).

And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith (Acts 15:8,9).

It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me (John 8,17,18).

And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son (1 John 5:8-10).

Thou shalt not covet.

But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing (James 1:2-4).

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: (Colossians 2:9,10).

I think that what I just shared was what Moses may have saw also that made him cover his face for seeing hidden in the Ten Commandments the glory of what the Holy Spirit would do in the life of the believer in Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament Key to the Ten Commandments

Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God (Ezekiel 36:22-28).

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people (2 Corinthians 6:14-16).

The New Testament Key to the Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments are the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's heart

Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone (Ten Commandments), but in fleshy tables of the heart. And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:2-18).

The verses that I used in unlocking the Ten Commandments are just what came to memory while I was writing. There may be other New Testament scriptures that fit each commandment even better, but you can get the gist of the idea with these verses.

The rest of this chapter is a study of the difference of attaining righteousness through obedience to the law, or righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ because for many this is a stumbling stone. I let some pastors and other Christians review the information in this chapter and I am getting enough feedback too address something that they have brought up. Many people, when they hear me talk about the Christian walk and the Gospel say, "Franklin, you believe you can walk in "sinless perfection". I answer, "What I believe is you can walk in His righteousness"! It is a walk of FAITH! In the epistle of Romans, Paul explains this beautifully. In the book of Titus Paul addresses the same thing from the opposite direction.

Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh,

nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:19-23).

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself (Titus 3:9-11).

I want to address this before you read any farther. I completely understand that my righteousness is as filthy rags and cannot be cleaned (1 John 1:8), so I just accepted the free gift of righteousness and put it on by faith. That is the righteousness that I walk in, and yes it is “sinless and perfect” because it came from God as a gift and I had no part in creating it. This is a stumbling stone for many and some will just never understand this. Let me try to explain it this way.

See I was made a sinner because of what Adam done, before I was ever born as Paul taught in Romans.

Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon ALL men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon ALL men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous (Romans 5:18,19).

You can see also in this same verse that I was made righteous by what Jesus Christ did on the cross **BEFORE** I was born! The only problem is that I didn’t know Jesus Christ died for my sins and the sins of all mankind until someone comes and tells me about the “good news” of the Gospel, which is salvation through Jesus Christ. Until I heard the “good news” of the Gospel, I was living a life on earth, like Adam who was hiding from God and I didn’t know I was already forgiven and could come to God.

And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: (Colossians 1:20-22).

As we read earlier in Romans 5:18,19, since my condemnation as a sinner came on me before I was born, and my redemption from that sin was accomplished on the cross of Calvary before I was born, then that only leaves me with the choice of “accepting or rejecting” that salvation. I can in no way “add to” or “take away” from my redemption that was accomplished on a cross **BEFORE I WAS BORN!** Please read the rest of this chapter from the point of view of what I just explained. I don’t think I can explain the Gospel any simpler, but I will try.

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

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake (2 Corinthians 4:3-5).

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: (Romans 3:21,22).

For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. (Romans 10:2-5)

What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; (Romans 9:30-32).

And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Jesus Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: (Phil 3:9)

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter (Romans 7:1-6).

For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace (Romans 6:14).

But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law (Galatians 5:18).

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: (Galatians 3:10-14).

For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (John 1:17)

But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses (Acts 13:37-39).

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is a gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8,9.)

For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. (Romans 4: 3-8)

And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise (Galatians 3:17-18)

The Christian covenant is after the Abrahamic covenant of faith, not after the Mosaic covenant of the law received on tablets of stone (Ten Commandments) as even Moses agreed!

Mosaic Covenant

And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers (Abraham, Issac, and Jacob), but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire, (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to shew you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up

into the mount;) saying, I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage (Deuteronomy 5:1-6).

Christian Covenant

For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. (Hebrews 12:18-24).

For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: (Romans 4:13,14)

The Explanation

Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:19-29).

Who is that seed to come?

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ (Galatians 3:16).

Now after all these scriptures, If someone still argues that they are a Christian and are also under the law, then Paul gives the appropriate course of action to take. Paul warns the true Christian to avoid strivings about the law, with people that are still saying they are under the law!

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself (Titus 3:9-11).

Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:22,23).

I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean (Romans 14:14).

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:17,18).

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove (convict) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; (John 16:7-9).

What I have found also that anyone that claims to be still under the law IS STILL UNDER THE LAW! God is still demanding righteousness from them because they have not accepted the free gift of righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ even though they may claim they have. They never have truly died in Christ and they are still looking forward to the death penalty on their life imposed by the law for their sin.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23).

And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it (Luke 9:23,24).

Search the scriptures; for in them ye THINK ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life (John 5:39,40).

The Bible refers to this as “the law of sin and death”. If you sin you will die, unless you can find someone to die for you (Jesus), which is what I did. The Christian gospel must be looked at from a life vs. death issue instead of just a good vs. evil issue. Jesus Christ has already paid the death penalty on the cross for the believer. The Christian has already passed from death unto life through Jesus at the cross and they are experiencing a resurrection now into a spiritual world and looking toward eternal life. Christ condemned sin “in the flesh”, but the Christian is “in the Spirit”.

***For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:*(Romans 8:2,3)**

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace
(Romans 8:6).

But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Timothy 1:10).

The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:56,57).

Let me explain the Law vs. Grace doctrine another way. See Jesus taught that one jot or tittle shall not pass from the law until all things be fulfilled.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:7-20).

Seems like a contradiction to all the other scriptures. What is the answer then? The Christian today is teaching the fulfillment of the commandments as a ministry of the Holy Spirit in your heart instead of the purposeful determination of your flesh to become righteous through works.

You have to understand that in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John the world was still under the law and the “age of grace” didn’t start till after the cross. So as long as Jesus was walking the earth He enforced the law on all that claimed their righteousness came from obeying it and forgave all that could not obey it. You can see

plainly the difference in these two scriptures on how God deals with the issue of forgiveness before the cross and after the cross.

And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses. (Mark 11:25,26).

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

Now that we have FIRST been forgiven, that then gives us the freedom to forgive others. The Christian now also loves because he has first been loved. Religion teaches that when sin comes, then grace and correction leaves and wrath and rejection comes until we repent.

Even today, as long as you are still “alive” then you are under the law and you must die for your sins because the wages of sin is death. To this day, death is still the penalty for breaking the law (Romans 6:23). The Christian has already “died” when they were crucified with Christ and the law cannot go any farther. Its righteous penalty has already been paid in the death of Christ for us.

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God (Romans 7:4).

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1-3).

For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law (Romans 5:10-13).

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:6-11).

If you are trying to save your life in this world, then you will lose it, but if you go ahead and die in Christ now (Galatians 2:20), then you will find life eternal (John 12:25)!

The law has no power over the Christian that is dead in Christ. It is only appointed unto men once to die and then the judgment, but there are two ways to die. You can die in your sins or die in Christ. If you die in your sins then you will face the judgment of God at the last day (Revelation 20:12-15). If you are crucified with Christ right now (Galatians 2:20), Jesus took your judgment at the cross and your name is now written in the book of life (Philippians 4:3). If you die in Christ today, you can then be resurrected by His Spirit to walk in a freedom knowing that the law can never kill you again! That is the reason why the Bible says that God no longer imputes us with sin (Romans 4:5-8) (John 16:8,9).

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove (convict) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; (John 16:7-9).

There are two conditions that you can be under in this world, “condemnation for sins” or “justification of life”. You must understand these terms, as they are frivolously tossed around in the church, but what they are referring to holds eternal implications!

Condemnation for sin means God says, “You deserve to die, because you didn’t really believe that Jesus atoned for your sins (John 16:9)”.

Justification of life means God says, “that you deserve to live, because of your faith in Jesus Christ”.

As you can see by the verse (John 16:9), condemnation for sin (which some Christians are constantly claiming in their lives) comes from unbelief in the free gift of Jesus Christ, but what about “**justification of life**”? “**Justification of life**” would have to then come from true belief in the free gift of Jesus Christ!

Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation: even so by the righteousness of one the FREE gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s (Adam) disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one (Jesus) shall many be made righteous (Romans 5:18,19).

I can usually ask most Christians what “condemnation for sin” feels like, and they can tell me in great detail, because they claim that they experience conviction everyday, but I don’t think I have ever had any Christians that can tell me what “**justification of life**” feels like! Something is wrong with that.

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

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. (Hebrews 10:1,2).

The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; (Hebrews 9:8,9).

The true Christian through the indwelling Holy Spirit has come to the knowledge that they deserve to live eternally because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ once for all. All you can ever get from the law is the knowledge that you deserve to die (condemnation of sins).

Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe (Galatians 3:21,22).

Let me put this into perspective so it can be easily understood. According to the Bible, there are only three reasons that can explain why you are not under the condemnation for sin.

Number one: You are a reprobate (Romans 1:26-28). Remember that the reprobate does not like to retain the knowledge of God. The reprobate is under condemnation but just choose to ignore it until their conscience is seared, or they attempt to remedy it through works. The Christian on the other hand, seeks the knowledge of God instead of rejecting it.

Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame (1 Corinthians 15:34).

Number two: You are a liar. (1 John 1:8)

Number three: You found such amazing grace in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross that God no longer imputes sin to you! Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound! (Romans 4:6-8)(Romans 5:15,16)(Romans 4:22-25) (Romans 6:23)(Romans 6:14)(Romans 5:18-21)(Romans 8:33,34)(Colossians 1:21,22)(1 John 2:1,2) (Romans 5:10-13)(Hebrews 1:3)(Romans 8:1)(Hebrews 7:22-28)(John 5:22-24)(Hebrews 13:20,21)(Ephesians 2:13-16)(1 John 4:17)(Romans 3:21-24)(2 Corinthians 5:17-19)(Hebrews 10:8-14)(John 3:16).

Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 5:18-21).

The Christian now stands in grace and also in a state of being that the Bible refers to as "justification of life" instead of "condemnation for sin". Sin with its penalty has no more dominion over you because you are not under the law, but under grace (Romans 6:14). Because of Jesus sacrifice, you now have "justification of life". God says, "YOU DESERVE TO LIVE ETERNALY"!!!!!!!!!!!!

And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. (Romans 4:22-25).

But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. (Romans 5:15,16).

But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses (Acts 13:37-39).

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin (Romans 4:6-8).

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

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once PURGED should have had no more conscience of sins. (Hebrews 10:1,2).

As we can see by the previous scriptures, a pure conscience is not only possible, but is a result of the redeeming power of Jesus in a true believer's life. What do you think would happen if you went before most confessing Christian congregations and declared that you had a clear conscience and no condemnation of sin in your life? Paul tried it.

And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth (Acts 23:1,2).

And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men (Acts 24:16).

I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; (2 Timothy 1:3)

The reason that I keep going over Law vs. Grace doctrine from many different angles is because you have to understand the difference between **self-righteousness** and the **gift of righteousness** or you will get totally confused when you come across other scriptures that seem to stand in direct contradiction. As we just read Paul says that, "he has lived in all good conscience before God until this day", but then describes himself later as "the chief of sinners"! If you do not "rightly divide the word of truth" then this sounds like Paul was sinning with a clear conscience?

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting (1 Timothy 1:15,16).

There is a "condemnation of sin" that doesn't come from God that I believe many in religion are walking in though and thinking it's from God. I will expose it shortly. The reason why the Bible says that God no longer imputes us with sin, because if He did, what would be the penalty?

And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin (Hebrews 10:17,18).

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).

And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; (Luke 3:3).

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven,

and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin (Romans 4:6-8).

The penalty for sin has already been paid once for all eternity to anyone that accepts the free gift God has offered mankind in the sacrifice of His Son. God has already accepted the payment for our sins and also the sins of the whole world, because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ one time for all sins. Because of the sacrifice of Jesus, God looks at you as cleansed. If God now looks at you as still unclean, that would mean that Jesus failed.

I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain (Galatians 2:21).

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame (Hebrews 6:4-6).

It is one thing for you to believe you have forgiveness it is another thing to actually experience and walk in that forgiveness!

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:1,2).

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us (Romans 8:33,34).

If the Holy Spirit is not condemning us that believe in Jesus, then who is?

For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God (1 John 3:20,21).

A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing the he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself (Titus 3:10,11).

Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46).

And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles (Acts 18:5,6).

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (1 Timothy 2:24-26).

And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst (John 8:9).

There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Romans 8:1).

If God is not imputing sin to the Christian, then how do we that truly believe in Jesus stand before God today? I have some "GOOD NEWS"!

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet NOW hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouable (unconvictable) in his sight: (Colossians 1:21,22).

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any (1 Corinthians 6:9-12).

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not (1 Corinthians 10:23).

But what if we still sin and are not under condemnation?

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:1,2).

By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did ONCE, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore. (Hebrews 7:22-28)

This is very important! The one (Jesus) that God has given authority to judge or condemn you for your sin, actually loved you so much He died for you even knowing you were a sinner!

For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life (John 5:22-24).

As you can see by all these scriptures, it is Jesus that dealt with your sin, so you can walk in His righteousness! Because of that, God grants you “**justification of life**”. This is the living mindset that the true Christ walks in. You have to come to the realization that because Jesus died for you, God has already decided that you deserve to live eternally! Are you still an enemy of God in your mind?

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet NOW hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable (unconvictable) in his sight: (Colossians 1:21,22).

I think that Mary of Bethany was one of the only ones to grasp the significance of the need for Jesus to die to accomplish this great reconciliation.

Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her (Matthew 26:6-13).

The true Christian doesn't believe that they "sneak" by with sin or they have a "license to sin" because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, on the contrary, the true Christian finally comes to a point that he realizes that he was a sinner and had no power over sin to defeat it outside of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. The Gospel doesn't get any simpler than this: the blood of Jesus overcomes the "sin penalty" while the indwelling Holy Spirit overcomes the "sin desires". It is only through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, that we can even get the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the first place.

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live (Romans 8:13).

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16)!

See your sin doesn't cause God to hide from you as many churches teach today, but it causes you to hide from God as Adam in the Garden of Eden.

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouceable (unconvictable) in his sight: (Colossians 1:21,22).

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

Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance (Psalms 90:8).

Religious Trap! I want to stop here and address several arguments that I have run into in religion with different doctrines that seem to contradict and confuse. One that many pastors like to use to justify the sin in their life is Romans 3:9,10.

What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: (Romans 3:9,10).

The correct use of this verse is to expose self-righteousness in someone and the need to trust solely in the gift of righteousness imputed to us by faith in Jesus Christ. Many pastors though just quote they first part of this discourse of scriptures and claim that they are talking about the "sorry sinful state of the Christian", even though the Christian has supposedly been given the gift of righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ. If a person claims the first verses in this discourse and apply it to their self after they are "saved" then they have to claim the rest of the verses that go with this that are also describing the same person. Let's now read this scripture in its full context!!!

What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes (Romans 3:10-17).

Is this truly a description of your pastor or your own state of being as a “new creature” in Jesus Christ? Do these scriptures read in full context truly describe the present state of the “saved” Christian even though they claim to be a “born again” new creation and a child of God or does this verse better describe the Christian?

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Coincidentally, the “none righteous, no not one” verse does seem to stand in contradiction to Luke 1:5,6.

There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless (Luke 1:5,6).

The Bible says that, “as a man thinks in his heart so is he”. If you always go through life thinking that you will always be a low down dirty sinner even after you “get saved”, then you will also accept all sorts of sin in your life as normal. After all sinners are suppose to sin. That is what sinners do. Since I am a low down dirty sinner, I am just doing what I should be doing by sinning. But if you believe that you have been made righteous by faith in Jesus Christ, then your life should start manifesting that state of being also. The Bible says, “As a man thinks in his heart so is he”.

For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God (1 John 3:20,21).

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed (Romans 10:10,11).

Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame (1 Corinthians 15:34).

I want to briefly explain also a very popular scripture that is used today by many to try to prove that the law has not changed and is in full force and effect even to the “born again” believer.

For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified (Romans 2:13).

Taken in it’s proper context, Paul is talking about the people who have not accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour and they are still trying to be “justified” in God’s eyes by obedience to the law instead of grace through faith. Paul plainly teaches the correct New Testament covenant in other scriptures that stand in direct opposition to Romans 2:13 as means of justification in the New Testament believer.

To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law (Romans 3:26-28).

What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness (Romans 4:1-5).

The verse that Paul uses to tie all this together is one that many have used to claim that they can “lose their salvation”. In actuality this verse is just showing that those that believe in justification through obedience to the law, have never truly knew Jesus Christ in the first place!

Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace (Galatians 5:4).

I want to also show the proper use of a verse that is also misused to claim that people “lose their salvation”.

For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire (2 Peter 2:20-22).

This verse is just showing that you can clean up a pig, but as long as it is still a pig it will return to doing pig things. It never says that the sow is changed into a “new creature” like the Christian by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit! This is very similar to the pastors that still claim they are “sorry sinners”, but just forgiven and cleansed and then go right back into sin, because of never changing “sin desires”. Or the story about the person that is cleansed from a demon and it returns with seven more (Luke 11:24-26). These people only know Jesus as just a “forgiver”, but not a “Savior”.

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin (Romans 6:6,7).

Another one is the doctrine of “backsliding”. This is popularly used in the church today to explain the “sinning saint”. In the Bible the doctrine of “backsliding” is associated only with Israel while under the law. Israel gained “righteousness” through obedience and then slid backward through disobedience. It is just another form of requiring the Christian to attain “righteousness” through the law and provoking them to reject the gift of righteousness given then by true faith in Jesus Christ! “Backsliding” doctrine teaches you have to “regain” the ground that you lost through disobedience.

I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain (Galatians 2:21).

Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace (Galatians 5:4).

And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life (2 Corinthians 3:4-6).

I want to put this simply, because I use to wrestle with this also. God understands that you cannot clean up your flesh and you were a sinner. That is why He sent Jesus to take your place! If you are under “condemnation of sin” then that means you still need to clean up the flesh (old man) or find an atonement. You can try to clean up your flesh, but when you are done cleaning your flesh, it still has no inheritance in the kingdom of God.

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:
(Romans 8:3).

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers,

nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such WERE some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any (1 Corinthians 6:9-12).

Remember that it was the sacrifice (Jesus) that was required to be without spot and blemish. Now your relationship with God no longer is conditional on whether you sin or don't sin (as many think that sin breaks their fellowship with God), but your relationship with God is strictly based on the blood of Jesus alone. We are not justified by anything we have done or any commandment we have kept, but by who we have believed in!

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: (Romans 3:23,24).

And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses (Acts 13:39).

In fact if you are disobedient, then God now steps in with correction and chastening, instead of rejection. As plainly taught in Hebrews chapter 12, if your fellowship with God is broken when you are disobedient until you repent, then you are correcting your own behavior, and if God is not correcting you but rejecting you when you are disobedient, then the Bible says God is not even your Father! How can you be chastened and rebuked by the Lord if you don't do anything to be chastened and rebuked for?

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof ALL are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons (Hebrews 11:5-8).

God now fellowships and takes pleasure in the believer because they no longer trust in the obedience of their flesh, but in the blood of Jesus as the atonement which was God's sacrifice as the sole basis for securing eternal fellowship with Him. The obedience you seek will follow as a result of that relationship with your Heavenly Father and His chastening! Remember your sin is destroying you, not God. The reason why your sin cannot break your relationship with God (and this will shock many in religion today), is because your relationship with God is not based on you! It is based on Jesus interceding for you!

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:1,2).

But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore HE is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:24,25).

I think many in religion may have forgotten this main simple truth, if it wasn't for the sacrifice of Jesus, you would never be able to have a relationship with God no matter how good or obedient you are. That is why I cannot "embrace all faiths" as just different ways to God. If you want a joyous relationship with God, just except His sacrifice (Jesus)! He provided it for you to prove He desires a relationship with you (John 3:16)! When you come to God by the blood of Jesus alone not trusting in anything else, (law, sacrifices, etc.), then you are acknowledging that the sacrifice of Jesus was all sufficient to secure that relationship with Him for ever. Everything else (obedience, works, stewardship, etc.) that you desire will then come as a result of that relationship with God through Jesus Christ! The divine order is first relationship, then correction. As a new spiritual baby, you have to be taught how to live in this new spiritual world by your Heavenly Father.

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; (Hebrews 5:8,9).

Your Heavenly Father will do the correcting and chastening as you can read in Hebrews chapter 12.

For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth (Hebrews 12:3-6).

You overcome sin by an act of God's will, not your own will. Here are some other verses that should bring more joy and good news to anyone reading them.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen (Hebrews 13:20,21).

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not

only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement (Romans 5:8-11).

But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: (Ephesians 2:13-16).

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: (Romans 5:19,20).

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John2:1,2).

The true Christian understands that they cannot “clean up their flesh”, but must let it die and they understand that their righteousness is as filthy rags. The true Christian just swaps their righteousness for Jesus’ righteousness that cannot get dirty. Jesus already paid it all for those that believe in His finished work on the cross!

The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:56,57).

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law (Romans 5:12,13).

This grace and liberty where in you stand though brings tremendous responsibility because even though God is not imputing sin to you for Jesus’ sake. You still can do things that can hurt others even though you are not under condemnation for sin as Paul plainly taught.

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another (Galatians 5:13).

Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? (1 Colossians 2:20-22).

Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge; for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend (1 Corinthians 8:7-13).

This verse shows that a Christian can sin against his brethren and sin against Christ, even though he is not committing sin against himself.

I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: (Romans 14:14-16).

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not (1 Corinthians 10:23).

In the middle of all these scriptures I want to stop and make sure you fully understand and don't lose sight of what the Gospel is offering. The victory over DEATH!

Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (2 Timothy 1:8-10).

The battle is being fought in your mind. It is knowing the truth that shall make you free (John 8:32). One of the victories of the Gospel is walking in a clear conscience, and peace with God and peace with yourself, because **death is a state of mind** as taught in the Bible.

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Romans 8:6)

Remember, death originally came from the **KNOWLEDGE** of good and evil (Genesis 2:16,17). The physical death of Adam was the end result of the knowledge of

death. The victory was won at the cross. The Christian life is simply walking in that victory.

The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:56,57).

You see the Word of God brings the truth to light, and then the Spirit of God brings the truth to pass. It is one thing to have a vision, it is quite another to see that vision come to pass. Your mind “awakens” to righteousness through the knowledge of the truth. It is sometimes referred to as “The Great Awakening” and the beginning of a new day.

Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame. (1 Corinthians 15:34)

And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light (Romans 13:11,12).

The Bible says that repentance is a gift of God so they can acknowledge the truth. The drunk, thief, drug addict or the prostitute needs to understand that they are already forgiven for Christ’s sake if they will just awaken to that truth and receive that gift of repentance.

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (2 Tim 2:24-26).

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet NOW hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouable (unconvictable) in his sight: (Colossians 1:21,22).

The Bible says that it is the “goodness of God”, not the “wrath of God” that leads you repentance!

Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? (Romans 2:1-4).

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved (John 3:16,17).

Now back to Law vs. Grace scriptures.

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: (Romans 3:21-24).

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:17-19).

The penalty has already been paid. If anyone reading this keeps “losing his or her salvation” please ask yourself one question. Does the blood of Jesus wash away all sin, or does sin wash away the blood of Jesus? It can only go one way! If you claim you can “lose your salvation” that was secured for you by Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary, you are not proclaiming to the world your failure, but the failure of Jesus!

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame (Hebrews 6:4-6).

Once the blood of Jesus has washed away your sin, then anything you do afterward cannot wash away the blood of Jesus and is already atoned for. You now have an advocate!

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:1,2).

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:25).

I do agree that if your salvation comes by something you do, then you can lose it by something you do. But if your salvation comes by what Jesus did on the cross, then you cannot reverse that, all you can do is accept that atonement or reject it. Many people also think that every time they are disobedient that they also have to reapply the blood over and over to cover the new sin to restore fellowship with God. That is still the Old Testament style of sacrificing and God no longer accepts it.

Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that HE may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ ONCE for all (Hebrews 10:8-10).

By the Christian claiming they are still under the law and just replacing the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament with Jesus, you make the blood of Jesus no stronger than an animal's blood to take away sin, because you have to constantly keep applying it. Jesus' sacrifice was one body sacrificed one time for all sin!

By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ ONCE for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered ONE sacrifice for sins FOR EVER, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by ONE offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Hebrews 10:10-14).

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame (Hebrews 6:4-6).

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous (Romans 5:19).

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; (Romans 3:21-25).

And once again we see in Romans 3:25 that you just read, that through the blood of Christ Jesus we receive "remission of sins that are past". Paul is careful to point out that

any past sins are forgiven, because Hebrews chapter 10 says that any future sins are not even imputed to the Christian!

Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; (Hebrews 10:18-20).

I want to stop right here and discuss “remission of sins” because nobody preaches it anymore. This is the main message of the Gospel! What does “remission of sin” mean? The word “remission” in the Greek is “aphesis” which means deliverance, forgiveness, or liberty. Sin is like a disease that starts in the soul and attacks the whole body. But the Bible says that sin when it is finished brings forth death (James 1:15), just like cancer when it is finished brings forth death, and AIDS when it is finished brings forth death. What would happen though if you found a cure for cancer or AIDS that could put it into remission before it had a chance to complete its course (death)? According to these verses, that is what the blood of Jesus has accomplished for the sinner! When did the “remission of sins” start? When you die and go to Heaven? The remission of sins was accomplished at the moment you accepted the blood of Jesus Christ on your life.

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:37,38).

For the believer to go back to obedience to the law with its required blood sacrifice as a means of justification or to receive blessing is to deny the very sacrifice of Jesus Christ!

I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. (Galatians 2:21)

Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace (Galatians 5:4).

But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the CURSE of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: (Galatians 3:11-13).

God has already accepted the payment for our sins and also the sins of the whole world, because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ one time for all sins. Since the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, God has been reconciling man back to Him, not rejecting, condemning or imputing their sins to them any longer.

I want to touch on something briefly that ties in with this study also. Many think that God’s will and plans can be messed up by man, because the Bible says that it is God’s

will that “none should perish”, yet many people perish everyday. I believe that God has not had to sit by with His hands tied and watch men perish. On the contrary, God did something about it when gave His own Son to atone for the sins of any that will accept that atonement.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

By this verse we can see that God not only did not stand by and was somehow helpless to stop mankind from perishing, but He was very active in making a way of escape for mankind. This verse is so good I have to quote it again!

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

As you can read, God became at peace with all mankind that will accept the free gift of the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ.

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement (Romans 5:8-11).

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:1,2).

See Jesus condemned sin “in the flesh”, but the Christian is “in the Spirit”. He that is born of the flesh is flesh, but he that is born of the Spirit is Spirit (John 3:6,7). In fact, how do you know the true gospel is being preached if you hear it? One of the signs is it will be seen as being taught against the laws of Moses by people claiming you have to keep the laws of Moses!

And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him

to the council, And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: (Acts 6:8-13).

And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law (Acts 18:12,13).

And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place; and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place (Acts 21:27,28).

Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart (2 Corinthians 3:12-15).

The reason that I am writing about this again is to make sure you understand the benefit of completely dying in Christ. I still see many people in the church still wrestle with the question of “are they under the law or under grace” or a mixture of both? Once again, the answer is very simple. If you are “alive”, then you are under the law. If you are “dead” then the law has no more power over you because death was the maximum penalty the law carried.

Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God (Romans 7:1-4).

But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; (1 Corinthians 1:9,10).

If you are still “alive”, then you are in religion, but if you are “dead”, you are in Christ.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1-3).

When you cross over into the realm of the Spirit, where eternal life exists, then the law cannot follow you past the cross of Calvary with its death sentence. The judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10) is not a judgment of salvation, but a judgment of service to receive gifts. The “end of the world” and eternal judgment for the Christian’s salvation came at the cross of Jesus. The rest of the world that rejects Jesus waits for another “end of the world” and eternal judgment (Revelation 20:11-15).

Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out (John 12:31).

For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: (Hebrews 9:26,27).

If you are already claiming to be a “Christian” and are reading this then you may be saying, “this is ridiculous, I am not dead”, but if I am “dead” like your saying, then when did I die?

For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain (Galatians 2:19-21).

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. (Romans 6:14)

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. (Romans 6:5,6)

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter (Romans 7:4-6).

The cross of Jesus is a door to pass through death and enter into a world of spiritual life. Please read the chapter “The Spiritual World”. By the death of Jesus on the cross, every penalty of the law was paid. The law cannot go past the cross to follow us into the spiritual world and eternal life! This is why the Bible says that Jesus fulfilled the law instead of doing away with it! This is why Jesus is called “the way”.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son (Colossians 1:12,13).

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil (Matthew 5:17,18).

Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel (Mark 1:14,15).

Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished (Luke 18:31).

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, (Luke 24:44,45).

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

Many have changed the Gospel from “Jesus is the way”, to “Jesus showed the way”, and reduced the Gospel into the same covenant as the Old Testament that still needs fulfilling and Jesus Christ has been reduced down to nothing more than a heavenly inspired motivational teacher whose blood sacrifice carried no more power over sin than an animal!

Once again, I see in the church today when people that want to be saved are told to come to the foot of the cross. What I came to find out is the true path to salvation was not at the foot of the cross, but on the cross! Paul said:

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me (Galatians 2:20).

Your eternal life can start today, but only if you truly die, and you can never truly die at the foot of the cross no matter how many times you come to it. You do not die at the

foot of the cross. In fact, how could I be buried with Jesus in baptism (symbolic) and raised to walk in a new and living way except I first died. That's like the children of Israel coming to the Jordan River and never crossing into the promise land. The Jordan River is also called the "river of death". Paul understood that he had to die meant a total surrender.

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world (Galatians 6:14).

And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; (Colossians 2:10-14).

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. (Romans 6:3-7).

What Paul realized and what I later realized was, the cross of Calvary offered me the unique opportunity to die to this world just as dead as the ones in the grave without shedding my blood. I found someone to die for me! Paul explained it this way.

For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. (1 Corinthians 1:17,18).

Jesus offered himself as a real sacrifice for me. I offer myself as a "living" sacrifice for Him. The victory that you seek is not at the altar, as many believe in the church today when they are told by the pastor to come down to the altar, but the victory is found on the other side of the altar!

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (Romans 12:1).

You can “rest in peace” now, not when you breathe your last breath!

For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world (Hebrews 4:3).

If you have been coming to the foot of the cross or the altar at church, then yes you are still under the law because you never died. Those who have crossed over to the spiritual world at the cross of Jesus are not under the law. The cross is a doorway through Jesus to a spiritual kingdom and a resurrection that I could partake of now.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life (John 5:24).

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:1-3)

The ones that are at the foot of the cross in the church are still in the flesh (Adam), still under condemnation, and still looking toward death, the penalty for their sin.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:22).

You might as well be living back in time almost 2000 years ago and be standing in the crowd looking up at Jesus on the cross. Even today you are still in the world of the Old Testament and not in Christ. I hear many in the church today lament that it was their sin that put Jesus on the cross. I look at the cross differently. I believe that it was the love of God for me that put Jesus on the cross! We love God because He first loved us!

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

Every Saturday and Sunday, many different religions play out different doctrines and rituals at the foot of the cross, totally ignorant of a whole new spiritual world on the other side of the cross. The eternal life and victory you seek is on the other side of the cross, in the realm of the Spirit. That is why Jesus said for you to take up your cross and follow Him! Please read the chapter “The Spiritual World”.

He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal (John 12:25).

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: (Colossians 1:13,14).

I like to see pastors that preach behind a pulpit that is shaped like a cross. This signifies that they are on the other side and speaking words of the new life “in the Spirit” to all that are still at the foot of the cross who refuse to be “crucified with Christ” and let go of this world.

And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. (Acts 5:18-20).

The Christians that have been crucified with Christ are “in the Spirit” and are now looking forward to eternal life. It is only appointed unto men once to die, but if we die at the cross with Jesus then the Spirit of life enters in us and starts renewing the mind with spiritual knowledge. If you throw out doctrine in the church for the sake of unity because “doctrine causes division” then you are then left with nothing truly “Christian”.

And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: (Colossians 3:10).

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:23).

The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew (Proverbs 3:19,20).

All we are waiting for now is the redemption of our bodies.

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you (Romans 8:11).

But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; (1 Corinthians 1:9,10).

The Bible speaks in many places about crossing over into the spiritual world. Please read the chapter “The Spiritual World”. I will explain much more on life in the spiritual world because what is being taught mainly in most churches is how to somehow survive in the natural world.

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us (1 Corinthians 5:7).

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1-3).

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death (1 John 3:14).

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (Romans 8:9).

As is plainly taught in the Bible, the Christian has already passed from death unto life through Jesus Christ. Now after reading all this, if you really have great confidence in your obedience and the power and determination of your flesh to please God and you are “purpose driven” to keep all of God’s commandments and fulfill the purpose you believe God has for your life, then I agree that is a very noble undertaking. Maybe you can succeed where Paul failed!

For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ (Philippians 3:3-7).

I also think if everybody would obey God’s commandments and follow Biblical principles, then the world would be a much better place. Here then is a good starting point in your quest for those who look for “holiness” through works, instead of faith. Try keeping God’s FIRST commandment to man and the rest of your life should become much easier.

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou gayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shall not eat of it: for in the day that thou nearest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Genesis 2:16,17).

This should now be enough information to help the new believer that may be studying simple foundational doctrine on law and grace.

The Old Testament Church

Now what I am going to explain here about “Christian” religion today may be a little different from the way you have heard growing up in organized religion. The reason that I believe the church has been in decline and disarray is not because it has the wrong structure and needs a new one (i.e. cell/ small group, new paradigm, new thing), but I believe it is preaching the wrong message. When the true gospel is preached, there were thousands added to the church daily, yet there are pastors preaching the “gospel message” all over the world in churches that are struggling for only one or two to be saved. The rest of the world is turning away from what is being preached in the “Christian churches” today and toward all sorts of different religions of the world (Wicca, Witchcraft, Hindu, Buddhism, Scientology, New Age, etc.). Today the church has responded by starting to preach “unity of all faiths” to bring everyone back under the banner of “The Church”. I think I know why.

This same thing went on in Paul’s day in the Bible. In Paul’s case, hearing the Gospel message alone did not convert Saul (surnamed Paul). Saul heard the Gospel being preached and thought it was blasphemy.

And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or woman, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem (Acts 9:12).

At that time Saul was a devote believer in (Jehovah) God and the whole Old Testament, (books of Moses, the Psalms of David, the proverbs of Solomon, the prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and all the minor prophets), and even after all this Old Testament knowledge, Saul (Paul) still went around persecuting Christians in the name of God! He had even sat at the feet of the great Bible teacher of that day, Gamaliel. Which tells me that the true Gospel was hidden from men in the Old Testament.

How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; (Ephesians 3:3-5).

Later though something happened in Saul’s (surnamed Paul) life that so radically changed him that the Bible says that he now preached the faith that he once destroyed.

But they had heard only, that he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed (Galatians 1:23).

WHAT CHANGED? The gospel message was the SAME! The words hadn’t changed. What changed Paul and turned his life totally around was meeting the one who the Gospel was talking about and having the witness of the Holy Spirit enter into him.

Now Paul's writings are considered every bit as divinely inspired as the Old Testament prophets' words are!

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

Let me explain further. During Paul's day, the Old Testament was being read in the synagogues every Sabbath. People had heard it taught for years, even from their youth, yet the world turned from the Old Testament and toward witchcraft, idol worship, Greek and Roman gods, and many other different religions just like today. The reason being is salvation and peace with God could not be gained through the Old Testament. Its purpose was to make people realize their fallen state and their need of a Savior. In fact the New Testament gospel was so different from what the people were use to hearing in the preaching of the Old Testament that they claimed that it turned their world upside down!

But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; (Acts 17:5,6).

And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us. And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel (Acts 6:8-15).

What I hear being preached in the churches today, and on TV, and radio is a big move to go back to the Old Testament. The "new paradigm" churches are even going farther than the New Testament. The reason for this is I do not think that either group of churches understand the New Testament or the Gospel of Jesus Christ or they would have never left it. And like Paul's day, the world is once again rejecting what is being preached and turning back to other religions for salvation and to try to find peace with God because they cannot find it through the Old Testament church that has evolved today. The correct order is to get the Jews to embrace the New Testament instead of the church embracing the Old Testament. Please read the chapter "Law or Grace?"

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers (Galatians 1:11-14).

What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; (Romans 9:30-32).

And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people (Romans 10:15-21).

What has happened to “the Church” today? As near as I can figure, the churches line of thinking today is if we go back to the Old Testament and imitate the things that the children of Israel were suppose to do, then maybe we can get what the children of Israel should have gotten for their obedience.

This big move back to the Old Testament is so rampant in the church today, for example, I hear many pastors claim that the verse in 2 Chronicles 7:14 where God was answering the prayer of Solomon for God’s people (children of Israel) was also talking to Christians today! On the Global Day of Prayer, it was estimated that 490 million people around the world joined together and prayed this prayer.

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place. For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually (2 Chronicles 7:14-16).

Taken in the proper context, God tells Solomon that He will only hear this prayer if it is prayed specifically in SOLOMON’S TEMPLE. Go back and read the other verses

before it and after it in a KJV Bible. Many pastors actually wanted Christians to pray this same prayer claiming it for America. This is simple elementary doctrine! The Old Testament holds many wonderful examples and principles for life, but it has to be kept in proper context. It was designed to govern man while man is “alive” walking in the flesh. The law enforced a spiritual commandment that a natural man cannot continuously keep (Romans 7:14). The Christian that has been crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20,21), is born of the Spirit and being led by the Spirit, which gave the inspiration and knowledge to write the Old Testament. Paul said:

Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone (Ten Commandments), but in fleshy tables of the heart (2 Corinthians 3:2,3).

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:24-26).

This type of mentality is very rampant in today’s church also. I have heard many other people continue to pray this same prayer also and America is still in the full process of self-destruction. When America keeps getting worse, then these people that keep praying 2 Chronicles 7:14, thinking that there must be something wrong with their faith or God is judging America. I am going to let you in on a little secret. The reason why God doesn’t ever seem to answer this prayer and America keeps getting worse while religion seems to be growing has nothing to do with the faith of people praying this prayer. According to this very same scripture, if people will would read the Bible for themselves, the only possible chance you have that God would even consider answering this prayer today, is if you went to the exact place where Solomon’s Temple was and rebuilt it and rededicated it, and went into it and prayed this prayer after turning from your sin.

There are several more reasons also why God has not answered this prayer? Number one, this prayer doesn’t require the blood of Jesus for forgiveness of sin because it wasn’t offered back then, it required your own repentance and obedience for the forgiveness of sin. Second, this verse was never meant for Christians because the Gentiles did not become “God’s people” until Jesus died on the cross for all mankind. Peter was given a vision of the great sheet full of beasts in Acts 11:1-18.

Foreasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life (Acts 11:17,18).

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now

the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy (1 Peter 2:9,10).

Because of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, we not only can be people of God, but children of God, because we are born again of the Spirit. Now if you want to try to make the case that you are Jewish and still go back to the Old Testament, then Jesus gives you this warning. Remember this verse was written to THE CHURCH at Philadelphia!

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee (Rev 3:9).

The Bible does speak of spiritual Jews in the New Testament, but they are not the “children of Israel” as the Jews in the Old Testament were. The relationship that the New Testament Christian has to the Old Testament Jews is they share an inheritance. As a Christian I cannot curse the Jews, Arabs or any of mankind. My war is not with flesh and blood, but it is a spiritual battle that I fight. I can pray blessings on the Jewish people as the sons of Abraham and God’s chosen people because it is through Abraham’s inheritance that I am to be a partaker of also (Romans 11:1-32). The Bible says the Jewish people are God’s elect (Isaiah 45:4) and the Christian is Christ elect (Romans 8:31-34). In fact one reason that the Gospel was offered to the Gentiles was to provoke the Jews to jealousy.

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. (Romans 11:26-29).

The inheritance that the Christian also has as an heir with the children of Israel is not a little strip of land in the Middle East that people have been fighting over for years, but the whole world! Every thing you see going on in the Middle East is not for Israel’s land but on who gets to control Jerusalem. If you think that giving away the land of Israel to the Arabs will bring peace to the Middle East or the world, then you do not understand the Abrahamic covenant. The descendants of Ishmael understand the inheritance of Abraham was for the whole world and to be ruled from Jerusalem. That is why they are now calling this planet earth the “Muslim world”. They believe through Abraham that they get the whole planet earth as an inheritance for being the firstborn. It must first be purged of all infidels (non-Muslims).

For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are

of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect (Romans 4:13,14).

That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ (Galatians 3:14-16).

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:26-29).

How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: (Ephesians 3:3-6).

The reason that I am sharing this is because there are millions of people who have died throughout history and thousands that are being killed now and in the future who deserve to know why they are being slaughtered like cattle by people claiming they are doing God's service. During the crusades, you had both the Muslims and the Church battling over the Temple Mount in the city of Jerusalem as the place to rule over the world. The Church would rule it for awhile, and then the Muslims would rule it for awhile. Today the Muslims own the Temple Mount and are claiming the planet earth as the "Muslim world". The Muslims understand the seriousness of the Abrahamic covenant and birthright of the firstborn. In the World Church today you also have many that are planning to conquer the whole planet earth for "the World Church". But the World Church will also have to first purge the earth of infidels and heretics (unbelievers in this Global Church) to set up the "kingdom of heaven". For either the Muslims or the Church to except anything less than a total global submission of mankind to their authority would be a rejection of part of their birthright and an insult to God! That is why there can never be any lasting peace on the earth until Jesus Christ comes.

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear (Matthew 11:12-15).

And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled (Luke 21:20-24).

The only problem with ruling over the earth from Jerusalem, the Bible says that it is Jesus that smites the nations at His return, not the Global Church or the Muslims.

And the armies, which were in heaven, followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treated the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hats on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS (Revelation 19:14-16).

What is the true Christian supposed to do? Will they be caught in the middle between the World Church and Muslim World? That's an easy question to answer! I have some "good news". The true Christians will be enjoying a great reunion with Christ in the City of Gold.

And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh (Luke 21:28).

Also a remnant of Jews will be hidden and protected by God on earth during this time and will enjoy a future redemption when Jesus comes to rule and reign a thousand years. What many in the world today don't understand is, it is not the World Church or even the Muslim World that is going to bring these prophecies of the Bible to fulfillment. It is the publishing and preaching of the true gospel of the kingdom by true Christians unto all nations.

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come (Matthew 24:14).

And the gospel must first be published among all nations (Mark 13:10).

The world must understand that the true church can never be killed or "stamped out" because to destroy the true church you must first kill the head (Jesus). The head of the church is Jesus Christ who already died and has risen from the dead never to die again. Every time the world thinks they have killed a Christian, someone else somewhere in the

world is at the same time hearing from Jesus. As many have found out thru out history, trying to destroy the true church is an exercise in futility!

In this study, I am not focusing on the argument between Ishmael and Isaac over the birthright of the firstborn. Jesus Christ will put to rest that issue when He comes to claim His birthright as the firstborn Son of God and also the seed of Abraham! As many church pastors are getting their congregations focused on Jerusalem on earth and the storms surrounding her, the Jerusalem that I am looking toward for an inheritance is the same one that Abraham looked to for his inheritance. The one that is above in the spirit! That is where Jesus Christ, who is the firstborn of God, is currently sitting with the church of the firstborn, who is also called Abraham's seed!

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ (Galatians 3:16).

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:26-29).

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1).

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:8-10).

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city (Hebrews 11:13-16).

This heavenly Jerusalem is the inheritance of Abraham and all that are born of the Spirit through faith, shall rule on the earth with Him.

Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: (Ephesians 2:5,6).

Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 22:28-30).

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last (Luke 13:28-30).

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9:15).

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14:1-3).

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; (Ephesians 2:19).

So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more (Joel 3:17).

Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee. I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth (Isaiah 62:4-7).

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:20).

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:1,2).

The true Christian understands that the issue of the inheritance is not an Arab and Jew issue, but a natural man (born of the flesh) vs. spiritual man (born of the Spirit) issue! An earthly Jerusalem and a heavenly Jerusalem.

For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now (Galatians 4:22-29).

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God (Romans 2:28,29).

Isaac, Jesus, and a true Christian are all the result of a miracle birth by the power and will of God that flesh could never accomplish even if it desired to.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:12,13).

What I mainly want to focus on in this study of immortality is reversing what Adam did in the Garden of Eden, which is salvation from death through the cross of Jesus Christ for all mankind Jews, Arabs, and Gentiles alike that will accept that sacrifice. It is the Gospel of Peace, not war.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God (Revelation 2:7).

You must understand, our high priest (Jesus) came out of the tribe of JUDAH, not the tribe of Levi!

For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life (Hebrews 7:14-16).

If anybody reading this are going to a church where the pastor, priest, elders, bishops or deacons start referring to themselves as Levities, this should immediately throw up many red flags of danger to the Christian. We have a different priesthood. The Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament was the stewards of the revealed will of God, which is the law. The Christians are the stewards of the mysteries of God, which is the path to immortality!

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. (1 Corinthians 4:1)

For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: (Ephesians 3:1-6).

If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. (Hebrews 7:11-19).

Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is

upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away (2 Corinthians 3:12-16).

The only reason I can see after reading all these verses that anybody would want to go back under the Old Testament law is because the mysteries of God are still hidden from them!

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them (2 Corinthians 4:3,4).

For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. (Romans 10:2-4)

Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame (1 Corinthians 15:34).

The Gospel is about reconciling all of mankind, not just the Jews back to God.

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:26-29).

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:17-19).

The Jews will be saved, but so will the Gentiles. The Gentiles are saved at the first coming of Jesus, when He died for our sins on the cross, but the nation of Israel will be saved at His second coming as Paul taught.

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As

concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes (Romans 11:25-28).

Christians also have to understand that God is now on Mount Zion with a new covenant, not on mount Sinai, where the children received the Mosaic covenant, which are the Ten Commandments.

For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:18-24).

Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded (1 Peter 2:6).

I listened to an evangelist preach a sermon and describe most people in the church today are like the children of Israel at the bottom of the Mount Sinai and are too scared to step out on faith and follow Moses (the senior pastor) up into the clouds on Mount Sinai to go to the next level to meet God. He taught that only a few spiritual ones in the church had the faith to go up into the cloud on Mount Sinai to meet God, but the rest of the church needed to get off the pews and follow if they ever wanted to go to the next "level" with God. I have some disturbing news for the church today. The church can climb Mount Sinai and the Ten Commandments as high as they want to, but as you can see by these verses, when they finally get to the top they will not find God there. God is on Mount Zion now and Jesus is the mediator of a new covenant!

In the Old Testament, the Word of God was written on stone and paper. In the New Testament the Word of God is Jesus Christ (the mediator of a new covenant Hebrews 12:24)! If I am in Christ, then I am in the Word of God already. When most people say they are in the Word of God they mean they are studying the Bible. If I was to lose my Bible or be somewhere without access to it, I am still in the Word of God, being in Jesus Christ.

Now getting back to why 2 Chronicles 7:14 cannot be referring to the Christian today is because the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch (Acts 11:26)! There is a major error that is also spread across all denominations in various forms today. People are erasing the term "children of Israel" in the Old Testament and replacing it with "the church" and trying to claim that these same verses apply to the New Testament church.

This is similar to “replacement theology”. To claim that Old Testament verses that refer to the “children of Israel” also applies to the “New Testament church” is to declare that the Christian can be spiritually born again as people of God before Jesus ever died on the cross! This is also in direct contradiction to the Bible.

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy (1 Peter 2:9,10).

That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. (Ephesians 2:12,13).

Point to Ponder: In this verse, it says that without Christ, we are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and have no hope, and without God in the world. This scripture also shows that all the people that are claiming that God is your sub-conscience mind and trying to get in touch with your “inner god” through yoga meditation techniques cannot claim that the Bible agrees with that doctrine. According to this scripture we were not even born into this world with a divine nature, but with the nature of Adam.

Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly (1 Corinthians 15:46-49).

Man was created as humanity, God the Creator is divinity, Jesus Christ the Son of God and Son of man exists as humanity and divinity in one. ***For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9).*** We only become “spiritual” in a relationship with God when we truly accept Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit indwells us.

This error is very easily corrected if you understand simple Bible doctrine. You must understand that there is a major difference between the “people of God (children of Israel)” and the “children of God (Christians are born of the Spirit of God)”. Christians are also referred to as the people of God, but not until they are born again. Let me explain it this way.

If I were king of a nation, the people of that nation would be “my people”, but they would not be my children. The children of Israel were born of the flesh and called Abraham their father and Jesus rebuked the Pharisees that tried to claim God as their Father. The Christian is born of the Spirit when they are “born again” and now do call God as their Father. It wasn’t till after the cross that the distinction between Jew and Gentile was over shadowed with the difference between natural man and spiritual man.

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26,28).

Mankind could not be born again and become the people and children of God until after Jesus died on the cross! The references to people as “children of God” in the Old Testament are in reference to a Creator / creation relationship as in the “Father of Creation”.

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28).

Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? (1 Corinthians 6:2,3).

Many pastors also take Old Testament prophecies that were pointing toward the first coming of Jesus, and are applying them to the second coming of Jesus. The Old Testament taken in its proper context is always used for the preparation of the coming of the Messiah, the first coming and the second coming. The first coming of Messiah, which was Jesus, was hidden in the Old Testament, but the preparation for the second coming of the Messiah is declared in the Old Testament. The Jews are looking for the second coming to be the first coming of the Messiah because they rejected Jesus when He came the first time. The Christians accepted Jesus at His first coming and are now looking for His second coming. Many still stumble at this stumbling stone.

Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech. And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away (II Corinthians 3:12-16).

There is even now an accepted practice in the church today where people are trying to pray back to God the same prayers and Psalms of the Old Testament saints. They don't seem to understand, that many things that the people were praying for and crying out for in the Old Testament has already been freely given to the true Christian by faith in Jesus Christ. The people of the Old Testament were looking for the Messiah. The Christian has found the Messiah (Jesus Christ)! What I have even seen in the church today are people claiming to be Christians and they say they are operating in “the spirit of David”, “the

spirit of Zadok”, “the spirit of Phinehas”, “the spirit of Joseph”, etc. Whatever happened to Christians operating in the “Spirit of Christ”?

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (Romans 8:9).

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables (2 Timothy 4:2-4).

What I see today is a great falling away from the New Testament faith and the church is embracing Old Testament works and calling it a “new thing”. Paul said it best when he addressed the Galatians:

I do not frustrate the grace of God, for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain (Galatians 2:21).

Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace (Galatians 5:4).

The Bible does teach that the Christian can still use the law today, but as always its purpose is still to condemn the sinner. Any justification now comes strictly from the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.

In the Old Testament, it was only God’s chosen and sanctified priest that could bear the burden of the law on their shoulders; anybody else that tried to carry it was struck dead. That is why our High priest Jesus Christ bore the burden of the law for the Christian! Yet there are pastors claiming to be Christians that are standing in the pulpits every Saturday and Sunday that are still trying to get the congregation to carry the very same Old Testament law on their shoulders also!

And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. (Luke 11:46)

But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers

NOR WE were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. (Acts 15:5-11).

In fact Paul even tells the Christian to avoid strivings about the law, with people that still say they are under the law!

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself (Titus 3:9-11).

This is why I think the real reason that “the church” has been dying. The church doesn’t need a “new paradigm (cell/small groups)” to be effective, it needs a NEW TESTAMENT! The Old Testament works; the New Testament is grace.

For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17).

Law and faith also cannot co-exist as a means of justification in the believer’s life, because the righteousness comes from two different sources.

But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them (Galatians 3:11,12).

Under the law, righteousness comes from obeying God’s commandments and must be earned through obedience. Unrighteousness or sin comes from disobeying God’s commandments.

Under grace, righteousness comes from faith in Jesus Christ and is a free gift. Unrighteousness or sin comes from unbelief in Jesus Christ!

Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:22,23).

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove (convict) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; (John 16:7-9).

You have to understand our righteousness is as filthy rags and cannot be cleaned even by obeying the law. It must be replaced with Jesus’ righteousness, which cannot get dirty!

Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone (ten commandments), but in fleshy tables of the heart (II Corinthians 3:3).

I have said this before but I think that it is worth repeating. Some “New Testament” churches are trying to bring back Old Testament Davidic worship as a condition for coming into the presence of God. If you cannot come into God’s presence with the blood of Jesus alone, then praise and worship is not going to get you in the holiest either. Praise and worship was the accepted Old Testament way of entering in because they didn’t have the blood of Jesus to offer as the required sacrifice.

Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name (Psalms 100:1-4).

Even then, praise and worship never got anybody in the Bible past the court of the temple, only the high priest could go into the presence of God. In many churches today they are holding “camp” meetings for the church, yet the gospel is for those that are living outside the camp!

We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come (Hebrews 13:10-13).

That is why the people in these churches today can never seem to get into the presence of God and their pastor or spiritual leader can. The “New Testament” way into God’s presence is by the blood of Jesus alone and true praise and worship comes as a result of being in His presence not a condition to get into His presence! I believe the real reason this doctrine is being pushed is because some church leadership knows that you are not going to ever get into God’s presence with praise and worship alone, so they are the only ones that can “go behind the veil” or to the “secret place” and talk to God for you. They will then come out preaching and say, “the Lord told me to tell you”. You don’t have a clue whether they are telling you the truth or not, because you are still trying to praise and worship yourself into His presence. The moment a person says to the New Testament Christian, “the Lord told me to tell you” then they are at that point stepping directly between you and God and declaring that you are not worthy for God’s fellowship or presence.

According to Jesus own words (“***But the hour cometh, and now is***” John 4:23,24), true worship that God now accepts now didn’t start until Jesus’ earthly ministry and would carry into the future, not go back in the past. Jesus also warned about vain worship

(Matthew 15:8,9)(Mark 7:6,7). Paul even spoke about people ignorantly worshipping God, by trying to offer God gifts or money as worship. The work of the hands is the same thing that Cain tried to offer God, and God rejected it also.

For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an alter with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; (Acts 17:23-25).

The worship that God seeks now is generated by the work of the Spirit in your heart.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23,24).

The reason that I am writing about praise and worship is so you understand its purpose. I do not want to see Christians confined to the “outer court” when they have the right to stand beside any Pope, apostle, prophet, priest, pastor, small group leader, etc. at the throne of God. How you worship God (hands up, hands down, through dance, through praise and worship music (traditional and contemporary), in silence, etc.) is between you and God. I just want to make sure you know that it is the blood of Jesus and not praise and worship music that secures our eternal presence with God today. Just knowing that should be enough to cause the praise and worship.

