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 We Believe The Bible Without Error
 And Teach What We Believe!

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A Systematic Theology is a work that takes the very simplest, basic Doctrines of the Bible, teaches these doctrines, then using these teachings as a springboard progresses toward the more difficult doctrines. The next study will always build on the one just taught. This Systematic Theology will show how the doctrines of Scripture relate with the other truths of the Scripture. Systematic Theology is also a good place for new Christians to start. Some of the works at this site are definitely not geared toward the new Believer, but assume that you understand certain basic Doctrines necessary for that study. If you follow the Systematic Theology in the order it is presented, you shouldn't have any problems understanding the deeper studies presented later in this work. I cannot over-emphasize the importance of studying and applying the Word of God to your lives. Failure to understand the Word has caused carnality and division in our modern day Church.

Emptiness of carnal Christianity noted to seminarians by Jess Moody (By Cindy Kerr)

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) -- Southern Baptists are reaping "a harvest of division" because many are living a Christianity that is not Spirit-filled, Jess Moody told students at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. "I'm not talking about speaking in tongues or a word of knowledge," said the retired pastor of Shepherd of the Hills Baptist in Van Nuys, Calif., and current adjunct teacher of pastoral ministry and evangelism at Southwestern. "I'm talking about what George Truett, Lee Scarborough and B.H. Carroll preached years ago that Baptists stopped preaching 30 years ago. Now we're reaping a harvest of division from our carnal Christianity." Moody said he believes God wants revival at Southwestern. "That doesn't infer that we're a bunch of corrupt bureaucrats. It means that so many of us have been shamelessly untaught concerning the ministry and power of the Holy Spirit in a human being's life," he said at the Fort Worth, Texas, seminary Oct. 22. "Baptists are stuck at the new birth and that's it. If revival doesn't come here, we are in a big mess nationally. You are tomorrow for the Southern Baptist Convention," he told the seminary students. "The Holy Spirit is the Edsel of the Southern Baptist Convention according to Herschel Hobbs," Moody added. "I'm not criticizing what Baptists don't do -- we'll get to heaven all right, but we'll be stripped of our rewards if we walk all during our ministry as carnal Christians." Moody said a marked difference exists between how carnal Christians and Spirit filled Christians treat other people. "Carnal Christians order people around, direct everything, command, threaten, fire, preach at, judge, criticize, blame, name-call, ridicule, shame, probe and make rotten husbands, wives and pastors," he said. "They're not able to accomplish anything and wonder why when they stand up and preach and extend an invitation, no one comes forward. "But if you're filled with the mighty, loving Holy Spirit, he will console, reassure and sympathize with you so you can support, trust, have the power to interpret, analyze, suggest, diagnose, praise, suggest, advise and model." Much of the blame begins in the pulpit, Moody said. "Chaucer said, 'If the gold rusts, what shall the iron do?' What are those folks going to do out there if we put in the pulpit carnal men of God?" he asked. "Called, born again, saved for sure, but missing the marvelous truth that we must not lose -- the filling of the Holy Spirit." Citing his own efforts to duplicate Christ's life in his, Moody said only the Holy Spirit can do that work. He added people can't always tell who's walking in the Spirit and who's not. "Trying to live the Christian life in your own flesh is like riding a bike with square wheels in mud up to your waist," he said. "People doing that are miserable, even if they may be posing as great pastors, as great denominational leaders, as great professors and students." At stake is not the believer's salvation, Moody said, but the church's mission to reach the world for Christ. "We will never change the world until all of us are filled with the Holy Spirit," he said. Using the acronym RIBS, Moody said five things happen to Christians when they accept Christ as Savior. They are Reborn, Indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9, 11; John 3:3), Baptized into Christ's death (Romans 6:3) and Sealed. The fifth thing, he said, is that they are filled with the Spirit. "You can't lose your ribs," said Moody, "but you can lose your filling" by grieving the Spirit (Romans 4:30) and quenching the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19), making the person a carnal Christian. The good news is that carnal Christians can be filled with the Holy Spirit again, Moody said, citing 1 John 1:9. "If you confess your sins, remember that God will forgive you and cleanse you of the sins you can remember, plus the ones you can't," he said. He added praying for the Holy Spirit to come is not the answer. Instead, he said, Christians should "pray for the Holy Spirit to come out." Faith in God's power to act and believing he will also be important to being filled with the Holy Spirit, Moody said. "I believe in miracles. I believe in God's healing power. I believe God can do anything we will allow him to do," he said. "By his strange design, he has made our willingness one of the conditions for Great

Awakening. The greatest miracle, Moody said, is the power of Jesus Christ to transform lives. "When I talk about a miracle, the new birth is a greater miracle than turning water into wine," he said.

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Why should I study the Scriptures systematically?

Are You Saved By Faith In Christ?

English	Francais	Deutsch
Espanol	Portuguese	Italiano
Arabic	Hebrew	Indonesian
Chinese	Japanese	Russian
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Vietnamese	Greek	Norwegian

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Systematic Theology

STUDY ONE

The Strength of the Word of God

Its Influence on the Christian Belief

Secular Logic

The necessity of Dogma within the Biblical Realm

The Absolute: The Bible is true in all that it affirms in its Autographa, which we have a nearly perfect reflection of via Textual Criticism of the 5000 manuscripts that are extant today.

"The Bible is the watershed for Evangelical Christianity ... and true in all it affirms.." (Francis Schaeffer)

In our era there has risen a faction of evangelical - theologians who are in reality "liberal" in their approach to the Bible. They hold that the Bible is *only true* in its affirmations of faith, but is *erroneous* on all matters pertaining to science or history. The debate rages on: the conservative camp holds that the Bible is totally inerrant; the liberals, only partially inerrant.

I am a conservative believer, as you can see if you have spent any time studying these writings. This theological treatise is addressed to you, dear Reader, so that you may see that logically, historically, and textually the Bible is fully inerrant.

The Bible *must be* without error, or else Christianity is indeed another passing fad.

Through God's Spirit I will show you that the *consequences* of accepting an errant Bible into the Christian faith.

C.S. Lewis ... "The Scriptures cannot be legends. They are not good enough to be legends: no prose, no art in fact, no explanation of where God came from. If they are legends and not historical, then they are realistic prose fiction of a kind which actually never existed before the 18th century..."

The Historical Evidence of the Total Inerrancy of the Bible

IN CHURCH HISTORY

Because the authenticity and the inerrancy of the Scriptures were never seriously challenged, the early Church never debated at-large on this subject. In the period of the Reformation dogma on the integrity of Scripture was not seriously considered, for the major theme was "Justification by faith alone". The Reformers were basically in agreement with the Roman Catholic Church on the matter of the integrity of the Scriptures.

Even so, there are many quotations and creeds (which we will see later) which more than show the hard truth that the early Church fully accepted a totally inerrant Scripture.

IN JEWISH HISTORY

Josephus, the famous Jewish Historian, wrote: "... There are no discrepancies in the facts recorded. The prophets learned their message by reason of the inspiration which they received from God ... they compiled accurately the history of their own time."

The Jewish faith is built upon the concept of the *absolute inerrancy* of the Scriptures. As God's chosen people, their duties were to carry their faith untarnished, to preserve the Scriptures free from error as documents from the hand of God.

IN ROMAN CATHOLIC HISTORY

Clement of Rome .. "You have carefully studied the sacred Scriptures which are the true utterance of the Holy Ghost. You know that in them there hath not been written anything that is unrighteous or counterfeit.."

Justin Martyr .. "The writers received from God the knowledge which they taught .. Men whose sole foundation was to present themselves pure to the energy of the Divine Spirit, in order that the Divine Plectrum itself, descending from Heaven, and using righteous men as an instrument like a harp .. might reveal the knowledge of things Divine .."

Augustine .. "His members gave out the knowledge which they had received through the diction of the Head; whatsoever He willed us to read concerning His own words and acts, He bade them write, as though they were His very own words .."

In addition to the above Catholic scholars, Polycarp, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Chrysostom, and Athanasius all believed in the totally inerrant Scripture. All of these men are revered Church Fathers, all Great Theologians.

THE REFORMATION FATHERS

Martin Luther .. "The Scriptures have never erred, the Scriptures cannot err .. It is certain that Scripture cannot disagree with itself .."

John Calvin .. When Calvin admitted error in the Scripture, he always attributed it to his own neglect, or that of a copyist. He believed the Scriptures to be inerrant in their Autographa, the original texts. Calvin held that if a Scriptural book recorded

a man's name as the author, then he was the one whom God used to write the text.

THE CONFSSIONAL CREEDS

The Westminster Confession of Faith, in speaking of the Holy Scriptures, states: "*It is the only infallible rule of faith and practice..*"

The New Hampshire Confession of Faith stated of the Bible, "*..it has God for its Author, salvation for its end and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter ..*"

JESUS AND THE APOSTLES

Both our Lord as well as the Apostles frequently referred to the Scriptures in their ministries. In the Gospels alone Jesus referred to the Old Testament Scriptures 33 times, frequently using the Bible to rebuke the Devil or witness to His own prophetic reality as Messiah.

Jesus, the Living Word of God (John 1), as a member of the Trinity of God understood the integrity of the Scriptures. If the Scriptures were errant, would our Lord have misled us by quoting errant Scripture? This I cannot believe! Jesus, as God in the flesh, *knew that the Holy Texts were without error*, and as an Orthodox Jew studied and trusted the same.

John 16:13 "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."

Jesus promised His disciples (and the Church) that the Holy Spirit would come to *guide you into all truth*. This same Spirit has guided the Church from the beginning, leading all those who came before to believe in a fully inerrant Scripture. This Spirit witness of those who came before is a powerful testimony: would the Holy Spirit allow the Church to believe the Scripture to be inerrant for nearly two thousand years if it were not so? Has the Holy One failed in His calling? Or are we, via liberal theological thought, transforming the Truth of the

Ages into what we believe is a higher truth, but in reality trading the truth for a lie?

Biblical - Textual Proofs Of The Inerrancy Of Scripture

2 Timothy 3:16 "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness .."

The key to this text is the use of the word ***all***. ***All*** means that which it is speaking of is ***fully inclusive***, no part withstanding. Alford speaks of this text by saying:

"The meaning, unquestionable, both grammatically and textually, means every Scripture, i.e. every part of the Scripture.. "

The liberal theologian states the Bible is errant ***except*** in matters of the faith, yet the Bible in a ***matter of faith*** declares itself to be true in all ways historically, scientifically, and religiously. Even here the liberal theologian is opposed in his quest to destroy the foundation of our faith.

The matter of Scriptural inerrancy is one of an all or none proposition. Either we believe the Word of God to be fully inerrant, or fully errant, full of error. Either we believe it to be written ***free of human impulse***, or written by human impulse. The Bible itself leaves us no other options.

2 Peter 1:21 "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."

We either believe its contents to be true in all it affirms, or else we disbelieve it entirely.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

1 Corinthians 14:37 "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."

Galatians 1:11-12 "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."

Either the Scriptures are true or false: the Bible, in its own text, cuts off any possibility of a halfway point.

There is yet another reason for believing in the absolute inerrancy of the Scriptures, the fact of the Sovereignty of God:

Isaiah 46:9-11 "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: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it."

It is written, "holy men of God wrote as they were moved by the Spirit". If we believe that God controls all creation within His Plan of the Ages, the following things must be true: 1. If God wrote the Bible, then no human frailty would be allowed in His Divine work. Can God communicate or fellowship with sin? 2. If God did not write the Book, then why did He allow such a devious work to be completed and preserved throughout the centuries? Did God purposely allow His people, whom He loves, to be so deceived? Did He allow Israel to guard a lie with their very lives? I cannot believe this.

Through a period of 1500 years God chose out over 40 authors, covering a time span of 60 generations. The Old Testament of our Bible is peppered with over 2000 phrases like "thus saith the Lord", a clear indication of God's hand in the writing. The God chosen writers came from three continents: Africa, Asia, and

Europe. The Bible was written in four languages: Chaldean (Assyrian), Aramaic, Koine Greek, and Hebrew. God took this mix and, in His holiness, created a beautiful work, a work whose words flow like living water from paragraph to paragraph, chapter to chapter, book to book, with a fluidity which no other human work possesses.

Why this amazing phenomena? The answer is simple: the Book, our Bible, is of God, not of men. God in His omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence persuaded the chosen authors to write as He so decreed. This is why such an ancient and venerated writing has stood the test of time for thousands of years.

The Bible In The Light Of Textual Criticism

Many liberals roaming the outskirts of Christianity disbelieve the authority of the Bible on the grounds that we *do not have* the original text in our possession today. This is true, we do not have the original text. Yet this is not as big a problem as has been made out in the past. By the science of Textual Criticism we have a highly comparable text to that of the original Autographa. Let me explain, using Textual Criticism on the classics taught by 99% of our colleges today. This same method is used to verify classical works of man, and no one questions the validity of these classics (while running the Word of God into the ground). A little one-sided, don't you think?

I must credit the discovery of this material to Josh McDowell. The material is found in the "Documentation of Classical Literature", located in all complete university libraries.

AUTHOR	CLOSEST MANUSCRIPT IN YEARS TO AUTOGRAPHA	HOW MANY MANUSCRIPTS IN OUR POSSESSION
Plato	1200 Years	7

Caesar on the Gallic Wars	1000 Years	10
Aristotle	1400 Years	5
Aristophanes	1200 Years	10
Sophicles	1400 Years	100

When you compare the above manuscripts to one another to determine accuracy to the original, you really don't have much to work with. So, how do the Biblical texts stand up when compared to the classics?

TITLE OF MANUSCRIPT	YEARS FROM THE AUTOGRAPHHA
John Riley Manuscript (130 A.D.)	100 Years
Papyri II (200 A.D.)	150 Years
Chester Beattie Papyri (155 A.D.)	155 Years
Vaticanus Papyri (250-400 A.D.)	220 Years

In addition to the above "early manuscripts" (much closer to the original Autographa than the classical writings we reviewed earlier) we have 5000 Greek Manuscripts, 1000 early versions of the Bible, and 8000 versions of the early Latin Vulgate. There are a total of over 14,000 early copies that we use in Textual Criticism to compare, giving us a reliable Biblical text that is a near perfect mirror of the Autographa.

As Textual Criticism is a science of comparison, we can see that Christianity has more textual reliability in its Bible than *any other 10 pieces* of classical literature put together. In most of the passages in the Bible, there is a majority of agreement over any given verse. In only a few cases are there left-handed or right-handed texts. Yet even in these verses, the discrepancy has little effect on the underlying message.

Even if you did away with *all the manuscripts* of the Bible in their entirety we would still have the Holy Scriptures. By piecing together all the verses that the early Church Fathers quoted in their writings, we could literally reform the Bible from these texts. By quotation of the verses commented on in the Talmud we could literally reconstruct the Old Testament. God may have allowed the originals to be destroyed, yet He has not left His children without His Word.

Where Do The Alleged Biblical Discrepancies Come From?

There is rarely a week that passes in my life when I do not hear some godless heathen or carnal Christian crying about Biblical discrepancies. For the heathen there's nothing that I can do but pray that they find the truth of Christ. But for the Christian we can list the situations that may make the Bible appear to be fallible. I cannot cover every instance of alleged Biblical discrepancies, but I can refer you to a book written by John W. Haley called "Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible". In over 471 pages Haley looks at all the alleged discrepancies in our Bible, showing them to be misinterpretation from our standpoint, not an error in God's Word. The following information is a condensation of some of the scholarly work found in this book.

The situations which may cause alleged Bible discrepancies are:

THE METHOD OF RECORDING TIME: The Jews had two chronological dating methods, a sacred calendar and a civil calendar. Among the Latin Christian nations there were around 7 different calendars. The Romans also had an entirely different method of recording time.

When we see two Biblical authors using a different calendars to record a historical event, neither is wrong in his record. They are just using the calendar that their expected readers would use at the time of the writing.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE THOUGHT AND LANGUAGE OF MAN: As man historically evolved, his phraseology and language evolved with the times. New words are created. 1,000 years ago Christians did not understand phrases like "the satisfaction of Christ", yet the concept was fully understood.

THE CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCES AND SITUATIONS: As the situation changes, so changes (1) God's thought toward man, (2) Man's thought toward man, and (3) Man's thought toward God. All that God created He proclaimed "good". Yet as man fell into sin, progressively perverting his relationship toward the Creator, God proclaimed mankind evil and destroyed all but a few by a catastrophic flood.

WHO DECLARED WHAT?: The Bible makes record of two things: (1) That which God stated and decreed and, (2) That which man or Satan stated. If God states something, we know it is fact. Yet if *man* states it, the validity of the statement must be questioned. Yet, even if the Biblically recorded statement is a lie from man, we can believe that the wording was recorded *exactly* as it was made. The Bible is historically accurate.

THE VIEWPOINT OF THE AUTHOR: TO WHOM WAS IT ADDRESSED?: The authors of the Biblical writings had different viewpoints they were writing from, and different audiences they were addressing. Paul's letter to the Romans was written to Legalists who felt they had to *earn their way* to acceptance by God. Thus Paul wrote "works without faith is dead". John's first Epistle was written to address the Gnostics (who believed that salvation freed you so you could sin), telling the Church "faith without works is dead". Neither writer disagreed with the other, they merely had differing audiences so wrote from different viewpoints. The underlying fact they agreed on was that true faith is accompanied by works, and true works are accompanied by faith. Both go hand in hand.

THE ORIENTAL IDIOMS: Differences in ancient Oriental idioms and phraseology may often seem to present a discrepancy when there is none. The Bible often refers to "the four corners of the earth". When it does so, it does not mean the earth was viewed as having four corners, but rather refers to the *four*

points of the compass.

There are also many statements that confuse newcomers to Christianity such as, "He who loses his life for my sake shall gain it". The Scripture is really not contradicting itself, as you will see if you read the context around the verse in question.

DISCREPANCIES IN NAMES: According to the place and circumstance, a person's name may be changed in the Bible. Why?

The early Greek and Hebrew peoples attached a great deal of significance to the name of a person. The name often reflected the character or motivation of the person. After a person had close contact or a blessing from God, often his or her name was changed by God. Names of geographical locations also changed to reflect usage, dedication to God, or cursing by God.

The early Greek and Hebrew cultures also had a habit of attaching many names to the same object. This may cause some degree of confusion in Biblical interpretation, but is not a real discrepancy in the Scripture, merely a clear representation of the culture to whom the Work was written.

HUMAN ERROR: Human error, often directly from Biblical critics, is by far the largest source of alleged discrepancies. It would be good if we keep in mind the scriptural injunction:

2 Peter 1:20 "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation."

There are several points which we should remember in Scriptural exegesis:

1. The context of the verse may not **only** be in the chapter where the verse in question is in, it **may be** several chapters before and after that verse. Thoroughly read the immediate context of the verse you are seeking to interpret.
2. The context of the verse may only be found when it is compared to all **like**

verses. Do a **topical study** of the verse you are studying using a good reference work like "Naves Topical Bible" or the "Thompson Chain Reference Bible".

3. The context of a verse may sometimes be understood only when viewed in the **original** Greek or Hebrew. In this case, a Greek or Hebrew lexicon may be needed, like Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, unabridged edition. Often there is no one-to-one correlation of words translated from one language to another. Often one Greek word may only be fully translated by 3 or 4 English words.

4. The context of a verse may be influenced by the history behind the verse. Was the Doctrine for just that era, or is it also for today? An example of this is the Law of Moses and the Levitical sacrifices, which are no longer pertinent to us today, because we are under the atonement of Christ.

5. A verse may also be taken out of context by **running one context into another**. An example of this is:

Hebrews 10:26 *"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,"*

27 *"But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."*

By running these two verses together we may misinterpret it to mean:

"If a Christian willfully sins, he shall become a non Christian and shall be punished as a heathen in Hell."

Our legalist friends may use this verse to prove their doctrine of eternal insecurity. Yet if the verse is interpreted this way, it actually means "once lost, always lost", for the word **sin** in the Greek means to "miss the mark, to make a mistake". The answer to this text is:

a. Commas, semi-colons, hyphens, and periods were **not found** in the early Greek

manuscripts. The translators of our Bible added these textual punctuation marks because this is what we are familiar with when reading. We cannot allow these man added marks to tell us when to pause or stop within a context.

b. The epistles to the Hebrews were written to Jewish Christians who were still relying on animal sacrifices for the atonement of their sins.

c. Verse 26 is written in first person plural, verse 27 is written in third person plural. Verse 26 is written to those like unto the writer, verse 27 is written impersonally to the world at large.

Taking the historical contextual evidences of the verses into consideration, the correct interpretation is:

a. Verse 26 and verse 27 are *two different* separate passages which are in two separate contexts.

b. Verse 26 is making this statement: "After one has accepted Christ as Savior, he no longer needs to sacrifice animals to atone for his sins. The sacrifice of Christ is eternal, atonement forever.

c. Verse 27 is making a statement totally disassociated from Verse 26. A new paragraph is started warning of how God will deal with those who reject the message of the Cross. The second paragraph runs from verse 27 through verse 30.

Christians largely fail in their defense of the inerrant Scriptures out of fear (I want to be part of the acceptable crowd), faithlessness (I have not really studied the Word, so I am not sure), or both. Often Christians fear the modern-day sciences which have technologically grown immense in the last fifty years. Yet as Lord Kelvin once stated:

".. Physical science has nothing to say against the order of creation as given in Genesis"

Lord Kelvin was being very honest. Physical science has *nothing to say* about

matters of faith, for science only deals with *tangible* items. For something to be studied scientifically, it must:

1. Be observable by the five senses, or by instrumental extensions of these senses.
2. Be observable by repeatable processes to ensure truth and accuracy.
3. Be observable by measuring processes: in other words, it *must* be measurable.

Science has nothing to say about faith, for faith goes beyond the reality of things seen. Science has nothing to say about God, for He is a Spirit, immeasurable and unquestionable. Science has nothing to say about miracles, for they come as God so decrees, and therefore cannot be studied as a repeatable process.