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name (Hebrews 13:15).

The Lord's Supper

Now I want to address another major error in the way that the churches today are explaining communion. I want to show you the meaning of “discerning the Lord's body”.

For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. (1 Corinthians 11:29-32).

First we have to “define” the Lord's body before we can “discern” the Lord's body. What is the Lord's body? The Lord's body is not just the whole congregation, but the individual Christians physical body also! All of this study can also be applied to the church body as a whole, but I want to mainly focus on is the individual believer.

What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (1 Corinthians 6:19,20).

What you have in the physical body is not the “sinful flesh” that needs destroyed. That is plainly taught in the Bible to be the flesh of the heart (I will). When Paul used the word “vile” to describe the mortal body in Philippians 3:21, he was not describing the physical body as filthy or an abomination. The word “vile” used in that verse is translated from “tapeinosis” in the Greek. It simple means “humbled”, as in “made lower than the angels” or inferior to angelic bodies in immortality.

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man (Hebrews 2:9).

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: (Romans 8:3).

Jesus didn't come in “sinful flesh” but in “the likeness of sinful flesh”. The “likeness of sinful flesh” that Jesus came in was the ability to act out of unity with God, but he never exercised that option (I will) and was always in strict obedience to the Father. God is a Trinity, three separate persons in perfect unity (John 17:22) (Genesis 1:26)(1 John 5:7)(Colossians 2:9).

Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed,

saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I WILL, but as thou wilt (Matthew 26:38,39).

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:14,15).

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: (James 1:13).

For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted (Hebrews 2:16-18).

Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; (Hebrews 5:7,8).

Paul also explained the “sinful flesh” as his personal will (I will) and the ability to act independent of God.

Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for TO WILL is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not (Romans 7:17,18).

The physical body of the Christian is not the source of sin as Paul plainly taught. It just gets the blame for the sin.

Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body (1 Corinthians 6:18).

And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, (Mark 7:20,21).

And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: (Colossians 2:10,11).

What condition is the physical body of the Christian in which the Bible says now belongs to God?

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:22).

And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:11).

Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied (Jude 1,2).

Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: (1 Corinthians 1:2).

For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified (Hebrews 10:14).

As you can see by the verses you just read, we are sanctified in the Lord Jesus and not by our works. These scriptures stand in contradiction to the “we must grow in our sanctification” doctrine that some pastors preach.

In this study, I want to stop and straighten out a mix up that I believe that goes on in the church today. Once again it is self-condemnation that is the culprit, but instead of rejecting it, the church has embraced it in the Lord’s Supper! To straighten this mess out we have to go all the way back to the Garden of Eden to find out who really has the right to judge good and evil, God or us.

You need to understand that man was created with the freedom of choice (freewill), but not the knowledge of good and evil (free moral agent). Before Adam ate of the tree, everything that God created was good. After eating of the tree then everything good that God created for Adam, he considered bad including himself (nudity). Nothing else changed except Adam’s perception of God’s good creation. Eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is where man received the “ability to judge”, but not the “right to judge”, including himself, as Paul taught!

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God (1 Corinthians 4:1-5).

The knowledge of good and evil was reserved for God alone, like God told Adam. In fact, whenever man does exercise the ability to judge good and evil (free moral agent), God declared man a god.

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken (Genesis 3:22,23).

There is a big difference between “freewill” and “free moral agent”. This is where everybody misses this when studying freewill doctrine. Man was created with “freewill”, but man was not created with “morals”. Man attained “morals” by eating of the tree that God commanded him not to. Today, man still runs around with the knowledge of good and evil while proudly proclaiming that he is a “free moral agent”, but actually the only thing that a “free moral agent” is free from is God and eternal life. Mankind does not seem to understand that Heaven can only have one God!

The knowledge of good and evil has never brought man wisdom like Satan told Eve. All that the knowledge of good and evil has ever brought man is death (through self-condemnation) like God told Adam! But since we are stuck with this knowledge of good and evil, thanks to Adam, then we need to understand it’s correct usage.

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil (Genesis 3:4,5).

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: (Genesis 3:22).

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Genesis 2:16,17).

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (Romans 5:12).

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself (Titus 3:9-11).

The sad state that natural man now finds himself in through self-condemnation because of the knowledge of good and evil, Jesus Christ reversed in the true believer.

I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemed any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother were grieved with thy meat, now walks thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:14-23).

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us (Romans 8:33,34).

For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God (1 John 3:20,21).

Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled (Titus 1:15).

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:22).

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first (old) testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9:14,15).

Remember that it is your self-condemnation through the knowledge of good and evil that actually separates you from the source of life, which is God and keeps you out of the Garden of Eden. Before Adam had this knowledge of good and evil, he was at peace with himself and at peace with God, which is exactly what the Gospel of Peace now brings to mankind!

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet NOW hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouable (unconvictable) in his sight: (Colossians 1:21,22).

As you can see by this verse, sin doesn't cause God to hide from you, but it causes you to hide from God, just like Adam in the Garden of Eden.

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat (Genesis 3:6-11)?

Now that Adam judged himself naked, God made him a coat of skin as a covering so Adam couldn't see his own nakedness. Adam was created by God in the flesh and naked without shame standing before God in full relationship. Once Adam's conscience awoke he then judged himself unworthy of God's presence and the body of flesh that God created pure was now considered by Adam to be defiled. I saw this very same scenario take place one time at a swimming pool. A young child came out of the house and ran to the pool to go swimming totally naked. He was very excited and happy about getting to go swimming. Someone stopped him and told him that he shouldn't be outside naked and told him to go inside and have his mother put him on some shorts. The little boy then covered himself with his hands and ran back inside the house to get some clothing. Innocence was lost and the child now had shame. This story is not a condemnation of that person that corrected the boy because sooner or later someone else would have taught the child that his body that God created for him was shameful. The Bible teaches that we are to become again as children to enter into the Kingdom of God.

And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:3).

Peter was even rebuked by God for making the same judgment about God's creation being unclean!

And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a

trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life (Acts 11:1-17).

I was listening to a radio preacher driving home from work one day and he was talking about the low cut pants and shirts that many girls are wearing today that showed part of the stomach or chest. He said that it was "just disgusting" what girls were wearing today. I asked myself a question. How do you explain to these girls that their physical bodies are disgusting, filthy, and nasty creations of God? Once again thanks to Adam, the world has self-judgment, but what kind of damage has this self-condemnation done to the physical body? I think I know why the physical body sometimes, but not always experiences many diseases and death. The solution I believe can be found also in the Lord's Supper!

For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. (1 Corinthians 11:29-32).

As we can see in this verse, the Bible says that we must "discern" the Lord's body. Once again, what then is the Lord's body?

Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth

against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (1 Corinthians 6:15-20).

What these scriptures teach is that your body now belongs to God and it has become God's temple. What is the condition of the temple of the body? Because of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, your physical body, which is His temple, has been cleansed and sanctified.

And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:11).

For by ONE offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified (Hebrews 10:14).

When we drink the cup of communion we are agreeing that it is the blood of Jesus and not our own works whereby we are cleansed.

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:26-28).

And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of FAITH, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:17-22).

And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by FAITH (Acts 15:8,9).

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen (Revelation 1:5,6).

Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you (John 15:3).

He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean (John13:4-11).

See this is where the Pharisee's couldn't understand why the disciples of Jesus could eat with unwashed hands in contradiction to the tradition of the Jewish elders.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also (Matthew 23:25,26).

As you can tell by these verses, our bodies are now the Lord's, which He has cleansed with His blood and Word and we are now His temple. What happens then when we judge God's temple, which is now our physical bodies, unworthy and defiled even though the Word says they have been washed clean forever (Hebrews 10:14) by Jesus? God says He will destroy that temple!

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are (1 Corinthians 3:16,17).

Through self-condemnation, do you know how mixed up this world has gotten? In the church today, many are telling God, His temple (our bodies) is defiled and must be destroyed and God is telling them that His temple (our bodies) has been cleansed by the blood of Jesus His Son (John 3:16)!

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord (1 Corinthians 11:27).

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame (Hebrews 6:4-6).

And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is

spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you (Acts 13:38-41).

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles (Acts 13:44-46).

Now after studying these verses, lets go back and take another look at the scripture explaining the Lord's Supper.

For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world (1 Corinthians 11:29-32)).

This is just a theory that I have but I will share it anyway. The reason I think that there is so much breast cancer, cervical cancer, prostate cancer or other diseases in the world today is because the world has told women and men to consider these parts of their bodies defiled or dirty. If they do this, whether they know it or not, they are asking God to destroy this part of His temple. Believe it or not but these parts of the body are part of God's "good" creation also. This is where the Christian steps in and shows how Jesus Christ has cleansed the temple top to bottom, we just have to come to that realization through the Holy Spirit. This is the cleansing of the conscience.

I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean (Romans 14:14).

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me (Acts 26:15-18).

Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled (Titus 1:15).

Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:22,23).

The Bible also says that a divided house shall not stand, but I also believe a divided person shall not stand either. Because of the knowledge of good and evil man can now argue with himself. He has become divided. Here lies a trap of Satan. What Satan does now is get someone to hate himself or herself. Jesus said:

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these (Mark 12:30,31).

Paul later reaffirmed this.

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Galatians 5:13,14).

For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones (Ephesians 5:29,30).

People that consider themselves overweight or ugly are real susceptible to this type of self-condemnation of their physical body, especially woman. They may hate their bodies for the appearance only, but what happens in their mind 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, is one half of that person is telling the other half of themselves that they are ugly or fat and must be destroyed. This starts then a process called self-destruction. There is also a big difference between hating your life, and hating yourself. You can hate the life that you may be trapped in, without hating yourself. What I am talking about is not referring to loving yourself out of vanity (2 Timothy 3:2), but finally realizing you are a cherished creation of God. Religion teaches that mankind will always be defective until the day he

dies, which I think is the actual penalty of living a life of defectiveness. I disagree, through Jesus Christ we can become complete and at peace with whom we are in Christ. That is the main purpose of the Gospel of Peace! As long as man walks through life thinking that he will always be defective then he can never walk in true peace. Before Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he had peace with himself and peace with God. Please read the chapter “Perfecting of the Saints”.

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: (Colossians 2:9,10).

If you come to Jesus, He will clothe you with His righteousness so you no longer see your nakedness or shame. Remember that the knowledge of good and evil that brought death to man is a battle of the mind.

Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame (1 Corinthians 15:34).

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see (Revelation 3:18).

When our eyes were opened to sin at the tree of knowledge of good and evil, then our eyes to God’s righteousness were closed at the same time. When Adam ate of the tree his eyes were opened and he now had “self-consciences (self-judgement)” and his “God-consciences (God’s-judgment who created him perfect)” went to sleep. Jesus came and reversed this by awakening us to “God-consciences (access to God)(righteousness)” thru the Holy Spirit and closing our eyes to sin.

And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth (John 9:39-41).

For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth (Romans 10:2-4).

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: (Romans 3:20-22).

The “free moral agent” is still condemning himself today when he judges good and evil with his eyes wide open, as he is still standing in the shoes of God. There is also a difference between judging evil (Jesus job) and discerning evil (our job).

But strong meat belongeth to them that are full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil (Hebrews 5:14).

The Bible does allow the Christian to judge, but only after the cross (1 Corinthians 2:15), because the true Christian that has felt the mercy and grace of God in their lives because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:32) can now share something that judgment by the law could never allow a sinner as the Pharisees proved. MERCY! Because of the cross, now we are free to share that same love and forgiveness, even to our enemies!

And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep (Acts 7:44).

Also King Solomon, who had all the laws of Moses to judge the children of Israel by, prayed for discernment of good and evil, instead of assuming judgment by knowledge of the law, which also pleased God!

Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing (1 Kings 3:9,10).

This then brings up another question. If man then acquired the knowledge of good and evil (morals) by disobedience to God, whom does it rightfully belong to? Jesus said,

For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: (John 5:22).

If judgment is not rightfully ours, but it belongs to Jesus Christ the Son of God, then can Jesus shut our eyes that Adam opened to self-judgment and give the judgment of our lives back to Jesus where it belongs to avoid a greater judgment (Revelation 20:11)? Can we then fall into the hands of a living God and rely on His mercy? Can we then trust God to protect us from evil?

But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you and keep you from evil (2 Thessalonians 3:3).

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: (2 Peter 2:9).

And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her (Genesis 20:6).

Because of Adam's disobedience, man is now stuck with the knowledge of good and evil, but what if Jesus could sit down in the judgment seat in the Christians life where He belongs?

And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth (John 9:39-41).

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God (1 Corinthians 4:2-5).

The Christian today can discern good and evil, without judging that person.

Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves (Matthew 10:16).

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted (Galatians 6:1).

But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (2 Timothy 2:22-26).

Many religious people today are judging and condemning mankind and themselves with their eyes wide open, while they continue to eat of the knowledge of good and evil that God had forbidden man to eat from. They are declaring themselves wise, just like Satan told Eve she would be if she ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil (Genesis 3:4,5).

This is why Jesus called the Pharisees serpents and vipers, and told them they were of their father the devil! The apostles even rebuked them for this!

Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region (Acts 13:46-49).

Point to Ponder: When Jesus spoke to the Pharisees, He called them serpents and vipers and said their father was the devil.

Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell (Matthew 23:33)?

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it (John 8:44).

If Jesus said that the Pharisees had the devil as their father, what was their similarity? The Pharisees and Lucifer both wore the same clothes! They both wore the breastplate of judgment!

Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire (Ezekiel 28:13,14).

And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it. Foursquare it shall be being doubled; a span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof. And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row. And the second row shall be an

emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their inclosings (Exodus 28:15-20).

Remember that the serpent in the Garden of Eden didn't "crawl on his belly" till after God cursed him for deceiving Eve (Genesis 3:14). Please read the chapter "Who is the Antichrist" for a deeper study.

The Christian wears the "breastplate of righteousness" by faith as part of the armor of God (Ephesians 6:14) instead of the "breastplate of judgment" that the Pharisees wore that were condemning the Christians. How can you judge yourself unrighteous and wear the breastplate of righteousness at the same time? Remember that the breastplate of righteousness that the Christian wears is not our righteousness but God's righteousness given to us as an eternal gift for our faith in Jesus. It is the judgment of the Lord on our life that the Christian trusts in now.

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord (1 Corinthians 4:1-4).

And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth (John 9:39-41).

For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son (John 5:22).

Who do you want in the judgment seat of your life, the law of Moses, the Pharisees (religion), your cell / small group leader, your conscience, or Jesus Christ? After the mercy that Jesus showed me, I never want to sit under the judgment of anyone else but Jesus Christ! If I have done well, I embrace His blessing, if I have done bad, then I embrace His chastening (not condemnation Romans 8:1). Jesus' judgment of my life takes precedence over my judgment of my life.

And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being

convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more (John 8:3-11).

But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles (Acts 13:45,46).

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: (Colossians 1:21).

The Pharisees even taught “righteousness by works” in the synagogues. If they trust in their works, instead of Jesus, to become righteous before God, then they will be judged by those very same works at the last day.

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works (Revelation 20:11-13).

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan (Revelation 2:8,9).

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee (Revelation 3:9).

Jesus even referred to the synagogues of the Pharisees as “their synagogues”.

For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day. And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue: (Matthew 12:9).

And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works (Matthew 13:54).

Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: (Matthew 23:34).

As we just read, Paul knew the true freedom when he quit judging himself and surrendered to the judgment of Jesus! I also found this great liberty, mercy, and true freedom by surrendering the judgment of my life back to Jesus and I believe you will also. The “good news” of the gospel is that the one (Jesus) who has been given the right to judge you and condemn you for your sin actually took your judgement for you! I just don’t see how someone can reject that great of a blessed assurance, but sadly people still do. Doesn’t this next verse just make you want to shout, “Halleluah”!!

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his BLOOD, we shall be saved from wrath THROUGH HIM. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have NOW received the atonement (Romans 5:8-11).

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us (Romans 8:33,34).

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I be judged of you, or of man’s judgment: yea, I judge not my ownself. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord (1 Corinthians 4:2-4).

As Paul plainly taught in this verse (1 Corinthians 4:2-4), he was experiencing the Lord’s judgment already which may again shine some more light when connected to the verse (Hebrews 9:27) and (Galatians 2:20).

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: (Hebrews 9:27).

I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who LOVED me, and gave himself for me (Galatians 2:20).

Coincidentally, many times the first part of this verse (1 Corinthians 4:2-4) is quoted, “**Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful**” to try and condemn other Christians for not doing enough for God, which is actually the exact opposite of the context that Paul was speaking in! And which is totally against other scriptures that also show that they do not have that authority.

Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand (Romans 14:4).

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us (Romans 8:33,34).

Now I want to address what I believe that is another error in the way communion is taught in the church today which ties in with what we just read. It is the embracing of **1 Corinthians 11:31: For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged** as the Christians appropriate course of action before taking communion. This will shock most “Christian” religions but actually the correct verse for the Christian to embrace when taking communion is the one that everyone fears the most, **1 Corinthians 11:32! But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.**

I have one question? Why do so many Christians fear the chastening of the Lord? It sure beats “condemnation with the world”! It is only through chastening by the Lord that you are ever going to grow into a mature Christian! I want to show you something beautiful in scripture that you may have forgotten.

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked by him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. But if ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons (Hebrews 12:5-8).

The true Christian relationship is a Father / son or daughter relationship with God. A true Christian is a child of God by the “newbirth” (born of the Spirit) not gained and kept through obedience. The obedience that you seek will come through your heavenly Fathers’ chastening as a result of the “newbirth”! The divine order is to first become sons and daughters, and then receiving correction instead of rejection by our new heavenly Father. You have to first have a heavenly Father to be corrected by a heavenly Father!

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen (Hebrews 13:20,21).

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; (Hebrews 5:8,9).

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).

Let me explain further. If you are the parent of a child, that child is yours by birth or adoption. Many people in the church today still wrestle with the idea that if they are disobedient, then they are no longer children of God. Please read Hebrews chapter 12. These selections of verses plainly teach that sons and daughters of God can be disobedient and still be sons and daughters! The main thing that is changed by the “spiritual newbirth” is how God deals with your disobedience. Because of Jesus’ sacrifice for you on the cross, God no longer condemns you or even imputes sin to you (1 John 3:1-10). Condemnation is out (Romans 8:1), and chastening is in! Now God corrects His children out of love for them, instead of condemnation of them!

There are many stories in the Bible about people God made a covenant with that really messed up and still God used them to accomplish His purpose. Abraham and Sarah (child through Hagar), Moses (killing the Egyptian), David (relationship with Bathsheba), and Solomon (worshipping idols). These stories as well as many others stand in contradiction to the “God is looking for a few good men” doctrine that many preachers preach today. On the contrary these stories show that God can and will use anybody He chooses to accomplish His purpose even if they mess up. From the time Peter was called by Jesus to be a disciple, he was possessed by Satan (Matthew 16:23), rejected Jesus three times (Mark 14:72), and even after Pentecost, Paul rebuked him for not walking uprightly according to the gospel (Galatians 2:11)! Even after all this, God still used Peter to raise Tabitha from the dead!

Try surrendering yourself and your actions to the judgment of your Heavenly Father. Sure it doesn’t feel good to be chastened by the Lord, but Paul and I both found out, it does have some advantages over self-judgment.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yeildeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are excersised thereby (Hebrews 12:11).

From my experience if you totally surrender your heart, Jesus didn’t come to destroy your life, but to SAVE IT! Jesus came that you may have life first, and that more abundantly. Jesus actually saves you from your self (condemnation). Therefore there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus (Romans 5:1). The Gospel of peace is two fold. Through Jesus we have peace with God and peace with ourselves. Jesus will not

condemn you if you come to Him; in fact He died for you even knowing you were a sinner!

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us (Romans 8:33,34).

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: (1 John 2:1).

By these verses you can see that your eternal salvation is not dependant on you but on God's faithfulness to grant the intercession request of His Son Jesus Christ for you! Even when Jesus was being crucified by the Romans, He prayed to the Father to "forgive them for they know not what they do". I am quite certain the Roman soldiers knew that they were planning to try and kill Jesus with the crucifixion.

I want to expound further on a beautiful story in the Bible of how Jesus addresses the sinner today. The way Jesus deals with sin is played out in the story of the woman caught in adultery and also shows beautifully the difference between law and grace. The law always condemned the sinner with the sin because the two were connected, and the religious people wanted to stone her.

And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? (John 8:3-5).

What the woman found out next was the "GOOD NEWS" of the gospel, that Jesus condemned the sin without condemning the sinner! That same forgiveness is still open to any man or woman that is in sin today.

This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more. (John 8:6-11)

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do,

in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: (Romans 8:1-3).

Christ condemned sin “in the flesh”, but the Christian is “in the Spirit”. The connection between the sin and the sinner is broken through Jesus Christ and the spiritual new birth! This story also shows how the conviction of sin and the resulting condemnation came not from Jesus, but from their own conscience (self-condemnation).

There are some churches today that have even split over member-to-member relationship issues and have taken the Gospel one step further and are declaring that Jesus embraced the sin with the sinner. Jesus did not do this, as we can see when Jesus told the woman go and sin no more. Jesus called the sin, sin. He forgives it (1 John 1:9) and then corrects it through the power of the Holy Spirit. If there is no correction from a heavenly Father and they continue in that behavior as we just studied, then the Bible calls those people reprobates (Romans 1:28).

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live (Romans 8:13).

Do you need spiritual healing? You can stand naked before your family doctor without shame, why can't you stand before the Great Physician without shame with your heart naked? How can you be healed if you are hiding from the physician (Jesus)?

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do (Hebrews 4:13).

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight: (Colossians 1:21,22).

For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them (Acts 28:27).

Quit hiding behind the tree in the garden and trying to play God through judgment. If you continue to judge yourself and others by the law, then God doesn't have to judge you because you have already condemned yourself with the world, which is the very definition of a heretic!

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself (Titus 3:10,11).

For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; (2 Corinthians 1:8-10).

Under the law even today, the whole world is guilty of sin and sentenced to death, but if you surrender to the judgment of your Heavenly Father then He will chasten and correct you out of love, but because of Jesus' sacrifice for you, God will never condemn you with the world (Romans 8:1). The Bible says it is the "goodness of God", not the "wrath of God" that leads you to repentance (Romans 2:4). This is the Good News of the Gospel.

Baptism of Fire

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: (Matthew 3:11)

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy (1 Peter 4:12,13).

Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: (1 Peter 2:6,7).

But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you (1 Peter 5:10).

The reason that I want to discuss this topic of suffering is because many people in the church today are going through tribulation and thinking that God is somehow cursing them for failing in some area of their Christian walk. Many also think that any trial they go through must be an attack of Satan on their life. The "baptism of fire" is the process of removing every thing out of the life of a Christian that is worthless to the Kingdom of God and the removal of things that are destroying the Christian.

For example, I had a 1969 Camaro for years that was my first car that I loved. I was constantly restoring it, racing it, and driving it to work at the same time. When I would get the bodywork done and the car painted then the engine would blow up or the transmission would fail. When I would fix the engine and the transmission, then someone would run into the body. I replaced the engine six times in the car and changed seven transmissions. The driver's side fender I replaced three times. The passenger side was replaced twice. The car was an idol in my life and was costing me a lot of money. Since all I had at that time was religion, I always thought that it was Satan that was trying to destroy that car, but the whole time it was God that was showing me that I had made it an idol. I still didn't have the willingness to sell the car until after Jesus actually saved me and the Holy Spirit entered into me and gave me a greater desire than that of the car. I had to be delivered by Jesus from that bondage and desire, but no special "deliverance ministry" was needed. Please read the chapter "Decision Time" for a study on deliverance from material desires through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

The "baptism of fire" is overseen personally by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a partaking of the sufferings of Christ that all Christians must participate in. It is also referred to as drinking of the Lord's cup.

But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:(Mark 10:38,39).

And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation. For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; (2 Corinthians 1:7-10).

It is known as the refiner's fire. The refining fire will reveal any works that are not profitable for the Kingdom.

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire (1 Corinthians 3:11-15.)

And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God (Zechariah 13:8,9).

But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: (Mal 3:2).

Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction (Isaiah 48:10).

It burns away the chaff or worthless part of the wheat that cannot be used for anything.

What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? (Jeremiah 23:28,29).

I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! (Luke 12:49,50).

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire (Matt 3:11,12).

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy (1 Peter 4:12,13).

It is the birth pains as Christ is being formed in you.

My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, (Galatians 4:19).

It is the fellowship of suffering, spoken of by the apostle Paul.

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; (Philippians 3:10)

Jesus was perfect through sufferings.

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings (Hebrews 2:9,10).

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; (Hebrews 5:8,9)

We must also enter into the Kingdom of God through tribulation.

And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 14:21,22).

The Bible uses the analogy of the Lord being the potter and we are the clay. As with a clay vessel, it could not be used for the purpose it was created for until it was first put in the fire and hardened. This process of hardening in the fire was two fold. First without hardening, a clay pot could never be filled with the water or us with the Spirit and be a

vessel prepared for the masters use. Second, unless the potter hardened the vessel into the shape he wanted, someone could come along later and change the shape of the vessel.

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 2:3).

It is a process of refining and purifying to perfection and Satan is trying to stop the process by offering us pleasure instead of suffering.

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward (Hebrews 11:24-26).

The process of suffering also stops the process of sin.

Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God (1 Peter 4:1,2).

If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire (1 Corinthians 3:15).

If life in this world were without affliction then there would be no desire for a better world. If the bondage of Egypt were pleasurable then the children of Israel would have had no desire to leave. That is why I think God never let me prosper in this world until I was surrendered to Him. I didn't find out till after my conversion, God's purpose behind this. As I said before, you may have the freedom to make choices in your life, but God has the control over whether your "choices" prosper or not. I believe that He controlled my circumstances to bring me to the point of total surrender to Him. God had done this very thing before! It was His way of separating me from the world and to get me to the point of total surrender to him and forsaking this world. Let me share a quick story.

God did this same thing to the children of Israel when they were under the bondage of Egypt. In the Bible, Egypt is a representation of the world. When the captivity started out the children of Israel were getting fed and had a simple life under the protection of Egypt. But they were still in bondage and they didn't have the freedom to serve God, because they had to serve Egypt. Egypt was their source of life. They prayed for a deliverer to free them from the bondage of Egypt. Now when God finally sent Moses to deliver them from bondage, God knew that they were not ready to forsake the life in Egypt to follow Moses across the wilderness to a promise land. In fact, even when they were out of Egypt into the wilderness, they wanted to go back to Egypt when things got tough. So God turned up the heat until they hated their life in Egypt. If you read the story, the more the children of Israel would cry out for salvation, the harder Pharaoh would make life on them. It finally got to the point that Moses questioned the Lord about this.

And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all (Exodus 5:22,23).

Finally after several plagues on Egypt and cruel bondage imposed on the children of Israel by the Egyptians, Pharaoh had enough of the plagues and told Moses to take the people and go. It seemed like their prayers for deliverance were finally answered. The LORD then did a very unique thing. The Bible says that the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart so he would not let the people go. And the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart again and again until He knew the children of Israel were in such distress and misery (like you may be in now) that they were ready to completely forsake Egypt and follow Moses into the wilderness, to a promise land (Exodus 4:21, 7:13, 9:12, 10:1, 10:20, 10:27, 11:10, 14:4, 14:8).