Why The Bible Must Be Totally Without Error:

The Effects Of An Error Filled Bible On The Church.

If the Bible is accepted as inerrant, this gives the Church of Christ validity on which to stand. If inerrant, it is the textbook of God, a Book the Holy Spirit uses to train His people.

C.S. Lewis: "You start arming against the devil when you know and recognize his works. He doesn't want you to believe in him. His first aim is to give you an anesthetic to put you off your guard. Only when this fails do you recognize him."

When we allow Satan to make us believe that there are *parts* of the Bible which are full of error, then how much harder will it be before we believe the whole Book is full of error? True, the Bible is not a scientific textbook. The Father did not create it for this purpose. Yet the Bible as a whole is written fluidly, the scientific passages flowing to the historic passages which flow into the faith passages. If we take away a part of the intricate whole, then do we not dam the creek?

If a part of the Book is errant, then who qualified to declare it? As man is fallible, who will we trust to make such a great decision as to which parts are fallible, which are true? If the Spirit of God allowed confusion to be written in the midst of the Work, does this not in effect make God a partner to deception? By accepting an errant Bible a whole chain reaction of problems arise, problems that will certainly hinder our witness to the godless.

Evolutionists speak of man evolving in intelligence. Yet did man ever "evolve" as these speak of evolution? God gave man creative power. Within this power lies the ability to improve and grow, yet man in his being has *never* been unintelligent (as scientists like to represent the so called Neanderthal man). As C. S. Lewis discovered in his studies:

" .. There has been no progression in intelligence from a thousand years to date. There is no proof of any advance. People may not have known what we know today, but how could an unintelligent man invent the wheel?"

The thought that man *invented* the idea of God to explain the unknown is preposterous. In Ptolemy's *Almagest* (a standard textbook in the Middle Ages) we find the following statement:

"The earth in relation to the distance of the fixed stars has no appreciable size and must be treated as a mathematical point .."

There was never any conflict between science and Christianity until less than 100 years ago. When speculative science rose in popularity many weak Christians ran away. When you stand on the absolute truth of our inerrant Bible, you do not need to compromise your faith to accommodate scientific truth. The Christian faith has always been a faith founded on fact. If we compromise the foundations of our faith, modifying it to suit the current scientific fad, we become, in many ways, worst than the unbelieving infidels. When we give in to the tangible then, just like doubting Thomas, we trade a solid foundation of truth for a hill of sand. Trust the Father, trust His Word: He and His Word are ever faithful.



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Systematic Theology

STUDY TWO

How God is Revealed Unto Man

How We Must Know There is a Supreme Being

A Study In The Scientific Witness

Of all the things that are explained in the Scripture, there is one thing that is never explained: in fact, there is not even an attempt made to explain this phenomenon. The question "Is there a God" is never asked? The writers of the Bible never doubted His existence, but merely accepted it as fact, the only *logical* course of reasoning. The ancients also never tried to define God, other than in a relational sense. The best relational definition of God comes from His own words in:

Exodus 3:13-14 "And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

In Hebrew times the name of a person was always *descriptive* of the person. The title God gives Himself, YHWH, or **I AM**, shows His infinity or eternal nature. God was not created by man, but has always been in existence. He is the great **I AM**. Man did not create the idea of God to cover up his own scientific ignorance, for there are many historical proofs that man has never been unintelligent. There

are proofs that man, even before the time of Christ, understood creation and his relationship to it. If Joseph did not understand the virgin birth as *contrary to nature*, then why did he seek to divorce Mary, believing her pregnancy to be the result of sexual promiscuity? If man did not know that the sun *normally rose* in the East, then why would he have been interested in it once rising in the West? (Isaiah 45.6)

C. S. Lewis "The religion in the world that gives its followers the greatest happiness is, while it lasts, the religion of worshipping oneself."

"We are gods" has been the cry of mankind ever since the Tower of Babel. Atheism has always been a blind faith in the falsehood that God is not there. There are more proofs for God in nature alone than the atheist can ever hope to disprove.

THE PATTERN OF NATURE: In nature there's a pattern, a design, a system of order. A design shows purpose, which in turn points to an intelligent Designer. When you look at a house you know that an intelligent builder made it. You know that it would be preposterous to say, "That house just came into being. It evolved from a speck of wood dust into what it is today." When you honestly look at the world around you, you know that an intelligent God created it.

THE EFFECT OF NATURE: Nature is an effect, so what is the *first cause*? Scientists can explain links in the natural chain that lead up to an event, but cannot explain the first cause of it all. The actual existence of the chain is totally unexplainable unless you accept that it was created by God.

C. S. Lewis "The the law of physics When one pool ball (A) sets another ball in motion (B) the momentum lost by (A) is equal to that gained in (B). This is the law. But this is only provided that something sets (A) into motion. The law does not set the ball into motion. But if on a ship with the pool table, and the same occurred, it was not the law that did this, the wave caused the incident. The wave was moved according to the law but not moved by them. However far you trace back, the laws of nature never causes anything."

To sum up Lewis, we can see the effect, but must attribute the cause to something else other than man, nature, or the laws of physics. If the naturalistic idea of evolution is true, and mankind sprang up from the beginnings of chaos, then every particular thought of man is not intelligent but flawed because of our source. Thought born of irrational causes must needs be flawed itself, totally untrustworthy. If we accept the humanist theory of creation we make our own theory error in the first place.

There are two proofs of God found in human nature. They are (1) the intuitive proof and, (2) the moral nature of mankind.

C.S. Lewis "I could not believe that 999 religions were completely wrong, and the remaining one true. In reality Christianity is primarily the fulfillment of the Jewish religion: but also the fulfillment of what was vaguely hinted at in all other religions at their best."

All men to a degree, whether consciously or unconsciously, believe in a Creator, an intelligence higher than themselves. "There are no atheists in foxholes". If you and I both jump out of a jet plane flying thousands of feet above the earth without parachutes, I am certain I could claim your soul for Christ before we hit the ground.

The *moral argument* for the existence of God relates to the conscience of man. The conscience of all men expresses a *moral viewpoint* in relation to the knowledge that we have. The human race has a sense of morality and order that could only have been given to us by a moral God. If a man at one point history had said, "You know, it would be nice if we had a sense of order", then that man would in reality have already had that sense in place prior to his statement.

Why do men have a sense of right and wrong, good and evil? If good is what man makes it, then why is it *not good* to murder? There is indeed a Higher Being who instruct us all in what is good and what is evil through our conscience.

The proofs of God that we have seen so far, that scientific witness, is what is known theologically as the *General Revelation* of God. These proofs are limited

in their use because of the Fall of man. When Adam fell he caused all of creation to fall with him. When the master falls (as Adam was, by decree of God), so falls the servants.

God's creation suffered the corruption of sin, just as Adam did, when he disobeyed God. Because nature is corrupted by sin we often get a clouded view of the Creator when we look at this spoiled handiwork. We ask "How could a loving God allow such cruelty and suffering?". Nature gives us the wrong idea that the Creator is brutal, torturous, when in reality the corruption we see in nature is a result of Adam's failure. Nature does not tell us that we are unrighteous, unable to get into Heaven on our own. But nature does clearly reflect that it was made by a Creator:

Romans 1:20 "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse".

In order that man understand God and what He expects of us, He has revealed Himself to us through ***Special Revelation***. What are the characteristics of any true Special Revelation from God?

1. It must supply reachable answers to solve man's problems.
2. It must rationally describe God to man.
3. It must explain the justice and mercy of God, and harmonize these two characteristics of Deity.

The Bible is this Special Revelation from God. It supplies the answers to man's problems in the atonement of Christ. It describes God to man by the use of easily understood relationships. It harmonizes the justice and mercy of God in the event of the Cross of Calvary.

The Bible itself ***claims to have*** certain necessary knowledge of God, and describes the necessary knowledge of what God expects of man:

2 Corinthians 5:20-21 "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."

Romans 3:21-26 "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; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

There are *external proofs* that the Bible is the Special Revelation of God to man. These proofs are furnished in the Person and historic authenticity of Jesus Christ.

(Watson) .. "No one has ever discovered the words that Jesus ought to have said No action of His shocked our moral sense Some have puzzled us None have fallen short of the ideal He is full of surprises, but they were always surprises of perfection."

There are about 60 major prophecies concerning the Messiah in the Bible, and Jesus fulfilled them all. All of the prophecies concerning Christ were written before 450 B.C. These 60 prophecies had 270 minor details that had to be fulfilled perfectly in the true Messiah. The probable fulfillment of *just eight* of these being completed in one man's lifetime are one in every 100,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000. This proves two points: (1) When Jesus fulfilled all 60 prophecies verbatim, this stands as a testament that Jesus was indeed Messiah, and conversely (2) By accurately foretelling these 60 prophecies we can say this stands as a testament that the Bible is indeed the Word of God. The chances of the various writers of Scripture "just stumbling" on this information is so astronomical that you cannot even assign a probability to it. You have a better

chance of guessing the winning lottery number on the first try!

The Scripture, by its fulfilled prophecies, shows it emanates from the very hand of God. The prophecies of Ezekiel 25-26 were fulfilled in their entirety less than twenty years after the text was penned. The Prophecies of Daniel 2 were also fulfilled less than 100 years after its foretelling. These are powerful proofs that the Bible is God's Special Revelation to us, a revelation we should diligently study if we would understand our Creator.

The Scientific Witness of General Revelation will show you that there is a Creator, but you must understand the Witness of Special Revelation, the Holy Bible, if you are to see Him clearly. In our next section we will study our Maker as He is portrayed by Special Revelation. God Bless!

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Systematic Theology

STUDY THREE

Defining The Almighty One True God

Through His Name and Attributes

How can finite man ever hope to be able to fully comprehend the One who called all things into existence from nothing with but a word? Can we comprehend such Person?

All men, even Christians, have blasphemously portrayed God at one time or another. We represent God as corruptible in our idols. When you represent God in the form of material substance, you *imply* that God is as corruptible as that which you portray Him by. We often choose the idol that we have made over the Word of God and fellowship with God.

In Las Vegas men gamble their lives and fortunes away while trusting on Lady Luck. In reality, no Lady has anything to do with the fall of the dice. God controls this thing we call "luck":

Proverbs 16:33 "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD."

In America we believe that men are elected to govern our country according to popular vote. And this is true, we do freely vote for or against our leaders. Yet an unseen Hand works behind the scenes, controlling the vote and tides of power.

Leaders may be elected, yet the government is ultimately controlled by the Infinite, totally within the Plan of God.

Proverbs 21:1 "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."

All over the world men have a fear of death. Scientists diligently study so that, one day, we might defeat this archenemy of mankind. "Let's freeze the body. One day we can resurrect him, and return him to life". Yet it is written:

Job 14:5 "Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.."

Then again there is the atheist who scornfully rejects God. To him God says:

Psalms 2:4 "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision."

How can mortal man understand the Father of all creation? By carefully studying the characteristics of God found in Scripture we may come to know our God. We may not reach a *full* understanding of the Infinite in this life, yet we can understand Him *in relationship* to His creation.

The Base or Simple Names of God

By means of Special Revelation God has defined Himself to mortal man by different names. In early Hebrew and Greek cultures the name of an individual explained something about the person. God uses three base names for Himself in the Bible:

EL or ELOHIYM: This name stresses the power of God. It defines Him as all powerful, all seeing, all knowing, all encompassing. There is not anything that our Creator cannot do.

YHWH: This name has its roots in the name that God gave Moses in Exodus 3.14, I AM. YHWH describe the eternality of the one True God, the fact that He has existed without Creator from eternity past and will exist forever. To the Jews this name of God was so sacred that, even to speak it, was to bring death to the speaker:

Leviticus 24:16 "And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the LORD, shall be put to death."

ADONAI: This name shows the Mastery that God has over His people. It also shows that, in relationship to God, we are His servants.

The Compound Names of God

The above three base names for God are used extensively throughout the Scripture, and each name explains some characteristic inherent to our Maker. But God also describes Himself to His creation through the use of *compound names*. There are the compound names that are coupled with the power name of God, EL:

EL SHADDAI: This name is used to show the sovereignty of our Creator, His uniqueness among all within the universe. The name designates God as "Almighty Almighty One".

SHADDAI is derived from the Hebrew SHADDAD, which means "to destroy". The name is often used in Scripture when God disposes of the heathen while protecting His people.

EL ELOINE: This name defines the power of possession that the Creator alone has. Literally translated "The Most High God", it is used in instances when God is described as the true Owner of Heaven and Earth.

EL OLAM: This name stresses the eternity or infinity of God. Literally translated,

it means "The Everlasting God".

A second set of compound names are coupled with YHWH or (as we translate it) LORD:

LORD JEHOVAH: This name is used to highlight God's immutable or unchangeable nature. When used in conjunction with a covenant, it carries a *guarantee* that God will keep the promise He made.

*Genesis 2:15-17 "And the LORD God (LORD Jehovah) **took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God (LORD Jehovah) **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.**"***

Adam should have paid attention, for by using this name God was warning that He would not break His promise to man if man disobeyed Him.

LORD OF HOSTS: This name is used to show that God alone commands all the angelic host. It is also used to convey the idea that God will rescue His children in times of trouble, using all the means He has at His disposal.

In the New Testament the use of the titles "God" and "Lord" are equivalent to their parallels in the Old Testament, yet in the New Testament the other compound and basic names of God are rarely used. Usually the title "Father" is used to symbolize the special relationship that the believer has with his Creator because of the atonement of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Himself usually referred to the head of the Godhead as "Father". As a matter of fact, only once Jesus refers to the Father as "God", and that was when He hung on the Cross of Calvary. When He hung on the Cross He did not do so as the Son of God, but as a *judicial sacrifice* to pay the penalty for our sins.

Classifying the Attributes of God

The attributes or characteristics that God possesses are a part of His nature. They are *not* something which He created, nor something that He grew or evolved into. The attributes of God are both *communicable and incommunicable*.

The Communicable Attributes of God

The communicable attributes are those which pertain to God's essence in relation to creation. God *shared* these attributes with His creation. An example of the communicable attributes are mercy, justice, and love. Though creation shares these attributes with God to a lesser degree (because He is infinite and we are finite), they are attributes which both God and His people possess.

Communicable attributes are those which, to put it more simply, are shared by both God and, to a lesser degree, His creation.

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

1 Thessalonians 5:23 "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."

God is a Spirit, ethereal yet real, without body as we know it. Regenerated man possesses within himself a human spirit, recreated in us at the point of salvation. It is this part of us that is "born again", as Jesus so wisely put it. The Spirit of God is a shared asset with man, and to this degree is a Communicable Attribute.

Romans 11:33-34 "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor?"

God possesses intelligence, and His creation possesses intelligence. Though God's

intelligence is ***much higher*** than that which man possesses, this attribute is still inherent in both God and man. This is a Communicable Attribute of God.

The first two Attributes we have just discussed, the spirit and intelligence of man, are a part of the ***imagery of all mankind***. Man was created in the image of God:

Genesis 1:26 "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

and these are parts of that imagery. God is holy and just. His goodness is a pure, untainted goodness. His creation possesses these attributes to a more finite degree, riddled with sinful impulses, yet good in the sense that we are "moral" beings with a conscience. After regeneration we share this Attribute of God closer, to a greater degree, for sin is dampened in the new Believer:

1 John 2:29 "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him."

The Incommunicable Attributes of God

The incommunicable attributes are those which God and ***God alone*** possesses. These are:

SELF EXISTENCE: God needs no one to survive. He is the first cause of everything, yet He Himself is caused by nothing.

Exodus 3:13-15 "And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said

moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations."

Because God alone is self existent, no one, save God, has total freewill. Men are dependent on their appetites and these appetites often lead to sin. Even Christians are dependent on God for their survival. God is not bound by dependency.

IMMUTABILITY:

Malachi 3:6 "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."

Hebrews 1:10-12 "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."

All things change and grow old. Yet God will never change in His infinity to the smallest degree. God is unchangeable and immutable.

INFINITY: When we speak about God's *infinity* we are talking about His immensity, omnipotence (all powerfulness), omniscience (all knowing), and omnipresence (He is everywhere).

Psalms 139:12-13 "Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb."

2 Peter 3:8-9 "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. 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."

SIMPLICITY: When we speak of the simplicity of God we are referring to His uniqueness: there is no God but Our God.

1 Corinthians 8:6 "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."

Our unique God is One, yet in Three Persons. He is Father:

John 6:27 "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."

He is Son:

John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

And He is the Holy Spirit:

Acts 5:3-4 "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."

As we will discuss the Trinity of God in a later lesson, this is all we will cover on the Trinity at this time.

The Will Of The Sovereign God

The Implication It Has on Man's Free Will

Isaiah 14:24-27 "The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?"

How much power than does the Father hold over creation? Does the Bible recognize human freewill as a part of God's Plan of the Ages? Many state that the Creator did not build a society of robots. The often heard slogan, "God helps those who help themselves": how much truth does this slogan hold?

The Westminster Confession (Shorter Catechism) states: "The decrees of God are His eternal purpose according to the council of His will whereby for his own glory, He hath foreordained whatsoever things come to pass."

God is a self sufficient being, needing no one to sustain His life. He created men for ***His own glory***. We often forget that, in the arrogance of our humanity.

Revelation 4:11 "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

He chose to pardon man through the medium of the Cross because He ***desired to***, not because He had to. As Romans states:

Romans 11:36 "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

God is the ultimate source of all life, the only Agent that creates life. The ultimate aim of creation is to glorify its Maker.

James 1:17 "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

Isaiah 46:9-11 "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: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it."

When a man changes his plans, it is usually because of lack of wisdom or knowledge. Yet God is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent. When the Plan of the Ages was made from eternity past, they were established in certainty because our Father knows the end just as completely as the beginning. Nothing is left to chance.

Isaiah 40:13-15 "Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing."

God's decrees and plans are made from the *only* completely free will in the universe. His are rational decisions based on sufficient reason. God never acts out of necessity, nor are God's degrees conditioned on any inability on His part: He is sovereign. God's decrees are carried out as He states them, regardless as to our desires. There are no boundaries that the Father cannot overcome: whether of the free will of man, or the course of nature, God can sway it. God is omnipotent over His creation.

When we look through the Scriptures we see many instances where man is disobedient to the Will of God. How can man be obedient to his own will and ignore the Will of the Sovereign God? How can the truth of the Supreme Being be

reconciled with the truth of human free will?

The Decreeive and Directive Wills of God

Theologians recognize that there are *two categories* of God's Will, the *Directive* and the *Decreeive* Will of God. Both work hand in hand to achieve God's Plan of the Ages.

The Directive Will is that which is God's *best* plan for us. The Directive Will can be obeyed or disobeyed by man, based on his free will. The Directive will is a command much like a Father author gives a son, a parent to a child. It is in the child's best interest to obey this direction though he can ignore the injunctions, to his detriment.

Within the Directive Will God tells us not to lie, steal, or cheat, do murder, and so on. He tells his children to pray, to have fellowship with Him. If the child obeys he will be rewarded. If the child disobeys he is punished. C. S. Lewis said:

"God gave us the choice of being able to contribute to the course of His events in two different ways: (1) He made the universe in such a way that we can, in those limits, do things to it and, (2) He made his own plan or plot of history such that it admits a certain amount of free play, and can be modified in response to our prayers."

The Directive Will is that which God would have man to do for our *higher good*. Man has the power of prayer. If we pray we will bring about our higher good regardless as to whether the prayer is answered negatively or positively. Why doesn't God always answer "yes" to our prayers?

(Satires, Book 4, Satire 10, Line 3) "God has left Himself a discretionary power. Had He not done so, prayer would have been an activity too dangerous for man, and we should have the awful state of things envisioned by Juvinal 'enormous prayers' which Heaven in anger grants."

Though man is directed to pray unceasingly, man does not always pray for the *right things*, the *right reasons*, or in the *right way*. God alone understands all things, and, knowing that all things work together for good, the only way the Father guarantees this is by leaving Himself a *discretionary power* in all things, even prayer.

There are two texts which cause new Christians problems. They are:

Matthew 18:18-19 "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

Matthew 16:19 "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."

These verses seem to imply that the Church of Christ is dominant over God in prayer. How does the Greek texts support these verses? A more correct translation of these verses would be:

Matthew 18:18-19 "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever you may bind (DESETE, Aorist Active Subjunctive) on earth shall have been bound (ESTAI DEDEMENA, Periphrastic Future Perfect Passive) in heaven: and whatsoever ye may loose (LUSETE, Aorist Active Subjunctive) on earth shall have been loosed (ESTAI LELUMENA, Periphrastic Future Perfect Passive) in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

Matthew 16:19 "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever you may bind (DESETE, Aorist Active Subjunctive) on earth shall have been bound (ESTAI DEDEMENA, Periphrastic Future Perfect Passive) in heaven: and whatsoever you may loose (LUSETE, Aorist Active

Subjunctive) on earth shall have been loosed (ESTAI LELUMENA, Periphrastic Future Perfect Passive) in heaven."

With these passages correctly translated we can see that there is **no** New Testament concept of man controlling God as if we were gods ourselves. These two texts in question were first incorrectly rendered by Jerome in the Latin Vulgate, 400 A.D. Yet many within Christianity feel that they can "force" God's hand by prayer, or by "Tithing". "If I give my ten percent then God **must** return this money to me fourfold!" God is omnipotent, not forced into any method of operation by His own creation. You see this best illustrated when we study the Decreeive Will of God.

God's Decreeive Will **cannot** be refused. In the Decreeive Will the Father persuades man to obey according to His wishes. God may sway the freewill of the person in question. God may sway the freewill of the *persons surrounding* the person in question. God may change the laws of nature or environment around the person in question. God may manipulate or change the environment so that man will carry out His Will according to His purpose.

The healing of a physical or emotional wound is within the Decreeive Will of God:

C.S. Lewis: "Doctors themselves do not take the view that medicine heals the body. The magic is not in the medicine, but in the body. What the doctor does is to stimulate nature's functions in the body, and to try to remove the hindrances. A cut heals itself, for no dressing shall heal a cut on a corpse."

Death is within the Decreeive Will of God. There is "appointed unto man a time once to die, and after this the Judgment". Miracles may be within the Directive or the Decreeive Will of God, depending on the circumstance. The greatest objection to the Decreeive Will of God is our jealously guarded idea of human free will. We shall study human free will in detail shortly. For now, though, it is sufficient to say that God *may persuade* man to do of his own will what He, God, wants man to do. God is **not controlled** by his creation. If God did not plan all

things, if He does not have a Plan of the Ages, then God cannot be God. If God did not decree what was necessary to insure the end was as He wants it, then there had to be a time when He *did not know* everything. If there was ever a time that God did not know everything, then He gains in knowledge every time something happens that He did not know would happen. What we have, if this is true, is a changing God. Yet we have seen that it is written, "I am the Lord thy God, I do not change". God doesn't change, therefore God *must control* certain aspects of His creation in order to insure His Plan will be carried out as He desires.

This in turn answers the question, "Why can't man have a totally free will?" Because man would be responsible for the *education* of God. If man had *total* free will then he would have, and any given time, a 50-50 chance of choosing either one fork in the road of God's Plan or another. God did not base His Plan on the frailty of human will. His Plan is based on His unvarying Will; for this reason the Plan will be carried out exactly as He decrees. Man does *not* educate God!

Is the concept of foreordination under God's Decree Will *only fatalism* in another wrapper? Absolutely not! Fatalism has no goal, no joy, and only a series of laws with no soul or spirit. Foreordination brings with it the assurance that it is motivated by a good and righteous goal, accomplished by our loving Creator. The Father *will bring about* the highest good for His children through His Decree Will.

Does foreordination disregard all motive of purpose? Please remember that God not only foreordains the *ends* to meet His goal, but also foreordains the *means* as well. Foreordination is a Doctrine that should drive the believer to achieve more for God in this life, for we have the assurance that He truly loves and watches over us. Our Father wants us to succeed, and in His Will will help guarantee our success. The greater the hope of success, the greater should be our motivation to service.

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Systematic Theology

STUDY FOUR

The Doctrine of the Triune God

Continuing The Study of the Incommunicable Attributes

And The Compound Unity of God

(C.S. Lewis) "All sorts of people are fond of repeating the Christian statement that "God is Love". But they seem not to notice that the words "God is Love" has no real meaning unless God contains at least two Persons. If God was a single person, then before the world was made He was not Love. Of course, what these people really mean when they say "God is Love" is often something quite different: they really mean Love is God."

It is *impossible* for anyone to truly comprehend the Trinity of God. God is One, yet He is a unique One. God is a *compound unity* of three Persons so close to, so exact to one another, each in submission to one another, so as to move and act as a unified yet incomprehensible One.

Many mock Christianity by stating "You do not know anything about arithmetic. How can three be one?" Yet on closer examination we will see that, without a Triune God, there can be no real concept of God as we know Him. It is the attribute of the Trinity that makes the Godhead believable.

The Biblical Proof of the Triune God

Deuteronomy 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: "

The Jews often quote the above passage to prove that God is not in three Persons but only One. What is *often neglected* is that there are *two different words* in the Hebrew used for *one*.

YACHID: meaning *an absolute unity or properly '1'*. This word's use is illustrated in Genesis 22.2, where God said to Abraham:

Genesis 22:2 "And he said, Take now thy son, thine only (YACHID) son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. "

The word YACHID is *never used* in the Bible for the Godhead.

ECHAD: meaning *a compound unity, several composites which make a whole or a combined '1'*. We can define this word's usage in passages such as:

Genesis 1:5 "And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first (ECHAD) day."

ECHAD is also found in Genesis 2.24, where we read:

Genesis 2:24 "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one (ECHAD) flesh. "

ECHAD is also *used of God in Deuteronomy 6.4* and in many other passages that refer to the compound unity of the Godhead. When we compare ECHAD as used in other passages to Deuteronomy 6.4 we see that God is *not an absolute One* but a *compound unity*. This unity is made up of three Persons. Just as *Day* is made up of *evening* and *morning*, and *one flesh* is made up of *man* and *wife*, the Godhead is composed of Father, Son, and Spirit.

In other passages we see clear presentations of the Doctrine of the Trinity:

Isaiah 48:12-16 "Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last. Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together. All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear; which among them hath declared these things? The LORD hath loved him: he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans. I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous. Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: "

So far in Isaiah's text we see **God speaking**. It couldn't be anyone but God, for He describes Himself as the *first, I also am the last*. He uses God's Divine title of **I am he**. This denotes His eternality, His forever existence:

Exodus 3:14 "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

He also claims to be the **Creator of the Heavens** and the earth. God is clearly speaking here, but in last part of the text, without changing context, God says:

".. and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me .."

Notice that **God says that God sent Him**. In fact, God says that God **and His Spirit** sent him. This is nothing less than an Old Testament vision of the throne room of God. In the throne room the One God sent Jesus to be man's redemption. The other Being present was God the Spirit. They **both** sent Christ so that man might be saved.

The Logical Necessity of the Trinity

See if you can follow this line of reasoning: We know that God is perfect, and we know that God's Love is therefore perfect. If God is perfect (and He is), then He

may only be aware that He is through relationship within His Being. Perfect Love *demand*s an object. Since God pre-existed man, He *must have been Love* before the existence of mankind. In order to recognize Himself as Love before mankind, and Love demands in object, then He *must be in at least Two Persons*, yet be One God. But Two Persons in the Godhead would not be enough for perfect Love. As God is perfect His Love *must be perfect*. To be perfect it must be exercised and return unconditionally. Had there only been Two Persons in the Godhead then Love would *have been conditional* and of necessity returned between the Two. If there are Three in the Godhead then either Member can offer unselfish Love without expecting return. This would be unconditional Love. The Son could Love the Spirit, the Spirit the Father, each Person could love the next selfishly. Without expecting return God could recognize in His assets the attribute of Perfect Love.

If you cannot understand this line of reasoning then there are other simpler proofs of God's Triune nature. These proofs are found when you see the *necessity* of the Doctrine of the Trinity as it influences and is supported by the doctrine of Redemption.

First, the Doctrine of the Trinity is essential for *any lasting plan of redemption* for man:

2 Corinthians 5:19 "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. "

Since the fall of Adam the *foremost theological discussion* has been, "How can men become reconciled to God? Man, by his own volition, chose to follow Satan. Man must pay the penalty. But how can man pay the penalty of the Fall?

Some say that *since we were not there* at the Fall we *were not accountable*. But to say this is to oversimplify the problem. When God created man in the Garden he was perfect, without sin. When man disobeyed God he fell into sin and Spiritual death. Our children are *genetic replicas* of what we are. If the parents are black the child will be black. If the parents are white the child will be white. Though the combinations of parents *do not always* produce the expected child, this

is the norm.

When Adam walked the earth before the Fall he was without sin, and had a functioning human spirit. This human spirit enabled him to physically communicate with God at will. God walked in the Garden every day just to talk to Adam face to face. After the Fall Adam became spiritually dead, and this relationship was lost. Residing in him was sin, the old sin nature. As Eve was also spiritually dead when they came together to reproduce their offspring were also spiritually dead. Can a dead tree produce a live tree? Death only produces death. The offspring of Adam were ***all genetically spiritually dead***, having the old sin nature from birth.

So here is the dilemma. By the fall mankind met spiritual death. God, in his justice, required that man pay the penalty for the Fall. But man was not ***fit payment*** before God. Before a man could repay the penalty of sin for the human race he had to pay the penalty ***for himself***. And since man was spiritually dead there was ***nothing that he had*** that God wanted. The dead cannot contribute to the living. The spiritually dead cannot pay back the penalty of spiritual death.

A substitution ***could pay*** the penalty for sin. One could pay the penalty if he was ***first clean*** himself. But the substitution must first be clean or else it would not be acceptable before God. The problem was that there was ***no one in humanity*** who could pay back the penalty, because all mankind was spiritually dead. The parents might raise a morally right child, but parents could not produce an offspring that was ***without the old sin nature*** and spiritual death.

God knew the fix that man was in. God had every right to destroy the human race and start over. But if He destroyed man because of Satan's deceit, then Satan would have won a battle against God. Thus God set out to show that, regardless of what Lucifer did, He could right the situation.

But God was not ready to bring man out of spiritual death just yet. The old sin nature brings with it an inflated ego, leading man to think that he can become righteous before God with his own works. To disprove this God set up a system of

works whereby man could *see how utterly impossible* it was to get to Heaven by his own efforts. God set up the sacrifices first as a means of *temporary atonement* for sin. If man obeyed God by offering the animal sacrifices religiously, then God would tolerate the fallen state of man for a time. If man refused to obey by refusing to offer the animal sacrifices, then God classified him as an unbeliever and a heathen. After physical death this group of people went to Hades *without hope of redemption*.

God set up another system of works that complemented the sacrifices. This system was called the Law and was composed of about 2500 statutes of do's and don'ts. Each day you woke up you had to face a *strict system of religion*. If you broke the Law, then you atoned for this by making an animal sacrifice. On top of all this *once a year* you had to make a sacrifice to atone for portions of the Law you broke and forgot to atone for.

This system was *less than satisfactory*, and God knew it. But He wanted to leave the system in place *until men knew it as well*. Mankind must understand that there is nothing that we can do before God to get out of the mess we're in. Mankind had to know that he could not pay the penalty, for man was totally filthy before God.

Man was between a rock and a hard place. Man need to pay the penalty for sin but could not. God was the *only One* who could pay the penalty. Hence the Trinity. God had to solve the problem of man, but as Man and not God. God lowered Himself to become Man in the Person of Jesus Christ. Since Jesus as God was sinless, When He took on flesh as God-Man He was also sinless. He went to the Cross as a Man to pay for our sins. He rose again on the third day to *show that the payment* was acceptable to the Godhead. While on the earth as a man, Jesus used to the powers of the Spirit to perform miracles, to teach, and to lead people to salvation in Him.

But this is not the entire story of redemption. When man was *allowed* to temporarily redeemed himself through animal sacrifices, none of the sacrifices *had any lasting value*. Not only was the sacrifice improper in itself (for an animal

cannot pay the penalty for men), but as soon as the sacrifice was made man went *back out and began to sin again*. We are all compulsive sinners. Even as a hermit man will still find a way to sin. Again comes the Trinity of God to the rescue. Christ is seated at the right hand of God the Father forever, making intercession for our sins:

Hebrews 7:22-28 "By so much was Jesus made a surety (EGGUOS, guarantee) of a better testament (DIATHAKA, covenant). 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. "

When we sin now, rather than being "saved again", Christ *immediately makes intercession* for us. This ensures that we retain our salvation rather than lose it. God the Holy Spirit also *indwells* us, aiding us in making better decisions for the Lord, and convicting us to repent when we sin. Only *through the Trinity* are we maintained in God's redemption.

The Christian Monotheist would tell us that the Jesus manifestation makes intercession with Himself, which is *nonsense*. The Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses say that the "lesser god" Jesus makes intercession for our sins. But a mediator or intercessor *must be equal* with both parties that He tries to reconcile. If Jesus was merely a man He *could not* be an Intercessor, for He would not be equal with God. If Jesus was pure God then he would not be equal with man. If Jesus were lesser god that he *would not be equal* with either God or man. Jesus must be pure God in the flesh, forever sitting at the right hand of God the Father in Heaven. Any other combination throws our salvation away. The Doctrine of the

Trinity, though many may not understand it, is true. It is a foundational Doctrine in the Christian faith that cannot be lightly thrown away because of Catholic prejudice.

A parallel study can be found [here](#) on this subject.

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Systematic Theology

STUDY FIVE

The Essence, Person, Union, and Life Of The Logos

Who is the Christ

We need to look into the uses of the Greek word LOGOS and how it relates to Jesus Christ. The word LOGOS is *never* found in the Greek text as being used to denote reason or the function of the mind. Whenever the Greeks decided to describe these concepts they used terms such as PNEUMA (which meant the spirit or mind of man), or CARDIA (which referred to the heart or emotions of man). LOGOS was never used in reference to the created being in the Greek manuscripts.

In classical literature LOGOS is never used to denote the *subjective* faculty of reason, but is used to designate "the reason to be given, in an objective manner, to anyone else". LOGOS means, literally, "speech or word".

John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Who is the LOGOS John is talking about in the above text? From our study of the history of the word LOGOS we already know that the word is *never used* to describe a *created being*.

John 1:14, 29 "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace

and truth. ... The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

It is obvious from the context of these verses that the LOGOS is Jesus Christ. Yet even with the context of these verses can we prove that Jesus Christ is Divine? Let's look at John 1.1 in detail:

In the beginning. This phrase is similar to the Hebrew RESHITH found in:

Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

This phrase shows that Christ was with the Godhead at the beginning of time, yet does not *successfully* show that Christ was with the Father *before* this time.

.. was the Word, and the Word was with God. The latter part of this phrase is the Greek PROS TON THEON, which shows that the LOGOS was *not only* coexistent with God in the beginning, but *face-to-face* with the Father so that He communicated with Him as an equal. Yet even here we do not see the Christ pre-existing before the RESHITH. Is He truly infinite, or only a Created Being like man and the angels?

.. and the Word was God. In this last phrase we see the ultimate truth about our Lord Jesus Christ. The word *was* in this phrase is the Greek EN, which is an Imperfect tense of the Greek EIMI, which means "to be". Whenever the EIMI is used or placed between two nouns, according to the Greek laws of grammar the two nouns are parallel in meaning in *both* essence as well as in nature. This law is only in effect in the event that an article is placed on the first noun (which is the case in this instance).

The LOGOS is Christ, according to the Greek laws of grammar. The LOGOS equals God and God equals the LOGOS exactly. Christ is Divine with all of the attributes of the other members of the Godhead. This is the essence of what John is telling us in his introductory passage.

Jesus Himself testified that He was God in John 8.58:

John 8:58 "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."

How does this passage verify the Deity of Christ? The Greek for ***I am*** in the passage is EGO EIMI. These words clearly show that Christ was saying He was God because:

1. EGO EIMI is a Present Tense Double Nominative. In this construction it shows a ***beginning*** for the existence of the subject (Abraham), yet shows ***no beginning*** nor end for the object of the construction (Christ).
2. ***I am*** is out of context with the rest of the sentence. Christ is not illiterate, for when He was young His wisdom was such that He taught the wise men of His time.

Luke 2:46-47 "And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."

With the knowledge that Christ possessed (and has even now), would He be so ***ignorant*** as to not know proper grammar? In order to form the sentence properly He could have said:

Before Abraham was, I existed, or,
Before Abraham was, I was, or,
Before Abraham was, I lived.

Yet Jesus used extremely bad grammar and said, "***Before Abraham was, I am***". The only possible explanation for Jesus' faux pas was that He ***wanted*** to draw attention to the phrase ***I am***. He used the phrase ***I am*** as the personal name of God, just as it is found in:

Exodus 3:14 "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus

shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

and applied that Holy, Sacred name of God to Himself. The Jews who heard Jesus understood that He used the Holy name of God and applied it to Himself.

John 8:59 "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."

After hearing His statement these Pharisees pick up stones in order to kill Jesus for blasphemy, in accordance with Jewish Law. Jesus called Himself God, the Jews recognized this, and it's high time that we ourselves acknowledge that He was and is God in the flesh.

An Introduction to the Person of Christ

His Hypostatic Union

(C.S. Lewis) "A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic, on a level with a man who says he is a poached egg, or else he would be the devil of hell. Either this man was and is the Son of God; or else a mad man or something worst. You can shut Him up for a fool; you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him the Lord God. But let us not come out with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us, He did not intend to ..."

Matthew 16:16-17 "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

Who can truly understand Jesus, the (CHRISTOS = anointed one) Christ? We have never experienced the union of pure sinless humanity and pure Deity in one

Person, until we experienced it in Jesus.

John 1:14 "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

Earlier we saw that the LOGOS, the Word, is Jesus Christ, and He was and is fully God in the flesh. In John 1.14 the King James team "missed the mark" when they translated this verse. They render the passage ***Word was made flesh***, suggesting that there was a time when Jesus was not in existence. A better rendering from the Greek text would be ***Word was became flesh***. The LOGOS was already pre-existent in another form as God in eternity past, and took on another form (humanity) in order to become our Savior. In Phillipians 2.6 we see:

Philippians 2:6 "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:"

Taking this verse section by section from the Greek text, we see the following teaching:

Who, being... being is the Greek HUPARCHO, which means "to exist".

in the form of God... form is the Greek MORPHE, which means "the exact shape or nature of".

thought it not robbery to be equal with God... is best translated from the Greek text as "did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped".

Put it all together and we see that Jesus pre-existed in the exact same nature and Being as the other members of the Godhead, therefore He did not have to "seek" Deity, nor pretend to be God. He was and is God from eternity past and into eternity future. Christ was not only fully God, but He walked the earth as fully man, as witnessed by His own words and the words of the prophets:

John 8:40 "But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth,

which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham."

Romans 1:3-4 "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:"

Romans 9:5 "Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

Philippians 2:8 "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Hebrews 2:14 "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;"

There was confusion over the exact nature of Christ in the organized Church until the council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.). At this council the Church leaders conferred and agreed on the following:

"(Christ is) known to be in two natures, unchangeable and indivisible. The distinction of the natures being in no wise being taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Substance; not pointed or divided into two persons.."

The Council decided that, Scripturally, Christ is not God in man, but a Member of the Godhead who possessed a fully operating Human nature. The two natures in Christ, both God and Man, are called by theologians a "Hypostatic Union". Whenever we use the term "Hypostatic Union" throughout the rest of this study we are talking about the unique union of both Man and God in the one Person, Jesus Christ.

When we understand the Hypostatic Union of Christ we understand why He was impeccable (unable to sin and able not to sin). Though Christ was human, He was sinless human, without any trace of the Old Sin Nature that we have. It was and is

essential that Christ be in Hypostatic Union in order that we be saved. Why?

Between God and His creation there was a wall of sin erected from the time Adam made his decision to turn his back on God in the Garden. This wall grew greater and larger each year that creation existed as we move farther and farther from our Creator. God's love wanted to find a way to heal this breach, yet His righteousness demanded that the sinner (mankind) pay the penalty. Yet the one who paid the penalty could not be bogged down in sin himself, for then the sacrifice would be tainted and unacceptable to God. An innocent and sinless man who, representative of humanity, would have to be offered as a substitutionary atonement for the sins of mankind. The substitute had to be willing to make this offer, not be forced into it.

Why wouldn't an *animal sacrifice* work?

1. The Jewish nation performed frequent and yearly sacrifices, yet by the very fact of their *repetition* we see that these sacrifices were ineffective. If they were effective, they would *not* have been repeated year after year. The animals used were ineffective substitutes because, (a) They were *not* on the same level with those they were substituting for, (b) They were not truly *willing* to accept their role as sacrifices as they were senseless animals, (c) These animals were *not sinless*, as when Adam fell all of creation was also tainted by his act of sin. Animals were placed in the care of mankind, were dependent on man. When we fell, the animals fell as well.

2. After the act of atonement by animal sacrifice the people fell back into unnatural sin patterns. *No person* can live perfect according to the Laws God, for there are thousands of ramifications and degrees within this Law. If a man breaks one of the points of the Law he breaks all them.

James 2:10 "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

3. There was also *no animal or human* sacrifice that could live in substitute for the people because (1) The guilt and transgression of sin are passed down from

human to human *in the blood* of the person. For this reason there are no sinless humans born. We are all sinful as our Father Adam made us.

Leviticus 17:11-15 "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood. And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust. For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off. And every soul that eateth that which died of itself, or that which was torn with beasts, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger, he shall both wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even: then shall he be clean."

(2) Even if there were a sinless animal somewhere on the earth it could not live in man's behalf, as it is not on the *same level* with men. Thus we have a dilemma seemingly without solution. How does the Hypostatic Union of Christ solve this dilemma?

Christ was innocent , born free from sin. He was born of the virgin Mary, yet His Father was God Almighty. In the creation of the child the ovum of the mother contributes to the development of the body of the child. The sperm of the father contributes to the formation of the blood of the child. The blood contains both the physical life and the spiritual death of man. If the blood of the father is contaminated with sin, then the child will, by genetic necessity, be sinful. When Adam fell his soul was tainted with sin and the soul is contained within the blood of man (see the verse above). In Jesus' birth, He came into humanity completely pure. No man contributed to the formation of the blood in the baby Jesus. Mary became "with child" by the supernatural power of the sinless Holy Spirit, and the curse of Adam was not imputed to Christ. He was and is a sinless, holy atonement

for our sins.

Christ was willing to die for the people God. He was *not forced* against His will to do that which He came for.

Christ was resurrected so He could sit on the right hand God the Father to forever make intercession for us when we fail in Godly living.

Had Christ been merely man He could *not* have been a *living sacrifice* for the believer. Had He been purely God, He would not have been an acceptable sacrifice, for He would not be on the same level as the people He was to represent. Christ was *fully God and fully man* so He could be our Redeemer.

Because of the Hypostatic Union of Christ, His work accomplished three objectives:

- (1) His atonement met the *demands* of the Law for the sinner once and for all.
- (2) His atonement appeased the *wrath and justice* of God.
- (3) His atonement met the demands of the Law of God, yet at the same time showed forth the *mercy* of God.

The Satisfaction of Christ

The theological term "satisfaction of Christ" indicates that Christ not only did a *good work* on earth, but that this work was both *perfect and eternal*. The work was finished, so salvation is *not* what we do *in addition* to Christ, but our salvation is based on what Christ *alone* did for us. Can we prove the Satisfaction of Christ is a Biblical doctrine?