If you are hearing this and your life is a mess, and nothing seems to work out right, it may just be that God has chosen you for something very special and is separating you from this world and is drawing you to Him, where He can give you the true riches through Jesus Christ. All God is waiting for is for you to finally come to the point of totally surrendering all.

Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? (James 2:5).

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: (I Corinthians 1:26-28).

Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, of father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. (Mark 10:28-30)

Satan tried to stop Jesus from going to the cross through Peter.

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and

said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men (Matthew 16:21-23).

It is the same cross that we are to pick up and carry. Jesus said that if you don't hate your own life then you couldn't be his disciple.

And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:25-27).

There is a big difference between hating your life and hating your self. Satan will try to get you to save your life in this world by making your life a success in this world also.

And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? (Mark 8:34-36).

Paul said that we are to stand joyfully by while our goods are spoiled, but our goods can't be spoiled till Satan is bound then our goods are spoiled.

But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance (Hebrews 10:32-34).

But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. (Matt 12:28,29).

While you are hanging on to all the goods and pleasures of this life then you have no desire for a better life with Jesus. You are actually hanging on to death instead of life. Paul said that men that preach that material gain is proof of godliness are destitute of the truth (1 Timothy 6:5). The Christian that has no riches in this world has to just ask and they can have what ever they want from their heavenly Father. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Psalms 50:10)! That is how the Christian can go through life in this world possessing no worldly things yet having access to everything! When Jesus needed a colt, all He had to do was ask and it given Him! How did Jesus know that a colt would be tied up waiting on Him (Mark 11:2-6)? Because it was already His before He asked for it.

As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things (2 Corinthians 6:10).

Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's (1 Corinthians 3:20-23).

Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows (1 Tim 6:5-10).

I also would like to stop here and briefly address an error that is being taught by many religions today. What I have heard is that worldly prosperity is the abundant life that Jesus promised. I even heard one pastor say, “show me the money” as proof of God’s blessing on the Christian.

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly (John 10:10).

And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God (Luke 12:15-21).

Jesus states plainly that man’s possessions are not the abundant life. Paul found everything he wanted by losing everything he had.

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, (Phil 3:7,8).

Jesus called Paul for the purpose of suffering.

But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake (Acts 9:15,16).

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting (1 Timothy 1:15,16).

Job also knew about the process of suffering and so did Joseph.

Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy (James 5:10,11).

What is the Biblical course of action to take to get through tribulation and suffering?

Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; (Romans 12:12).

The suffering of Christ abounds in His people.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us (Romans 8:16-18).

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; (Phil 3:10).

Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: (Colossians 1:24).

For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. (2 Corinthians 1:5-7).

I have even heard of different religious sects that also try to identify with Jesus Christ's suffering by mutilating and abusing their own bodies. They don't understand that by His stripes we are healed! This is important! If any religion requires you to hurt or mutilate your physical body or another person it cannot be classified as Christianity. His

body was broken for us as is represented in communion. Please read the chapter on “The Lord’s Supper”.

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed (1 Peter 2:24).

The Bible says a Christian has to suffer also.

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me (Phil 1:29,30).

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world (John 16:33).

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter (Romans 8:35,36).

I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ (Rev 1:9).

The Baptism of Fire is also a trial of faith.

Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: (1 Peter 1:6,7).

Many people believe it is Satan that is trying to attack people’s prosperity in this world. If a person’s life were falling apart, then that would drive them toward a Savior (Christ) instead of away. Satan’s best plan of action is to offer man success and all the desires of this world.

Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. (James 5:1-3).

But woe unto you that are rich! For ye have received your consolation. (Luke 6:24).

He offered Jesus the same thing in the wilderness!

And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine (Luke 4:5-7)!

Remember that this world that you are trying to find happiness and success in, is not the world of Jesus.

And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world (John 8:23).

The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath (Proverbs 15:24).

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence (John 18:36).

The only reason that He came into this world was to save us from this present evil world.

Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: (Gal 1:3,4).

The Bible says that the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy. How does he do that? Please read the chapter "Decision Time" for a deeper study of Satan's snares.

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly (John 10:8).

But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows (1 Timothy 6:9,10).

And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth (Luke 12:15).

Jesus gives us a peace that overcomes this world.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid (John 14:27).

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world (John 16:33).

Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22).

We are no longer a part of this world and since we are not of this world, we suffer tribulation in it.

If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. (John 15:18,19).

I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world (John 17:14-16).

Our God is also a consuming fire.

For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God (Deuteronomy 4:24).

And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:27-29).

Fire is associated with brass.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived (Numbers 21:8,9).

The Christian can rest in the assurance that Jesus will be with them through the fire as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego found out when their faith was put to the test.

He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come

forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire (Daniel 3:25,26).

And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters (Rev 1:12-15).

The Lord is the source of afflictions in this life so you will remember the day when you called this world (Egypt) home.

Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life (Deuteronomy 16:3).

And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left (Isaiah 30:20,21).

Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction (Isaiah 48:10).

Freewill vs. God's Sovereignty

The first two pages of this chapter and the last part of this chapter have been repeated in other chapters but it is needs to be repeated here for this study. Man was created with the freedom of choice (freewill), but not the knowledge of good and evil (free moral agent). Before Adam ate of the tree, everything that God created was good. After eating of the tree then everything good that God created for Adam, he considered bad including himself (nudity). Eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is where man received the “ability to judge”, but not the “right to judge”! The knowledge of good and evil was reserved for God alone, like God told Adam. In fact, whenever man does exercise the ability to judge good and evil (free moral agent), God declared man a god.

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken (Genesis 3:22,23).

Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? (John 10:34-36).

There is a big difference between “freewill” and “free moral agent”. Man was created with “freewill”, but man was not created with “morals”. This is where everybody misses this when studying freewill doctrine. Man attained “morals” by eating of the tree that God commanded him not too. Today, man still runs around with the knowledge of good and evil while proudly proclaiming that he is a “free moral agent”, but actually the only thing that a “free moral agent” is free from is God and eternal life.

For example when eating pork the Christian has a choice (freewill) on whether to eat or not eat because there is no harm in either choice, because God has cleansed their conscience. He gives God thanks for the meat (1 Timothy 4:4,5). A “free moral agent” on the other hand can judge for himself the meat defiled and try to abstain from it to keep from sinning.

Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? (1 Corinthians 8:7-11).

For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:20-23).

See the knowledge of good and evil has never brought man wisdom like Satan told Eve. All that the knowledge of good and evil has ever brought man is death (through self-condemnation) like God told Adam. But since we are stuck with this knowledge of good and evil, then we need to understand it's correct usage.

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil (Genesis 3:4,5).

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Genesis 2:16,17).

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself (Titus 3:9-11).

Remember that it is your knowledge of good and evil that actually first separated you from the source of life, which is God and keeps you out of the Garden of Eden.

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet NOW hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouable (unconvictable) in his sight: (Colossians 1:21,22).

As you can see by this verse, sin doesn't cause God to hide from you, but it causes you to hide from God, just like Adam in the Garden of Eden.

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he

said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat (Genesis 3:6-11)?

To help explain Freewill vs. God's sovereignty, I want to revisit my early religious years. The harder I tried to make the Christian life work, the worse life would become. God did not answer any prayers, but when I prayed things usually got worse. If I ever got a step ahead, it would not be but for a moment and something would come along and knock me two steps back. Why did my life not show any fruits of salvation? Why was I not at peace with God? Why no "abundant life"? Where was the victory over sin? What was I missing?

I didn't find out till after my conversion, God's purpose behind this. As I said before, you may have the freedom to make choices in your life, but God has the control over whether your choices prosper or not. I believe that He controlled my circumstances to bring me to the point of total surrender to Him. God had done this very thing before! It was His way of separating me from the world and to get me to the point of total surrender to him and forsaking this world. Let me share a quick story.

God did this same thing to the children of Israel when they were under the bondage of Egypt. In the Bible, Egypt is a representation of the world. When this started out, the children of Israel were getting fed and had a simple life under the protection of Egypt. But they were still in bondage and they didn't have the freedom to serve God, because they had to serve Egypt. Egypt was their source of life. They prayed for a deliverer to free them from the bondage of Egypt. Now when God finally sent Moses to deliver them from bondage, God knew that they were not ready to forsake the life in Egypt to follow Moses across the wilderness to a promise land. In fact, even when they were out of Egypt into the wilderness, they wanted to go back to Egypt when things got tough. So God turned up the heat until they hated their life in Egypt. If you read the story, the more the children of Israel would cry out for salvation, the harder Pharaoh would make life on them. It finally got to the point that Moses questioned the Lord about this.

And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all (Exodus 5:22,23).

Finally after several plagues on Egypt and cruel bondage imposed on the children of Israel by the Egyptians, Pharaoh had enough of the plagues and told Moses to take the people and go. It seemed like their prayers for deliverance were finally answered. The LORD then did a very unique thing. The Bible says that the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart so he would not let the people go. And the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart again and again until He knew the children of Israel were in such distress and misery (like you may be in now) that they were ready to completely forsake Egypt and follow Moses into the wilderness, to a promise land (Exodus 4:21, 7:13, 9:12, 10:1, 10:20, 10:27, 11:10, 14:4, 14:8). As you can read in these scriptures, Pharaoh did not have any control over the choices in his life.

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

Let me stop right here and use this story to correct a false teaching before we move on. I have heard many people say that God is a gentleman and will not force you to do anything against your will. That teaching is in direct contradiction to this Bible example. Pharaoh's "will" was to finally let the people go, but God changed Pharaoh's will and hardened his heart against his will to accomplish a greater purpose with the children of Israel. God finally destroyed Pharaoh when He was done proving His point. Sorry folks, that is the sovereignty of God. We are His creation and as such, we are subject unto the will of our Creator as the Bible plainly teaches!

What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, (Romans 9:14-23).

But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace (Romans 11:4,5).

When God chose me, He would not leave me alone until He had me. This is the meaning of biblical predestination. God decides He is going to do something and then He does it.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures (James 1:17,18).

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame

before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will (Ephesians 1:3-5).

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified (Romans 8:28-30).

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us (Romans 8:33,34).

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

It was even God's will that I was born again! I have an eternal inheritance not only because I wanted it, but also because He wanted me to have it!

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: (Ephesians 1:11).

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:12,13).

Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed (Acts 13:46-48).

In Acts 13:48 it states that there are certain people that are ordained to eternal life. If that is true, then the exact opposite would also have to be true, that God ordained some to condemnation. Is that possible? Please read the chapter "It's About Time" for a deeper explanation on predestination.

For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and

denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not (Jude 4,5).

But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve (John 6:64-71).

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).

Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: (1 Peter 2:7-9).

I love Bible study because I believe there is only one truth. Many verses speak of predestination as I have just shared a few, but many verses also speak of freewill.

Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon ALL men unto justification of life (Romans 5:18).

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that ANY should perish, but that ALL should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And WHOSOEVER will, let him take the water of life freely (Revelation 22:17).

Some people will embrace either one view and reject the other outright even though both doctrines are spoken of in the same Bible. I believe that predestination and freewill

can both exist in harmony even though they seem to stand in contradiction. There are other doctrines in the Bible that I use to think stood in direct contradiction until the Holy Spirit later revealed them to me. The verses then flowed together. I have always believed that the Bible had the answers but I just could not understand them yet, so I left the door open for an explanation. I later I learned some beautiful biblical truths that I was previously blinded too. I believe if it is in the Bible then there is a reason and I study and pray to find it. But if I was to reject the predestination doctrine completely like almost everybody I know, then I leave myself no chance to later learn the true reason those verses are in the Bible. By rejecting it I have already decided that there is no true answer because the doctrine is now considered invalid to me in my current state of understanding. People ask me if I believe in predestination and I say, “yes” because it is spoken of in the Bible. People also ask me if I believe in freewill and I say “yes” because it is spoken of in the Bible. This answer usually makes me very unpopular with both groups of people.

Take the story of Jonah for an example. God’s will was that Jonah was to go to Nineveh to preach, but Jonah exercised “freewill” and went the other way. God sent a fish to swallow Jonah and spit him out on the shores of Nineveh and so he preached to the city just like God planned. I started to write a book on God’s sovereignty and call it “Two Ways to Nineveh”. This story shows that if God wants to use you for a purpose, He will manipulate your circumstances to fulfill His will. There are two ways to Nineveh; you can either ride in a boat or in the belly of a fish! In fact, some of the very best things God has done in my life have been done against my will; because my will was “self-destructive” and God’s will is that “none should perish”! Because I didn’t do some of those things willingly I will not receive a reward for those things even though I did them later.

For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:16-18).

Another example is the story of Abraham telling Abimelech that Sarah was Abraham’s sister instead of his wife. Abimelech then took Sarah to be his wife, but God stopped Abimelech from having any relationship with Sarah.

And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her (Genesis 20:6).

The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will (Proverbs 21:1).

Once again in the book of Revelation we find God manipulating man's will for the sole purpose of fulfilling prophecy, which also proves that man, cannot stop God's purpose for His creation.

For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled (Revelation 17:17).

Stories like these kind of take the "free" out of "freewill". What I found out later that my "freewill" was the actually bondage and not freedom, because it gave me the ability to act independent of God. Paul even said that he could do no good thing, "for to will" is present with him.

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not (Romans 7:18).

Your "freewill" and the choices you make without God, will drive you into destruction because they are driven by your lust and desires, just like Pharaoh mercilessly drove the children of Israel. The victory that you seek is not in "your will" but in "God's will". In fact, "I will" is what got Lucifer thrown out of Heaven. Lucifer said "I will" five times in Isaiah 14, but God would not let him practice "freewill" in the Kingdom and threw Lucifer out. The reason for this is only "God's will" is permitted in God's Kingdom, other wise there would be confusion like on earth.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners (Isaiah 14:12-17)?

"I will" is what is still keeping man out of the Kingdom. What is the difference between Lucifer saying, "I will" and mankind saying, "I will"? Nothing, it is still separate from the will of God. In fact, there are actually only two "wills" in this world, "I will" and "God's will". When "I will" dies, all that is left is "God's will" for your life.

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts (Galatians 5:24).

Mankind can still have hope in this world because "God's will" is greater and encompasses "I will". Please read the chapter "The Spiritual World" for a deeper explanation of this.

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).

This is the main stumbling point for religion. Religion says, “I will in the flesh do something that can only be accomplished in the Spirit”. Paul rebuked the Galatians for this very same thing.

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? (Galatians 3:1-3).

A perfect example of this is the story of Abraham and Sarah. “God’s will” was that Abraham have a child through Sarah who could have no children. Sarah exercised “freewill” and tried to bring “God’s will” to pass in the power and reasoning of her flesh (I will). Sarah had Abraham father a child through another woman because this is the only way Sarah could figure out in her flesh how to bring “God’s will” to pass. If Sarah had just left things alone and said “Thy will be done”, 12yrs later, “God’s will” and the promise would have still come to pass with the birth her own son Isaac.

But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing (James 1:4).

For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry (Hebrews 10:36,37).

Instead Sarah started a war by any act of “freewill” that is still raging to this day between Israel and the Arabs over who has the birthright to the land of Israel. This is the reason God cannot allow our “freewill” and our “freedom of choice” into His Kingdom. Many churches today are ignoring this fact and trying to take the inheritance (Kingdom of God 1 Corinthians 15:50) by force instead of waiting on the fulfillment of the promise by God. They have a desperate desire to “control” the power of God.

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force (Matthew 11:12).

There are many other instances where God overrides man’s will to accomplish a greater purpose. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life”. I have a question for you? Where does our choice fit into His way? We have no choice, but His way! In fact, man will usually only yield to God when he has no choice. The “free moral agent” theology in a nutshell says that our power of choice binds God’s power of choice. This arrogance of man also causes them to think that their will binds God’s will, and somehow they can use this to control or manipulate God. This then gives humanity a sense of

power. They believe they “allow” God to do things in their life, or they don’t “allow” God to do things in their life, as if God is powerless to do anything unless we “allow” Him. They, as the creation, believe they now have power to manipulate and control God’s will by an act of their will. This now makes them the Creator instead of God. In their world the creation controls the Creator. If our “freewill” has such tremendous power, then why didn’t those that were crying out for deliverance from demons in the Bible just choose not to be possessed? The free moral agent feels that just because they are breathing air in this world, that they have certain rights, which have to be obeyed by God. What did God have to say about this?

(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy (Romans 9:11- 13).

What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day (Romans 11:7,8).

Religion also teaches that you are in control of God’s plan for your life. The only place I have really found this is when the prophets are given power over their spirits (1 Corinthians 14:32,33). In ministry, you don’t use the Holy Spirit to do service for God, the Holy Spirit uses you! In fact self-control (temperance) is listed as a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:23), which would actually make self-control in the Christian, Holy Spirit control!

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God (Romans 8:13).

Point to ponder: If a demon can possess a person and cause them to do things against their will, why can’t the Holy Spirit that is more powerful take control of a Christian and cause them to do God’s will?

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them (Ezekiel 36:26,27).

I have also heard pastors argue that God's will and plans can be messed up by man, because the Bible says that it is God's will that "none should perish", yet many people perish everyday. God has not had to sit by with His hands tied and watch men perish. On the contrary, God did something about it when gave His own Son to atone for the sins of any that will accept that atonement.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

By this verse we can see that God not only did not stand by and was somehow helpless to stop mankind from perishing, but He was very active in making a way of escape for mankind. This verse is so good I have to quote it again!

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

I want to share another interesting experience that I have. After the circumcision event, I could hear Jesus' voice and I received constant revelations of His Word. God is always present in our hearts through the Holy Spirit (the Comforter). You can grieve the Spirit, but you can't leave the Spirit!

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30).

That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory (Ephesians 1:12-14).

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: (Philippians 1:6).

When I go to bed, I sense His presence, and He talks to me when I am asleep (Job 33:14-18), when I wake up he is there, all day long he is there. In my experience, I have not been able to escape Him! I don't understand how Christians say that they must chase God to find Him.

And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, BY the Spirit which he hath given us (1 John 3:23,24).

Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent (John 6:28,29).

But one day all this did stop. One day I didn't hear his voice anymore. Then the next day came, and He was again silent. I could always feel His presence, but He would no longer speak. I went into a panic! What could I have done that could have made Jesus stop speaking to me? Since I was not under conviction for any sin, I started to ask for forgiveness for anything that I might have done that I thought would cause a break in fellowship. The next day came and I still did not hear His voice. By this time I thought that He might have given up on me and I was really down. The next day, the revelations started again just like always, but then Jesus revealed what had happened.

Jesus used that experience to show me that the reason He was fellowshiping with me and showing me the secrets of the kingdom, was not because of anything that I was doing, whether good or bad, but just because He wanted to!

John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven (John 3:27).

This taught me a valuable lesson. No matter what I tried to do, good or bad, I could not manipulate God. He was fellowshiping with me because He wanted to, not because He had to. Talk about feeling special! That experience made me feel like my purpose in life and my relationship with Jesus, was the most important purpose ever bestowed upon man. I also realized that He must also do this with all of His disciples. This has happened other times since then, but I don't panic anymore and the revelations eventually return.

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: (Philippians 1:3-6).

I have heard people say that they have bound God to His Word. By using the Word of God, they believe that they can control the actions of God or force God's hand to move in their life by applying His Word. In my experience, I have not found anyway to manipulate God with His Word or otherwise. If I don't "allow" God to do something in my life, He does it anyway. If I "allow" God to do something He doesn't. I have never found anyway to eclipse God's sovereignty. In my experience, God decides to do something in my life and then does it, whether I "allow" Him to or not. If I stray from God's will, he steps in against my will with correction of disobedience, not condemnation of sin, because condemnation of sin always demands the death penalty, and that has already been paid in full by Jesus Christ.

What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he

cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost (Luke 15:4-6).

A shepherd that has a sheep that goes astray doesn't slaughter it when he finds it, but carries it back to the flock REJOICING! Apparently Jesus seeks His sheep out if they stray.

An example of this is, if you found your child playing with a loaded gun, you would step in as a parent and take away the gun whether your child wanted to "allow" you or not. It would be your duty as a parent if you loved that child not to let them continue in destructive behavior. In fact the Bible says that God corrects and chastens the sons and daughters whom he receives. If you are without this correction, then the Bible says that you are not children of God. You have to have a heavenly Father first before you receive correction from a heavenly Father!

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons (Hebrews 12:5-8).

The Bible even says that Christians are chastened many times by God (Hebrews 12:11). God once chastened me for letting someone in a church anoint me with oil after God showed me that He alone would anoint me for ministry.

Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts (2 Corinthians 1:21,22).

I went one night to hear a man speak that was supposed to be a "prophet". I had never heard of his name before and I didn't know if he was a prophet or not. The "prophet" commanded that everyone in the service be "anointed" on the forehead. This was supposedly an anointing for ministry. I declined because of what God had shown me. The other people in the church that were sitting around me became adamant that I receive this "anointing" because the "prophet" had commanded it. I told them that God alone anointed me for ministry not a prophet. That was an Old Testament practice for the prophets. Their response to me was that God would not tell the prophet to have everyone in the church be anointed with oil and tell me something different. The pastor then started the service by saying that anyone that hasn't yet been "anointed" must be brought up to the front of the church and be anointed before the service could begin. This was starting to get ridiculous, so I agreed to get one of the people I knew with the oil to anoint me so I could stay and listen to the prophet. He anointed me with the oil, but instead of praying for ministry, he prayed for healing. Anointing with oil for healing is a valid New Testament practice (James 5:14,15). So I thought it were no big deal and no harm done.

I listened to the “prophet” speak but he didn’t say anything that I thought was spiritual revelation and I still don’t think he was a real prophet. The next day God chastened me and it was not fun. At no time during this chastening was I ever under any condemnation of sin even though I had been disobedient. A Father deals with their child through correction out of love not condemnation out of wrath. I did learn some things from this experience though, which is the true purpose of chastening and rebuking. I do not think many Pentecostal and Charismatic pastors understand just how serious God considers the anointing for ministry!

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby (Hebrews 12:11).

The Lord showed me again that it was Him that had personally chosen me for ministry and He alone would handle my anointing and equipping for ministry not some “prophet”.

These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of HIM abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him (1 John 2:26,27).

Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts (2 Corinthians 1:21,22).

The scriptures (Hebrews 12:5-8) also prove that sons and daughters of God can be disobedient and still be sons and daughters. This is because we are sons and daughters of God by the spiritual new birth, not by obedience. The obedience comes as a result of the new birth! The divine order is first becoming sons and daughters and then the chastening. It is the “goodness of God” not the “wrath of God” that leads you to repentance. This is just like your natural children, they didn’t chose you as their parent, whether born naturally to you or adopted into your family, you chose them. My heavenly Father knows how to make better decisions for my life than I do. I have already experienced a messed up life created out of my decisions. It was a living hell.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:1-3).

The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath. (Proverbs 15:24)

And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. (John 8:23).

A Word of Warning

Rebuilding of the church

Most of my studies have been on the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and I really, really, wanted to stay on just that, but there is also some bad news that must be addressed also. I don't like to confront problems in the church without first explaining those problems and then presenting the Biblical solution, which is why the rest of this book is written. This chapter on warning is just one chapter in a much larger book. Judge this information with spiritual discernment.

To start with, forget about denominations, there are only two churches in existence today, a true church and a false church. This may surprise everybody, but the true church has already been operating in one accord silently inside all denominations including the "cell churches" preparing for the coming of Christ. This has always been the case. Even in Paul's day there was a hidden remnant of God's people working behind the scene in one accord that religion never saw until it was time for God to use them.

But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace (Romans 11:4,5).

And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel (Luke 1:80).

Even Paul as a leader in the church, seemed to know nothing about some of these people of God in a city where he was sent to preach.

Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city (Acts 18:9,10).

Even though the "cell / small" group church movement is rapidly growing, I also hear of a quiet exodus of Christians coming out of this "cell / small" group movement also that have been spiritually abused by the church leadership. Something that I hear in these people that are coming out of the "cell church" movement is they are all seeing the same thing and they are in one accord. I am going to address some of those concerns in this chapter. I do think certain types of house group meetings are biblical and I have had wonderful fellowship with other Christians in small house groups. The disciples even broke bread from house to house (Acts 2:46). I know many wonderful people that are still participating in small groups at home, and I do miss the fellowship. I don't know if they are still willingly embracing cells now or if they are locked in a cell (group) and do not have the key to get out. At one time, I attended the "school of leaders" and I had even started my own cell group, so I know that many in the individual cell / small groups do have a true desire to minister to people. The people in small groups can get together and

do much good for the communities in which they live. But what I am seeing is the cell / small groups today is they are becoming the “comforter” instead of the Holy Spirit.

It is not the personal cell / small group individuals that I am questioning with this study, it is the structure and the “equipping / discipleship” programs of the ones that are trying to rule over them in the church and their possible motives. Many other people have pointed concerns out as these cell groups have split other congregations. I had a personal relationship with Jesus as I explained in my testimony before cell groups came to the congregation I attended. I didn’t forsake that personal relationship with Jesus or my own personal Bible study when I joined the small group movement. One concern I have is the Bible plainly states that it is God and not us that assembles the body together. To claim that the body of Christ has been defective until the cell / small group structure came along is to deny that God was able to accomplish that task through out the history of the church.

Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand (2 Corinthians 1:21-24).

I do not disagree with all of the cell church doctrine, but as a builder, my concerns are more with the structure of this “new paradigm” church movement. When you start stacking small groups on top of each other, (first generation, second generation, third generation, etc), I think there is a problem, which I will address here. Is the “new paradigm” movement preaching an old gospel in a new way, or is it preaching a new gospel a new way?

As I read the book on cell churches (*Where Do We Go From Here? A Guidebook for the Cell Group Church* by Ralph Neighbour, Jr.) and understood more how they operate, some questions and concerns arose which I will address here. The hour is late and it has become too dark for many churches to see and they have been blinded, but their ears can still hear a voice in the darkness.

Ok, let’s start from the beginning. Why has there always been such turmoil in the world associated with religion? Why have millions of people died through out history in the name of God in war after war? What has Satan, many religions past and present, secret organizations and societies, governments, and most of mankind been pursuing from the beginning? The POWER of GOD!!! Why can they never seem to attain it? The answer is very simple. They want to CONTROL the power of God. What they fail to realize is the power of God is freely given but with one condition. God remains in control of His power and uses it only through us as vessels for His purpose and His Glory. A Christian doesn’t use the Holy Spirit to do service for God, the Holy Spirit uses them!

Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts (James 4:2,3).

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath

shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us (2 Corinthians 4:5-7).

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28).

What many people today are trying to do is rebuild the church in a new model called “Cell Churches”. To understand why the "cell model" (also called “small groups, life groups, watch groups, share groups, etc.” which I will prove later, because many small groups deny that they are really cell groups), cannot be the structure for the true church I will have to give you a crash course in temple building. At one church that I attended, they had a program called Network that was designed to teach you your spiritual gift and to get you plugged into ministry. Because of my experience as a carpenter and the way I could fix things, they told me I had the “spirit of craftsmanship”. The church thought that the best way I could be used in the church was in helping to build stages and props for church programs. This supposedly was my God ordained calling and purpose according to the Network class. Even though my original trade was a carpenter, I still have some understanding of building temples. The most Holy place in the tabernacle in the wilderness and the Ark of the Covenant were both built out of wood overlaid with gold.