The saving power of the Satisfaction of Christ works in *three* simultaneous aspects toward the believer:

(1) Christ saves us as our High Priest:

Hebrews 10:1-10 "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. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest 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 10:11-12 "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"

Christ's offering was accepted by the Almighty as a one time *eternal work*. The Christian does *not* have to fear the loss of his salvation, for the work of Christ was and *is* a finished work. Can we ever forget the last words Christ on the Cross:

John 19:30 "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

Jesus was not referring to His life, for it was not really ended. He was referring to the work of the Cross: *It is finished*. Praise God for His mercies!

(2) Christ saves us as our sacrifice:

Ephesians 5:2 "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."

The offering of Christ was and is a one time, eternal work. It was pleasing to God because it ***not only*** paid for sin, but also released the believer from the bondage of guilt.

Leviticus 17:11 "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

Blood may make ***an*** atonement for the soul, but only the blood of the pure and perfect creature may make ***the*** atonement for the believer. Such was sacrifice of Christ.

3. Christ saves us as our Redeemer:

Galatians 3:13 "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:"

The Greek word for ***redeemed*** in this passage is EXAGORAZO, which means "To buy from or pay the price for". Christ put Himself forward as ***our payment*** for sin, took the penalty of the wrath of God that we all richly deserved. Mercy is abundant in salvation, not justice, for we did not get the justice we so richly deserved.

We are all like blind men, walking the wrong way down a one way street. We should not be on that street, but we are because of the disobedience so rich within us. A truck careens around the corner (the Law), and barrels our way, ready to crush us. Yet Christ reached out, pulled us out of the way, and took the crushing weight of the Law on Himself. He EXAGORAZO us, paid the penalty in our stead.

The payment Christ made was full, perfect, and harsh. To merely say "He paid the penalty" is to oversimplify what Jesus did for us. Prior to crucifixion the victim was ***scourged***. This is not an ordinary whipping by any means, it is simply

horrible torture. The victim was strapped to a vertical post so that his feet barely touched the ground. The executioner then lashed the man with a whip interlaced with razors or broken pottery. Of the scourging of Christ it is written that *no part* of His body was left untortured, His very *beard* was ripped from His face:

Isaiah 50:5-6 "The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting."

Next the victim was to carry the mode of His death, a 70 pound post grinding into his wounded shoulders. The original Cross was not that which the Christian Church today knows. The Greek word for Cross is STAUROS, which means a "pole or post". The "t" shaped Cross infiltrated Christianity when paganism was allowed into the early Church during it's "Dark Ages". The worshippers of the bull god Tammuz entered the Church. As they worshipped the Tau (a symbol of Tammuz), they worshipped his symbol which was "t". Once they were forced into Christianity they carried this symbol with them which later became known as the Christian Cross. (see W.E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, Fleming H Revell Company, page 256 "Cross, Crucify", A.Noun). However, the Bible is very plain that Jesus died on the *tree*:

Galatians 3:13 "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:"

Historically Jesus had to carry this post approximately 660 yards from Antonia to Golgotha, the "refuse pile" of the city. Here He was nailed to the post in such a way that every breath He took was excruciatingly painful. In this humiliating manner Christ died for us. This was the redemption. This was the EXAGORAZO.

The World View Of Jesus Christ

C.S. Lewis: "You must show a man he is wrong before you start explaining why he is wrong."

The world has viewed Christ in many various forms and persons for many many years now. In this section we will study the various cultic views of Christ, and seek to explain why they deviate from the Biblical view of Jesus.

Ebionism and the Ebionites

"Ebionism" literally means "the poor ones". This early cult sprang up in the first and second centuries after the death of Christ. The Ebionites were a branch of Christio-Judaism which today we would classified as "Galatian" believers.

There were both Christian and non Christian Ebionites. These people denied the Deity of Christ because of Deuteronomy 6.3-4 (which we have studied before. See our studies on the Trinity of God). The Ebionites believed that Jesus became God only when the Holy Spirit descended on Him at His Water Baptism. In the same way the Ebionites believed that ***all believers are a little God*** just like Jesus was. In reality we all are only men, not God. Jesus was and is the only Man who ever walked the earth who could be rightfully called "God in the Flesh".

We have already refuted all of Ebionism's claims except one: that we become God-like at the point of salvation. This is a confusion of the ministry of the Indwelling of the Spirit. True, we do receive the Holy Spirit of God at the point of salvation. But the Spirit ***indwells or lives*** in us, yet distinctly separate from our souls. The Spirit ***does not mix*** with our souls, but works in union with us. Even God ***does not have the power to re-create Himself***: He cannot make other Gods out of mortal man, even with His infinite power. Christ was and is God, not because He was created to be so, but because He self existed as God from infinity to infinity.

Sorinthianism and the Sorinthians

Sorinthianism is very close in theology to Ebionism. The Sorinthians believed that there was ***no real Godhood in Christ*** until after His Water Baptism. After Water Baptism the Sorinthians believed that Jesus possessed ***two distinct personalities*** in

one body. They believed there was both a Divine and a human person living in the same shell, that Christ was a type of schizophrenic. This cult never really took hold in the Eastern world, dying out shortly after it's birth, yet it's doctrine lives on in several of our "modern day" cults.

Dolcicism and the Dolcitists

Another cult that was prominent in the first century was Dolcicism. This cult takes it's name from the Greek DOKETOI, meaning "to seem or to think". Dolcicism was the direct antithesis of Ebionism. They believed that Christ was **fully God**, and in His Deity only **seemed** to be like man. The Apostle John dealt with this group quite extensively. He wrote in response to their false doctrine:

1 John 4:2-3 "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."

.. Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God. This heresy was widespread in the world in the time of the Apostles. Sabellius, a heretic condemned at the council of Rome (253 AD), extended this doctrine so that it also perverted the doctrine of the Trinity of God. Sabellius held that God was not in three Persons. God was only one Person who showed Himself to man in **three manifestations**. Sabellius claimed that **Jesus was the one true God** who manifested Himself as Father, Spirit, and Son. Though Dolcicism is no longer known by its original name, its theories live on among the **Christian Monotheistic** cults. The most popular of the modern "Jesus Only" cults is the United Pentecostal Church.

Arianism

In the fourth century A.D. Arianism came into being. This cult reached its height of power in 325 A.D. In that year the cult's leader, Arius, was called to stand before the Church council at Nicea. Arianists *denied the Deity* of Christ. They believed that, rather than being self-existent, Christ was *a created being* from God. It goes without saying that Arianism also denied the Doctrine of Trinity. Arius' reasoning was:

1. If Christ was the *only begotten of God* then there must have been a time when He was not begotten.
2. The Son possessed a nature like the Father's yet *not the same* nature as the Father's.

Arius based his arguments on two texts:

John 14:28 "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I."

Arius reasoned that, *if* Jesus said the Father *was greater* than Himself then He was lesser than the Father and a created being. But he failed to take the verse in its proper historical context. As Calvin stated:

"Christ does not here compare the Divinity of the Father with his own, neither His own human nature with the Divine essence of God, but rather His present state with the celestial glory to which He must shortly be received..."

When Jesus walked the earth He walked it as a Man. This is because the Plan of God required that He live, work, and die as Man to atone for our sins. This was the *only way* He could be a proper redemptive sacrifice for us. Arius failed to recognize this because he failed to recognize Christ's Hypostatic Union.

The second verse Arius used was:

Matthew 19:16-17 "And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master,

what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

Arius felt that Jesus, by rejecting the title of **Good** and applying it only to God, Jesus was directly stating that He was not God. There is nothing farther from the truth.

First, *look at the context*. In the background a young man is coming to Christ to *earn his way* into eternal life. This young man has rejected Jesus as the way unto life (John 14.6). The young man has determined that he can be *good enough on his own* to get into Heaven without the help of the Son. He further recognizes Jesus as *mere man only*, with no power to help him obtain salvation. This is seen through the title RABBI or **Master**. RABBI is a term applied to a *human teacher*, and by using this term to Christ the young man shows he was rejecting the Hypostatic Union of Christ.

So the young man comes to Christ, refers to Him as a *mere* human teacher, and dresses up the title with the adjective **Good**. Jesus rejects this adjective, not because He is not God, but because He is trying to prove a point. No *mere man* is ever good, for *all men* are dead in their sins (Romans 3.1-13; Ephesians 2.1-3). Jesus teaches, "If you are going to recognize Me as a mere man rather than your Savior, do not call Me **Good**. There are no **Good** people. All men are dead in their sins." The young man obviously missed the doctrinal point (as did Arius), because Jesus went on and explained how hard it would be to *get into Heaven using works*. If Jesus was a mere man saying that the things He said, then He could not be good. As C.S. Lewis stated, He was either a demon from hell or a madman. Jesus is either in Hypostatic Union and **Good**, or out of Union and possessed. There is no midpoint!

The Cult of Apollos, Bishop of Laodicea

Apollos developed another twist that rejected the Hypostatic Union. He and his

followers believed that Christ was *fully God* with *only a semblance of humanity*. Apollos held that Jesus possessed only the body and soul of the man, but had *no human spirit*. The human spirit of Christ, Apollos asserted, was *destroyed and replaced* by the Holy Spirit when He was baptized. This early cult still has a small following today under different names.

Cults Headed by Early Church Authorities

Nestorius (the Bishop of the Church at Constantinople, 4th century A.D.) led a group of followers who believed that Jesus had *two natures* in His Hypostatic Union, which is correct. But Nestorius also believed that Jesus possessed *two personalities* to go along with the two natures. Again we have a cult that believed our Lord Jesus was a schizophrenic. This heresy was condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D.

Eutikese (an Abbot at the Church of Constantinople, 5th century A.D.) invented yet another twist. Eutikese held that Jesus had *three natures and one personality*. He said Jesus had a Divine Nature, a Human Nature, and a mixed Humano-Divine Nature. This cult was condemned at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D.

Modern Theological Cults

One liberal theologian, Shlarmaker, mixed Buddhism with Christianity. This was no worse than the early cults mixing Judaism with Christianity. What made Shlarmaker's Theology so bad was that he taught that Christ was *exactly equal* to the created being, man. The only real difference between Christ and us, he contended, was that Christ reached a higher God consciousness than we have. He said anyone can reach what Christ was with *hard work and dedication to good deeds*. This is a particularly blasphemous doctrine as it not only denies the Hypostatic Union, but also de-emphasizes the work of Christ on the Cross. The Cross no longer stands for atonement to pay for our sins, but is now an *unfortunate event* brought on by those jealous of Christ's created Divinity.

Shlarmaker's Theology is not taught or condoned by the Scripture. Mormonism contains elements of this theology.

Another theologian, Ritchell, introduced what he called "German Radical Criticism" of the Bible. He taught that Christ had no Hypostatic Union, that it was *impossible* for any man to have two natures. Ritchell declared that Christ was *merely a man* who totally submitted Himself to the will of God. In the same sense, according to this teaching, any of us today could reach what Christ did by exhibiting the same submission to God.

Harry Emerson Fosdick taught that every Christian has the *same amount* of Divinity that Christ had: *only in degree do we differ* from what Christ possessed before God.

Joseph Settler (a quasi-Lutheran theologian), taught that Christ was *not preexistent with God* literally, but Christ was *only foreknown* in the mind of the one true God. Settler emulated his mentor Arius in most of his doctrinal views. Settler, as did Arius, denied both the Hypostatic Union as well as the Trinity of God.

Professor Henry Van Doussan, a quasi-Presbyterian theologian, used a slightly different twist to reject the Hypostatic Union. He held that Christ was *not fully God*, but that God was fully present in Christ as He would be *in any man*. God and Christ were one only in the sense of their *unity of purpose*, but Christ was certainly not the equal of God. Doussan stated:

"Unless God is present in the life of every man, then He cannot become present in the life of Jesus of Nazareth .."

Doussan did not create a new Theology, but only emulated his earlier cultic mentors. There are many different cultic views concerning the person of Jesus Christ today. All such views are inspired by Satan, the Father of lies. Satan tried to trick our Lord Jesus (Matthew 4) into turning away from His Hypostatic Union and the Plan of God. When this failed Satan convinced unbelievers of both yesterday and today that Jesus was no more than a mere man. If such attacks succeed then there can be no salvation for these people, because the heart of

salvation is to accept the *historic Jesus Christ as your personal Savior*. We cannot work our way into salvation: we must rely on what Jesus did for us at the Cross and beyond within His Hypostatic Union.

If Satan can trick the believer into minimizing or disregarding the unique Person of Christ he can cause:

1. Stunted growth in the believer. This doctrine is pivotal to so many other Bible doctrines that to reject the unique Person of Christ leads to deeper and deeper departures from the truth.
2. An idea that we can "work our way" to Heaven. The witness of the Cross is destroyed when we tell the unbeliever "you must accept Christ and do this, or do that" to be saved. Unbelievers become believers when we tell them of their hopeless situation and show them that Jesus is the way out of Hell. Unbelievers stay unbelievers when we tell them to work their way to Heaven, to work their own way out of this hopeless situation.

Too often I hear the mantra, "It's just an opinion, a harmless way of belief". There is nothing harmless in rejecting the Hypostatic Union of Christ. The Apostle John didn't seem to think that such deception was "harmless opinion", and neither should any right thinking Christian.

Jesus Christ Is God

Proofs Through His Attributes

John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

When Jesus spoke these words He effectively divided the world, with all of it's false gods and goddesses, asunder. His statement was both negative as well as positive. In the negative sense, Jesus is the *only* way to God. Christ, and Christianity, are exclusive concepts. There is no other way to God *but* through

Jesus. In the positive sense we see that, if we put away our blind stabs at seeking God, there is one *sure* way to God, and that way is Jesus Christ.

This was not the only statement Jesus that Jesus made about being the exclusive way unto God. Jesus is the *only Begotten* of God:

John 3:18 "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."

Who better to lead man to God than the only Son of God? Jesus is also the *only mediator* between God and man:

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

Who better to talk on our behalf than the "only Mediator"? In our society people often become wishy-washy when they talk about religion. "Can't we just all love one another and be in one accord?". But when you read the Foxes Book of Martyrs you see that the early Christians, strong in the faith, were feign to forsake Christ in either word or deed. They held up the exclusiveness of Christianity for all to see, and in so doing kept the Church alive when it would have otherwise been blotted out by "religious people".

Paul's letter to the Galatians emphasizes, over and over again, the exclusiveness of Jesus Christ. The Jewish Christians wanted to add in the rituals of the Temple with their Christian worship, and to this Paul replied "God forbid". It is true that all other religions carry, to a small degree, some elements that are parallel to Christianity. The Moslems believe that there is one God; so do we. Yet should the Christian compromise the exclusiveness of Christ in order to accommodate the religions of the world? Is it right to allow the Buddhist, in ignorance, to starve himself to death seeking Heaven and, after dying, only finding Hell? I don't think so, and neither does our God!

There are many verses of Scripture that we can look at topically to prove the Deity

in Christ's perfect union. For instance, we can look at an Old Testament quotation that ascribes a certain attribute to God, then find the parallel verse in the new Testament that ascribes the same attribute to Christ. This clearly shows the Deity of Christ in Hypostatic Union.

God is the only Savior of the world.

If God is the only Savior, and Christ is declared to be the Savior, then Christ *must be equal* to God.

Hosea 13:4 "Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me."

John 4:42 "And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

God is declared to be the Creator of all things.

If God is the Creator, and Christ is declared to be the Creator in parallel, then *Christ must be God.*

Isaiah 40:28 "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding."

John 1:3 "All things were made by him (Christ); and without him was not any thing made that was made."

God is declared to be the Judge of all.

If the Judge, and Christ is declared to be the Judge in parallel, then ***Christ must be God.***

Joel 3:12 "Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about."

John 5:26-27 "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man."

God is declared to be the believer's Shepherd.

If the Shepherd, and Christ is declared to be the Shepherd in parallel, then ***Christ must be God.***

Psalms 23:1 "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want."

John 10:11 "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

God is declared to be the believer's Rock and Fortress.

Since God is the Rock, if Christ is declared to be the Rock in parallel, then ***Christ must be God.***

Psalms 18:2 "The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower."

1 Corinthians 10:4 "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was

Christ."

God alone is to be worshipped.

If God only is to be worshipped, and Christ in parallel is worshipped, then ***Christ must be God***. Not even the Archangels are allowed to be worshipped.

Psalms 148:1-5 "Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created."

Hebrews 1:6-8 "And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."

Matthew 8:2-3 "And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed."

The Matthew passage is particularly telling. Jesus was ***worshipped*** by the leper. The word in the original tongue is PROSCHUNEO, which means "to lay prostrate before an object of worship, to kiss or fawn over an object of greater Deity". In Judaism it was ***blaspheme*** to worship a mere man; to do so would subject you to immediate death by stoning. Yet Jesus, a Orthodox Jew, did not discourage the leper; He merely accepted the worship given as if it were His due (and it was). If Jesus were not God then He contributed to blasphemy by His own actions, and was ***not*** a "good" man or a prophet: He would indeed be a sinner. That Jesus believed

Himself to be God is obvious. He WAS and IS God.

PROSCHUNEO is a word used only for worship of God. The same word is used in the following context:

John 4:20-24 "Our fathers worshipped PROSCHUNEO in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship PROSCHUNEO. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship PROSCHUNEO the Father. Ye worship PROSCHUNEO 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 PROSCHUNEO him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship PROSCHUNEO him must worship PROSCHUNEO him in spirit and in truth."

Furthermore the leper addressed Jesus with the title *Lord*, ADONAI, which is one of the holy names of God. Jesus was not only addressed as ADONAI in this one passage, but over 200 times in the Gospels alone. In each instance Jesus accepted the title as His rightful due, never rebuked the speaker. This is carried forward in the following text:

John 5:23 "That all men should honour (TIMAO, To prize or show reverence to) the Son, even as they honour (TIMAO, To prize or show reverence to) the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him."

Jesus expected the same honor attributed to the Father, for He was and is equal in power and authority to the Father. Jesus Christ is God!

God alone is to be called "Lord".

God alone is to be called the Lord (KURIOS) as this is a title of Deity. But Christ is referred to in the new Testament *exclusively* as the Lord. This is the

New Testament equivalent to the Old Testament YHWH, the Divine name of God. Cults usually try to play down the use of KURIOS when applied to Jesus by noting that many Kings and Rulers were also called KURIOS in the ancient Greek literature. This is because many Rulers of this era set themselves up as gods. Many believers were martyred in the early Christian Church because they called Jesus KURIOS, refusing to bow down and worship Caesar as God. KURIOS is a title of Deity, and though wrongly applied to carnal Rulers, it *was rightly applied* to Jesus Christ in the Scripture.

The Prophetic Word of Christ

Jesus' manner of Prophecy points out the fact that He is God. Whenever the Prophets gave a message from God they preceded the message with "Thus saith the Lord". For example:

Exodus 4:22 "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn:"

Joshua 24:2 "And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods."

This phrase is found 415 times in the Bible uttered by the Prophets, prior to making a proclamation from God. Whenever Jesus prophesied He never used these words, as if He were saying "I am the source of this message, I am the Divine Son of God".

The "oneness" of Christ and God

John 10:30-33 "I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to

stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."

one in the above passage is the Greek EIS, which not only refers to oneness *of purpose*, but also oneness *of being and substance*. The Jews understood that Jesus was declaring Himself to be *equal with God* because, they immediately picked up stones in order to execute Him for blasphemy. Jesus knew what He was saying: He is God.

1 Corinthians 8:5-6 "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."

In contrast this passage shows that both Christ and the Father, though co-equal, are unique within the Godhead. Each Member have their own specific functions, each their own place without struggling for supremacy. The name and title *Lord Jesus Christ* even points out the Deity of Christ. *Lord* is the Greek parallel to the Hebrew YHWH, meaning I AM, the Divine name of God. *Jesus* comes from the Hebrew YEHOSHUA, translated "God with us". *Christ* is CHRISTOS, meaning "The Anointed One, the Messiah". Jesus' name and title could literally be rendered, from the original languages, as: "I am God the Anointed One".

Thus do we see the Scripture unequivocally declares the Deity of Christ, fully co-equal with both God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. He IS Lord!

A parallel study can be found [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#) on this subject.



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Systematic Theology

STUDY SIX

The Doctrines of Grace

These studies were previously developed in full as "stand alone" studies. Rather than just "copy" these studies here, you will find them in the links shown below. God Bless!

[The Doctrine of Grace \(Part 1\): Universal and Saving](#)

[The Doctrine of Grace \(Part 2\): Living](#)

[The Doctrine of Grace \(Part 3\): Dying and Eternal](#)

[Common Grace And Spiritual Death: Can Man Do Good?](#)

[Common Grace And Spiritual Death: What Is Divine Good?](#)

[Common Grace And Spiritual Death: The Path To Salvation](#)

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Systematic Theology

Part 1: Universal and Saving Grace

The Many Theologies Of Grace

One of the most misunderstood but most essential doctrines in the Scripture is the doctrine of Grace. When most people think about Grace they remember the song "Amazing Grace", relating Grace only to that blessing from God that gave us salvation. Legalism (the system of Theology that believes man is *saved by works*, or that a combination of man's and God's works save man) recognizes Grace only as a *limited act* of God. They teach that man can lose his salvation by *falling from* God's Grace if his works aren't up to the Divine standard. Calvinism recognizes Grace as "efficacious"; that is, God's Grace is exhibited *to the elect* to bring them to salvation. Calvinists believe that any Grace less than saving Grace is "Common Grace", which helps the human race to survive so that the elect can be saved. To the Calvinist, therefore, Grace is *elect oriented*.

Arminianism, on the other hand, recognizes God's Grace as His *unmerited favor to the human race at large* for either salvation or preservation.

As you can see there's a great deal of misunderstanding about God's Grace as it applies to humanity. I think this misunderstanding comes

about because a group of believers will adopt a particular central theological belief, then build all other doctrines around this theme. Calvinism does this with Efficacious Grace, Arminianism with Universal Grace, and Legalism with Conditional Grace. In this study I pray we can forget our *central themes* long enough to get a clear Scriptural presentation of God's Grace.

A General Summary Of Grace

Grace (CHEN in the Hebrew, CHARIS in the Greek texts) is defined as "God's unmerited favor or blessing to man". *No one earns or can ever deserve God's Grace* for man is patently undeserving of any part of Grace. God created the universe and placed on the earth His creation He called "man" (Hebrew ISH). Man didn't deserve creation any more than a piece of pottery deserves it, but God in His Grace created man, complete with free will and a desire to use it. When man rejected the Grace of God to follow the serpent Satan (Genesis 3) man *deserved destruction*. But rather than getting what we deserved God gave man more Grace by providing him a way out of the mess he had gotten into. God, by His action in the Garden, shows us that Grace is the most intrinsic part of His character. Our Lord *functions through Grace*, everything that He does is flavored by Grace. By understanding Grace we can come to understand our Lord more fully. When we understand the Godhead more completely we will appreciate Him more, growing in our love for Him.

God is always the Bestower of Grace and we are always the recipients of this bounty. We can do nothing to earn His Grace for it is unmerited favor automatically bestowed from His nature. To say that we can earn Grace by our works is to say that *we can change God's character* through our works. God cannot be changed by man! The idea is ludicrous.

The different facets of God's Grace to humanity can be categorized as follows:

- **Universal or Common Grace:** The Grace that God freely gives to *all of the human race* so they can survive. This Grace allows the unbeliever to survive in this life so that he or she will have the opportunity to come under the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit and be saved.
- **Saving Grace:** The Grace that *allows an individual to accept Jesus* Christ as Savior, thereby becoming an adopted "saved" son of God.
- **Living Grace:** The Grace that God gives *the believer* so that he or she can survive and prosper in the devil's world.
- **Dying Grace:** The Grace that God gives *the believer* to ease him or her from this life into eternity.
- **Eternal Grace:** The Grace that God gives *the believer* on his or her entrance into the next life.

Universal Or Common Grace

Universal Grace (also called *Common Grace* by the Calvinists) is the Grace that God bestows on all mankind *regardless of their spiritual state*. God desires that all people have an equal opportunity at salvation.

1 Timothy 2:3-4 "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. "

In order for *all men* to have an equal chance at salvation they must

first survive. They must have food, water, clothing, shelter, and governmental law to survive in this life. God extends the physical life of man day by day through this policy of Universal Grace. This gives man the ability to freely reject or accept Christ as Saviour when he is under the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 14:15-17 "And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach (EUAGGELIZO, Evangelize, proclaim the Good News of the Gospel) unto you that ye should turn (EPISTREPHO, To turn to, convert. By extension, be converted from false religions and the world to Christ) from these vanities unto the living (ZAO, Present active tense, Always Living, eternal) God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: Who in times past suffered (allowed) all nations to walk in their own ways (HODOS, a road which one travels, a manner of life, act or custom). Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good (AGATHOPOIEO, Present Participle, Kept on doing good of intrinsic value), and gave (DIDOMI, Present participle, Kept on giving) us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons (KAIROS, periods of time, dispensations), filling our hearts with food and gladness. "

When Paul and Barnabas went to Lystra Paul, through the Divine gift of healing, healed a man who was "cripple from his mother's womb". The people of Lystra, who worshipped the Greek pantheon of gods (Jupiter, Apollo, Mercury, etc.), saw this miracle of healing. They immediately proclaimed Barnabas to be "Jupiter", and Paul "Mercury" because of this miraculous manifestation. These Apostles wouldn't have anything to do with this false proclamation. Paul immediately began to evangelize these idolaters.

But how do you evangelize idolaters? There wasn't a complete canon of Scripture at this point in history. The Apostles had no easy to carry Bible like we have today. These idolaters had been taught by their

parents to believe in the Greek pantheon of gods, and these people *did have* their own "Bible" (though false) on hand. Paul had two things that aided him in evangelizing these people. First, he had the *witness of the miraculous healing*. Even the idolaters knew that healing of this type must come from a Divine Source, so the very fact that Paul healed the cripple gave a "Divine Signature" to his testimony. Second, Paul had God's witness through nature, the manifestation of His Universal Grace.

The evangelistic message might have been better received if the antagonistic Jews from Antioch and Iconium hadn't have perverted the message. Nevertheless we can see several things about God's Universal Grace in Paul's message. We can see that Universal Grace is bestowed on all equally, *regardless of their spiritual status*. Paul said that God gave *us* rain, food, and fruitful seasons. He didn't make any distinctions in the crowd he addressed. All mankind, regardless of their relationship to God, are blessed under God's policy of Universal Grace.

We can also see that God's policy of Universal Grace is a *continuing policy*, not one that is stopped because man rejects Christ. This can be seen in *and gave (DIDOMI, Present participle, Kept on giving) us rain from heaven*. God *keeps on giving* us (believer or unbeliever) food, rain, and fruitful seasons. If the unbeliever rejects the Gospel under the convicting ministry of the Spirit, God keeps on giving Universal Grace to him, for he might someday accept Christ.

We can also see that God's Universal Grace is a *witness to mankind* that there is a true God in Heaven. God *left not himself without witness* on the earth, for His witness is the provision of our basic needs.

Romans 1:20 "For the invisible things of him from the creation (KTISIS, Foundation) of the world (KOSMOS, earth) are clearly

seen, being understood (NOEO, to be consciously understood in the mind) by the things that are made, even his eternal (AIDIOS, without beginning or end, uncreated) power and Godhead (THEIOTES, Divinity, Deity, Divine Nature) ; so that they are without excuse"

All scientists can explain the causes of the universe, but they can *never explain* the first cause. Though man may grow in wisdom, though he may know how nature works, man can never explain how nature began. When you look at nature you must always come to the question: "But what started it all?". When you get to this question the only real solution you can reach is "God did it all!". God left man with an absolute witness that He is, that He has always existed. God cannot be seen, but His orderly nature can be seen in creation. Evolutionists teach that nature just "came into being" with either a bang or a squish. But evolutionists cannot explain why all oak trees have the same type of leaf structure, why all poplar trees have their distinctive structure, why all of creation has an undeniable order to it. In nature even the unordered is orderly. For instance, no two people on the face of the earth are exactly alike. Even identical twins have different fingerprints one from another. This lack of similarity between people is universal, and because it's universal it must be arranged. Though some species in creation have the same design, man stands apart as being absolutely different from his brother. Such an arrangement in creation leads all of mankind to eventually reach the conclusion that there is a Master Designer far above us, and this Master Designer is God. God's Universal Grace not only provides for all of mankind (so that they might have a chance at salvation), it also tells the human race that there is a God who loves us.

Romans 13:1-4 "Let every soul (PSUCHE, soul, the immaterial part of man that gives him personality) be subject (HUPOTASSO, Present Imperative tense, always be under the authority of, be subordinated to) unto the higher powers (EXOUSIA, powers. By

extension, governmental authorities) . For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained (TASSO, appointed, set in place) of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance (DIATAGE, appointment, order established) of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation (KRIMA, a judgment. Those who rebel against God's ordained governments will be punished under their laws) . For rulers are not a terror to good (AGATHOS, good of intrinsic value) works, but to the evil (KAKOS, evil or nonproductive, destructive) . Wilt thou then not be afraid (PHOBEO, afraid, respectful) of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister (DIAKONOS, servant, minister, deacon) of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid (PHOBEO, Present Imperative tense, keep on being afraid) ; for he beareth not the sword (An idiom that expresses the governments God given authority to punish, even to the point of death, those who do evil) in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger (EKDIKOS, an avenger, one who renders just recompense to those who break the law) to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. "

God's Universal Grace establishes government bodies and authorities which in turn establish laws for the protection of humanity. All people possess an old sin nature:

Galatians 5:16-26 "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. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another. "

This old sin nature causes man to automatically move toward evil rather than toward good. The Christian can overcome the power of the sin nature by growing in the Spirit:

Romans 6:14-18 "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. "

And through studying the Scriptures:

Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerners of the thoughts and intents of the heart. "

But the unbeliever only has *two restraints* that keep him from rampant sinning: (1) the operation of his *conscience*:

Romans 2:14-15 "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the

law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) "

And, (2) the operation of the "collective conscience" of humanity, governmental law. By establishing the conscience in man, and by arranging it into a group conscience called "government", **God protects the human race from itself**. If left to his own devices man will eventually murder, kidnap, rape, steal, and in every possible way tear down the fabric of his survival. The Los Angeles riots of just a few years ago were a good example of this. Ethnic minorities ran rampant through the city, destroying their own homes, stealing from their neighbors, because governmental authority was absent. By establishing the conscience God placed in all men some unwritten but **absolute codes** of right and wrong. While a man can negate his conscience by repeatedly ignoring it's warnings, it is **nearly impossible** for the corporeal conscience of the law to be unseated. One man may run rampant, killing innocents, but the group conscience exists to catch and punish him by separating him from society. Punishments (up to, and including, death) are sometimes necessary for the protection of civilization so that unbelievers can be evangelized and possibly saved from eternal damnation.

Many Christians misunderstand Universal Grace insofar as it relates to the government. One of the questions most frequently asked is "What about the Communistic or Tyrannical nations? Were they established by God?". We need to understand that God established the conscience (ability to recognize good and evil in man, and caused men to arrange this into governmental laws. God places men in position of authority over the people to administer this mass conscience.

Proverbs 8:14-16 "Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am

understanding; I have strength. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. "

But God never dictates the system by which these laws are administered, for the system itself is created by people. Let me give you an example: a few hundred years before Christ came to earth Rome began to build it's empire. One man didn't just build this empire, but a group of people created it. The mass conscience of the people united under the allowance of God into a nation. This nation expanded into an empire. Over this empire God appointed a governer that the people called Caesar. This much was established by God: (1) The mass conscience called "Rome", and (2) The one who was appointed to govern Rome, Caesar. The mass conscience of Rome decreed that murder, rape, adultery, robbery, and many other areas of overt sin against the state were "crimes", punishable under governmental law. By recognizing harmful overt sin as crime and punishing it the Roman government protected it's citizens. Now let's look at Christ's earthly ministry. The Roman leader was still called Caesar, and the Roman Government still protected it's people. Yet the Caesar in power at this time *taught the people that he was god*. Since the Roman people believed in the many gods of the pantheon, they allowed Caesar to call himself god. Our God never told Caesar to call himself god: the Father never sanctioned this. But as long as the government protected it's people the basic reason for Universal Grace was served, so the Father allowed the government to stand. Under Universal Grace the government doesn't exist to proclaim the True God, but exists to protect the people of the earth so they might be evangelized. If the government fails to protect it's people then God causes that government to fall. Until that time the people under it *must obey* it's statutes.

Matthew 22:21 "They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's;

and unto God the things that are God's. "

Mark 12:17 "And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him. "

Luke 20:25 "And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's. "

Now lets look at the communist or tyrannical governments. Russia was, at one time, a monarchical form of government. At one point in history the mass conscience of the people rebelled against this government because it failed to protect it's people. Once the mass conscience rebelled it formed a system of Marxism called Communism. God didn't establish that system, but He did arrange the mass conscience of the people into a government. God placed over this government a head of state. The government established certain overt sins as punishable as "crimes", and made a series of laws that protected the people. Communism in Russia oppressed it's people for 75 years until God allowed that government to fall once more, establishing a new Head of State. As long as that present government protects the people so they can be evangelized it will stand.

In summary, Universal Grace is all that God does for humanity *to keep it alive for evangelization*. Under this Grace God provides food, water, law, and the other basic needs of man. Whether the person is a believer or an unbeliever isn't the issue in Universal Grace: God continues to provide for the unbeliever even if he rejects the Gospel, so that he might have every opportunity to be saved. The dead are past saving, so God daily postpones death so that the spiritually dead might become spiritually alive through Jesus Christ.

Saving Grace

I heard an interesting little antidote that describes the Saving Grace of God. This is just an illustration: If you leave this life in your sins, not having accepted Christ as Savior, you will "lift up your eyes in Hell".

A man dies and goes to heaven. Of course, St. Peter meets him at the pearly gates. St. Peter says, "Here's how it works. You need 100 points to make it into heaven. You tell me all the good things you've done, and I give you a certain number of points for each item, depending on how good it was. When you reach 100 points, you get in."

"I taught Sunday School for 10 years!" boasted the newcomer to heaven. "Terrific!" says St. Peter, "that's certainly worth a point."

"One point? Golly. How about this: I started a soup kitchen in my city and worked in a shelter for homeless veterans."

"Fantastic, that's good for two more points," he says.

Okay," the man says, "I was married to the same woman for 50 years and never cheated on her, even in my heart." "That's wonderful," says St. Peter, "that's worth three points!"

"Only three points?" he says. "Well, I attended church all my life and supported its ministry with my tithe and service." "There you are, two more points." exclaims St. Peter.

"Two measly points!!" the man cries, "At this rate the only way I could ever get into heaven is by the grace of God!"

"That's it!" yelled St. Peter, "Come on in!"

Saving Grace is that action of God whereby a person, upon accepting Christ as Savior, is granted salvation. The person who is saved doesn't *earn or deserve his salvation*, but salvation is given him because he believed in Christ. Saving Grace can best be illustrated by a taxi cab. The person wants to move from his present location to another better location. In order to get from the one location to the other this person must get on the Grace taxi. When boarding the taxi he discovers that there's no fare to be paid, nor will any fare be accepted. All payment was previously supplied by the Driver of the cab, Jesus Christ. By just getting on the taxi a person is automatically moved from a lost condition to salvation. The taxi is a *one way* mode of transportation controlled entirely by God. Because the vehicle is controlled by God, not by our actions, we cannot do anything to earn or deserve the ride. On the other hand we *can not* do anything to revoke the ride once we're in our new state of salvation. Once you are saved, you are saved, and there's nothing you can do to remove yourself from this state.

Ephesians 2:8-10 "For by grace (CHARIS, unmerited favor, the free gift) are ye saved (Perfect tense of SOZO, you have been saved in the past with the result that you keep on being saved) through faith (PISTIS, belief, the action of belief); and that not of yourselves: it is the gift (DORON, an honorary gift not earned) of God: Not of works (ERGON, energy, production from man's ability), lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. "

This is probably the most disputed doctrine in Christianity today, though I don't really know why. Half of Christianity contends that you can *lose your salvation* through repeated acts of sin. The other half of Christianity says that "Once you're saved, you're always saved". All arguments and contention are easily resolved if only we would read the *clear teachings of the Scripture* on Grace. Our Ephesians

passage is very clear on Saving Grace. Paul specifically states that ***Grace is the vehicle of Salvation***. We get on that vehicle through unmeritorious faith. The Perfect Tense of SOZO clearly specifies that ***once we arrive*** at the destination of salvation by this vehicle, at that point Salvation becomes a permanent possession of the believer. Finally, this text teaches that we don't arrive at our present saved state by our own energy or human works. The fact that we arrive at all is attributed ***solely to the Grace of God***. If we ***don't arrive*** at our destination ***by works*** then we can't leave our present position by works.

Saving Grace requires one thing from the individual to be effective, the desire or will to "get on the taxi". Many people, even the best and brightest people of the world, refuse to be saved because they think ***it's too easy***. Basic human pride and the old sin nature drives man to want to "pay God" for the fare. Remember, though, any fare is waived for our salvation, and any attempt to pay the fare just isn't good enough.

Luke 14:16-24 "Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house

may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper. "

The rich friends who rejected the feast were left outside the gates, no longer welcome at the feast. In Jesus' parable the *certain man* is an illustration of God the Son, the *servant* an illustration of the Holy Spirit, and those in the *highways and hedges* an illustration of the saved. Christ provided for the feast of salvation *with His very life*, suffering and dying on the Cross. He sent the Holy Spirit into the world to convict all to come to the *great supper* of salvation.

John 16:7-11 "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 the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. "

Many of the best of humanity: the scholars, the rich, the super intelligent, the super-rich, rejected the invitation to salvation under the convicting ministry of the Spirit. They chose earthly riches over heavenly riches. They felt that salvation was worthless unless they added to it in some way. In either case they rejected the offer of salvation and the Holy Spirit left them, seeking out *the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind*, the least gifted of humanity. Under the convicting ministry of the Spirit these people chose to accept the invitation to salvation. Like it or not, none of us who are saved were *much of anything* before we were saved. Though it is *not impossible* for a rich man to enter Heaven (Simon Peter was a well to do fisherman before salvation, Paul a well known and respected man in the Roman government, Bartholomew Nathaniel was the son of the King of Geshur), most people with riches and fame reject the salvation Gospel for their riches. This is what Jesus was talking about

when he said:

Matthew 19:24-26 "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."

This is also what Paul was talking about when he said:

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise (SOPHOS, knowledgeable or scholarly) men after the flesh (SARX, flesh. their knowledge was not in the spiritual but in the physical world), not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen (EKLEGOMAI, Aorist Middle Indicative, has called out of the world) the foolish (MOROS, silly, stupid, 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 (AGENES, not of noble or aristocratic birth) of the world, and things which are despised (EZOUTHENEO, Perfect Passive Participle, things continually rejected by society), hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought (HINA KATARGEO, for the purpose of rendering neutral or useless) things that are (TOU EIMI, Present Participle, Things that keep on being): That no flesh should glory (KAUCHAOMAI ME, should not boast) in his presence. "

Paul isn't teaching that God *never* invited the rich, powerful, and wise to accept Christ as Savior. As Jesus taught in the Luke text, these people were also invited but rejected the vehicle of grace by their own free will. When they rejected the Gospel, God called the rest of humanity, who accepted the Gospel of their own free will. God blesses those who accept the message while rejecting those who

rejected it. *No one will be able to boast in Heaven* that God saved them because they were "good", for alongside of the few rich and powerful who accepted Christ will be the least of humanity. You must accept salvation under the terms God has established.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning (Refers to the moment in which the believer is saved, i.e., from the beginning of your salvation) chosen (HAIREOMAI, Aorist, lifted up, raised up to) you to salvation through sanctification (HAGIASMOS, sanctification, separation unto God. Refers to the Holy Spirit's convicting ministry whereby we are separated from the overwhelming power of the old sin nature. This allowed us to freely choose or reject Christ as Savior) of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. "

All people start out with an equal chance of getting on that vehicle of Grace. All people have an equal chance to be saved through grace.

Man is a spiritually dead creature. In the Garden of Eden man was spiritually alive. Man was created body (the fleshly container of the soul), soul (the personality or essence of man. What makes us human), and spirit (that part of man that gives us relationship to God). When Adam sinned in the Garden he died spiritually:

Genesis 2:17 "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 3:7 "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. "

This spiritual death placed a barrier between God and man that we couldn't breach. A corpse can't save itself, man couldn't save himself. When the human spirit died something else came into man to take its place: the Old Sin Nature. This old sin nature resides in our bodies (as we saw before in Galatians 5.16-26), controlling man so that he wants to follow the world rather than God, evil rather than good.

Ephesians 2:1-3 "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. "

The Father, in eternity past, decreed that the Son come to the earth and pay the penalty for man's sin. God provided a vehicle called Grace that would allow man to accept Christ's payment and be saved. Man's old sin nature makes him want to reject all that God has to offer. The problem was how to get man to a point where he can freely (without the power of the old sin nature's influence) choose or reject the vehicle of Grace. God solved the problem by giving the Holy Spirit a dispensation in which He could call each unbeliever on earth at least once in their lives, temporarily separating each one from the overwhelming power of the old sin nature. While under this "convicting ministry" the unbeliever would be able to freely accept or reject the Gospel message. If the person accepts the Gospel message by faith, then this new believer is now redeemed under Saving Grace. Under Saving Grace all that Christ did for the believer on the Cross is applied to him. He is justified, declared righteous before God. The Holy Spirit marks the believer as one permanently separated from the devil's world, and permanently indwells him. None of these things can occur if the person either rejects the Gospel message, or tries to be saved by his own works. The only thing that gets you on the vehicle

of Grace is a free-will choice of faith in Christ.

Calvinism, under its system of personal election, recognizes Saving Grace in a different way. Calvinists believe that since *only the elect* will be saved, then whoever is called to salvation is called "efficaciously". In other words, if you're called to salvation you are called because you were first elected by God. And if you're elect you will definitely respond to the call. I believe that the Bible teaches that Saving Grace can be rejected, and *is rejected* every day on the basis of free-will.

John 6:35-40 "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh (ERCHOMAI, Present Participle, keeps on coming) to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth (PISTEUO, Present Participle, keeps on believing) on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh (ERCHOMAI, Present Participle, keeps on coming) to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will (THELEMA, will, heart's desire, free-will. Christ surrendered His free-will when He was incarnated), but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth (Present Participle THEOREO, continually discerns, considers, perceives. Again an action of the free will) the Son, and believeth (PISTEUO, Present Participle, keeps on believing) on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. "

Calvinism focuses on eleven words in the above text to teach efficacious Grace: *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me*. Do these eleven words teach that God calls a select few with a call that can't be denied? Let's look at the context around these eleven

words. Notice the repeated use of present participles (PISTEUO, ERCHOMAI). The Present Participles denote repeated actions of the will. The Present Participles show that those who come to Christ exercise their will to do so. They persistently responded to the Gospel message. This is why they were saved, by a non meritorious act of their free-will, accepting Christ as Savior.

In the rest of the context we see the free-will of man in acquiring Saving Grace through the use of the Present Participle. In the entire context of John 6 we see that in order for man to be saved he must:

- (vvs 35) Keep on coming to Christ: an action of man's free-will.
- (vvs 35) Keep on believing in Christ, an action of man's free-will.
- (vvs 37) Keep on coming to Christ, an action of man's free-will.
- (vvs 40) Keep on considering or contemplating Christ, an act of free-will.
- (vvs 40) Keep on believing in Christ, an action of man's free-will.