For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:9-11).

I believe that many forget that the New Testament temple is not just the church as a body, but also the physical body of each individual believer in Jesus Christ. While everybody today is focused on the uniting of the body, I want to go back and focus on the individual believer as a temple of God in this book.

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are (1 Corinthians 3:16,17).

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (1 Corinthians 6:19,20).

In the Old Testament temple the ark of the testimony, which had the tables of stones (Ten Commandments) in it, was behind the veil in the most Holy place. The ark of the testimony was in the oracle in the most Holy place where God would speak to man.

And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims (1 Kings 8:6).

In the New Testament, the believer's physical body is a temple of God and the believer's heart is the most Holy place where God dwells.

Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart (2 Corinthians 3:3).

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people (2 Corinthians 6:16).

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; (Acts 17:24).

If the believer's physical body is also God's temple and the believer's heart is the most Holy place where the ark of the testimony carrying the New Testament is located, then the oracle of the temple should correspond to your mouth.

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:10,11).

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe (Hebrews 5:12,13).

As we can see by these scriptures not only the church as a body, but each individual believer is also the New Testament temple in this world. Jesus Christ is our High Priest, but the believer also ministers to this world out of a physical body, which the Bible says is God's temple. Christians refer to this doctrine as the "priesthood of the believer".

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: (1 Peter 2:9).

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen (Revelation 1:5,6).

Therefore seeing WE have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us (2 Corinthians 4:1-7).

The cell group claims that they also believe in the priesthood of the believer and that is what they are doing in the cell groups by “equipping” the people to minister to the nations, but what they will not tell you is the same “priesthood of the believer” doctrine also secures the believer direct access to the throne of God and not through some “spiritual father” or “one set man”. But what I have just shared about the individual believer becoming the personal temple of God and being indwelt with the power of God personally cannot be attained in the “cell / small” group church movement. They believe this kind of power comes only when the believers are in a “small group” setting in perfect unity or in a corporate worship or celebration setting in unity like the upper room at Pentecost. But what happened at Pentecost were many individual baptisms at once.

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:3,4).

As stated in the cell church guidebook, the advocates of the small group structure believe that the only way that a disciple can truly experience the full power of God is in a group setting, not individually. Apparently the power for ministry only shows up when “we get it right”.

“There is no place under heaven for spiritual gifts to be properly developed than in a cell group. It is there, and nowhere else, that Christians can be taught to appreciate, desire, and exercise spiritual gifts. The cell group is the channel of power. It is the gateway to enter into the supernatural, the entrance to every believer discovering the power of God to heal, to deliver, and to provide growth.” No matter how wonderful a theological position may seem, the heart of changing values is not theology but the practical application of it in experience. The valid church is only peripherally experienced in a P.B.D. setting. It requires the people of God to gather themselves as God intended before the setting for the experience will allow His fullness to flow. Page 74,75 (Where Do We Go From Here? A Guidebook for the Cell Group Church by Ralph Neighbour, Jr.)

In the Bible we find the exact opposite! Peter never needed a small group with him to accomplish God's purpose. In the book of Acts we find Peter telling all the other saints to "get out of the room" while he raised Tabitha from the dead!

But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive (Acts 9:40,41).

If the true power of ministry comes only in a small group setting why didn't Peter gather all the other saints around Tabitha to pray for her resurrection? Even Paul referred to himself as coming in the "fulness of the blessing of the gospel" personally in Romans 15:28,29 and not corporately.

When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ (Romans 15:28,29).

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead (Colossians 2:9-12).

When the Lord called Paul into ministry, why did he send him to the wilderness of Arabia to be "equipped" for ministry and not usher him into a "small house group" to help him perfect his spiritual gifts thru other apostles? Leaders equipping leaders?

To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me (Galatians 1:15-24).

Why does the Bible say that each true believer is given a ministering spirit (angels) if true ministry can only flow through a cell / small group structure? Why do we even need the Holy Spirit or a personal ministering spirit if it is cell groups that "equip" us for ministry?

But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? (Hebrews 1:13,14).

For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee (Acts 27:23,24).

The reason that I am sharing this is not to attack the people in cell / small groups, on the contrary, I want to see them walking in a full personal relationship with God! I was a cell group leader at one time and I had a good cell group leader that sincerely wanted to serve God and I think they have also left the movement. The Bible speaks of God indwelling the church body as a whole (Ephesians 2:20-22), which is where I agree with the cell church doctrine. Where I disagree, is that the cell church model is that self-proclaimed true church body structure, as I will explain later.

And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:20-22).

I think now many pastors that are focusing on building churches with small groups are looking for quantity instead of quality and forgetting that individual believers are also the temples of God.

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (1 Corinthians 6:19).

The reason why religion has to reject the “priesthood of the believer” doctrine also is because if each individual had access to God directly, and each believer was considered a priest of God, and could be filled with the Glory and power of God individually, then all Christians would be on a level field and God would not be a respecter of persons. Each member of the body would have equally important roles to play in the body. The church leadership could not then control the congregation. The congregation would have to then be controlled by God, which should bring unity with a pastor that is hearing from God also. This “priesthood of each believer” doctrine would place Jesus as the head and High Priest of the church and the mediator between God and man, instead of the pastor, priest, rabbi, apostle, prophet, etc. The sheep could hear the voice of Jesus also (John 10). The main reason for the Protestant Reformation and its split from the Catholic Church was to have the freedom to have a personal relationship with Jesus! One of the things the Bible says God hates besides “sowing discord among the brethren” is the doctrine of the Nicolaitans

So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate (Revelation 2:15).

What is the doctrine of the Nicolaitans? Nicolaitans is made up from two Greek words “nikos” meaning “to conquer” and “laos” means “the people” or “laity” (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance). How would that doctrine apply to today’s church? Nicolaitians today would take a congregation of believers that were brothers and sisters in Christ and were all equal members of the body of Christ with each given important but different spiritual gifts and separate them into “clergy” and “laity”. They then would place the church leadership (clergy) on a higher position in the body of Christ than the other members of the body (laity). They then would set themselves up as the head of the church instead of Jesus Christ and would rule over the rest of the body. Do you know any Nicolaitian churches today?

But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness (1 Corinthians 12:20-23).

Now back to the temple of your body. How is the temple of the body built? When someone presents the Gospel to another person that the Holy Spirit is drawing and they first believe in Jesus Christ, the cornerstone of the temple is laid at that point. 1 Corinthians chapter 3 explains this building process in more detail. The Bible says,

For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building. According to the grace of God, which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:9-11).

As you can see by this verse, the believer in Christ is built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ the cornerstone. The Word of God is like stones placed in the temple. The apostles and prophets brought the Word of God. The Word of God brings the truth to light, and then the Spirit of God brings the truth to pass in the believer’s life.

But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (2 Timothy 1:10)

What happens when someone receives his or her first deep revelation of spiritual truth, another stone in the temple is placed. The Bible says that God builds line upon line and precept upon precept (Isaiah 28:9-12). When the believer grows in spiritual understanding then more stones are laid in that temple. What many in the church do today though, when they first get a spiritual revelation out of the scriptures, is they immediately think that God has called them to preach. They will then go start a church or join a seminary and place some sort of man’s religion on top of what the Holy Spirit is revealing them out of the scripture. They will then go into ministry or preaching without

a firm understanding of the big picture. That is why you have so many denominations out of one truth. What many fail to realize is a temple is not ready for service until it is FINISHED. When the temple is finished then it is dedicated and the Glory of God fills the temple and it was now ready to minister to the people. Please read the chapter “The Christian Experience: From Seed to Saint”. In fact the Lord’s Prayer (also called the Apostles prayer) was basically a shorter version of the same prayer that Solomon prayed when dedicating the temple (1 Kings 8). It was a temple dedication prayer. In the Old Testament God sanctified the temple, in the New Testament God sanctifies the believer.

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen (Matthew 6:9).

And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel (1 Kings 9:3-5).

Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place. For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually (2 Chronicles 7:15,16).

And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:11).

If the believer’s physical body is a temple of God then the kingdom of God should come to the temple. Even today, many churches like the Pharisees are trying to get the church organized in unity to bring the kingdom of God to earth, but Jesus said each believer could already have the kingdom of God within them personally. When you pray “thy kingdom come” in the Lord’s Prayer that was taught to the disciples, you are actually calling for the Shekinah Glory of God to fill the temple. Please read the chapter “Understanding the Kingdom”.

And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! For, behold, the kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:20,21).

For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power (1 Corinthians 4:20).

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Romans 14:17).

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us (2 Corinthians 4:6,7).

Please read the chapter “The Perfecting of the Saints” and “The Christian Experience: From Seed to Saint” for a deeper study of the completion process of the believer (temple), which is the true purpose of the five-fold ministry and not authoritarianism. In the body of Christ as a whole each believer is also considered a living stone to help build the body, but the believers (living stones) are also not built together in a pyramid structure, as I will explain now.

No matter how you try to present it, the "cell church" model will always be a pyramid. It starts at the top with the senior pastor over zone pastors, over zone supervisors, over shepherd groups, over cell leaders called (Fathers). This exact same model can be seen in the Catholic Church where you have the Pope over cardinals, over archbishops, over bishops, over priests called (Fathers). In 1994 the Lutherans of course spotted this easily and voiced their concerns about the structure of the cell group when it started to gain some popularity. But even to this day, the Catholic Church has not changed their doctrine, the cell church has not changed their doctrine, and those same concerns are still valid today. What has changed today, 12 years later, is the Lutherans are also now embracing the same cell / small group model with all other denominations! That is not only peculiar but down right bizarre! If you want to do more research about this end-time church growth movement, the website www.intotruth.org has done much more detailed research into these “new paradigm” cell churches and Joel’s Army movements.

You may be saying, “If the cell church model works at getting members, building communities, and growing churches, what is wrong with that”? The pyramid structure is strictly a worldly type of building structure. The Egyptians (which Egypt also is a type of the world in Bible terminology) used the pyramid model as well as many other civilizations.

All pyramid designs carry an inherent structural flaw unless the pyramid is built to just one size with no plans to grow larger. This structural flaw makes the pyramid design unsuitable for building a church. Using the pyramid model, no one will ever be able to truly complete the temple and thus bring the power of God and immortality to the earth because the foundation of the temple is always shifting, as I will explain. It doesn't have a "cornerstone" because the MEMBERS are the foundation. In the Bible, the Glory of God did not fill the temple until it was FINISHED and a pyramid design when applied to an organization is always growing until everyone in the world is either a submitted member or destroyed. The personal temple of the Christian’s body CAN be completed though to walk in the power of God and immortality.

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him which is the head of all principality and power (Colossians 2:9,10).

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us (2 Corinthians 4:7).

In ancient civilizations, the dead kings, pharaohs, and royalty were placed inside these pyramid structures with carefully prepared bodies with the belief that they would be resurrected in the body and need their worldly possessions in an afterlife. One thing that the world keeps finding when they open these old pyramid structures though is dead kings, pharaohs, and royalty! The tomb of Jesus Christ was empty after His resurrection. Jesus was not buried in a pyramid structure but a garden tomb. This shows that the power to resurrect someone from the dead didn't come from any structure or organization that has been structured like a pyramid. As we saw earlier, God through Peter raised Tabitha from the dead after telling every one to "get out of the room" (Acts 9:40,41). Whenever someone was resurrected from the dead in the Bible, it was done by one person operating in the power of God, not church members coming together in small groups or some secret priests with some special ritual. When Joseph commanded that his bones be brought out of Egypt, it represented a bodily resurrection out of the world (Exodus 13:18,19). Joseph knew that the embalming process of Egypt and burial rituals could not resurrect him from the dead, nor can getting all of mankind into unity. Where did this resurrection power come from then? Please read the chapters "Understanding Eternal Life".

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you (Romans 8:11).

By reading Acts 17:24 also we know that God doesn't dwell in a temple made with hands. By this we can conclude that no earthly structure built by man whether it is pyramids, temples, shrines, cathedrals, lodges, church buildings, etc. cannot be the source of resurrection power. But can an organization of men in unity ever attain this kind of resurrection power? I want to now take a closer look at the "cell/small" group structure and the power of unity of men. If you step back and look at the "cell/small" group church in it's simplest form, you can see a pyramid structured organization built by Egyptian (worldly) builders that has placed "Christian" religion in the center as the "core belief" and rallying point. Apparently the belief is that a pyramid-structured organization can give life to a dead religion because the cell church advocates are claiming that they are bringing new life through small groups to "dying" churches. Once again I want to show how the cell / small group structure relates to the pyramid.

The "cell church" model is built with the cell groups under leadership, which in turn are under leadership, until you reach the top leader, which we will call the "capstone" of the pyramid, which sits on the top. He is the "eye" which sees the vision for every cell church that is under him. This is called the "One Set Man" doctrine. The new cell groups are at the foundation of the pyramid until they divide then the next generation is on the bottom and their "parent" cell group is lifted one level higher. In fact cell / small groups refer to themselves as first generation (Fathers), second generation (young men), third

generation (children) etc. As the cell groups divide and re-divide, the foundation gets wider and wider. This in turn lifts the leadership higher and higher toward heaven and above the lower cells. Since you are constantly adding to the foundation of the pyramid, then you cannot have a "cornerstone" because the foundation is always moving and growing.

This is the same model that the men tried to reach Heaven building the Tower of Babel. They were in common unity (community) and working together and if God had not intervened and stopped the building, then the Bible says:

And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined (vision casting) to do (Genesis 11:4-6).

This is the awesome power that building a pyramid structure combined with man's imagination seems to achieve. At Pentecost you had the disciples in the "unity of the faith" and the power of God fell upon them from heaven, but at the Tower of Babel you had man in the "unity of the purpose" and the power of man rose up from the earth. To build a pyramid, all a person has to do is go out with one vision and get many people that are "purpose driven" to embrace that one vision. Have you ever heard of **vision casting**? If you are a pastor and are reading this and you don't have a vision from God for your church then the book (***Where Do We Go From Here? A Guidebook for the Cell Group Church*** by Ralph Neighbour, Jr. **page 365,**) will teach you how to prepare one.....

"After you have determined whether or not the cell church is for you, begin to put the vision into words. A vision represents a challenging picture of what the church and its members can be. It paints a picture of a possible and desirable future. The key leaders of the church should do this together. A vision statement should include these characteristics:

- No longer than three sentences
- Transferable
- Includes all believers in its execution
- A timeline of five to ten years
- Simple enough for an eight-year-old to memorize.

Once the vision is established, it will require persistent and enthusiastic communication to "sell" it through the ranks of the church members so it will be embraced with commitment". (Quotation marks his) (***Where Do We Go From Here? A Guidebook for the Cell Group Church*** by Ralph Neighbour, Jr. **page 365,**).

By getting everyone in the church community to focus on bringing to pass the vision of the "One Set Man" brings tremendous power. This is why many people and "cell

churches" use this pyramid style of structure, because it can push the church leadership to staggering heights with or without God.

(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; (2 Corinthians 10:4,5).

If any pastor reads this then please don't do like many other pastors and turn outside your congregation for the vision for the congregation. That is what Saul did when he went to the witch at Endor when he wasn't getting direction from God. Because Saul did that instead of going to God directly, his kingdom was taken away! Instead turn to the inside of the congregation for direction. Those people sitting in the pews are not as blind as you might think. You may just have a David, Samuel, or Nathan sitting in the congregation that God has given direction also.

Many congregations also love the "cell church" model because they like having many "spiritual leaders" above them to be accountable to instead of God. But even though this style of pyramid structure can grow these "cell churches" to eventually overtake the whole world (which I believe they will), this still is not the true church model that is spoken of in the Bible.

The true church model is the exact opposite of the "cell church" model because the true church has the leadership on the BOTTOM as the foundation supporting the people and not sitting on the top. The true leadership is the "cornerstone", not the "capstone"!

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; In whom all the building fitly framed together growth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:19-22).

As the Bible plainly teaches, in the true church model, the apostles and prophets in the church are on the BOTTOM supporting the people and not sitting on top of the congregation. That is why the Bible says that the apostles were placed **first** in the church after Jesus Christ the cornerstone, as the foundation stones on the very bottom and the prophets second, being placed on top of the apostles, and teachers third, being placed on top of the prophets.

But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: (Matthew 20:25-27).

Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand (2 Corinthians 1:23,24).

Advocates of the pyramid structure sometimes will try to say that their pyramid is built upside down and therefore the leadership is also on the bottom supporting the congregation. That is deceiving because they also believe and claim that the "anointing" for ministry flows from the top leadership DOWN which is the Old Testament priestly model. Some claim that this is what is represented with the "star of David" which is a pyramid overlaid with an inverted pyramid. But what I want to show in this study is the church is not built like any pyramid.

There is another major flaw with the pyramid "cell church" model that many people are getting ready to turn their whole life, natural and spiritual over to. If the cell groups were to forsake the "cell church" movement then the leadership would collapse for its foundation would be gone. This is why unity in the cell groups is so vital to the leadership of the "cell church" model. If one person in the cell is not fully in one accord with the other members of the cell in its purpose, then that person is considered a virus to the cell and can only make the cell sick until they are either submitted to the purpose or removed. The power of the cell church structure comes from unity of cell members and their submission to authority. They call it "common unity" or "community". The cell church doesn't need the members to walk in victory through Jesus to complete its mission; it needs the members walking in unity of the vision. The cell church is not concerned about the unity of the true faith (Jude 3), but the unity of all faiths.

I believe unity is important in the church as I discussed earlier. Jesus prayed for unity in the church and that is also part of the purpose of the five-fold ministry. What many do not realize is the five-fold ministry has already worked just like God had designed it to bring the true church into one accord behind the religious scene while the world is focused on building a Global Church. As you can see by the story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:6), just because man is in one accord and "unity of purpose" does not necessarily mean it's "of God".

With the true church model that has Jesus Christ and his Word that was once delivered to the saints by the apostles and prophets, as the foundation that is supporting the people, then the only way for the true church to collapse is for Jesus to forsake the church or man to scatter God. The true church has Jesus as the foundation and not people professing Jesus. I prefer a church model that is built on the ROCK that can't be moved and not on the people that can!

The thing about this also is the "new thing" doctrine, which they call a "new paradigm" that is driving this "cell church" movement is just another term for "New World Order" or "New Age" for short. Look up the word "paradigm" in your dictionary. A lot of these cell churches sing about the rapture (pre-tribulation) in their hymnals, but they are quickly submitting to the "Kingdom / Dominion" theology doctrine in an effort to remain in "one accord". Churches that claim to believe in the rapture are dropping the rapture doctrine like a hot potato to be a part of this movement. Please read the section in this chapter on the "Pre-tribulation Rapture". As you get deeper into this movement, the churches will stop teaching end time prophecy doctrine altogether, and even quit discussing doctrine because "doctrine causes division", which is the only real danger to the "cell church" movement. The reason why the "cell church" movement can accomplish this unity even with differing doctrines is because they get everybody to rally behind the same "core beliefs". Anybody that disputes the validity of the cell church movement is accused of

“sowing discord among the brethren”, but instead the cell churches are themselves the very ones that have split and divided many churches that has changed over to that model! While proudly proclaiming unity, the cell church has at the same time been purposefully scattering the flocks!

I also want to address a movement called “Joel’s Army” that follows closely with the “cell church” movement. This doctrine has been refuted many times by many Christians in studies you can find on the Internet, but I just want to address this briefly because they pose a great danger to the true Christian. This is very important! Until Jesus returns, the Christian carries the Gospel of Peace (peace with yourself and peace with God).

And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! (Romans 10:15).

Only one problem, when you are at peace with yourself and at peace with God then you are at war with the world system (Matthew 10:34). Christians do battle and war and are considered soldiers, but our battle is against spiritual wickedness in high places not other Christians or any physical person. Jesus said,

Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves (Matthew 10:16).

And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them. And they went to another village (Luke 9:53-56).

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)(2 Corinthians 10:3,4)

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, (2 Tim 2:24).

The purpose behind this "Joel’s Army” movement is for "the church" to take the world for Jesus (fulfilling the Great Commission) and present all nations to him as a spotless bride when he comes to rule and reign for a thousand years. Sounds like a very noble cause for the church to pursue doesn't it? Only one problem with this "new thing" doctrine, when Jesus comes back to rule and reign for a thousand years (millennium kingdom), the Bible says that He is not looking for an world that has been conquered by a Global Church Army (Joel’s army) working in common unity to present to Him. On the contrary, when Jesus returns to set up the millenium kingdom, He is coming with a sword looking for a fight and the armies of heaven come WITH Him. They are not on the earth

waiting for Him! If the church is on the earth as “Elijah” and pointing the Jews to the temple when Jesus returns, then these prophecies could not be fulfilled.

And the armies, which were in heaven, followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it HE should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: (Revelation 19:14).

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage (Jude 14-16).

As you can see by this scripture, it is Jesus himself that smites the nations and not the CHURCH! Jesus Himself rules the nations with a rod of iron. In spite of this, I believe the cell churches will accomplish what the crusades failed to, the domination of this world by “the church”. The Bible speaks of a battle that is called Armageddon that Jesus fights BEFORE He sets his throne to rule over the earth for a thousand years.

What Jesus is looking for BEFORE he sets up his millennial reign and a thousand years of peace, is a rebuilt temple, complete with Davidic worship services (celebration services) and a false Messiah ruling a world that a Global Church has conquered in the name of Jesus. With the nations already conquered by the "cell church" movement, the only ones left for Jesus and the armies of heaven to fight when He returns are the "cell churches" and they're "One Set Man"! This movement even claims that they are the “Elijah Church” that will usher in the coming of the Messiah. This prophecy was fulfilled in John the Baptist when he pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God. Jesus even said:

For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come (Malachi 4:5,6). He that hath ears to hear, let him hear (Matthew 11:13-15).

The Bible speaks of the coming of Jesus Christ for the church is preceded by a voice from heaven and by a trumpet, not a prophet!!!!

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

As you can see by this verse, the church meets Jesus in the air, not on the Temple Mount, when He returns for His church.

Many in the cell churches today also believe when the cell gets in perfect unity, then “the Christ” incarnates the cell and it can now minister to the world (Matthew 18:19,20). Anyone or any cell / small group can now claim that “the Christ” has incarnated them and they have now become “Christ”. What you have in this theology makes a perfect stage for one person to rise and to sit on the top of this pyramid and declare that "the Christ" has incarnated him and he has become "the Christ". This is perfect for a "cell church" movement that is looking for the second coming of the Messiah. They can also claim to be “the Elijah Church” and point the Jews toward this "One Set Man", supposedly fulfilling the prophecy of Malachi 4:5,6.

This is simple to understand. Let me explain. The Jews are looking for the first coming of Messiah to rule and reign for a thousand years. This "One Set Man" could fulfill both prophecies at one time. With this "ushering in the Messiah" doctrine, you could easily have both "the church" and the Jews, worshipping the same man as "the Christ" when he appears. Many Baptist, Pentecostal, and Charismatic churches that embrace this doctrine claim they also believe in the “rapture”. One main problem with this “Elijah Church” doctrine is, the Jews are not looking for Jesus to come in the air, but “suddenly to His temple” (Malachi 3:1). For the church to claim that they are the “Elijah” of the prophecy of Malachi and still believe in the rapture cannot be possible! When the church is “caught up” into the air, how is the church going to then have time to point the Jews to Jesus? They have to do that today, before they are “caught up” in the air. But witnessing to the Jews today would still be the same mission of the church for the past 2000 years, not some new “Elijah” ministry!

Many Christians through out history have truly pointed the Jewish people to Jesus and many Jews have become Christians, but what is strange is the church has never considered herself “Elijah” until now. I guess if you can build a new end time church, then you can call it whatever you want. A wise man once said, “one may build a church, but it won’t be Christ’s church”.

There maybe an appearing of Elijah before Jesus comes to rule for a thousand years but according to rapture doctrine, the church is with Jesus when He returns and not on earth pointing the Jews to Him. Some believe that one of the two end time witnesses during the tribulation period is Elijah, but these two witnesses will have already have finished their ministry and been caught up to heaven (Revelation 11:12) by the time Jesus returns. Their ministry is to confront a false Messiah and an apostate church, not to declare the coming of the Messiah. The Bible says that a false church and the Jews will already be worshipping a false Messiah in the temple when Jesus returns. Through out the history of the true church and even today, when a Jew accepts Jesus Christ as the Messiah, they are then agreeing that it was John the Baptist that was the “Elijah that was to come” and declare the Messiah. They are not looking for a new “Elijah” to come and declare the Messiah to them again, because they already know Him!

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied

until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear (Matthew 11:12-14).

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life (1 John 5:20).

In all of history, to achieve this massive conquering of the nations for Christ and to fulfill this prophecy, the "cell church" model is the only thing that has the capability to do this. It is sweeping across the world at a record pace, drawing in all denominations and picking up speed as it grows. Its rallying cry is "common unity" or "community". Most people believe that it will be fully in place in 3 to 5 years. I believe you have less than 2. Remember that the cell church grows exponentially. The larger it grows, the faster it grows. Only one problem with this goal, the Bible speaks of a falling away (2 Thessalonians 2:3) in the end and not a huge worldwide end time harvest. When Jesus returns, is He looking for a unified Global Church or a "scattered elect"? As the cell church movement sweeps across the world you should start seeing many more "church" victories around the world as the world is being conquered by "the church". Religious authority around the world will start taking center stage as they unite.

For years people that study end time prophecy were always looking for the Jews to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem and the Pope and the Catholic Church to take over and then sit in the temple. For this reason, many people have accused the Pope of being the antichrist. This was because the Catholic Church was the only "church structure" in existence that was large enough to possibly fulfill this prophecy of a Global Church that could subdue the earth. As the world was focused on the Catholic Church and on the Jews rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem, the Global Church that CAN fulfill this prophecy has been growing out of the Protestant denominations that were the very same ones that were accusing the Catholics of the very same thing! The "cell church" movement you see sweeping across the world today, will embrace the Catholic Church and all Protestant denominations or any religion that is not in "one accord" and submitted to their authority and purpose.

This movement already has cell-tracking software that the cell church leadership can use to track everything in the disciple's life. It especially has a place to gather information on any of the disciple's unbelieving family or friends. This is very important! You must remember that an unbeliever to the "new paradigm" movement is anyone that does not believe in the "new paradigm" cell church movement itself, because the movement claims it is "the corporate Christ".

Jesus said: **He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad (Matthew 12:30).**

If you claim to believe in Jesus Christ and are not in one accord with the "cell church" movement, then you are considered an unbeliever also and a hindrance (laggard). Many believe that you can embrace any faith you want as long as you are in the unity of purpose, but they will force you from the congregation if you are not in one accord with their purpose. I believe the Catholics called what the cell churches are doing

“excommunication”. They consider themselves "the end time church" that is anointed by God to fulfill the Great Commission. To resist their authority, is to resist the authority of God himself, because it was God himself that has placed them in authority over you. They take that claim of authority over all in the church through Romans 13:1-6. I do agree that submitting to GODLY authority is Biblical, but as I will explain, I don't believe that the cell church leadership is that self-proclaimed or anointed “Godly” authority.

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing (Romans 13:1-6).

The Bible says that God will send many to hell for submitting to false prophets and teachers claiming church authority. The "cell church" leadership has already prepared your doctrine for you. Your only responsibility to the church and God is to submit to the spiritual leaders in authority above you and embrace and fulfill their vision.

Anyone that believes in Jesus, but does not submit to the "cell church" movement and "new paradigm" doctrine is accused of having a spirit of rebellion against God's authority. Therefore by rejecting this movement you are considered by the church to be demon oppressed and in need of deliverance, because the Bible says that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft (1 Samuel 15:23). Sound familiar (Inquisition)(Salem Witch Trials).

You have to understand, the “cell church” thinks that they are bringing back Jesus by finishing His work on the earth by subduing the world for Him. They believe that until the church subdues the earth, then Jesus CANNOT come back. They use this verse to justify that conclusion (Acts 3:19-21). In their mind, if you resist them, then you are actually keeping their Savior from coming back to earth. Many churches today are trying to take the inheritance by force instead of waiting on the fulfillment of the promise by God.

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force (Matthew 11:12).

The elect will always be a hindrance (laggards) until they are taken out of the way. Jesus warned that the time will come when they will kill you, thinking their doing God's service (John 16:2). This movement will eventually come to every local congregation. According to the Bible, the only one that can defeat this global end time “church” is Jesus Christ at the battle of Armageddon.

This "cell church" movement also makes a nice platform for someone to rise to power on, especially if they can do signs and wonders. This is important! This movement cannot

be stopped only briefly hindered because it was prophesied to come to pass. The reason I am giving this information is not to attack the cell /small group churches, but so you can understand the cell church movement. They are already preparing to bring the fight to you; you do not have to take the fight to them. The battle will eventually come straight to your door. Every doctrine that I have presented in this book I hope will help explain things so you can put on the armor of God to stand in that day, but as I said before, I can only give you words, only God can give you understanding of those words.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness (not breast plate of judgment); And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; (Ephesians 6:10-18).

All those that are still looking for Jesus to come in the clouds should start preparing also. I believe the stage is already set. The end time players are now taking their places. Well, you know the rest of the story....

Pre-Tribulation Rapture

And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh (Luke 21:27,28).

One trap I fell into when I was discussing with someone about the rapture you need to look out for. The discussion that I got into was with a person from another denomination who does not believe in the rapture. This happened in front of a lot of unsaved people, which is usually where people like to pick the "rapture" fight. The first thing they said was "show me where in the Bible the word "rapture" is located"? Everybody was staring at me and I was stuck! I had to admit that the word "rapture" is not found in the KJV Bible! The event is though, which is called the "redemption of the body" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)(Titus 2:13), but not the word "rapture". The very next thing the guy did was say "because I believed in a word that could not be found in the Bible that I was preaching false doctrine". He then went on to say, "Since one part of my doctrine is false, then the rest of my doctrine was also false"!

The way to win the "rapture" argument is not getting caught up in it from the beginning. When someone wants to talk about the "rapture", I immediately follow with the question, " Do you mean the "redemption of the body"? Now they are caught, because the "redemption of the body" IS spoken of in the Bible. This may seem like splitting

hairs, but if you don't, they can make you look like a false teacher! Also, these verses refer to the event, but do not place it in the framework of time. It is very important to understand what the pre-tribulation "rapture" belief is, and where it falls into end time events. Many churches that used to believe in the pre-tribulation rapture are starting to refer to their churches as pre-millennial in their doctrine. By doing this, these churches can accept people with pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, or post tribulation views and still be considered "pre-millennial", but only one of these beliefs is correct. I heard a very popular radio evangelist and his pastor discuss this briefly and then stated that they didn't believe it was a heaven or hell issue and wasn't worth arguing over. It most certainly is! If you are not at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb with Jesus during the great tribulation, then you are on the earth worshipping a false messiah! To explain the pre-tribulation view and how it fits in the framework of prophetic events, I will approach it from a different angle than most people do.

Many refer to the end times as the "tribulation". I approach it from the term "day of wrath" found in Revelation 6:17. In Revelations, after Jesus finishes speaking to the angels of the seven churches in chapter 3, the word "church" is not spoken of again until everything is fulfilled. In Revelation chapters 4,5,6 the scene changes from earth to what is going on in Heaven. At the end of chapter 6, we find this troubling period of time on the earth referred to as the "day of wrath".

For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? (Revelation 6:17)

The Bible doesn't say whether these seals of judgment of chapter 6 are opened over a period of days or all on the first day, but regardless the Bible says, "the day of wrath is come". Herein lies a strong argument for pre-tribulation belief. Do Christians go through the "day of wrath" which is plainly spoken of as starting sometime at the beginning of the tribulation? The Bible says:

For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come (1 Thessalonians 1:9,10).

For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

In the Old Testament, we also find an interesting story that shows that God will not pour out judgment or wrath on the righteous with the wicked. When God was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, God said that He could not destroy the city till Lot, who Peter called righteous (2 Peter 2:6-8), was taken out.

Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and

all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground (Genesis 19:22).

The Bible also speaks of a special crown given to all those that are looking for the appearing of Jesus!

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing (2 Timothy 4:7-9).

I have heard of the post-tribulation people argue that the church is like Noah, who was protected by God through the judgment, but Jesus' own words refute this doctrine and at the same time make the pre-tribulation doctrine even stronger.

But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be (Matthew 24:37-39).

Jesus said that His coming was as the days of Noah, **BEFORE the flood!** Jesus was using the flood in this discourse to describe the “tribulation” and judgment in the end time. Once again, the way to win the “rapture” argument is not getting caught up in it in the first place.

Embracing All Faiths?

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, ONE FAITH, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all (Ephesians 4:4-6).

Today, many different faiths are all coming together and using the cell / small group model for unity. Is it Biblical for the true Christian to embrace every other person from differing religions as “brethren” if they claim the name of Jesus Christ? Are all religions that claim the name of Christ walking in the victory of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? The Bible has a perfect example of this! If your pastor tells you that all that claim the name of Jesus in their denominations and ministries are your “Christian brethren”, then they do not care if you are walking in the unity of the true faith, as long as you are walking in the unity of the vision. There is a tremendous difference between “unity of the faith (Christianity)” and “unity of all faiths (New World Order)”! The Bible plainly teaches that there are people not walking in Christian victory that do ministry in Jesus name and they are not “Christians”. The Bible speaks of “wolves in sheeps clothing”.

Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? (Acts 19:13-15).

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matthew 7:22,23).

For example, I could not call another person my “Christian” brother if they denied the Holy Ghost as a person of the Trinity when the Bible plainly presents the Holy Ghost as a person that interacts with the Christian and not just an “active force of God”.

As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus (Acts 13:2-4).

Rebuilding the Levitical Priesthood

Some in many churches today are also trying to rebuild the Levitical priesthood. As you rebuild the Levitical priesthood with a new "High Priest" or Senior Pastor. You must restore the veil of the temple and the only access into the holiest is by the "High Priest" or as the "cell church" calls him the "One Set Man". As you advance in the plan to rebuild the tabernacle and grow the "cell leadership" you will start hearing about members in the church who have been through the leadership training and have made the transition to "spiritual leaders" or "spiritual parents". When this training is completed, their own “spiritual leaders” and the church then anoints them for service. From that time on, they will be “fathers” and their disciples will be their “children”. They will then have the responsibility of directing and equipping the disciples for serving God just like they were discipled and equipped by their leader. They will replace a personal relationship with Jesus Christ with a "small group" relationship. I do agree that the body of Christ does have many members that the Christian is in relationship with, but each believer still has a personal relationship with Jesus first. Jesus called his disciple’s “brethren” not children. In Acts 1:16 Peter refers to the disciples as men and brethren, not fathers and children.

And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,) Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry (Acts 1:15-17).

Many churches claim that their church does “small groups” not “cell groups”. Is there a difference? I will just list some things out of the cell group handbook that you can compare your church groups to. At one time, I attended the cell / small group school of leaders classes and had started teaching a new cell / small group which we called “life groups” before I was called out and left that congregation. I spent 2 years being slowly indoctrinated with others into the cell church movement. I did enjoy the many friends though. When Ralph Neighbour Jr. came to the congregation I was attending and explained the cell church vision, I was in the congregation agreeing to it with everyone else. I thought that this was a unique idea and it might be what God could be planning to do in the end to reach the people. It sounded so good, but yet I still sensed something wrong, so I took the advice of the church and read the book. When I actually read the book, I started seeing things that just didn’t seem right, like the “equipping” process, which I want to address briefly. The book that I read was *Where Do We Go From Here? A Guidebook for the Cell Group Church* by Ralph Neighbour, Jr. The “equipping” process is a four-part process laid out on **page 333**.

- 1) Spiritual Formation Weekend
- 2) Encounter God Retreat
- 3) Touching Hearts Weekend
- 4) Cell Leaders Intern Retreat

I have one question. Is this the Biblical model for the true church to operate? The author, Ralph Neighbor Jr. answered that question better than I could!

“The above equipping system has been developed over many years of trial and error. You don’t have to make the same mistakes I did. The wheel is already invented. Start with the above taxonomy and begin equipping your leaders”. **Page 342: Where Do We Go From Here? A Guidebook for the Cell Group Church** by Ralph Neighbour, Jr.

I personally do not believe that the true church model was “developed over many years of trail and error” or “it came about through many mistakes”. According to this, it was Ralph Neighbour Jr. that “invented the wheel” not “Jesus Christ”. Even though many pastors embrace this “equipping” idea wholeheartedly as the “gospel” there are still some of us that believe that God’s plan for the church has always been perfect, but many pastors just have not understood it. Ralph Neighbor, Jr. continues:

“I spent years developing the above models that equip believers and usher them into ministry. To monitor their effectiveness, I served as a senior pastor in Houston and then as a senior associate pastor in Singapore. I rebuilt each module over and over, refining them as they were tested. I did this not to sell materials, but to provide working models of key principles for the next generation. My desire was that my work would serve as a platform for others, who would internalize and adapt the structure to fit their cultures and the Christians who would be equipped”. **Page 342: Where Do We Go From Here? A Guidebook for the Cell Group Church** by Ralph Neighbour, Jr.

I have been accused of having the spirit of rebellion and “sowing discord among the brethren” by church members for even remotely questioning that this small group “equipping” doctrine is not ordained by God. In actuality, I am even agreeing with Ralph Neighbour Jr. on three important points he makes about the source of the “equipping” doctrine that these very same churches are submitting too! It is the cell / small group pastors that are embracing this “equipping” doctrine that are in error. They are claiming this is from God, even when the man that has developed it is claiming that it is the result of his own personal work! That is how totally ridiculous this has gotten. After reading the book, I believe Ralph Neighbour, Jr. when he states:

“I spent years developing the above models that equip believers and usher them into ministry.

. “I rebuilt each module over and over, refining them as they were tested”.

“My desire was that my work would serve as a platform for others, who would internalize and adapt the structure to fit their cultures and the Christians who would be equipped”. **Page 342: Where Do We Go From Here? A Guidebook for the Cell Group Church** by Ralph Neighbour, Jr.

How has these cell church pastors gotten so off track? The answer is very simple. You simply change the definition of one word. In Ephesians 4:12, you change the word “perfecting” to “equipping”. By changing that one word, you take the ministry of the Holy Ghost through the five-fold ministry and replace it with your own “equipping” system that has been established through much “trial and error” as you “rebuild each model over and over”. The Bible says the real one that “equips” and “anoints” the Christian for ministry is the Holy Spirit. Please read the chapter “The Perfecting of the Saints”.

But the anointing which ye have received of HIM abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him (1 John 2:27).

Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; (2 Corinthians 1:21).

If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen (1 Peter 4:11).

The Bible teaches that there are leadership roles in the church and people in authority, which is understood. Every believer has a purpose in the body and all Christians understand that, but they need to know exactly where they stand and what authority they do have in the church to avoid abuse by false leadership.

To start with to understand your security in the church, you have to understand the difference between belonging to the church and belonging to a local congregation. You

are baptized into the true church when you are saved, but you “join” a local congregation for fellowship and service. The local church was never intended to be a "home church". It is just the place where the Lord places you for earthly service. Jesus said, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:16). The real church is in heaven and on the earth as strangers and pilgrims. Many are calling this “cell church” model the World Church because it’s consuming all denominations. I will show you the true "home church".

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:22-24).

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, (Ephesians 3:14).

Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: (Ephesians 5:20)

The Bible says that I am a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth (Hebrews 11:13). God promises that the Christian shall inherit the earth and rule from New Jerusalem, so right now I am just sojourning in the land of promise, like Abraham, while I dwell on the earth.

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place, which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (Hebrews 11:8-10).

For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: (Romans 4:13,14).

As the world and the church today are focused on Israel and an earthly Jerusalem, I, like Abraham am focused on a heavenly Jerusalem.

For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid (Hagar), the other by a freewoman (Sara). But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem,

which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now (Galatians 4:22-29).

This is my "newbirth" place. ***"But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all" (Galatians 4:26).***

And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her; and the highest himself shall establish her. The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there (Psalms 87:5,6)

This is why even if you leave a local congregation or ministry when they change over to cell / small groups and they strike your name from their roll, I tell you most assuredly "WHEN THE ROLL IS CALLED UP YONDER I'II BE THERE"! The roll of the true church is written in heaven not on earth, so there is not any Pope, pastor, apostle, prophet, cardinal, archbishop or anybody else that can throw or "excommunicate" you out of the true church. They can throw you out of the congregation though.

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:22-24).

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out (John 6:37).

Which brings me to another doctrine that many churches have embraced that I believe is in error and that is the "covering doctrine".

"Covering" doctrine

If I understand this "covering" doctrine correctly, it teaches that if I leave a local church or some pastor's ministry for awhile or I do not join a local congregation then I lose God's protection and blessings (covering). I am now open to all kinds of attack from the enemy and I am "on my own" in the world. I have many friends and I am constantly meeting new believers that have come out of the "cell / small" group churches and are worshipping alone in their homes. Because they are true Christians, they have a deep desire to fellowship with other true believers, but they are afraid of being spiritually abused by a church leadership. What is going to happen to these Christians? After being in the cell churches, and having the courage to come out, they are not going to be

indoctrinated back in. Is God now rejecting them also? The true body of Christ is larger than any individual ministry. This “covering” doctrine has gotten so perverse that I know a pastor that has a large ministry and the people that are members of that church claim his ministry as their spiritual protection (covering). This pastor walks around with armed undercover bodyguards! He doesn’t even believe in his own covering of protection.

This “covering” doctrine as I see it, takes the local church or whatever pastors ministry and makes them the vine and me a branch of their ministry. If I leave their congregation or ministry, then I am a branch that is broken off the vine, and then I should wither and perish. Here is a radical idea (John 15:5). What if Jesus is the true Vine and I am a branch of Him? Then no matter where I went in this world, I would still be "in Christ" the Vine and my source of life would still be Jesus. Paul knew also where the true "covering" was.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38,39).

I don't think any local church or personal ministry "covering" could even come close to that. The Bible even says that each believer is given a ministering spirit (not a ministering pastor) to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:13,14)? Does this ministering spirit leave you at the door when you walk out of a local congregation or a certain ministry? I have heard of cults that use this type of teaching to scare members from leaving.

High Jacking a Congregation

I would like to take a moment here and describe what I see as another problem in religion today. I see pastors that are “high jacking” whole congregations. They are taking over whole churches and setting themselves up, as absolute rulers of the congregation, just like the Old Testament high priest. To question their doctrine or authority is considered the same as questioning the authority and Word of God. How do they do this? It is basically very simply done. I have purposefully stayed out of organized church polity and focused on exhorting and serving other believers because of my personal relationship with Jesus, but I see abuses coming because many people do not understand the true role of a pastor. Let me explain.

If I were going to “highjack” a local congregation, the first thing that I would do is gradually change the reference term used for the local congregation. Example: I would start referring to **Green Pastures Baptist** as **Franklin Whittenburg Ministries**.

By making this simple reference, I take a whole congregation that is ministering to the community and make it “MY” ministry to the community, but now I have the congregation helping and supporting me and my vision for ministry. In effect I set myself up as the “head” of the congregation instead of Jesus Christ. I can then operate it like a business to win souls; only now I become the president of the company, the “One Set Man”. Since Green Pastures Baptist is now Franklin Whittenburg Ministries, I can wipe out any “authority” of the deacons or elders to sit in oversight. What right do the deacons

have to tell me what to do or preach; after all, it's now MY ministry? Just like in any business, what employee has the right to question how the president of a company runs his business? In like manner, no one in the congregation is allowed to question the pastor on his doctrine. The only recourse a member of that congregation has is to submit or leave. Hearin lays a trap. If they do not submit to the authority and question the pastor's doctrine, then they are usually accused of having the spirit of rebellion, which the Bible says is the same as witchcraft. If they try and stay and correct it they are accused of "sowing discord among the brethren". When they leave the congregation, then they are told they are out from under "the covering" and protection from God. If you actually believe that that local congregation or ministry is your "covering" then I can see where the thought of leaving could cause great emotional distress.

I want to explain the true purpose and position of the pastor, so congregations can avoid being "high jacked". To do this, I will have to explain the "One Set Man" doctrine.

"One Set Man" doctrine

This doctrine takes the head of the church, which is Jesus, and replaces it with a "spiritual leader" of some sort. The "spiritual leader" now becomes the mediator between God and man. This is actually just an Old Testament Levitical pattern that is done away with in Christ. Our mediator (Jesus Christ) came out of the tribe of Judah, not out of the tribe of Levi, and the Christian covenant is built on better promises. Please read the chapter on "Law or Grace" and the "Old Testament Church".

The church, which is the ministry of Jesus Christ to the world, now becomes a ministry of "the pastor" to the world. The pastor now becomes the head of the church instead of a member of the body like everybody else. Since the church is now "their" ministry, then they become the congregations "spiritual father" and you become their "spiritual sons" and "spiritual daughters" because you were "birthed" out of their ministry. You become "children of the pastor" instead of "children of God". People soon forget that God is our only spiritual Father and every member in the church is BROTHERS and SISTERS in Christ. There is no second and third generation Christians. As Jesus plainly taught:

But be ye not called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are BRETHREN. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased: and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted (Matthew 23:8-12).

There does exist two generations in the Christian though. In the natural, your father is a generation, you are a generation, and your children are another generation. In the spiritual there is but one generation of God's children because even Jesus, Peter, Paul, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, etc. are the believers' brothers.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren (Romans 8:29).

For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren (Hebrews 2:11).

In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus (Acts 8:33-35).

Jesus called his disciples “brethren”, not children. In Acts 1:16 Peter refers to the disciples as men and brethren, not fathers and children.

And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,) Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry (Acts 1:15-17).

Paul did refer to Timothy as his son in the ministry and the other disciples referred to other believers as “my little children”. My brothers and sisters in Christ were birthed by the Holy Spirit and not by a “cell group” leader or pastor. You will just have to decide for yourself if you want to refer to your pastor or cell / small group leader as a “spiritual father” instead of God. Jesus said do not do it (Matthew 23:8-12). I will make that decision even simpler. Ask yourself one question. Who actually “sired” you, the pastor or God? After you answer that question, then call that one “father” and yes, your cell group “spiritual father” actually thinks he “sired” you.

The third stage in this passage refers to Fathers. By virtue of the name, spiritual fathers have sired children and are described as having a long-term, deep knowledge of God. Page 333 (**Where Do We Go From Here? A Guidebook for the Cell Group Church** by Ralph Neighbour, Jr.)

The true order in the church structure has Jesus as the head of the church and the pastor, prophets, or apostles or any other "spiritual leader" as MEMBERS of the body. It is very important that there is leadership in the church and the Bible confirms this, but never forget that the church leadership are just members like you. The pastor’s job in the body is not any more important than your job in the congregation, its just different.

The job of the pastor is to make sure the congregation has a relationship with the heavenly Father, and not to become the relationship with the heavenly Father! Many pastors and teachers today, and now apostles and prophets are trying to take the place of the Holy Spirit (Spirit of Truth) concerning the deeper revelations in a disciple’s life, instead of being a supporter of what the Holy Spirit is showing the disciple.

When I participate in a Bible study I can share with people some of the things I know according to the purpose of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). This is what I am doing with this book, but unless you have the Holy Spirit you can never understand what

I am sharing. That is why the Bible says that it is God that teaches you. The pastors, teachers, prophets, etc. are to work with God, not replace God. The pastors and prophets and teachers have no power to make you understand what they are saying, all they can do is speak the words. Some people that teach Bible doctrine can take away the key of knowledge though, be careful like the Bereans, and search the scriptures yourself!!!

Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered (Luke 11:52).

Just because a pastor speaks the Word of God doesn't mean they have the power of God. If they are faithful Godly pastors, then it is acceptable to show them respect and minister to their needs. The Bible says, "Do not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treads out the corn".

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon (1 Corinthians 3:5-10).

John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven (John 3:27).

No matter how good they are though, the pastor or teacher doesn't have the keys to your understanding; only God can unlock the scripture for you.

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, (Ephesians 1:17,18).

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life (1 John 5:20).

Even Jesus himself didn't teach his disciples everything, but left the deeper spiritual teaching to another source!

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come (John 16:12,13).

The main goal of the church should be to exhort and edify the believer and make sure that every member in the body was hearing from the Head (Jesus). God will grow the believer.

Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand (2 Corinthians 1:23,24).

I know several pastor's that totally agree with this and they will be the first ones to point out that the congregation that they minister to is not theirs, but God's. Those pastors shall receive a special crown one day for their service.

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away (1 Peter 5:2-4).

The pastor's job in the church is to point the people to Jesus, not replace Jesus. John 12:32 is the true biblical church growth method and not cell / small groups.

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me (John 12:32).

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase (1 Corinthians 5:5-7).

Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand (2 Corinthians 1:23,24).

Remember that it is the sheep's job to produce the wool, not the shepherds. When a pastor and church leadership gets the direction for the congregation, they then are the most important part in the body. But when it comes time to move the church in that direction, the feet and legs now become the most important part of the body. Without the legs and feet to carry the eyes where they see we need to go, then the eyes can stare at the

vision for the church for years and never get there. Once the feet and legs get the body to where the eyes see it should go, then it now takes the arms and hands to accomplish the task. They now become the most important part of the body. When the pastor takes the place of Jesus Christ as the head of the body and tries to direct the other members of the body in service, then it usually results in confusion. That is like the hand trying to tell the foot how to walk.

When Christians start taking their directions from other members of the body and they quit listening to the head (Jesus) then the end result will always be confusion. As you can see, we all have a part to play in the body of Christ that is an equally important function as the leadership in the body (1 Corinthians 12:12-26). But everybody is not an eye or an ear or a hand or a foot, but the "small group" models that the churches are using today trains everybody to be leaders and all people were not called to be leaders. Their motto is "leaders equipping leaders". We are all called to be priests though. Some people in the church are called solely to support church leadership not be church leadership. Also the "One Set Man" doctrine teaches that only one (senior pastor) has the "vision" for the church. Your body has one head (Jesus), but TWO eyes. Jesus sent the disciples out two by two. God used two or more anointed men for leadership and ministry, Paul and Silas, Peter and John and even the TWO witnesses in Revelation 11:3. There might be a chance of one man missing God's will, but two or three missing it is much less. I believe this model was used by God so one man would not be exalted.

For many years the church has operated under the belief that it is just the pastor that has the only word or "vision" from the Lord for the body. I had one cell group leader attempt to explain the five-fold ministry as fulfilled in the Senior Pastor. The "One Set Man" could step into any office of apostle, prophet, teacher, etc. and operate in any spiritual gift when there was a need for that ministry gift. If this is true, why then do we even need a five-fold ministry? Let's put a few of these super pastors to work ministering to the world and we can all go home and go fishing.

The "One Set Man" doctrine was presented to me for the first time at a small group "school of leaders" class. The teacher of the class drew a picture of the sun on a chalkboard with the rays of the sun shining on the pastor who was described as the "One Set Man". The congregation was then drawn underneath the pastor and the sunrays were then drawn radiating from the pastor down to the congregation. The explanation was that the anointing and power of God (sunrays) was poured on the head of the high priest (senior pastor) and then it flowed down onto the body (congregation) like an Old Testament priest when a prophet anointed them for ministry. Please read the chapter "The Old Testament Church". My "fall from grace" came when I asked one simple logical question to the class, "So you are saying that the senior pastor is the mediator between God and man"?

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; (1 Timothy 2:3-5).

My question surprised the other cell group leaders, but their response to my question surprised me! I was immediately accused of rebelling against the pastor's authority for even asking that question. But I wasn't questioning the pastor's authority; I was

questioning the pastor's doctrine, which is totally different. That was the last cell group leadership class I attended. It is very important to understand that any Christian can biblically question a pastor, apostle, or prophet's doctrine without questioning their authority. But what you see in the "cell group" church is the mentality that you cannot question doctrine *coming* from authority, which is grossly in error.

Two more scriptures were also quoted to me as I finally left that congregation.

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us (1 John 2:19).

Jesus said: ***He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad (Matthew 12:30).***

If you do not truly know who you are in Christ then even leaving a cell church can cause you great torment. Once again this "One Set Man" doctrine is an Old Testament type of structure that is trying to be applied to a "new paradigm" church. How did this work in the Old Testament? To put it simply, God spoke to Moses, Moses spoke to Aaron and Aaron told the congregation what God said. The reason that some pastors love this "One Set Man" model is because they can replace God in the believer's life. God explained this to Moses concerning Aaron.

And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God (Exodus 4:16).

Our High Priest (Jesus) speaks to everybody in the New Testament church. Jesus said:

But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers (John 10: 2-5).

This "One Set Man" doctrine places another member of the body as the head of the church and mediator between God and man. By following this doctrine, my relationship with my heavenly Father could never be any closer than the "pastor" or "spiritual leader's" relationship with God. The Bible says that even the angels are our fellowservents even though they are stronger in power and might. This brings me to another question that begs to be asked. Why can this "One Set Man" talk to God and not to everybody else? Are the pastors "holier" than the rest of the congregation? Paul even said that the apostles were subject to the same passions as everyone else in the church and so was Elijah. The true Christian understands that their "holiness" comes from the indwelling Holy Spirit and their "righteousness" is a gift from God for faith in sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and it is those things alone that secure all Christians' personal access to God!

Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: (Acts 14:13-15).

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months (James 5:16,17).

For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; (Ephesians 2:18,19).

John chapter 10 says, “all the sheep hear Jesus’ voice”. The only way that this “One Set Man” doctrine makes any sense is if you rebuild the Levitical priesthood, complete with the veil of the temple restored, with limited and conditional access to God.

Five fold ministry

Anybody that has been in Christianity for any length of time has heard of the five-fold ministry. You must understand its purpose today as it is being badly abused by many churches to establish “authority” instead of “perfecting” of the saints. Also you must understand what the apostle’s role and the prophets roll in these last days, because what is being taught by the “five fold ministry” is in gross error. I have already addressed the pastor’s role in the “One Set Man” doctrine. The verses that support the five-fold ministry are in Ephesians and 1 Corinthians.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way (1 Corinthians 12:27-31).