Five times in the Greek context we see Present Participles used to express what man *must do to be saved*. Five times these Present Participles declare man's free-will is an essential part of salvation. Man of his own free-will *cannot come* to Christ in His natural state of spiritual death. But when man is under the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, at this point his free-will is truly freed by God so that he can make a choice. Those who exercise their free-will in a positive manner while under conviction become one of those that "The Father has given the Son". They are those who entered the vehicle of saving grace, becoming a part of a innumerable multitude of believers who are the Body of Christ. They are those who contribute to the completion of the Bride of Christ, which will one day rule and reign with Him. Those who exercise their free-will in a negative manner, while under conviction, stay in their *spiritually dead* state. If the Holy Spirit doesn't return to them in their lifetime to try and convince them again they will, upon death, enter a state of eternal damnation. Their

free-will placed them in this state, just as surely as those who are saved placed themselves in Plan of Grace and therefore in the Body of Christ.

John 6:44 "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: (HELKUO, to draw without the notion of force, persuade by God the Holy Spirit) and I will raise him up at the last day. "

Another text that Calvinism uses to introduce Efficacious Grace is John 6.44. They teach that no one can come to Christ except God the Father draw or drag him to this acceptance. But HELKUO doesn't mean to drag someone forcibly into something against their, but is better translated as "to persuade". Man in his natural state *cannot freely accept Christ* as Saviour, for man is spiritually dead. The HELKUO ministry of the Father refers to the convicting ministry of the Spirit. In order to be saved each person must first be under this convicting ministry. Conviction *doesn't mandate salvation, it only makes it possible*.

*Acts 16:14-15 "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped (SEBOMAI, Present Participle, continually worshipping) God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought (PARAKALEO, to call alongside, to invite) us, saying, *If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us. "**

It may seem like I'm picking on Calvinistic doctrines in this section but I assure you, I'm not. I have only the greatest respect for John Calvin. Many of Calvin's doctrines are true, but I cannot agree with them all, no more than I can agree with many of the Arminian and Pelagian doctrines. They taught that man is able to accept Christ as

Savior anytime he wants, and that man is able to work his way to heaven. These doctrines, though prevalent in many Churches today, are equally wrong. Saving Grace is only effective when it's freely accepted by man. Man in his natural state is ***spiritually dead and controlled by an old sin nature***. Man cannot freely accept Saving Grace unless God first intervenes, preparing him through the convicting ministry of the Spirit. Salvation cannot be accepted "at any time" in a man's life because of this sinful limitation. Where Calvin was wrong in teaching Efficacious Grace, Arminius and Pelagius were wrong in over emphasizing the power of man's free-will over his old sin nature. Man is powerless while in sin's power, and being powerless he ***cannot freely accept*** Christ as Saviour. Like the woman Lydia, ***whose heart the Lord opened*** through the convicting ministry of the Spirit. The idea that man may accept or reject Christ at any point in his life is a dangerous doctrine that has misled many. It is dangerous because it misleads many unbelievers into thinking that they can ***put off*** salvation today and accept it tomorrow. But if the Spirit doesn't return to convict you "tomorrow" these procrastinators ***may die in a state of damnation***.

Unless the Holy Spirit places a person under conviction there's no use in trying to witness to that person. An illustration of this principle is found in the ministry of Paul. Early in his ministry Paul began collecting money from other Churches for the struggling Church at Jerusalem.

Acts 24:17 "Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings."

Romans 15:25-27 "But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual

things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things."

1 Corinthians 16:1-4 "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me. "

Paul dearly wanted to evangelize Jerusalem, for he himself was a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin. He wanted to witness to his Jewish brethren so they might come to Christ as he had.

Romans 9:1-5 "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. "

Paul was so engrossed in his own desires for his people that he forgot his own teachings about the spiritual death of man (Ephesians 2.1-4), forgot that, unless the Holy Spirit convicts man then he is unable to accept Christ as Saviour. Evangelists and witnesses need to learn the lesson that Paul learned: "Unless the Spirit directs you to witness, unless the Spirit has preceded you to convict the unbeliever, then any witnessing you do is doomed to failure. Man's free-will is only free to accept or reject the message when he is under conviction. Outside of conviction man will automatically reject the message as foolish fairy tales (1 Corinthians 2.14).

After Paul collected the money for the evangelization of Jerusalem he started to head there. Paul decided in his heart that he was going to evangelize Jerusalem no matter what (Acts 19.21; 20.22-24). On his way to Jerusalem Paul stopped at the commercial seaport of Tyre. He spent a week there with some other disciples. While at Tyre *he was warned by the Holy Spirit*.

Acts 21:4 "And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem. "

Paul was warned by the Holy Spirit to not go to Jerusalem. In fact, the Imperfect tense of LEGO (*said*) denotes that the warning was very severe; literally, "they kept on saying to Paul through the spirit". The Holy Spirit *wasn't going to proceed* Paul to Jerusalem. The Spirit wasn't commissioned to exercise His convicting ministry in Jerusalem at this time. But Paul had set his mind to evangelize Jerusalem. Because of his stubbornness he left Tyre and went on to Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit gave Paul one more chance to turn back when he stopped off at Caesarea. Paul stayed at the home of his friend, Philip the evangelist. While at Philip's home the Holy Spirit sent the prophet Agabus to speak to Paul.

Acts 21:11-14 "And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought (PARAKALEO, Imperfect, kept on begging, kept on trying to persuade) him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we

ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done. "

Paul's response may seem noble or even sincere, but remember that he was rejecting the direct commands of God the Holy Spirit. He was out of line in continuing to go to Jerusalem when he was directed away from it. But Paul had become so wrought in worrying about Jerusalem's salvation that he disobeyed God's leading and went anyway. When Paul got to Jerusalem he not only didn't evangelize the city, he so provoked it that he was imprisoned (Acts 21.27-40). Because of Paul's disobedience it was some time before Jerusalem was properly evangelized. The lesson is this. The convicting ministry of the Spirit is vitally necessary for man to reach salvation. Man can only come to Saving Grace while under the power of the Spirit. Conviction doesn't guarantee salvation, but it does make it possible. Once under conviction a person is able to, of his own freewill, either accept or reject the proposition of the Gospel. Paul went to Jerusalem outside of the Holy Spirit's will with dire consequences.

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Systematic Theology

Part 2: Living Grace

Living Grace is the action of God where He *supplies the needs of the believer* in the devil's world. Without this provision the Christian would quickly be destroyed by Satan. Because of Living Grace we can survive and even prosper regardless of Satanic attacks against us. The only time this protection is removed is when the believer falls from fellowship. If the believer falls from Living Grace he enters into *the sin unto death*. How fast the believer dies outside of Living Grace depends on the type of sin he's engaged in. Note the following examples:

- Those who blaspheme and lie to God the Holy Spirit suffer immediate death:

Acts 5:1-10 "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young

men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. "

- Those involved in repeated acts of sexual immorality, such as incest, gradually meet death.

1 Corinthians 5:1-5 "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. "

- Those who blaspheme the Lord's Table gradually sicken and die.

1 Corinthians 11:30-32 "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. "

- Those who accept false gods and witchcraft lose their prosperity and die.

1 Samuel 13:9-14 "And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering. And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee. "

- Those who revolt against God's established authority are placed under the heel of their enemies and die.

Isaiah 30:1-3 "Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin: That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt! Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust

in the shadow of Egypt your confusion. "

Isaiah 31:1-3 "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD! Yet he also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words: but will arise against the house of the evildoers, and against the help of them that work iniquity. Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When the LORD shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fail together. "

- Those who teach false doctrine in the Church will die under God's judgment.

1 Timothy 1:19-20 "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme. "

In each of these examples, failure to remain under God's Living Grace is *caused by sin in the life of the believer*. Not just an act of sin, but repeated acts of unrestrained and repeated actions of sin. In some cases God removed the believer from Living Grace and death was quick. In other cases the believer removed from Living Grace died slowly. I can't explain why some died quickly and others slowly, other than it suited the Will of God. In either case, the believer who stays in fellowship with God stays under Living Grace, protected from death so he can serve the Lord.

Psalms 37:25 "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen (RAAH, to see intelligently, experience, perceive) the righteous

forsaken (AZAB, abandoned, forsaken, deserted) , nor his seed (ZERA, offspring. Refers to the children under his care) begging bread. "

The psalmist David, inspired by God, wrote about his experience with Living Grace. David said that, even in his old age he was about 60 years old now), he had never seen *the righteous forsaken* by God. The *righteous* are those who are *saved believers in fellowship* with God. David had never seen the believer under Living Grace rejected, nor had he ever seen his offspring without food. Under Living Grace God *guarantees* that He will provide for the believer and his offspring.

Matthew 6:24-34 "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon (This was the name of the Greek God of money) . Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought (Present Active Imperative MERIMNAO + Greek Negative, stop being mentally worried about) *for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns* (Idiomatic for making a profit) ; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit (about 18 inches) unto his stature (literally, height) ? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon (The third King of Israel, son of David and Bathsheba. Perhaps the richest man the world ever knew) *in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if* (EAN, First Class Condition, "if, and it's true") *God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is* (literally "which is alive today") , *and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought* (Aorist Active Subjunctive MERIMNAO + negative ME,

"you stop worrying"), saying (LEGO, saying from the heart), What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles (refers to the heathen) seek (Present Active Indicative EPIZETO, continually and eagerly search for) :) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek (ZETEO, Aorist Active Imperative, I command you to seek) ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness (DIKAIOSUNE, the imputed righteousness of God by faith in Christ) ; and all these things shall be added (Future Passive Indicative PROSTITHEMI, Gnomic Future Tense, will definitely be provided face to face to you) unto you. Take therefore no thought (Aorist Active Subjunctive MERIMNAO + negative ME, stop worrying) for the morrow (EIS + Accusative AURION, about tomorrow) : for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof (Each day has enough Satanic activity without us adding to it by unrighteous behavior) . "

In the Matthew text Jesus teaches us about Living Grace. Jesus uses a form of logic that we see used later in the Pauline writings to prove Living Grace is a reality. If God gave us the greater gifts of physical and spiritual life, then *it is certain* that He will provide the lesser in giving us sustenance as we serve Him. We are soldiers in God's army. We were given physical life for Divine purpose, then saved for a Divine purpose. Since God has already supplied the greater things to us, then He will provide all that we need to carry out His plan.

Jesus uses two illustrations to explain God's Living Grace: The *fowls of the air* and the *lilies of the field*. Both the birds and the lilies of the field have a place in God's Plan. Since they have a place in His Plan He insures that they survive, even though they don't plant grain or weave their own clothing. If God provides for these "lesser players" in His plan, then it's certain He'll provide for man, who has the higher station. Unbelievers are only *possible players* in the Plan of God. As such, God provides for them under the Universal Grace. The birds and

the lillies are lesser players in the Plan of God. As lesser players God provides for them under a type of "Natural Grace". But those who are saved are *major players* in the Plan of God. We are Sons of God because we are in union with Christ. We are the Body of Christ who will one day be the Bride of Christ, returning with our Lord to rule and reign with Him. God guarantees that we shall survive and even prosper in the world so we can fulfill His Will.

Believers are often ignorant of Living Grace. Living Grace is for us all of us who believe, regardless of our level of spiritual maturity. The only requirement is that *we stay in fellowship* with our God. If we do like Christ decreed and *seek ye first the kingdom of God*, that is, stay in fellowship, seeking to grow in maturity. If we do this then all of the provisions of Living Grace will automatically be given to us. When Jesus sent His disciples out to preach the gospel of the kingdom He demanded that they rely solely on God's Living Grace.

Matthew 10:9-10 "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. "

Jesus knew that under Living Grace God provides everything His children need to carry out their mission. He told His disciples to carry no money, pack no food, carry no extra clothing, nor any means of protection (*nor yet staves*). All of these details are to be taken care of by our Father. Lest you get carried away though, we must emphasize that Living Grace doesn't mean you don't have to work. The disciples who went out from Jesus had a job to do. Had they sat down in the middle of the street and said, "I'm ready God. Provide!", they would have starved to death. Food is provided for the birds of the field, but they do have to dig for it. The lilies have to send their roots down into the ground to get water and nourishment. The birds have to forage for the means to build their nests. God *guarantees the finding* of the water, the food, and the building materials. Provision from God is

guaranteed through Living Grace, though the curse of the Fall is not revoked:

Genesis 3:17-19 "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. "

Yes, we still have to work. Under the provisions of Living Grace God guarantees the believer a job so he can provide for himself and his family. The believer doesn't have to worry about being without. The job will be provided. Without stepping on others (seeking promotion through the pain of others, like the heathen) the believer will be promoted in his job and prosper. Like the disciples the modern believer must go out and do his God given job. The believer who sits on the park bench waiting for God "bless" him is a sadly mixed up individual. Living Grace never removes the provision of work, it just guarantees that God will provide it.

Philippians 4:5-7 "Let your moderation (EPIEIKES, extreme self control) be known (GINOSKO, Aorist Active Imperative, known through experience) unto all men. The Lord is at hand (HO KURIOS EGGOS, The Lord is near. By extension, the Lord is near to help you) . Be careful for nothing (Present Active MERIMNAO + MEDEIS, stop worrying about even one thing) ; but in every thing (EN + Locative PAS, In the sphere of all things, in all circumstances) by prayer (Instrumental PROSEUCHE + HO, by means of the prayer) and supplication (Instrumental DEESIS, by means of entreaty) with (META + ACCUSATIVE, after) thanksgiving let your requests (AITEMA, things sought for personally) be made known

(GNORIZO, Present Passive Imperative, revealed at all times) unto God. *And the peace of God,* (KAI HE EIRENE TOU THEOU, and the health/ benefit/ welfare from the source of God) *which passeth* (HUPERECHO, Present Active, to have and hold over and above) *all understanding, shall keep* (PHROUREO, military term for the posting of the guard. By extension, shall post a guard on) *your hearts and minds through Christ* (EN + Instrumental CHRISTOS, by means of Christ) *Jesus.* "

Because of Living Grace the believer is commanded to "***stop worrying about even one thing***". God provides everything under Grace. You don't have to worry about promotion: God will promote you. Stop worrying about finding a job: just seek it, you will find it already provided. Stop worrying about providing for your family; God will provide. The reason Jesus placed a great deal of emphasis on "stop worrying" is because ***worry is a sin***. It's a sin of not trusting in God, not believing that He will do what He said. Worry is ***covert blasphemy*** against God. It is unbelief that implies, "God is a liar", when He clearly isn't. When you worry you sin. When you sin you're out of fellowship. If you keep worrying you stay out of fellowship, and stand in the way of Living Grace. The believer who worries about getting a job ***may never get one while he worries***. He who worries about providing for his family may find them starving. Every minute you worry, by your actions you call God a liar, and in such a state God cannot bless you.

To overcome the subtle trap of worry the believer can do two things. First, you can ***turn from worry to prayer***. Paul gives us a definite outline for effective prayer in this passage. Intensive prayer should always be given ***after thanksgiving***. This is more for the benefit of the believer than for God. When we offer thanksgiving to God we praise Him for what He's ***already done*** in our lives. By dwelling on God's past accomplishments we come to realize, "Why am I worrying? If God provided in the past there's no reason to believe that He won't

provide now!" Proper thanksgiving paves the way for effective prayer, for prayers are hindered by the effects of worry. Once thanksgiving has eliminated the effects of worry you can pray with confidence. Personal requests for God's provision are made over and over again (as seen through the Present Tense of GINOSKO). Again, the purpose of repeating the prayer request over and over is *for the believer's benefit*. By staying in communion with God, by repeatedly emphasizing the requests (remembering that God has provided in the past), the believer keeps worry out of the picture. God immediately responds to such prayer by placing His perfect peace in the believer, this peace posting guard on the soul of the believer against worry. In addition to this God will answer the proper prayer of the believer.

The second thing the believer can do against worry is to dwell on the many promises of Living Grace in the Scripture.

Philippians 4:19 "But my God shall supply (PLEROO, Perfect Passive Indicative, fill up a deficiency, fully possess, fill with a certain quality, fully influence) all your need according to (KATA, according to the norms and standards of) his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

God promises in His Word that *He shall fill up or meet every need* of the believer in fellowship. "Every need" doesn't just mean the bare necessities of life, or just an existence where you barely scrape through. Living Grace not only guarantees the bare necessities, but also guarantees the believers prosperity in the devil's world. Many believers do *just barely* make it in this life. That's not because God failed to provide, but because these people bounce in and out of fellowship so much that He has *no chance to bless* them. Believers who drop out of fellowship for extended periods of time stay out of Living Grace for that same amount of time. While out of fellowship they also fail to grow spiritually. God, unlike Satan, only gives His people blessings they can handle. Those who stay out of fellowship and in spiritual immaturity can't handle the deeper blessings of Living

Grace. They become their own worst enemies, by their own carnality preventing God from giving them prosperity.

Isaiah 30:18 "And therefore will the LORD wait (CHAKAH, Peale Stem, intensively wait, tapping the foot type waiting), that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait (CHAKAH, Kal Stem, keep on waiting for) for him. "

The Bible teaches that God is "tapping His foot and waiting" to bless His believers under Living Grace. The only thing that holds back our blessing is *repeated carnality and sustained backsliding*. It glorifies God when the believer has the capacity to be blessed. When we fall from Living Grace through sin or *by our own self righteous works* ...

Galatians 3:3-5 "Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? "

... we can't be blessed. We *must stay in fellowship* and trust that God will do what He's said He will do. When we "wait on God" this way, we'll definitely be blessed under Living Grace.

Isaiah 40:31 "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. "

Psalms 27:14 "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD. "

Psalms 37:7, 34 "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the

man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. .. Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it. "

Psalms 62:5-8 "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah. "

Jeremiah 14:22 "Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? art not thou he, O LORD our God? therefore we will wait upon thee: for thou hast made all these things. "

If we first "delight ourselves in God" He'll take care of the provisions.

By now you know that you stay under Living Grace by staying in fellowship with God, but it's possible that many of you don't **know how to stay in fellowship**. Many believers think this means to live a sinless life, to give up certain bad habits like smoking. You must realize that **we're all sinners**. As sinners some Christians are fairly righteous, only infrequently. Other believers sin more frequently, being spiritually weaker. Though we're saved we still have an old sin nature inside of us. We have the **ability to control that sin nature**, an ability that grows as we mature in Christ.

Romans 6:14-22 "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the

servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. "

When we sin we fall from fellowship. The big question is, "How do I get back into fellowship after sinning? What penance must I do?"

1 John 1:8-10 "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If (EAN + Subjunctive mood, if, maybe you will, maybe you won't) we confess (HOMOLOGEO, cite, name, to say the same thing about, to agree with God that it is wrong) our sins, he is (Present Active Indicative EIMI, keeps on being) faithful and just to forgive (Aorist Active Subjunctive APHIEME, to cancel once and for all) us our sins, and to cleanse (Aorist Active Indicative KATHARIZO, clean once and for all, purify) us from all unrighteousness (APO PAS + Ablative of source ADIKIA, from the source of all unrighteousness. Refers to the old sin nature) . If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. "

The Apostle John establishes *two major doctrines* in the above text. We are *sinner*s. If we say that we are without sin then we lie both to ourselves and to others. I don't care how outwardly righteous a believer may seem, he *does sin* and will continue to sin till he's in Heaven. It's true that the mature believer will be able to control his old sin nature more than the immature. But *all sin*.

The second thing John establishes is that *God realizes we're sinners*. God doesn't live in a box, He is a realist. He's given us a way to "bail ourselves out" when we sin. We get back into fellowship by "confession" of that sin to God. Confession (HOMOLOGEO) means to name the sin and say the same thing about it that God does. To cite it and ask forgiveness for it. You don't have to do penance for the sin, or say a hundred "Hail Marys". You don't have to wait till next Sunday so you can confess it before the brethren, or go to the prayer rail to "rededicate your life". You don't have to confess the sin to a priest. You HOMOLOGEO the sin to God alone. "Father, I know that (name the sin) was wrong. I confess it as sin, and ask forgiveness in the name of Jesus". You don't have to use these exact words to regain fellowship; this is just an example. But you should understand the following principles behind John's teaching:

1. *Don't wait until you feel sorry* for the sin before you confess it to God. When you sin you're out of fellowship, and out of fellowship your old sin nature is in charge. If you wait till you feel sorry to confess your sin you *may die the sin unto death* first. Don't delay confession of sin *because of feelings*. Confession of sin doesn't require an emotional tantrum to be effective.
2. Don't wait till you get to Church, a Pastor, or a friend before confessing your sins. Confess your sins to God *as soon as possible*. The sooner you get back in fellowship, the sooner you're back under Living Grace.
3. Confess your sins as soon as *you are aware you committed* them. This way you won't forget that you committed the sin, and stay out of fellowship because of your ignorance. It doesn't matter whether you remember what sin you committed or not: If you have an *unconfessed sin* in your life you're out of fellowship. And if you're out of fellowship you're not under the provisions of

Living Grace. Once we confess or site our sins to God, He remains faithful and righteous, negating the accountability for the sin, and rescues us from the power of the old sin nature.

It is imperative that the believer stay in fellowship and under God's provision of Living Grace. Living Grace **protects the believer** against discouragement:

Isaiah 41:10 "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. "

..against tyranny:

Isaiah 51:12-13 "I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor? "

.. against your enemies:

Jeremiah 39:17-18 "But I will deliver thee in that day, saith the LORD: and thou shalt not be given into the hand of the men of whom thou art afraid. For I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee: because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the LORD. "

.. from premature death and starvation:

Psalms 33:18-19 "Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; To deliver their soul

from death, and to keep them alive in famine. "

.. from persecution:

Psalms 27:5-6 "For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD. "

.. from extreme trials:

1 Corinthians 10:13 "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. "

.. from death during war:

Job 5:19-20 "He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. In famine he shall redeem thee from death: and in war from the power of the sword. "

.. from maligning that destroys your reputation:

Job 5:21 "Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh. "

.. and from many other calamities:

Psalms 91:1-7 "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from

the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. "

God, under Living Grace, **provides the believer:**

A Heavenly Father who *will* answer prayer:

Matthew 21:22 "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. "

A promise that all things work together for our good:

Romans 8:28 "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. "

The desires of our hearts:

Psalms 37:4-5 "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. "

Vindication before our enemies:

Jeremiah 16:19-21 "O LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit. Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods? Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know, I will cause them to

know mine hand and my might; and they shall know that my name is The LORD. "

Victory in war:

Deuteronomy 33:27 "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. "

Inner peace when violent death threatens you:

Job 5:22-23 "At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth. For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee. "

An inner knowledge that we are children of the Kingdom:

Job 5:24 "And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin. "

Offspring that will make you proud:

Job 5:25 "Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth."

And live a full life, dying peacefully at an old age:

Job 5:26-27 "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season. Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good. "

God is able to supply all our needs according to His richness in glory, praise His holy name!

**Continue with [Dying and Eternal Grace](#) in this study's [part 3](#).
Or, return to the Systematic Theology [Table of Contents](#).**

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Systematic Theology

Part 3: Dying Grace and Eternal Grace

Dying Grace is the provision of God where He gently takes the ***believer in fellowship*** out of this life and into the next. Believers who are under the sin unto death ***do not*** enjoy the benefits of Dying Grace. Unbelievers also are exempt from the benefits of Dying Grace. This provision, those of Living Grace, ***only applies to believers in fellowship*** at the point of physical death.

Dying Grace doesn't guarantee that the believer's death will not ***look*** violent. A mature believer may die in an exploding aircraft, a car wreck, a mine cave in, or in any number of seemingly violent ways. Dying Grace does guarantee that the believer, regardless of the manner of death undergone, will go to meet his Father with the minimum amount of pain and suffering that God can give him. A believer under Dying Grace will go to home with peace in his heart, not in frantic terror as the heathen do. His transition from earth to heaven will be easy and peaceful, greeted with joy by the believer.

Psalms 116:15 "Precious (YAQAR, costly, precious, valuable) in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints."

God regards His mature believers in the highest light. Because He so

loves and respects these warriors who sought to do His will in life, He takes great pains to *gently remove* them from this life at the end of their "tour of duty". The death of a mature believer is precious or valuable to God. There's no better way to leave this life than through God's provision of Dying Grace.

Psalms 23:4 "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death (TSALMAVETH, shade of death, shadow of the grave. Refers to impending death), I will fear (YARE, be dreadful or in terror of) no evil (RA, wicked actions. By extension, no pain): for thou art with me; thy rod (SHEBET, a staff used for walking or punishing) and thy staff they comfort (NACHAM, take revenge or vengeance for, show compassion for) me. "

Dying Grace *removes the overwhelming fear of death* that is a normal response to death in society. It removes the YARE, the overwhelming terror that death may bring. The believer under Dying Grace knows that his death is just a transition, a temporary journey from one world to the next. He has an *absolute knowledge* that after he dies physically he'll be eternally in Heaven. There is no "unknown" for the person under Dying Grace. God replaces the fear of death with a *perfect peace*.

2 Timothy 4:6-8 "For I am now ready to be offered (SPENDO, to be poured out as a libation. Sense = The soul is willing to be poured out of the body as an offering to God), and the of my departure (ANALUSIS has five definitions used in the ancient texts: (1) to break camp, a military term; (2) to set sail; (3) to unhook the oxen so as to feed or reward them; (4) to unravel a mystery; (5) to release a prisoner) is at hand (EPHISTEMI, Perfect Active, has now arrived and must be met) . I have fought a good (KALOS, honorable, good) fight, I have finished my course (DROMOS. athletic course, runners race track) , 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. "

Since Dying Grace is only given to the mature believer in fellowship there's another benefit gained by this believer. All Christians have a part to play in the Plan of God. Some believers never fulfill their designated roles *because of immaturity and excessive sin* in their lives. The believer under Dying Grace can say, like Paul, that *he has fulfilled* his part in the Plan. Throughout his life he sought to glorify God in all that he did. When the mature believer goes to meet God there are *no regrets*, no bitterness over missed chances. When his soul is poured out of his body like an offering to God there's that inner satisfaction that he fought honorably for his Lord. He finished the DROMOS, the course that God gave him to run. Neither God nor the believer has any regrets when it's time to take the believer out of this life. The mature believer goes to meet God knowing that there are rewards waiting for him in heaven.

If all believers would only understand *in their hearts* that they have a limited life span, what a difference this would make in the Church! When we're born we're *born physically alive* but *spiritually dead*. As unbelievers we only had a *potential place* in the Plan of God. When we accepted Christ as Savior we were given a *permanent place* in that Plan, an important place that God wants us to fulfill

1 Corinthians 12:12-14 "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. "

... in the Body of Christ. To help us "run the course" God wanted us to take He gave us *all* Spiritual Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

.. but so few ever discover what they are. "There's always tomorrow" the procrastinating believer says. But what so few understand is that we *only have a short time* on this earth to work in God's Plan. Your time may end today, tomorrow, or a year from now. All believers have an opportunity to meet God under Dying Grace. We all have the opportunity to leave this life as mature believers with no regrets. Whether we do or not is *up to each one of us*. We can prepare for a peaceful death by growing as God desires. We can prepare ourselves and receive rewards in Heaven by growing now. Or we can *procrastinate till the bitter end*, leaving this life shamefully under the sin unto death.

Philippians 1:20-21 "According to (KATA, according to the norm or standard of) my earnest expectation (APOKARADOKIA, to watch with the head stretched forward in intense concentration, eagerly awaiting, excitedly anticipating) and my hope (ELPIS, hope, confidence), that in nothing (EN + Locative Case OUDES, in the sphere of nothing) I shall be ashamed (Future Passive Indicative AISCHUNOMAI, shall not be disgraced or put to shame), but that with all boldness, as always (HOS PANTOTE, as at all times), so now also Christ shall be magnified (MEGALUNO, Future Passive Indicative, shall be exalted or glorified) in my body (SOMA, body. Here refers to the whole person, body-soul-spirit, according to Arnt

and Gingrich), whether it be *by life* (Dia + Genetive, ZOA, through my life), or *by death* (DIA + Genetive THANATOS, through the process of my death). *For to me* (Emphatic Position Proleptic Pronoun, for me!) *to live* (Present Active Infinitive ZAO, to keep on living) *is Christ, and to die* (Aorist Active Infinitive APOTHNESKO, to be about to die) *is gain* (KERDOS, have personal gain, more prosperous). "

The mature believer under Dying Grace death is *a promotion, not a demotion*. Each day of life is viewed as a gracious gift from God, each day an opportunity to glorify Christ. Death is viewed as *much more prosperous than life*, a promotion, because the mature believer stores up rewards in heaven daily. He lives his life for God so that when he dies he knows that he'll enjoy many rewards in Heaven. This believer has the assurance that his death, like his life, will glorify Christ. What better motivation do we need to grow in Christ?

There are many illustrations of Dying Grace in the Bible. We've just seen how Paul, as a mature believer, expected to leave this life under Dying Grace. When Abraham died as a mature believer he went to meet God under this grace:

Genesis 25:7-8 "And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years. Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people. "

Job described the believer under dying Grace as "laughing at death", and having the inner knowledge that he would go to be with God in Heaven:

Job 5:22-24 "At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth. For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be

at peace with thee. And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin. "

But all illustrations of dying have the same things in common. Let's categorize these areas before we leave this section.

1. The *mature believer in fellowship* with God is the only type of person to come under Dying Grace.
2. The *mark* of a mature believer is the one who *keeps sin out of his life*. He *confesses sin* when he commits it, then he continues forward in his growth. (1 John 1. 8-9).
3. Dying Grace allows the believer to go to meet God with *inner peace and happiness*, with the knowledge that reward awaits him in heaven.
4. The believer under Dying Grace has *no regrets when he leaves this world*. He accepted and utilized his Spiritual Gifts to the fullest in the Church to the glory of God. He fulfilled all his duties in the plan of God, and knows he is ready for promotion to Heaven.
5. The believer under Dying Grace *glorifies God* in life and in death.
6. The mature believer lives a very *full* life for God. He never goes to meet God prematurely: as a result, he often outlives many believers who were less dedicated to the Plan of God.

Eternal Grace

Eternal Grace is that action of God that places the believer in a glorified state when he enters Heaven. Eternal Grace is the *fulfillment of the promise of Saving Grace*. Under Saving Grace God justifies (declares righteous), redeems (buys back from the slave market of sin), propitiates (satisfies God's Divine righteousness), imputes righteousness, indwells us with the Holy Spirit, seals us with the same

Spirit, and enters each believer into union with Christ. Saving Grace also gives us *the promise* of Heaven, an inheritance in Heaven, a glorified body without the old sin nature dominating it, and eternal life with God. But Saving Grace only *promises Heaven*: it doesn't immediately fulfill the promise. Eternal Grace *fulfills the promises*.

Eternal Grace shouldn't be confused with the act of glorification or ultimate sanctification. Eternal Grace is God's *Heavenly policy* that *makes the act of glorification possible*. You are immediately entered into God's Eternal Grace policy if:

1. You accepted Christ as Saviour *while physically alive*. By accepting Christ as Savior you're under Saving Grace and also Eternal Grace.
2. When you go to meet God, either through physical death or by the Rapture of the Church.

You must be saved (under Saving Grace) if you expect to receive Eternal Grace. There is *no purgatory* where you can "work your way into" God's policy of Eternal Grace. You get the ticket for Heaven in this life *by accepting Christ as Savior*. After you enter Saving Grace the ticket is redeemed in Heaven under Eternal Grace.

Ephesians 1:5-11 "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 (EN HOS, in him, Christ) we have (Present Active Indicative ECHO, we keep on having and holding) redemption (APOLUTROSIS, the purchase price) through his blood, the forgiveness (APHESIS, forgiveness, remission, pardon) of sins (PARAPTOMA, sins against the Godhead), according to the riches of his grace (CHARIS, unmerited favor); Wherein (Ablative Singular Pronoun HOS, from which) he hath abounded (Aorist Active

Indicative PERISSEUO, to have over and above, have abundantly more) toward us in all wisdom (SOPHIA, spiritual insight, divine wisdom) and prudence (PHRONESIS, objective thinking) ; Having made known unto us the mystery (MUSTERION, fraternal secret, a secret only known to a few on the inside of the fraternity) of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in (EIS + Accusative, with reference to the) the dispensation of the fulness of times (KAIROS, a period of time as measured in dispensations, an epic) he might gather together in one all things in Christ (EN + Instrumental CHRISTOS, by means of Christ), both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated (Aorist Passive Participle PROORIZO, having been marked out beforehand, pre-designed boundaries established) according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: "

When we accepted Christ as Saviour we received the APOLUTROSIS, the *purchase price* for our souls. Christ bought us back from the slave market of sin. We were brought from Satan's power, given the ability to grow in spiritual maturity under Living Grace. Because we are under God's provision of Saving Grace *He predestined us to the provisions of Eternal Grace*. When God's plan for the Church is completed all believers will reach that point of history called *the fulness of times* or literally, "the full measure of the dispensation". The Church Age will be closed at this time. All believers will be gathered together in one body "in Christ". The regathering of the Church is the action of God we call *the Rapture*. During the Rapture first the saints who have already physically died will receive their resurrection bodies:

1 Thessalonians 4:16 "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: "

After this those believers still living on the earth will receive glorified bodies:

1 Thessalonians 4:17 "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. "

The first action God's will take under Eternal Grace is *to complete* the Bride of Christ by giving each saved believer a glorified body. Only *after* we receive our glorified bodies will we *be able* to receive our inheritance in Heaven. Eternal Grace demands that God first glorify His Church, then give it the eternal inheritance:

Titus 3:7-8 "That being justified (DIKAIOS, Aorist Passive Participle, receiving justification, being declared righteous before God) by his grace (CHARIS, unmerited favor), we should be made heirs (KLERONOMOS, an heir or inheritor by lot or division) according to the hope (ELPIS, hope, confidence) of eternal life (AIONIOS ZOE, everlasting or eternal life). This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. "

We're able to receive an eternal or everlasting inheritance because the *glorification of our bodies will give us eternal life*. Eternal Grace establishes the policy which *guarantees our glorification*, our eternal life, and our inheritance. Eternal Grace also guarantees that we will be accepted as the adopted sons of God in Heaven. We won't be second class citizens in Heaven, but will be given all the rights and privileges as the completed Bride.

1 Peter 5:10-11 "But the God of all grace (CHARIS, unmerited favor), who hath called us unto his eternal glory (AIONIOS DOXA,

everlasting state of glory) by *Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered (PASCHO, to suffer or experience the effects of evil) a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. "*

We as believers do not come under the provisions of Eternal Grace now for several reasons:

1. Eternal Grace provisions are *given to the Bride of Christ* as a whole at the end of this dispensation. No church age believer has received his glorified body. Without a glorified body Eternal Grace has not been established. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)
2. No believer has received his inheritance in Heaven, though believers who have already died physically are *now in Heaven* with God. Jesus Christ said that He was going to prepare our inheritance under the provisions of Eternal Grace ("I go to prepare a place for you".. John 14:1-3). He specifically stated that He must "return again and receive you to myself" so that we might receive our inheritance. When Christ returns for His Bride at "the Rapture" we will fully receive this inheritance.
3. God allows all believers to go through physical life on this earth before He enters anyone into Eternal Grace. We go through this period in PASCHO, suffering, in order that we have a chance to mature as believers, earning rewards in Heaven. At the end of the Church age, prior to the Marriage of the Lamb, all believers will go to the Judgment Seat of Christ. Here the believer's works done on earth are judged by the Son for reward (1 Corinthians 3:10-16). This is the "readying of the Bride" prophesied in Revelation 19:7. Once the Bride is prepared for marriage by the Judgment Seat, once we have received all reward or loss, then and only then does the Marriage of the Lamb occur. In summary, no believer has yet received reward in Heaven under the provisions of Eternal Grace.

All believers will receive the benefits of Eternal Grace. It must be remembered that the Eternal Grace policy doesn't go into effect until the Bride of Christ is completed. The first provision of Eternal Grace removes the Church from the earth, giving each of its members a glorified body. The second provision takes us to the Judgment Seat of Christ where our works are judged for reward. After receiving our reward or loss the Church is "married" to the Groom, Jesus Christ. By "marrying" the Church to Christ our position in Heaven is eternally secured. We receive our eternal inheritance in Heaven, forever ruling and reigning with Christ.

Summary of Grace

Regardless of which facet of God's Grace we're taking about, all of Grace has the same basic things in common. Grace is always **God's unmerited favor, a gift to mankind**. We can never earn or deserve God's Grace. All of God's Grace is given to man **with a specific purpose** in mind. For instance, God gave mankind Universal Grace so we would survive. By keeping mankind alive God gives us a chance to accept or reject Christ as Savior. The purpose of Universal Grace is to give man **a chance** at salvation. If the unbeliever consistently rejects the purpose of Universal Grace then God can remove it. When He removes the provisions of Universal Grace from an unbeliever it won't be long before he dies, going to his judgment.

Whenever you study God's Grace you should **keep the big picture** in mind. Grace is always the act of a loving God to a sometimes thankless creation. Grace was given by God to help man, not to hurt him. I pray you have discovered the rich provisions of God's Grace in your life, that you have come to accept Jesus Christ as Savior. God Bless you all!

**Continue with "Common Grace, Can Man Do Good?" in this study's [part 4](#).
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Systematic Theology

Can Man Do Good?

Introduction

Can man do good before God? What is God's attitude toward the unbeliever? Why does God allow the wicked to have money and other goods along with His believers? What does the term "Common Grace" mean, and what are its implications? In this study we will try to answer all these questions (and more) as we see how God views and protects man, whether believer or unbeliever. One question that we want to answer is: "Can the unbeliever, who is spiritually dead, accept the spiritual concept of Jesus Christ as Savior?".

Can The Unsaved Do Good Before God?

Can unsaved men *do good* before God? This question has been debated for nearly two thousand years by both liberal and conservative theologians. If you ask any unbeliever "Are you going to Heaven" his immediate response will be "I live a good life. I do

not harm anyone in what I do. Of course I am going to Heaven". Liberal theologians further cloud the truth with their doctrines on the *inherent goodness* and the *dignity of man*. What really hurts the Church and unbeliever alike is the current confusion between *morality and Christianity*. Most modern Christians feel that morality and spirituality are the same. If a person is moral in his lifestyle it is automatically assumed that this person *must* be a Christian. Nothing is farther from the truth. The Christian way of life is not morality, but spirituality. We are not to be led by our conscience, but the believer is to be led by the Holy Spirit. Yes, a Christian should be a moral person! But a moral person is *not necessarily* a Christian, and a moral Christian is not necessarily a mature Christian.

Those who teach morality as the Christian way of life have forgotten their roots much like the Galatian believers of the early Church. One thing to bear in mind is this: When we discuss the Christian way of life, anything the unbeliever can do is *not* an aspect of the Christian way of life. Now I *do not* advocate immorality for Christians, but a Christian should be moral because he is led by the Spirit of God. Morality is a side effect of Christianity. Morality does not denote Christianity or Christian maturity.

Teaching morality as the Christian way of life is a subtle Satanic dilution. Satan rarely attacks anyone headlong, but seeks to deceive by words that seem to be true. He did the same thing with Jesus in the wilderness (see Matthew 4.1-15). He does the same thing with unbelievers today. For instance Jesus taught:

John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

When the Church teaches morality as the Christian way of life the unbeliever, observing the Church, picks up on this. He sees that morality is held in high esteem above Christianity. This perception

deludes the unbeliever into thinking that he can work his way into Heaven by good moral living. Most unbelievers have the will power to be overtly moral in their living. Unbelievers are often *more moral* than carnal believers. By our erroneous teachings we turn the ones who *need* salvation away from the Savior and toward *self salvation*. This is the major danger in confusing morality with spirituality.

Pelagius, a British monk from Rome, was the first noted theologian to cloud the issue between morality and spirituality. Pelagius held that all men were unable to do good before God. Pelagius also taught that man, in his present state, is *able* to come to God for salvation of his own freewill. Pelagius was *partially right* in his doctrine, for man *does* have freewill. But the overtones of his teaching disregarded the power of the Holy Spirit and the work of the Son in salvation.

Pelagius' doctrines were of the self salvation category, and were naturally dangerous and *Biblically incorrect*. He emphasized the freewill of men *out of proportion* to what man, in his fallen state, is able to do. He also confused human good with what God would accept (Divine good).

For any extreme another will rise in the opposite direction. In opposition to the Pelagian view the theologian Augustine rose up. Augustine taught that all men are *unable to do good* before God. This doctrine is Scripturally sound. Augustine also taught that only believers in the power of the Spirit could do Divine Good. Again, this is Biblically correct. But Augustine stepped over the boundary of good doctrine. He taught that man, in his fallen state, had *no freewill* at all. Before the Fall man had freewill, but after the Fall man was *enslaved* to the appetites of the flesh. As a result, Augustine reasoned, man has *no freewill whatsoever*. So our question at this point is two pronged: Can man do good before God, and, can man come to salvation of his own freewill? Let us turn to the Bible and away from theological extremes.

Defining The Human Spirit

And How It Relates To The Body And Soul of Man

Understanding what God will accept as **good** only comes when you know what the Bible teaches about man's spiritual status. Before we talk about the spiritual status of man we need to *define the human spirit*.

Man in his original state was composed of three parts: Body, Soul, and Spirit. The Soul of man is what you are. This part of your being gives you *physical life*, controlling and animating your body. Our souls are invisible, intangible, and yet very real. The Soul contains self consciousness (I know who I am), emotions, and volition (the ability to choose). The Soul is composed of two major parts: The "heart" and the "mind".

The heart (Greek, KARDIA) is the main controller of the soul:

Proverbs 23:7 For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.

Proverbs 2:2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;

The heart makes all decisions affecting what the soul will or will not do. Though the *emotion* of the soul is also contained in the heart:

Proverbs 15:13 "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken."

The heart is *not the emotions*. The heart contains *much more* than

the emotions of the soul. If the heart is *controlled by* the emotions rather than *controlling* the emotions, then that person is highly unstable, whether believer or unbeliever. The heart is to the soul what the central processing unit (CPU) is to the computer. It controls all *flow of information* to and interaction from the soul.

The *mind* is the second part of the soul (Hebrew YETSER, Greek NOUS):

Isaiah 26:3 "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

The mind is the *storage area* of the soul. When something occurs that the heart wants to remember later, the heart directs that this information be placed in the mind. The mind holds this information indefinitely until the heart determines it is needed. The heart searches the mind, retrieves the information, and applies it where it is needed. We can use an illustration from childhood to show how the two parts of the soul interact. When you were a child your parents told you not to do certain things. This is because, in your parents souls, they had stored experiences in their mind that their hearts said was dangerous. My parents told me that electricity was dangerous, and not to stick any wire object into the wall outlets. When they told me this my heart received the information and thought on it. My heart then searched my mind to determine the validity of the teaching. There was nothing stored in my mind that told me electricity was dangerous, but I had past experiences stored there that told me that my parents were usually right. The heart took these experiences from the mind and considered them, in comparison, with the present warning. Based on the information at hand the heart had to make a decision. Should I obey my parents or not? In my case the heart rejected the previous experiences as *not being applicable* to this situation, deciding to try it anyway. Well, I stuck a piece of wire in the wall outlet and got the shock of my life! After I got off the floor my heart immediately

stored this new negative experience in my mind. You can believe me to this day, based on that stored experience, I do not put anything into a wall outlet that does not belong there.

The second part of the created man is the **body**. The body is the interface between the soul and the environment around it. As I said before, the soul is **intangible and invisible**. The body gives the soul visibility to other souls so that people can interact with one another. The soul will always be contained in a body. In this life we have a physical body which will eventually deteriorate into dust. This physical body contains the old sin nature:

Galatians 5:16-21 "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."