To understand its purpose, lets first look at what constitutes a true apostle. The Bible speaks of many false apostles arising in the last days and deceiving many. Currently there

is a huge New Apostolic Network that is trying to claim authority over everybody that claims to be a Christian. In the five-fold ministry, you must be able to tell the difference between a false apostle and a real apostle in these last days. First, all the word “apostle” means in the Bible is “one who is sent”. It is the word “apostolos” in the Greek. How do you tell the difference between an apostle sent by Jesus and a false apostle? The answer is very simple but requires an explanation. The original twelve apostles are considered “foundational” apostles. The Bible says that the Christian is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone.

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: (Ephesians 2:19-21).

You can see that reaffirmed in Revelation 21:14 in describing the foundation of the holy city New Jerusalem. The stones of the foundation had the names of the twelve apostles of Jesus written in them.

And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (Revelation 21:14).

This is very important! This is where everybody misses this! Any apostle that came after the original twelve ***BROUGHT THE SAME DOCTRINE AS THE ORIGINAL TWELVE!!!!*** That is the simplest way how Paul said to tell the difference between a true or false apostle.

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed (Galatians 1:8,9).

Paul and Barnabas were both called apostles in the Bible even though they were not one of the original twelve, which shows that the apostolic ministry was still in effect after the original twelve.

Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, (Acts 14:14).

What you have in the New Apostolic Network that you see manifesting today is new apostles trying to establish a new foundation for a new “wineskin” church. They claim that God will not pour out His power into an old “wineskin” church. They claim the Lord is doing a “new thing” or “new paradigm shift”. Many apostles claim that because of the authority of their office in the church that you should not question their credentials or doctrine. As I said before, “It is very important to understand that any Christian can biblically question a pastor, apostle, or prophets doctrine without questioning their

authority. But what you see also in the five-fold ministry today is the mentality that you cannot question doctrine *coming* from authority. We see in the Bible, God commended the Church at Ephesus, where coincidentally the five-fold ministry is proclaimed, for testing the apostles and they found them to be liars.

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: (Revelation 2:1,2).

God does not honor someone that blindly follows false apostles, prophets, teachers and pastors just because the person claims they were submitting to the authority God has placed over them. Ignorance may be bliss, but God said His people are destroyed for lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6)! Jesus said that “the Christian is to be sent forth as sheep among wolves and they are to be wise as serpents”, not “be blind as bats”. In fact, Jesus said that if the blind follow the blind, THEY BOTH would fall into the ditch.

Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch (Matthew 15:14).

If the apostles today do not preach the same gospel as the original twelve, then the Bible says they are false apostles and they have no more authority over anybody in the church than your pet cat or dog does. The moment an apostle says, “the Lord is doing a new thing / paradigm” they are immediately disqualified as a New Testament apostle according to Paul in the Bible (Galatians 1:8,9). It doesn’t matter how many churches are supporting them. The only way that these new apostles can have any authority is in a new church.

I now want to address the purpose of the prophet in the church today. The Bible speaks of many false prophets that arise in the last days and deceive many. I had some people stop by my house from a certain denomination and they wanted to witness to me. As we talked, I shared some revelations with them in the scriptures that were kind of “deep”. This caused them to ask me if I was a prophet. It is very dangerous to assume someone is a prophet. I could have said, “Uh, yeah, I am a prophet and the five-fold ministry gives me authority over you. The Lord just told me to start guiding your spiritual walk and to also tell you to give me all your money for my ministry”. See how ridiculous that sounds, but that is what is going on in many churches today. Most people in the church believe that they can tell a false prophet if they miss a prophecy. This is dangerous also because there was a woman that had the ability to use divination by the power of a demon and she could accurately tell the future. Paul rebuked the demon that was in her and her power of divination was gone (Acts 16:16-20). You cannot rely on a missed prophecy as your only test for a prophet. Try the spirits to see if they are of God.

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world (1 John 4:1).

Many claiming to be prophets and trying to speak prophecies over other church members are actually “soothsaying” instead of prophesying. The moment someone claims to be speaking “prophecy” to you and they say, “The Lord told me to tell you”, then they are at that moment declaring that your Heavenly Father no longer considers you worthy of fellowship with Him, so He has sent them with a personal message from God to you. This is still the ministry of the Old Testament prophet and not the New Testament prophet. Jesus alone is the only mediator between the true Christian and their Heavenly Father as plainly taught in the book of Hebrews in the New Testament!

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in TIME PAST unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (Hebrews 1:1,2).

The real New Testament prophet takes and reveals the deeper spiritual knowledge and mysteries found in the Word of God. The scribes interpreted the scriptures naturally while the lawyers taught the laws of God. A scribe teaches people about someone else’s experience with God. A prophet or Christian teaches people about their experience with God.

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing (1 Corinthians 13:2).

How do you know when the deeper spiritual truths that are being revealed by the prophet out of the scriptures are truly spiritual truths and not scripture taken out of context? You will receive the revelations in your heart, which is the seat of the Spirit.

And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? (Luke 24:30-32).

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy (James 3:17).

Most people, when thinking of prophets, focus on the predicting of future events. I want to address this also briefly. The mind is capable of bringing the past into the present, which we call a “memory”. The mind when quickened by the Spirit can also bring the future into the present, which we call a “prophecy”.

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come (John 16:12,13).

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

Many prophecies that the Bible predicted came true in Bible times. How is it possible to see into the future? The Bible says that John was “caught away in the Spirit” and shown the things “which shall be” when he wrote Revelation.

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne (Revelation 4:1,2).

For John to be taken somewhere by the Spirit and shown the future means that the future had to already exist somewhere, possibly in another dimension, for him to be taken there and shown it and come back and wrote about it. Where is this place located? Science has tried to explain how prophecy is possible which I have included in this book. I just added Bible scripture to support that scientific theory. Please read the chapter “It’s About Time” for a much deeper explanation of how prophecy works.

It's About Time

Dimensions of Time

That time has many dimensions is a concept often advanced to account for prophecy. The gist of the idea is that time-which seems to unfold in a linear way, with the past coming before the present and the present before the future-might, in another dimension, not be experienced sequentially. The past, present, and future could exist simultaneously.

The concept that there are unfamiliar dimensions of time is most easily approached by way of those dimensions with which we are already familiar, those of length, height, and breadth. These, in turn, are best approached, quite literally, from a starting point, which, geometrically speaking, has a location but no dimensions. It does, however, relate to figures with dimensions in the following way:

If a point is moved through space, it marks a line, with the one dimension of length. If a line is moved through space, it traces the figure of a plane, with the two dimensions of length and breadth. And if a plane is moved in space, it traces a figure with the three dimensions of length, breadth, and height.

We can also work backward from a three-dimensional body and find that the cross section of the three-dimensional cube is a two-dimensional plane, that the cross section of the plane is a one-dimensional line, and that the cross section of the line is a dimensionless point.

From this we can infer that a body of three dimensions is the cross section of a body of four dimensions and that a three-dimensional body, when moved in a certain way, will produce a body of four dimensions. Then comes the question, of what sort of body could a three-dimensional shape be the cross section? And in what sort of new direction could a three-dimensional shape be moved to produce one of four dimensions, since a movement other than up and down, backward and forward, or side to side would simply produce a larger figure, not one of a different dimensions. The answer, of course, is the feature duration. For as soon as something ceases to endure, it ceases to exist. To the three familiar dimensions, then, we should add duration in time as a fourth dimension. Ordinary three-dimensional bodies should therefore be properly described as four-dimensional, and a body with three dimensions must be defined as having only length, breadth, and height but no duration. Is such a thing possible? It is, but only hypothetically. For, in fact, the point, line, and plane do not truly exist as such. Any line that can be seen has breadth as well as length (and duration), just as any physical plane has a certain thickness as well as length and breadth. What movement, then, must a figure of three dimensions undergo to produce a body of four dimensions?

We moved a plane in the dimension of height to produce a cube; so the movement of a (hypothetical) cube in the dimension of time should produce a (real) figure of four dimensions. What does movement in the dimension of time mean?

As we said, it must mean movement in a new direction, not up, down, or sideways. Are there any other kinds of movement? For a start, there is the movement that the earth's rotation imparts to everything upon it and that puts even apparently motionless objects in motion. We can thus say that a three-dimensional body is the hypothetically motionless cross section of a real body whose fourth dimension, duration, is inseparable from the motion that the turning world inevitably imparts to everything. Further inevitable motions are that of the earth around the sun, of the sun around the center of the galaxy, and, perhaps, of the galaxy itself around some unknown point. Since any perceptible body is, in fact, undergoing all these motions simultaneously, we can say that everything has these dimensions, though in a way that is ordinarily imperceptible. Because motions and the dimensions they imply are only perceptible in a framework of time, they can be referred to as dimensions of time.

If duration is one aspect of time, what might the others be? Among several possibilities, we can suggest appearance and disappearance, change and recurrence. Of all possibilities, only duration is perceptible. When we say that something appears, we mean that we suddenly note its existence; when something disappears, we note its lack of existence. We perceive no intermediate condition of "appearing" or "disappearing". In the same way, we talk of change but actually only develop the concept, as we perceive aggregates of characteristics that exist-or cease to exist. And so we infer, but do not observe, the recurrence of sunset and sunrise, the passage of seasons, the growth of a child.

And yet, things really do appear and disappear, change and recur, although not actually perceived to do so. They are, so to speak, hypothetical to us and must have their reality in other dimensions of time, just as the hypothetical three-dimensional body becomes real, that is, perceptible, in the dimension of time we call duration.

If access to higher dimensions of time belongs to one body, it is at least theoretically possible that it belongs, though invisibly, to all bodies. We can further assume that such access is by way of unfamiliar modes or levels of consciousness-and that the name we give to one of these is prophecy. (Mysteries of the Unexplained: Reader's Digest Copyright 1982).

Lets break this down as the Holy Spirit did for me and poured out scriptures as I read this explanation of the dimensions of time. This revelation came in 1998. The first scripture that was brought into remembrance when I was reading was what the Bible says about some of the different aspects of time.

And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: (Revelation 10:6).

But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. (2 Peter 3:8).

Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually (Hebrews 7:3).

As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: (Luke 1:70).

And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times (Matthew 16:3)?

And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10).

As you can see by these scriptures that time can be manipulated by God or done completely away with. In the Kingdom of Heaven time is irrelevant. Time is not made of molecules and actually doesn't exist without any way to measure it. Let's continue breaking down this concept of dimensions of time. I will separate each paragraph and follow it with scripture.

That time has many dimensions is a concept often advanced to account for prophecy.

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

Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy (1 Corinthians 14:1).

The gist of the idea is that time-which seems to unfold in a linear way, with the past coming before the present and the present before the future- might, in another dimension, not be experienced sequentially. The past, present, and future could exist simultaneously.

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time (Luke 4:5).

John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; (Revelation 1:4).

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty (Revelation 1:8).

Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; (Revelation 1:19).

The concept that there are unfamiliar dimensions of time is most easily approached by way of those dimensions with which we are already familiar, those of length, height, and breadth. (Authors note: Notice that the Bible adds a fourth dimension of depth).

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; (Ephesians 3:17,18).

These, in turn, are best approached, quite literally, from a starting point, which, geometrically speaking, has a location but no dimensions.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters (Genesis 1:1,2).

It does, however, relate to figures with dimensions in the following way: If a point is moved through space, it marks a line, with the one dimension of length. If a line is moved through space, it traces the figure of a plane, with the two dimensions of length and breadth. And if a plane is moved in space, it traces a figure with the three dimensions of length, breadth, and height.

We can also work backward from a three-dimensional body and find that the cross section of the three-dimensional cube is a two-dimensional plane, that the cross section of the plane is a one-dimensional line, and that cross section of the line is a dimensionless point. From this we can infer that a body of three dimensions is the cross section of a body of four dimensions and that a three-dimensional body, when moved in a certain way, will produce a body of four dimensions. (Authors note: The Holy Ghost causes the movement in the realm of prophecy).

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:21).

From this we can infer that a body of three dimensions is the cross section of a body of four dimensions and that a three-dimensional body, when moved in a certain way, will produce a body of four dimensions. The Holy Ghost changes the natural body (three-dimensional) into a spiritual body (four-dimensional: glorified body). The Bible refers to this transformation as the quickening.

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you (Romans 8:11).

If you are truly in Christ, then you are in the resurrection (quickenning)!

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? (John 11:25,26).

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly (1 Corinthians 15:42-49).

Job looked for this change to come:

If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come (Job 14:14).

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life (John 5:24).

Then comes the question, of what sort of body could a three-dimensional shape be the cross section? And in what sort of new direction could a three-dimensional shape be moved to produce one of four dimensions, since a movement other than up and down, backward and forward, or side to side would simply produce a larger figure, not one of a different dimension. (The Bible speaks of up and down movement).

But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) (Romans 10:6,7).

The answer, of course, is the feature duration. For as soon as something ceases to endure, it ceases to exist.

But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved (Matthew 24:13).

To the three familiar dimensions, then, we should add duration in time as a fourth dimension.

But the LORD shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment (Psalm 9:7).

Ordinary three-dimensional bodies should therefore be properly described as four-dimensional, and a body with three dimensions must be defined as having only length, breadth, and height but no duration.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:22).

Is such a thing possible? It is, but only hypothetically. (Authors note: Hypothetically means it can be done but we just don't know how to do it yet). For, in fact, the point,

line, and plane do not truly exist as such. Any line that can be seen has breadth as well as length (and duration), just as any physical plane has a certain thickness as well as length and breadth. What movement, then, must a figure of three dimensions undergo to produce a body of four dimensions? (The Holy Ghost creates the movement of depth).

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

In fact, the Bible says that the temples made with stone are just figures (three-dimensional) of the true (four-dimensional).

For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: (Hebrews 9:24).

We moved a plane in the dimension of height to produce a cube: so the movement of a (hypothetical) cube in the dimension of time should produce a (real) figure of four dimensions. What does movement in the dimension of time mean? As we said, it must mean movement in a new direction, not up, down, or sideways. Are there any other kinds of movement?

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:21).

For to start, there is the movement that the earth's rotation imparts to everything upon it and that puts even apparently motionless objects in motion. We can thus say that a three-dimensional body is the hypothetically motionless cross section of a real body whose fourth dimension, duration, is inseparable from the motion that the turning world inevitably imparts to everything.

Further inevitable motions are that of the earth around the sun, of the sun around the center of the galaxy itself around some unknown point.

He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing (Job 26:7).

Since any perceptible body is, in fact, undergoing all these motions simultaneously, we can say that everything has these dimensions, though in a way that is ordinarily perceptible. Because motions and the dimensions they imply are only perceptible in a framework of time, they can be referred to as dimensions of time.

If duration is one aspect of time, what might the others be? Among several possibilities, we can suggest appearance and disappearance, change and recurrence.

Appearance

And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let

us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias (Matthew 17:3,4).

After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them. Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen (Mark 16:12-14).

Disappearance

And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesar (Acts 8:38-40).

Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by (John 8:59).

And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way (Luke 4:28-30).

And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight (Luke 24:31).

Change

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light (Matthew 17:1,2).

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed (1 Corinthians 15:51,52).

If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come (Job 14:14).

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Recurrence

And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you (Joel 2:25).

Of all possibilities, only duration is perceptible. When we say that something appears, we mean that we suddenly note its existence; when something disappears, we note its lack of existence. We perceive no intermediate condition of “appearing” or “disappearing”.

Disappearance

And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea (Acts 8:38-40).

In the same way, we talk of change but actually only develop the concept as we perceive aggregates of characteristics that exist-or cease to exist. And so we infer, but do not observe, the recurrence of sunset and sunrise, the passage of seasons, the growth of a child.

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: (Genesis 1:14).

And yet, things really do appear and disappear, change and recur, although not actually perceived to do so. They are, so to speak, hypothetical to us and must have their reality in other dimensions of time, (authors note: Even the Bible says that this present world in which we live is not reality).

Through faith we understand that the worlds (plural) were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear (Hebrews 11:3).

Just as the hypothetical three-dimensional body becomes real, that is perceptible, in the dimension of time we call duration. If access to higher dimensions of time belongs to one body, it is at least theoretically possible that it belongs, though invisibly, to all bodies.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

We can further assume that such access is by way of unfamiliar modes or levels of consciousness-and that the name we give to one of these is prophecy.

Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience (1 Timothy 3:9).

And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10).

I had never really thought much about the concept of time before this revelation because it was something that I thought couldn't be altered. But in the Kingdom of Heaven any thing is possible. Isaiah prayed that the Lord would backup a sundial ten degrees.

And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees? And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees. And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz (2 Kings 20:9-11).

The Lord also held the sun in place for a day for Joshua.

Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day (Joshua 10:12,13).

The concept that past, present, and future could exist simultaneously in another dimension brought up some more interesting ponderings. Did God give our minds the ability to alter perceived time? A good example of this was in a magazine article I read that was done about police gunfights in New York City. They studied testimony from law enforcement officers that were caught in gunfights and they stated that during the gunfight, everything went into slow motion. There is even a scientific name for this phenomenon. Also underground, people seem to lose track of time, as well as drugs slowing down perception of time. Do we "bump" into this spiritual dimension where time is irrelevant every once and awhile? The French call it "de jevu". What about people's whole life flashing in front of their eyes?

We know that the mind is capable of bringing the past of someone's life into the present with a thought, along with every fear, pain, pleasure, and emotion of the past experience all over again. This is called a "memory". Using the mind that has been moved by the Spirit, you can also bring the future into the present just as easy. This is called a "prophecy".

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come (John 16:12,13).

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we

speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:12-16).

This is what the prophets did through out the Bible. The Christian has this power to transcend time also because of the Spirit of Christ in them. The angel explained this power of operating in the future (prophecy) to John.

And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10).

The Bible says, "Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever". If the born again believer is "in Christ", then they are also in the past, present and future.

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

Jesus used the term "I am" to refer to Himself. "I am" is a term for the present. By using this term, Jesus was saying I am present in the past, I am present in the present, and I am present in the future.

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am (John 8:56-58).

Remember that the Christian can operate in this spiritual dimension because he is "in the Spirit" also.

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (Romans 8:9).

The Christian learns through the Holy Spirit how to apply a spiritual solution to a natural problem and uses spiritual law to overcome natural law. For example: If you toss a rock into the air then the law of gravity will cause it to come back down to earth, but the principle of lift or aerodynamics that a airplane uses overcomes this law of gravity and stays in flight. The principle of lift or aerodynamics that a plane uses does not do away with the law of gravity; it just simply overcomes it with a greater law. This is what the prophets did in the Bible. There are many instances of this principle in the Bible. We call them miracles. There is a story in the Bible about how an ax head fell into the water and sunk to the bottom, which was natural law in action. Elijah touched the water with a branch and made the ax head float (2 Kings 6:5-7). Elijah simply applied spiritual law to a natural problem. Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit could walk on water, turn

water into wine, walk through a closed door, etc. I wonder if Einstein ever read a Bible? Einstein said:

A problem cannot be solved at the same level of awareness that created it.

Albert Einstein

Ask the Lord to reveal this revelation on natural law vs. spiritual law to you next time you pray. Let's now take a look at how the holy prophets and apostles operated when they were in this world. Could they transcend time and overcome the natural laws of this world? Let's see what the Bible says about them.

The Bible says the prophets were around when the world began.

As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: (Luke 1:70).

As we can see by the precise accuracy of the Bible in it's prophecies, and the fact that the prophets and apostles were taken somewhere and showed these things, and returned and wrote about what they saw, proves that the future has to already exist somewhere at this present time and the past also in another dimension. When John saw the multitudes of saints worshiping Jesus Christ around the throne. He was looking at me as one of the multitudes worshiping Jesus. So that would mean that right now in another dimension, a part of us are already seated with Christ where He is!

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: (Ephesians 2:4-6).

The main problem that the present world has, is trying to take a knowledge that has come from a different world where time is irrelevant and tries to force it to fit in a world where time is relevant. Remember Jesus said that this world is not his world!

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence (John 18:36).

And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world (John 8:23).

The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath (Proverbs 15:24).

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1-3).

If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you (John 15:19).

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:12-14).

In fact, Jesus said he came to free people from this present evil world.

Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father (Galatians 1:3,4).

Who is the antichrist?

I want to just put this information out for someone to do a deeper study if they feel led, maybe they can use this in their studies. Most of my studies are focused on the “things above”, but during those studies, I still come across interesting things.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1).

When talking about the antichrist, the Bible says that the number of the man is “six hundred three score and six” or 666.

Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six (Revelation 13:18).

The only place in the KJV Bible where the exact phrase “six hundred threescore and six” is used is in describing the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year. The number is associated with two men. The one that received the gold (Solomon) and the one that gave the gold (Hiram the king of Tyre). Let’s look first at the one that received the gold.

Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold, (1 Kings 10:14).

Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and threescore and six talents of gold; (2 Chronicles 9:13).

Who was Solomon? He was the son of David. The Bible says that Solomon ruled from the throne of his father David.

So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem. Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly (1 Kings 2:10-12).

The Bible says that the Messiah (Jesus), who is also called the son of David, will rule from the throne of his father David.

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end (Luke 1:31-33).

Solomon was born of the flesh and ruled a natural kingdom; Jesus was born of the Spirit and rules a spiritual kingdom that overcomes the natural kingdom.

What about Hiram the king of Tyre? How do we know it was Hiram that sent the gold to Solomon and not someone else? The answer is hidden in the Bible, but closer study reveals it. We know that Hiram's navy brought gold to Solomon by 1 Kings 10:11.

And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones (1 Kings 10:11).

The Bible speaks of two navies' that brought gold to Solomon. The navy of Tharshish and the navy of Hiram. The Bible is careful to point out that the navy of Tharshish only came once every **three** years.

For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks. So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom (1 Kings 10:22,23).

The Bible says the gold that weighed "six hundred threescore and six" came in one year and not three, which would exclude the navy of Tharsish, leaving only the navy of Hiram.

Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold, (1 Kings 10:14).

Are there any similarities between the king of Tyre and Lucifer? The Bible connects them in several places. Tyre and Tyrus are two different spellings of the same place. The Bible says in 1 Kings 10:11 that Hiram sent precious stones to Solomon as well as the gold.

And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones (1 Kings 10:11).

Where did Hiram get the precious stones? Did Solomon use these precious stones in making the breastplate of judgment for the priests which Jesus later calls serpents and vipers (Matthew 23:33)? Are precious stones associated with Lucifer?

Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire (Ezekiel 28:11-14).

The Bible says that the king of Tyrus was in the Garden of Eden where the tree of life was. There is probably a good chance that he ate from the tree of life, which would then make him immortal. If he did eat from the tree of life and the Bible says Lucifer and the prince of Tyrus were both men, then the king of Tyrus could still be walking around today as an immortal man, until God causes him to be cast down. Are there any other connections to Lucifer and the prince of Tyre? In both Ezekiel and Isaiah we can see that Lucifer and the prince of Tyre are both described as MEN that tried to rise up to be like God and they were both cast down to the pit.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; (Isaiah 14:12-16).

The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God: Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee: With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures: By thy great wisdom and by thy traffick hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; Behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness. They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas. Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God? but thou shalt be a man, and no God, in the hand of him that slayeth thee. Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD (Ezekiel 28:1-10).

Why did the prince of Tyre think he was God? Because he also ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil!

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken (Genesis 3:22,23).

How close was Solomon to Hiram?

And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together (1 Kings 5:12).

Hiram was skilled in building temples and Solomon had the wisdom of God. How much influence did Hiram have in shaping Solomon? Solomon could be influenced spiritually, because even Solomon's wives were able to turn him from the Lord to other religions (1 King 11:3). The Bible says that Hiram and Solomon were in league together. The book of 1 Kings described how they came together to build a temple for God to dwell in. The Bible says that Hiram loved David and also blessed God. Could Hiram's heart have been turned later like Solomon's heart by someone or something also?

And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying, Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the LORD his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet. But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name (1 Kings 5:2-5).

By these verses, it would appear that Solomon and Hiram were attempting to fulfill a prophecy that was meant for Jesus? Did Jesus ever build a temple for God?

Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body (John 2:19-21).

But Solomon built him a house. Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things? Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye (Acts 7:47-51).

But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; (Hebrews 9:11).

Apparently Hiram and Solomon disallowed the cornerstone Jesus Christ when they built the temple so it eventually was destroyed.

And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house. And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew them, and the stonesquarers: so they prepared timber and stones to build the house (1 Kings 5:17,18).

Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet (Matthew 21:42-46).

How about the mark of the beast? What is it? I have heard many different speculations on what this mark might be. Let's look at some different scripture about this. When man was created he was given dominion over the beast of the earth, but after the fall of mankind, the Bible says man became no different than a beast!

I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? (Ecclesiasties 3:18-21).

The curse placed on Adam after he fell was to return to the dust of the earth like the beast. What about the spirit of man that goes upward and the spirit of the beast that goes downward? What determines the direction the spirit goes?

The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath (Proverbs 15:24).

According to Proverbs 15:24 wisdom points the "spirit of man" upward, but what points the "spirit of the beast" downward? The opposite of wisdom is ignorance. God said his people are destroyed for lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6) and wisdom is a tree of life

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her (Proverbs 3:13-18).

Could ignorance be then a mark of the beast? The Bible says that the mark will be in the forehead or in the right hand.

So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee. Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand (Psalms 73:22,23).

Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish (Psalms 49:20).

Could Paul have been referring to fighting with spiritually ignorant men at Ephesus when he spoke to the Corinthians?

If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die (1 Corinthians 15:32).

Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: (Ephesians 4:18).

But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves (Jude 10).

Job was accused of looking at his friends as beasts.

Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said, How long will it be ere ye make an end of words? mark, and afterwards we will speak. Wherefore are we counted as beasts, and reputed vile in your sight? (Job 18:1-3).

Fallen humanity is referred to in the Bible as sheep, goats, or swine. All these animals are considered cattle to be owned by someone for a use. Ideally we are to be sheep of God's pasture and considered His flock (Psalms 100:3). Jesus is the Good Shepherd (John 10). Pastors that lead the flock to green pastures above (John 10:9) are considered wise men of God. The Bible calls pastor's shepherds, not sheep. It is the sheep's job to produce the wool, not the shepherds.

Today there is a large move to get farmers to place a computer chip in their cattle as a mark to show ownership of the cattle. Science is also making strides with "neuro-chips" for implanting in the brain. In Bible days, earrings and tattoos were used to identify slaves and cattle. When the children of Israel left the bondage of Egypt, they took off their earrings. They then made a golden calf with them, but that is another study. I believe that this same computer chip used to mark cattle and pets today will be used by someone in the future to show ownership of other foolish and ignorant cattle (fallen humanity).

What about revealing the wicked one? Here is a theory I have.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9).

For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God (1 John 3:20,21).

And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly (2 Samuel 24:10). (Now you know why David kept praying for a new heart and why he was also after God's own heart? Acts 13:22)

I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one (1 John 2:14).

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death (Revelation 12:10,11).

Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me (John 12:28-32).

Who is sitting on the throne in your temple?

Many pastors and organizations are still today building massive buildings and mega churches for God and calling them God's house. The Christian on the other hand lets God build their temple for them.

For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:9-11).

For thou, O my God, hast told thy servant that thou wilt build him an house: therefore thy servant hath found in his heart to pray before thee (1 Chronicles 17:25).

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14:1-3).

Marriage, Till Death Do Us Part?

We all know the story of Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden. Could this same harmony that existed before man fell be reclaimed today? Could a new Adam sow new seeds with a new woman in a new garden? If so, how might this be accomplished? Adam gave no advice to God in the designing of the ideal woman, yet she still came from his flesh. What were God's preferences on the blueprint for this ideal couple? Could an ideal man have an ideal relationship with an ideal woman? What would be the blueprint for an ideal relationship? In this age of sky rocketing divorce rates, not even the church has been immune to the destruction of marriages. The rate of divorce in churches is just as high as the world around it. Apparently some people have not found what they are looking for in their marriage after saying their vows. Apparently what religion is preaching about marriage today is not working, so I think I will try to address some of these problems.

I want to make this very clear; I am not a marriage counselor or a pastor, but just a man that believes in Jesus Christ. Since I am not in a relationship at this time, I thought this to be a unique opportunity to be an observer of relationships from the perspective of a single outsider looking in. This analysis of marriage is only my opinion based on what I see and perceive to be wrong in marriage today. I also do not claim to speak for all men. I do not have any scientific data to back this up, so this should not replace professional or pastoral counseling. You must judge for yourself what is best for your situation and seek professional marriage counseling if necessary.

I currently don't believe the world today holds the key to an ideal relationship, even though most religions today hold the view that the ideal relationship is "one man with one woman, till death do they part". In this type relationship, what would be the glue that would hold one man and one woman together till death?

First I would like to put forth four different types of relationships and choose what I perceive to be the ideal one and why. These are very simple to understand. I will start with the most common first, which is *face-to-face* ($\rightarrow\leftarrow$). In this type of relationship, two opposites come together. In magnets this works great, but in people, can two opposites really stay together? From my perspective these relationships are constantly confrontational. Both husband and wife are trying to move the relationship forward but cannot because one or the other is always trying to go the opposite way. Then comes the argument on who has the right way. I have heard experts say that arguing is healthy for a relationship. I don't have a college degree and have not analyzed their data, but try going outside and yelling or kicking at your dog once each day and watch your relationship with your dog blossom. As I perceive for this type of relationship to move forward, one person has to change their direction contrary to their nature and must give up some of who they really are and go a way that they really don't want to go. Does this "mix" make the relationship exciting or spicy, maybe, but they usually can't agree and they can't come together to accomplish anything. What does the Bible have to say about this type of relationship?

Can two walk together, except they be agreed? (Amos 3:3)

The second type of relationship that we will look at is called *back-to-back* ($\leftarrow\rightarrow$). It is easier than the *face-to-face* type of relationship because it avoids

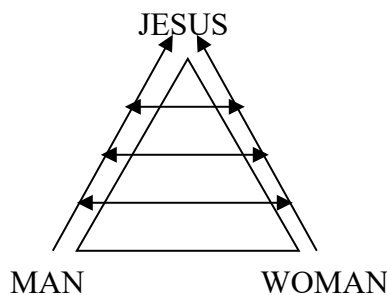
confrontation, but I perceive it to be just as destructive. In this type of relationship, the husband and wife decide that “you do your thing, and I will do mine”. The husband may spend his time at a bar or watching TV and the wife may spend her time shopping or working in the yard. As you both pursue your own direction, you drift farther and farther apart. Usually the people that choose this type of relationship experience constant loneliness. What usually happens with this type of relationship, is the husband or the wife will eventually find someone else that is going the same direction they are and they will divorce and pursue a new type of relationship with a new partner. When a couple quits working together for a common goal, then I perceive the relationship is doomed for failure. What did Jesus have to say about this?

And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. Mark 3:25

The third type of relationship and I believe that is still better is called ***side-by-side*** (⇔). In this type of relationship, both husband and wife share common goals and walk through life ***side-by-side***. You can walk side-by-side forever. Two oxen can plow more ground than one, especially if it doesn't have to drag the other ox plus the plow (just a hint for the couch potato in the marriage). This type of relationship can be very productive and last a long time, but I believe that there is still a more ideal relationship. The Bible gives some advice about this way if you decide to pursue it.

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:14)

The fourth type of relationship and the one that I believe is the ideal one was shown to me one time by a friend at church. It was a diagram that looked like this



What this diagram is illustrating, is the fact that if both the husband and wife are focused on Jesus, they will come closer and closer together as they become one in Christ. After all was that not the divine plan with marriage for man and woman, to bring two back together into one. Is not your children one flesh, made up by the flesh of two people? So you see two can become one.

This is where I want to stop and discuss what I believe marriage actually is. I think that many do not understand the true marriage relationship. Many think that marriage is a covenant and a vow that a man and woman make before God and the world sealed by a marriage license. If marriage has been reduced to just a vow made to each other at a

ceremony and a license by the state, then the church has no argument. Theoretically two men or two women could claim to be married by following society's definition of marriage. But if true marriage is actually two beings coming together to produce a new creation that is half the flesh of each parent and is a result of their union, then only a man and woman could actually be considered "married".

One of the reasons why I think the church has missed what the marriage union actually is and the reason why I am discussing this is because whole churches are splitting over an argument whether two men or two women can be considered "married".

I believe that actually true marriage is when two become one in mind and body. The result of that union is a new creation. The Bible says that "two flesh shall become one". When a man and woman come together in a physical relationship then the child that results from that union is a totally new creation. That child has one half the mothers DNA and one half the fathers DNA. That child is a mixture of the two fleshs of the parents. Two flesh become one. This same relationship and resulting newbirth is also used to describe the union of the Christian to Christ, which I will explain later.

There is also a difference between matrimony and holy matrimony. Matrimony is when a man and woman are joined one flesh; holy matrimony is when the believer and Christ are joined together in one Spirit. When the believer and the Holy Spirit are joined together a seed is planted and you also have a newbirth. Please read the chapter "The Christian Experience: From Seed to Saint".

I want to go back to the Garden of Eden and revisit the original reason for this marriage union to help understand its purpose. The Bible says that woman was taken out of the man and now he was incomplete without the woman. In Genesis, God called them Adam, not Adam and Eve.

This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created (Genesis 5:1,2).

Adam named Eve, in Genesis 3:20, not God. When God took woman out of man he became incomplete. Man then had a desire toward a woman to become whole again. This natural desire to become one between man and woman is not true love though; I will explain true love later.

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed (Genesis 2:21-25).

Men and women are born incomplete in the flesh and need the other to become complete to reproduce. The Christian must become one Spirit with Jesus Christ to become complete and reproduce also.

For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:29-32).

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God (Romans 7:4).

Notice how the Bible uses this discourse about marriage to describe the churches union to Christ. You can walk side by side “totally committed” to serving your wife or husband all day long, but you still will never be able to reproduce until you become one with them! In like manner you can follow Jesus in total “commitment” to His cause, but you can never reproduce fruit until you become one with Him. There is a huge difference between a Christian (joined to the Lord by the spiritual newbirth) and someone “committed to the cause of Christ”! Many religions have changed the Gospel from Jesus “is the way”, to Jesus “showed the way” and reduced Jesus Christ down to nothing more than a heavenly inspired teacher that “shows us a way to God”. Much like other religions supposedly “show us a way to God”.

I hear so many pastors and speakers preach on “commitment” to marriage and to Christ. This is where I disagree with almost every pastor and teacher on marriage. Total “commitment” to your spouse is not true marriage, and total “commitment” to Jesus Christ is not true Christianity! There are people that have so totally “committed” their lives to their religion, all the way to the point of blowing themselves up in a crowded market place, and still are in error!

What I see marriage reduced to today, is a vow made between two individuals to be together through a vow and a covenant before God and man, but they seem to try to remain individuals. This same school of thought has also been transferred to the Christian experience. Instead of an actual union of one Spirit with Jesus, Christianity is being taught as a covenant where you vow to be faithful to Jesus’ teachings and Biblical precepts, but you remain a separate individual. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 6:17,

But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit (1 Corinthians 6:17).

What I am discussing here is the personal relationship that the believer experiences with Christ when they are born again and not the great end time event known as the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, where the church as a whole body is together with Jesus. Many people know about Jesus through reading the Bible, but unless you know Jesus in a personal spiritual union then no newbirth can result. No seed was ever planted in the person’s heart and no newbirth ever resulted in the person’s life. The same Holy Spirit that planted the seed in Mary for Christ to be born is the same Holy Spirit that plants the seed in our hearts for Christ to be birthed in us. Christianity is a spiritual newbirth experience.

When a woman is pregnant, then there are two separate beings and lives existing inside her body. The mother’s life and the life of her child. Even though they both exist in one

body, the child is a separate creation from the mother and carries half of the father's nature, which makes the child a totally new creation and a new life with a new future. In like manner the new spiritual man that is growing inside the Christian when they are joined to the Lord by the Holy Spirit, is manifesting the attributes of the Father also. Paul said in Galatians 4:19, *I travail in birth again till Christ be formed in you.*

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? (2 Corinthians 13:5).

And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha (Romans 9:29).

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ (Galatians 3:16).

As Paul told the Galatians when he said I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, the Christian experiences travail during this spiritual new birth process. One day Jesus will tell many that he never "knew" them.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matthew 7:23).

The Bible's use of the word "knowing" is used many times to describe the marriage union where a seed is planted.

And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD (Genesis 4:1).

And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up (Genesis 24:16).

Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God (Luke 1:34,35).

You can see how far this idea of being married and staying individuals has gone when you see women keep their maiden name in a marriage to declare to the world that they are separate from their husband. The women in the Bible understood just how important it was to keep the same last name as their husband.

And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach (Isaiah 4:1).

When we are joined to Jesus in the marriage union then He takes away our reproach also, because we are now a part of His flesh also.

For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:29-32).

It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself (2 Timothy 2:11-13).

For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy (1 Corinthians 7:14).

Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered (1 Peter 3:6,7).

If Jesus never became one body and Spirit with us and we didn't take His name, how could He take away our reproach? Women today have played a great part in driving this wedge into the marriage union. The whole purpose of the man and wife sharing the same last name was because they should have become one new individual. Your children are a reproduction and a reflection of that new individual. If men and women today understood the vital significance of that marriage union, then I think there would be much less spousal abuse. Bottom line ladies, as a rule, men are not going to attack their own body because it hurts, they are going to take anger or frustration out on what is not their own body.....

So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:28-32).

Woman by declaring that they are different individuals using different last names are declaring that they are not part of their husbands flesh. They then wonder why their

husband is not treating them like his own body or nurturing and cherishing her? If a husband and wife do not consider themselves ONE, but only consider themselves two people in a covenant agreement, then the best they can possibly hope for in their “marriage” is to become really good friends that get together and have good sex. If the wife or husband doesn’t consider himself or herself the same flesh, then are they living with strange flesh? This is why the Bible refers to two men or two women relationships as strange flesh instead of same flesh.

Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire (Jude 7).

King Solomon in the Bible had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. Even though he had sex with many women, they were not considered same flesh.

But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; (1 Kings 11:1).

On to the next topic, there are some people in the world also that have been married several times, and many of them have the exact same excuse. They say they always seem to attract the wrong kind of mate and they do not know why. They say that their mate seemed like a good person when they got married and then they changed for the worse. I want to stop and analyze this excuse for a second. If you have been divorced several times and still do not know why you seem to always attract the wrong type mate, then in the name of common sense stop pursuing any more relationships until you do find out exactly why this happens! You are just driving up the divorce statistics. If all your past spouses were the main ones at fault in the relationship, then common sense would seem to point to the obvious answer. If your past spouses all seemed like a good person before you married them and then they changed into something bad afterward, then the obvious logical conclusion would be that you turned a good mate bad. If they were bad to begin with and you knew that then there is your answer, you should not have gotten married to a bad person in the first place. If all you’re past spouses were actually bad to begin with and they just had you fooled each time, then you need to get on your knees and thank God that you are still alive. This is one reason I did this study, to help people figure out why they keep getting into wrong relationships, because if you do not figure out why you keep getting fooled by bad spouses, the next relationship you get into with a bad spouse could just be your last!

I want to now touch on couples in ministry. I personally would not marry a woman that had a separate ministry. I would pray that the Lord would send me a woman that could help me in my calling. When a man and woman are joined in marriage, then they are considered one individual and should both be focused on the same ministry. When God created Eve from Adam, He created her to help her husband in his task. She was not given a separate “new” task by God.

I want to touch briefly on the topic of sex, because many think that sex is something that is dirty or nasty. The act of sex is a beautiful creation of God given to the human race. The circumstance in which the act is performed is what is considered sin.

Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge (Hebrews 13:4).

For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man (Romans 7:2,3).

The act of sex is the same whether people have a marriage license or not. One circumstance is considered a sin and the other is not. The act is still the same. If there is anybody out there that thinks that the act of sex is what is dirty or naughty, then a marriage license or wedding ceremony cannot take a dirty or naughty act and make it holy in your eyes. All a marriage license can do is take an act that is dirty or naughty in your eyes, and make it legal.

I just want to touch briefly on the subject where a husband and wife deny each other sex. What does the Bible say about this, because this can be very detrimental to a marriage?

Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency (1 Corinthians 7:3-5).

I want to now discuss the source of true love and how it applies to the marriage union. This may shock many women and men too, but true love is not gotten from your spouse. True love can only come from a relationship with Jesus Christ and then that love is shared with your spouse. Many woman and men that are seeking true love from their spouse will never find that love that they need. Their spouse cannot produce that kind of love. They also have to receive that love first from God, only then can they share that with their spouse. The true marriage is when both are giving to the relationship and not always taking from the relationship. They need Jesus Christ as the source of their giving. A man or woman in a marriage union can show love to each other to a certain extent, but the love that will last the ages, can come only from the Rock of Ages, Jesus Christ.

I want to stop here and expose two types of tricks that men and woman use on each other. Women are not going to admit they do these things and neither are men, so I will expose it. First I will deal with a trick that I have fallen for and I finally figured it out. When you come home and your wife is pouting or silent and they will not tell you what is wrong, but they keep telling you “you know what you did”, then there is a good chance that the husband is getting set up for this trick. Most guys will start apologizing for things

that they think they have done that their wife didn't know about. What they are actually doing is giving their wife a multiple choice of things to pick from. What I figured out finally is the husband has not done anything wrong that the wife knows about. The wife was just using this trick to get their husbands to tell on their self.

I also believe that many women from their childhood up have a preconceived notion what their perfect husband will be like. Many times though they settle for less than what they wanted with the intent on changing that man into their idea of a perfect husband. I have two words to address that practice. Stop it! That is not fair to your husband. What usually happens is that marriage ends up being a back-to-back or face-to-face style relationship. Wait and find that perfect husband that is at least focused on the same goals as you where you can walk side-by-side.

I want to address an issue that I have heard come up many times when talking about Christian marriages. Many women ask the question "What are we to do if our husbands are not Christians or active in their faith, should we still be submissive to them"? Firstly I have heard other Christian marriage counselors say they must just persevere in the relationship for the sake of their marriage vows. I will not tell you that. I do believe that Jesus can restore a marriage, but I do not feel that God honors a spouse that follows the other in ungodliness for the sake of being faithful to their marriage vows. I believe men and women do sometimes make bad decisions in picking relationships, but that should not translate into a life sentence of bondage and misery for them as Paul also taught.

But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? (1 Corinthians 7:12-16).

I will offer my opinion on where you may go from this point. You defiantly must realize you cannot go backwards and change the past. That is already written down in history. In my experience, you will suffer loss in a divorce and you must come to grips with that. You can mourn what was lost, but then all you can do is start from the point that you may be in now and move forward. To do that, you must understand where you are and what options you have to decide what to do next. Number one, you must understand what kind of relationship you are in now to make a logical decision as to which way to go. The only two types of relationship you can be in with opposing views on religion is what I discussed earlier in this study on face-to-face or back-to-back. The end result of these types of both of these relationships I perceive to be destructive as I explained earlier, unless the other spouse is changed by the Lord.

Please understand this, you are not going to change them into a Christian! Only Jesus Christ can change their life. The most you can hope for by trying to change them yourselves is maybe a promise by them to change, depending how much pressure you use. This will almost always end in failure. Their spirit may be willing, but their flesh is

weak. As I see it, if Jesus Christ does not change them, then you have to decide next if you are going to walk with them in hoping they will eventually be changed or are you going to leave them. You have to come to that decision. I do know that you cannot go and stay at the same time. If you do decide to leave then, if you enter into another relationship, please learn from your mistakes. Look for a spouse that you don't have to try and change and is truly focused on Jesus Christ and not some religion.

If you are still committed at this point in saving your marriage, then maybe what I am sharing here can help. If you are in the position that you are deeply hurt by your spouse, you must first find a way to forgive them. I know it happens, I have hurt people in relationships that I cared deeply for. Once again you must realize that you can't go back and change what happened, so all you can do is start from where you are now and go forward. There is an old saying that says, "If you live in the past, then you are dead in the present, and you have no future". If you can't find a way to forgive them, try doing this instead. Jesus will forgive anybody. As you get your true love from Jesus, you have to get your forgiveness from Jesus also. Try praying once a day that Jesus would forgive them for what they did to you, just like Stephen prayed for the Lord to forgive the people that were stoning him in (Acts 7:59,60). You are not letting them off the hook, but turning them over to Jesus, so you can be free. After you get to the point where you can freely pray this prayer for Jesus to forgive them, then one day try praying for your spouse yourself.

I want to also expose a trick that men use on woman many times that is far more destructive and very serious. Some men will verbally abuse their spouse in an attempt to break down their self-esteem. If men are successful in this, then the only sense of worth or value a woman has comes from what their husbands will give them. If not even their husband places value on their wife, then she feels she has no value to anyone else either. Only if a woman truly knows who they are in Christ and that they are a daughter of God, then they are destined to live in a marriage of constant uncertainty. Women that are overcome by this trick are constantly kept off balance and rarely come to a stable enough position to make a solid decision on leaving or staying in that relationship.

I also see today a steady decline in the way women are perceived by many men and society from fifty years ago. Fifty years ago women were many times set on a pedestal and respected by men. Why did men do that? Simple, because women back then acted respectable. What many young girls today are buying music that refers to them as "ho's", and they wear the term "bitch" as a badge of honor. The word "bitch" means a female dog. Many girls today are embracing derogatory names and think it is cool or funny, but then they are reducing themselves to that identity in their lifestyles and actions. We see society and men today starting to perceive women in this way also and are responding to them accordingly. In many men's eyes, these girls that have gone wild are changing men and society's perception of all women. Men are starting to look at younger women as drinking buddies that they can have sex with later, instead of a woman that they would want to be the mother of their child. Older women also are being portrayed in society and on television as desperate and running around the neighborhoods looking for sex. It does not take a visionary or a rocket scientist to see where this road of decline that many women are on will lead. In many countries even today, women are considered a little above animals and treated accordingly. The older women in America need to stop for a second and look where they are and many of the young women are heading. Through the

degrading of women in songs and television and the sexual revolution, women in the future could be eventually looked at as in other countries as nothing more than breeding stock. Many young and older women are somehow thinking they are finally finding great liberty and sexual freedom today in these lifestyles, but I perceive women have turned full circle and are going right back to square one. It took women to accept these stereotypes so to reverse this trend it will take women that will stand up and reject these stereotypes. The Bible teaches that it is the older women's responsibility to teach the next generation of women.

The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed (Titus 2:3-5).

A father can teach a daughter that she has great value, but I don't believe a man can effectively teach a girl how to become a respectable woman. Women do not deceive yourselves, as you can see in other countries, men and society can and will adapt to accept women as only breeding stock if that is your wish.

I mainly wanted this study to be focused on the marriage union, but I just want to stop briefly and address the subject of rebellious children. They can be very destructive to a marriage if not handled properly. I have heard countless sermons about how parents are to blame if a child goes astray or is rebellious. I want to put in a word of support in for the parents. Even if parents do everything right, a child can be rebellious and go astray, because they inherited a sin nature and rebellious spirit from Adam, and the only cure for that is Jesus Christ, not better parenting. I also want to touch briefly on the subject of divorce, because many men and women want to get remarried sometime, but they do not understand divorce. In the church, many times divorced people are looked down upon, but they are in some pretty amazing company. God was even divorced once.

The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. (Jeremiah 3:6-8).

In the Bible there are several verses on why a couple could get a divorce, but what actually is a true Biblical divorce is in God's eyes.

When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife (Deuteronomy 24:1,2).

Man has added more stipulations to the biblical divorce procedure that was not spoken of in the Bible. Divorce is much more complicated now than when it was described in the Bible. The divorce now has to be handled in a court and a judge must sign it to be legal in man's eyes. The reason for this is to divide up property and child custody. According to the Bible, divorce was final when the man handed the woman a divorce paper and told her to get out, the Bible says that she is able to go be another man's wife.

I want to share something here that I believe has also brought much harm to many marriages. I want to address this to the men that are married. I have seen a study that is quoted often on the Internet in varying percentages. The one that I saw said that the average person uses 40 percent of their mind worrying about something that will never come to pass and 30 percent of their mind worrying about something that has happened and cannot be changed. According to this study, 70 percent of the average person's mind is distracted worrying about things that they cannot control. Do not add your fears to your wife! If any husbands have a fear that is not proven, do not share this with your wife unless it is valid and certain. Many women try to get their husbands to open up and share their fears so they can show their husbands some support. I believe men should open up to their wives about certain things, but what usually happens when a husband shares their fears with their wife is now you have two people in the marriage that are worrying about something that may not even happen. Your wives may think they are strong, but they will sense a loss of security in their husband and internalize it, whether they admit it or not. You will notice a difference in their behavior toward you if you jeopardize their sense of security.

For the end of this study, I want to discuss one of the most important issues that are related to a successful marriage. I also want to stand up for the husbands that have been beaten up in the church by pastors and women that have accused them of not being the spiritual head of their house. I think almost every pastor has one sermon on beating up men in the church for not being the spiritual leader of their home. I want to expose this so maybe some pastors will start building up the men in the church instead. There is a reason for some of this.

Sunday school classes and church services are attended by both the husband and the wife, and they are both usually on the same learning level. The Sunday school teacher, pastor, cell or small group leader, or TV evangelist has replaced the husband as the spiritual leader of the home. This then can present other problems if the wife starts comparing her husband's spiritual walk to their Sunday school teacher or pastor or small group leader. Many women get their spiritual teaching now and their doctrine from women's conferences, the latest Christian author, television or radio. Many times the husbands cannot compete with these other spiritual leaders as "priest" of his home. How can a man that has spent all day at a job, come home and compete with a TV evangelist or a professor of theology, or Christian author that their wife has been listening to. Then on Sunday they have to compete with a pastor and a Sunday school teacher. I participated in a men's only Bible study because I think it builds up men when they get to share a new revelation that they have received with their wife. The husband actually gets to step into the role of the priest of his home. He gains respect and reverence from his wife and he comes to realize that he has a greater responsibility and duty in his family's spiritual health instead of leaving that to someone else.

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered (1 Peter 3:7).

The same thing applies to the children in the church today. The youth pastors in the church have stepped into the families and become the children's spiritual leader instead of their father. There are many teenagers and children that would never fuss and fight with their youth pastor like they would talk bad and argue with their father. Why is that? Because the youth in the church today look at and reverence the youth pastor as God's representative to them. The father used to hold that position also, as being God's representative to their children.

In many ways, the church today has stepped in and taken away the ministry of the husband to his family. I think Paul was warning about this very thing happening to a marriage in 1 Corinthians 14:34,35. In these scriptures, Paul was not trying to claim that women were any less spiritual or less of a person in the Lord's eyes, but it could be damaging their husband's credibility in his family's eyes.

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church (1 Corinthians 14:34,35).

Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband (Ephesians 5:33).

I am strictly dealing with a husband and wife relationship here and not a believer and Christ relationship, because the Bible says that in Christ there is neither male nor female in (Galatians 3:28). A woman can share her testimony of a changed life just like a man. The Bible also says that in the end time, both sons and daughters and servants and handmaidens will prophecy in Acts 2:17,18. I have heard many pastors say that the man and woman are co-equals in the leadership of the marriage, in light of all the scriptures that stands in contradiction to this, where do they get this doctrine? Even in the union of the believer with Jesus Christ, Jesus is accepted as the leader of that relationship.

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God (1 Corinthians 11:3).

If this idea of the wife submitting to her husband only came from one scripture, then you might be able to argue against it, but this doctrine is found in many verses of the Bible. I asked a pastor one time after showing them many scriptures proving that the man is the head of the marriage, why do they preach them as co-equals in the leadership of the marriage? He said that if you preach that the man is the head of the marriage, then that tends to breed arrogance in man. This is where I think many pastors may miss this. It is not the Biblical principles of a wife submitting to her husband that breed's the arrogance in man. That is an issue of the flesh. The problem is the husband's heart, not the Biblical

principles for the leadership in the marriage. I have even heard woman make a joke about these verses, and they say, “the husband may be the head, but the wife is the neck that turns the head”. What does the Bible have to say?

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing (Ephesians 5:22-24).

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God (1 Corinthians 11:3).

For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man (1 Corinthians 11:7,8).

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them (Colossians 3:18,19).

The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed (Titus 2:3-5).

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; (1 Peter 3:1).

For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered (1 Peter 3:5-7).

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression (1 Timothy 2:11-14).

If women today do not accept their Biblical role in the marriage as addressed in all these scriptures, and pastors don't preach they should, then the pastors need to quit demanding the men to keep their Biblical role as God ordained head of the marriage that is spoken of in the very same verses! We can just continue as we are going in the church

today and sit back and see if the divorce ratio in the church stabilizes or increases. What I see are many pastors that are just causing confusion. If the church wants to help restore and reverse the decline of marriage today, then try strengthening and supporting the men and then let them strengthen their wives and families.

I can tell you that if the church doesn't start supporting the fathers and husbands, then who will? I will support them in this study, but I am just one voice. Society already portrays husbands and fathers as stumbling, bumbling idiots on TV and in movies. The old saying "father knows best" has been changed into "father knows nothing". Here is the secret to the successful marriage.

Make sure that the husbands have a true relationship with Jesus Christ, and are not just making vows to the church and to each other to keep promises to their families. Their spirit may be willing, but their flesh is weak. If the husband in the marriage is truly saved, then the true love will follow.

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered (1 Peter 3:7).

Conclusion

I hope that you have enjoyed reading this research as much as I have enjoyed sharing it, but wait there is much more. Remember at the introduction of this book I asked you to read the whole verses provided in each chapter and not just the underlined part? There is a very important reason for this. The wisdom and knowledge in the Bible verses that I have presented in this book are “layered”. Many verses that I presented had primary truths and hidden truths in the exact same scriptures. That is why you can read the Bible one day and then as you grow in understanding of the doctrine, you realize that the same scripture carries a “deeper” hidden wisdom also that you were previously blinded to at the first reading. Bible scholars have a special name for this. I actually wrote this book to be 720 pages long instead of 360 pages. You are only half way through reading this book! The second volume is contained in the first. If you go back and read this book again, you may just find a book within a book. Remember the chapter “Bible Study Tips” where I described the wisdom in the Bible as a puzzle where you first have to understand the primary doctrine before you are able to understand the hidden doctrine that connects to it. The Bible says God builds line upon line, precept upon precept. This is the divine order for understanding the scripture. You are not going to be able to jump to the “deeper” wisdom without first understanding the primary doctrines. You are never going to be able to understand the secondary meaning until you first understand the primary meanings. I have underlined the primary truths for you, but the hidden truths can only be revealed to you by the Holy Spirit. Enjoy, the word Gospel means “Good News”! After you are finished please go back and read your KJV Bible. I have to now go feed my cats, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment (Hebrews 6:1,2).

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