Which continually tempts our souls to sin against God. In the next life we will have an interim body, a temporary container for the soul until the Rapture of the Church. After the Rapture we will have a glorified body, without any traces of the Old Sin Nature:

1 Corinthians 15:35-43 "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: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a

body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. 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:"

Though mankind has a tendency to *confuse* the body and the soul, feeling that they are one in the same, or that the body contains life *by itself*, the Bible definitely distinguishes between the two. First, only the soul and not the body is made in God's image:

Genesis 1:26-27 "And God (ELOHIYM, The Godhead) said, Let us make (ASAH, To make out of existing material) man in our image, after our likeness (God is invisible in His essence, yet real. He has volition and self determination, as well as self consciousness): and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created (BARAH, To make something out of nothing) man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

Genesis 2:7 "And the LORD God formed (JATSAR, To shape or form) man (ADAM, red man, clay man) of the dust (ADAMAH, red earth. From which ADAM comes from) of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (Hebrew Text states "lives", plural. Man received both spiritual as well as physical life at this point); and man became a living soul."

In Genesis 1.26-27 we see that God first said that he would make (ASAH) man *out of existing materials* in His own image. The existing materials that ELOHIYM referred to was *not the earth* but the materials of God's own Being. God's image in us is the reflection of the volition, self-determination, and self consciousness that all men share with God. The image of God is *not* in the body of man. This is emphasized in Genesis 1.27 when it states ***God created (BARAH, To make something out of nothing) man*** in His own image. BARAH recognizes that *no materials present on the earth* were used to make man in God's image. The materials that made us in God's image came from God's essence, and was imparted to our souls. The image of God was actually implanted in man when God breathed into the red clay shell the breath of *lives*. The soul and not be body is created in the image of God. The body is *only the container* of the soul.

Next note that *only the soul* and not be body is saved in regeneration (spiritual new birth):

Psalms 19:7 "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple."

Psalms 34:22 "The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate. "

Hebrews 10:39 "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

Those who confuse the body and the soul normally believe in the *false* doctrine of earthly perfection. Once you are saved God brings your soul into union with Him. God also gives you spiritual *new birth* at the point of salvation. But the Body remains unchanged by the salvation process. Since the Body remains unchanged there are several things you need to know:

1. You are a sinner, and will always be a sinner in this life. You cannot reach perfection or freedom from sin in this life. This is because the body and not the soul contains the Old Sin Nature which tempts you to sin. Prior to salvation you were *strictly* under control of the Old Sin Nature because you lived apart from God in the flesh. After salvation your control over the flesh will grow daily as you mature in Christ, but you will never be *entirely free* from sin until you reach the next life.

2. God purges sin from "whole you" in the Church Age by the natural process called physical death. Death is the *separation* of the soul from its present bodily housing:

Job 27:8 "For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?"

Psalms 16:10 "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."

2 Corinthians 5:8 "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

Since the Old Sin Nature is housed in the body, when God separates the soul from the body the soul is freed from that source of temptation. When your soul is removed from its present housing God gives you a "temporary body" for the soul until the Rapture of the Church:

Luke 16:19-31 "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels

into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

3. God's plan and inherent just nature ***demand***s that the whole "original you" be ultimately purged from the old sin nature. He has taken care of ***part*** of your salvation by saving your soul. The body will be saved when the event we call the Rapture takes place (see 1 Corinthians 15). God the Father will start this event by sending God the Son to the earth with all of His saints. These are saints who have ***previously died*** and are now in ***temporary spiritual bodies***. The Son will not touch the earth, but will be in the air above the earth making His presence known with a shout that will be heard by all:

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them 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."

At Christ's shout the *bodies* of believers *sleeping* in the earth will be re-created without the old sin nature. The believers that come back with Christ will be reunited with their newly formed sinless bodies. All this will occur in what the Bible calls the "twinkling of an eye":

1 Corinthians 15:52 "In a moment, in the twinkling (This is the Greek ATOMOS, referring to the tiny reflex movement of the eye that is so fast even the viewer can barely see it) of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

Next the believers who are yet living on the earth will have their bodies purged of the old sin nature *without having to go through* physical death. Then and only then will sin ultimately be purged from all believers.

The first two parts of man, the body and the soul, are possessed by *all men* at the point of physical birth. But the third part of man, the *human spirit*, is possessed in this age by *believers only*:

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 "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."

The Bible also makes it *equally plain* that the unbeliever is *spiritually dead*. He possesses a human spirit, but it is of no more use to him that a wart is to a hand.

Ephesians 2:1-3 "And you hath he quickened, (Made alive) who were dead (NEKROS, naked of life, completely dead, spiritually dead) in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."

Colossians 2:13-14 "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;"

John 6:53-54 "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, (Not literally, but idioms for believing in Christ toward salvation) hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Romans 5:15-19 "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. 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.) 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 6:17-18 "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

1 Corinthians 2:14 "But the natural (PSUCHIKOS, soulish) man receiveth not (OUK + Present Active Indicative DECHOMAI = absolutely never embraces to himself) the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness (MORIA, silliness, absurdity) unto him: neither can (DUNAMAI + OUK = He is not able) he know (Aorist Active Infinitive GINOSKO = To know at any point) them, because they are spiritually (Ablative of Source, "From the source of the human spirit) discerned. (Present Passive Indicative ANAKRINO = Discerned again and again)"

It is very plain from the Biblical texts that the unsaved man is *spiritually* dead. But what does spiritual death *mean* for each person? The best way to understand what spiritual death is is to look at 1 Corinthians 2.14 above. The human spirit is the *point of contact* between God and man. When God created man He breathed into him the breath of *lives* (Genesis 2.7). The *first* life God breathed into man was the soul. The soul gave man his being, and placed him in contact with the world around him. The body was the interface between the soul and the earth. This interface allowed man to interact with those around him. The soul interface through the body was directed *toward creation*. But man was not created just to interact with creation: he was also created to interact with his Creator. This is where the human

spirit comes in.

The *second* life God breathed into man was the human spirit. Just as it was with the soul, the body is the interface between the human spirit and God. The human spirit, as it worked through the body, allowed mankind to walk with God, to talk with God, and to make supplication to God. The human spirit was the communications link between God and man, just as the soul was the communications link between man and man. For any work to be pleasing to God it had to come *through the human spirit* of man.

But man was not satisfied with his spiritual status. God warned Adam to avoid one fruit in the midst of a vast Garden (Genesis 2.17). Adam ignored the warning and took the fruit. At the point of disobedience three penalties came upon Adam:

1. He *began* the process of physical death,
2. He immediately entered a state of spiritual death, and
3. Adam caused the imposition of the Old Sin Nature to come on his body.

These three penalties did not just come on Adam. Since Adam was the head of creation as well as the father of the human race, the same penalties came on all of his subsequent children. By disobedience Adam partook of a fruit that caused the Old Sin Nature to enter his body. Eve did the same, making it natural that all of their children would possess this same nature of spiritual death. The side effects of the Old Sin Nature brought corruption on the human body so that it slowly decayed into physical death. Since Adam was the Federal Head of the human race God *refused* to impute spiritual life to his offspring until the penalty for his disobedience was paid. This universal lack of spiritual life placed a barrier between God and man.

This spiritual death is so thorough that man will not even *ask for salvation* in Christ unless the Holy Spirit comes to temporarily draw aside this veil:

John 16:7-11 "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 the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

All mankind is, from the point of physical birth, born physically alive but *spiritually dead*.

The Implications of Spiritual Death on "Good"

And How God Receives Human Good

This may surprise you, but "good" in itself has *no* value to God. Good is only as valuable as the one who creates it. All men are born spiritually dead, and being spiritually dead every work they do is *separated* from God. No work that the natural man does is pleasing to God, because it's source is apart from God. This may be shocking to you because we commonly look at the highly moral man as a Christian or some great spiritual leader. But morality is the *same as immorality* before God if the person is unsaved or out of fellowship.

The Bible teaches many things about human good:

1. Human good **cannot save** a person from Hellfire:

Titus 3:5 "Not (OUK = strongest negative in the Greek) by (EK = Out from the source of) works of righteousness (EN + Instrumental DIKAIOSUNE = By means of righteousness) which we have done, (Aorist Active Indicative POIEO = We have done at any time) but according to (KATA = According to the norm or standard of) his mercy he saved (Aorist Active Indicative SOZO = Saved once and for all) us, by the washing (DIA + Genitive LOUTRON = Through the washing. Refers to cleansing from sin) of regeneration, (PALIGGENESIA, Genitive of Apposition = Even, That is to say regeneration) and renewing (ANAGKIAINOSIS, Genitive of Apposition = Even the renewing action) of the Holy Ghost;"

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace are ye saved (SOZO, Perfect tense = Saved in the past with permanent results) through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Only faith in God can save you from Hellfire. Human good is *apart from God's plan* because it's vessel (the unbeliever) is spiritually dead. If the vessel is dead it's works will be dead. Death cannot bring forth life. The spiritually dead *cannot* bring about their own salvation.

2. Human good is filthy before God:

Isaiah 64:6 "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; ('ED = menstrual rags, soiled or stained clothing) and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

Romans 8:8 "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

When you were a child you might have brought a roach to show your

parents in fascination. To you the roach was beautiful. But you soon found out that the roach was anything *but fascinating* to your parents. Perhaps you were hurt when they angrily told you to get rid of it. In the same way, many people are dense when it comes to human good. Unbelievers do their works before God expecting to get into Heaven with them. Donate to save the children, buy a hospital and give free services to the needy, take the homeless out to eat. God turns away from these unbelievers fruitless gifts just as parents do for the child's roach. The only thing God regards human good for is as a used filthy rag. It is the most disgusting thing in existence to Him. Two people can do good, the believer in fellowship with God, and the unbeliever. They can even do the same good moral deed. But to the believer God gives reward, while to the unbeliever God gives discipline. Two other people do good, a believer in fellowship, and a carnal believer. To the spiritual believer God gives reward, but to the carnal believer God gives Divine discipline. Human good is anything done *outside* of God's control and prompting. It is never acceptable to God, whether in believer or unbeliever.

3. Human Good is the basis of the damnation of the unbeliever:

1 John 2:1-2 "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man (A reference to believers) sin, we have an advocate (PARAKLATOS = One who pleads another's case, a lawyer) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation (ILASMOS = Means of appeasing, means of satisfying God) for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

Revelation 20:11-15 "And I saw a great white throne, and him (See John 5.22, 27. Jesus is this Judge) 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, (Whether rich or poor, all were judged) stand before God; and the books were

opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Many preachers and evangelists delude the unbeliever into thinking that the *basis of damnation* will be the sins that are reviewed at the Great White Throne judgment. Nothing is farther from the truth. Jesus paid for the sins of the whole world. These sins have all been paid for. God is an absolutely just Being, so just that He would *not* require payment for something that has already been paid in full. There is only one sin that the unbeliever is judged for at the Great White Throne: the sin of rejecting Christ as Savior. Since the unbeliever at the Throne has rejected Christ as Savior feeling that he could be *good enough* on his own to get into Heaven, the actual basis of the unbeliever's judgment is *human good*. The routine of judgment is plain in our Revelation text. First, the unbeliever comes to the Throne. Next, God (Jesus Christ) pulls down a set of books that contain all the *works* that the unbeliever did in this life. Each work is weighed to determine if it merits Heaven. Naturally *no work* merits Heaven. As we said before, if the vessel is filthy, the production of the vessel is disgusting to God. Because the unbeliever's human good works fail the test of righteousness Christ gives him one more chance as He turns to the Book of Life. The Book of Life is a book that has everyone's name in it at birth. Christ paid for the sins of the whole world. On the basis of Grace they deserve to be placed in the Book at physical birth. To *stay* in the Book a person has to accept the work of Christ on the Cross in *this life*, the work that Christ did for us at Calvary. If the unbeliever dies before he accepts this work his name is *blotted out* of the Book:

Revelation 3:5 "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. "

1 John 5:4 "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. "

Christ turns to the Book of Life to see if the unbeliever's name is *still* in the Book. Since it is not, he is banished to hell for all eternity.

Believers need to be very careful in how they witness to unbelievers. Often an unbeliever has some *bad habit* or predominant sin in his life that *we* do not like. When we witness to the unbeliever we have a tendency to modify the Gospel message by saying: "Only believe on Jesus Christ for salvation and stop doing ___." When you modify the Gospel of Christ you receive the punishment that God reserves for a false prophet. God has *never* placed a condition on salvation. Only believers do this when they are controlled by self righteousness and their Old Sin Nature. The unbeliever cannot be saved by *cleaning up his life*, nor can he remain in salvation by doing the same. Salvation is by *grace alone*, and human good has no place in the Gospel of Christ. Just witness the true Gospel of Christ and trust on the Holy Spirit to clean up the new believer's life. Hell will be full of *good* people who did not accept Christ as Saviour. Heaven will be full of rewardless Christians who lived their lives under human good rather than by the Spirit of God.

4. Human good causes the believer to lose reward in Heaven:

1 Corinthians 3:11-15 "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."

The believer has *six categories* of works that will be judged when he gets to Heaven. Three of the categories are Divine Good. **Gold** symbolizes the most *precious* act of Divine Good, having absolutely none of the believers self in it. **Silver** has a little of the believers self involved in it, but still was done majorly in the Spirit. The same is true of the **precious stones** category. The value or amount of Divine Good goes down with the amount of the believer's self it in, though all three of the first categories are majorly Spirit directed and Spirit controlled. Gold and silver will smelt so that all the impurities of self are burned out. Stones will crack and burn, but will not be consumed by fire. All three of these categories will leave the believer reward after the testing: the gold the most reward, precious stones the least reward.

The next three categories of works are those containing *large amounts* of human good. Out of these three **wood** contains the least amount of human good, **stubble** has the most. All three categories will burn thoroughly. **Wood** may leave some charred remains that will leave the believer a *small reward* whereas **hay** and **stubble** will burn entirely, leaving only dust.. God's attitude toward human good is plain: He will not accept it in either the believer or the unbeliever. His Grace still abounds, because the believer left with no reward at all will still have his salvation. God will never judge the believer for salvation, as Christ bore the judgment for us on the Cross. **But he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.**

Continue with "Common Grace, What is Divine Good?" in this study's [part5](#).
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Systematic Theology

What Is Divine Good?

Introduction

Can man do good before God? What is God's attitude toward the unbeliever? Why does God allow the wicked to have money and other goods along with His believers? What does the term "Common Grace" mean, and what are its implications? In this study we will try to answer all these questions (and more) as we see how God views and protects man, whether believer or unbeliever. One question that we want to answer is: "Can the unbeliever, who is spiritually dead, accept the spiritual concept of Jesus Christ as Savior?".

And Now, Divine Good

Since we have talked so much about human good, let us talk about its antithesis, Divine Good. Divine Good can only be done by a *clean vessel*. It must be done by a person who is *spiritually alive* (saved by Christ) and *spiritually awake* (in fellowship with God). The spiritually alive part is easy: only believe on Christ as your Savior and you will be saved. The spiritually *awake* part is also easy, but not taught by many Churches nor understood by many believers.

You are a sinner and you will *always* be a sinner. This is because, though God saved your soul at the point of salvation, you still have a functioning Old Sin Nature residing in your body. The Old Sin Nature can be controlled more and more as you move toward Christian maturity, but it will always be a *source of temptation* to drag you into sin.

God knows your condition, and knows you are a sinner so He has made staying in fellowship easy.

1 John 1:8-10 "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If (Third class condition EAN = Maybe we will, maybe we won't) we confess (HOMOLOGEO = Site, acknowledge, name, say the same thing about) our sins, he is (EIMI, Present Active Indicative = He keeps on being) faithful (PISTOS = Faithful, dependable, trustworthy) and just (DIKAIOS = Righteous, just) to forgive (Aorist Active Subjunctive APHIEMI = To cancel, pardon, or forgive in a point of time) us our sins, and to cleanse (Aorist Active Indicative KATHARIZO = To render ceremonially clean or pure, to render pure before God) us from all unrighteousness. (APO + PAS + Ablative ADIKIA = From the source of all unrighteousness. A reference to the Old Sin Nature) *If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."*

All a believer has to do to stay *spiritually awake* is to *stay in fellowship*. When we sin God has established a Grace provision that cancels out the mark and control of sin. This Grace provision is *confession of sin* to our Father. No penance is necessary, nor any emotional flagellation. You do not need to make confession to a priest or a preacher. You cannot make anything *right* while you are out of fellowship because you are operating in the power of the Old Sin Nature. The only production available at this point is *human*

good, which is totally unacceptable to God.

The formula for confession of sin is simple, just as simple as the formula for salvation. There are a lot of similarities between the state of being unsaved and being out of fellowship that required God to make both corrective formulas simple. When you are unsaved you are operating under the power of the Old Sin Nature. All production is seen by our holy God as human good. You are *spiritually dead*. When you as a believer are out of fellowship you are operating under this same Old Sin Nature. All your production is still seen as human good by God. You are *functioning* like you are spiritually dead. Both the formula for salvation and the formula for confession of sin are very simple, so simple a child can perform them. It is too bad that so few Christians use the latter formula correctly.

Confession of sin is understood when you look at the word **confess** (HOMOLOGEO) in the Greek. HOMOLOGEO means to "site, name or acknowledge, to say the same thing about". When you sin, you **must** acknowledge that sin to God the Father. Our 1 John text nowhere states that we have to go through emotional flagellation, nor to hate yourself for slipping into sin. You prayerfully ask the Father: "Lord, I confess ___ as sin, and I ask forgiveness in the name of Jesus Christ". When you do this God is **faithful, dependable, and trustworthy** to pardon the sin while releasing you from the source of your unrighteousness. All Divine Discipline is removed, and you are returned to fellowship in Christ.

But what about the **unknown sins** you have committed? It is a fact that the Old Sin Nature will often lead us into sin that we do not even **recognize** as sin. Sin is sin to God, and the unknown sin separates from God as much as the known sin. The remedy is again listed in our text. "God keeps on being dependable, trustworthy, faithful, and just to render us pure from the source of all unrighteousness". The **source of all unrighteousness** is the Old Sin Nature in us. When you

confess a sin before God, God *automatically purges* all unknown sins from the account as well. He removes the power of the Old Sin Nature from our lives so that we are completely back in fellowship. What could be easier?

Well, to some believers it is easier to go through emotional back flips before they confess their sins. Or they wait until Sunday so they can go to Church and "get clean" at the "altar". Or they wait until they can apologize to whomever they offended *before* they confess the sin. This is foolish! If you fall in a mud puddle, will you wait till Sunday to take a bath? Or will you get clean as soon as possible? The longer you stay out of fellowship, the more the Old Sin Nature takes over your life. It becomes easier and easier to sin. The easier it becomes to sin the farther you move into carnality. God's discipline increases in proportion to your carnality, and worst of all you *never grow* as a Christian. Christian growth is not measured by physical time from the point of New Birth, but growth increases the longer you *stay in fellowship* and *in the Word* of God.

One text that has been taken out of context is:

Matthew 5:23-24 "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

Proponents of the "make restitution before confession of sin" doctrine say that this verse teaches you *must apologize* to any brother your sin has offended *before* you can ask God for forgiveness. The verse does not teach that. In fact, the verse is *not even talking* about asking God for forgiveness. Let's highlight the context:

1. Historically this teaching is addressed to the Disciples by Jesus during the Jewish Age. The Church Age did not begin until the Day

of Pentecost. Jesus did teach several doctrines that spanned both Jewish and Church Ages, but this context is specifically referring to the Jewish Age.

2. There were *two basic types* of Levitical sacrifices that were "brought to the altar". The first was the **Sin Offering**. The Sin Offering was brought by a Jewish believer as a *means of confessing sin* to God. By bringing the offering the out of fellowship Jew was *restored* to fellowship. The Sin Offering was never referred to as "Gift" to God. It was absolutely necessary, and a Gift is something given *not of necessity*.

3. The second type of Offering was the **Gift Offering**. This is the type of Offering referred to in our text. The Gift Offering was brought to the altar by a Jewish believer who was *in fellowship* as a sign of worship to God. To give a Gift Offering you had to be in fellowship and in harmony with God's Plan and His people.

4. A major facet of God's Plan in both Jewish and Church Ages is that there be *no division* in the Body. If you sin against another believer, then return to fellowship by a Sin Offering in the Jewish Age, your sin may have left some division in the Body. Even if you did not intend to sin against another believer but he has something against you, this causes division in the Body.

5. Before worshipping God in either Age you should *seek reconciliation* with you brother. He is your spiritual brother with Spiritual Gifts necessary for the Body. If he has something against you this may place him out of fellowship with God. By reconciliation you cause this brother to return to fellowship, making your worship much more acceptable to God. This verse does *not* teach a "make it right before you repent" doctrine, but tells us that we should seek to eradicate all division in the Body prior to *worship*.

Let's see what the Bible has to tell us about Divine Good:

1. The Christian's method of operation/ way of life should be Divine Good rather than evil or Human Good:

Romans 12:19-21 "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

The Christian should ***not*** live his life under the power of Human Good (the Old Sin Nature), or through evil. Our lives should be motivated by Divine Good in all that we do. By Divine Good I do not mean a sticky sweet attitude all the time, nor a higher degree of ***morality*** in the affairs of life. Divine Good is produced in your life when you rely on the Spirit of God to guide you in your walk among man. Human Good and evil are the ***same thing*** in God's eyes, for they are ***both produced*** by man under the power of the Old Sin Nature. Divine Good is produced by God the Holy Spirit operating in the life of the obedient believer.

So many people have read the above verse and mis-applied it in their lives. Someone can hurt you. You can choose to do Good to them in return, but the motivation behind the Good action determines what ***type*** of Good you have produced. If someone hurts you and you are motivated ***by anger*** into returning Good to them, then you have ***not*** been Good at all. Divine Good is only produced by a mature believer ***motivated by God***. If your thought patterns are evil then your deeds are evil. The more ***self*** contributes to the action, the less your reward before God. The thought patterns you have determine the ***value*** that God assigns to the action.

2. Divine Good is only produced by the mature knowledgeable believer:

Colossians 1:9-10 "***For this cause*** (DIA + Accusative TOUTO = Because of this) ***we also, since*** (APO = from) ***the day we heard it, do not cease*** (Present Middle Indicative + Negative = We keep on and do not cease) ***to pray*** (PROSEUCHOMAI = Intensively pray) ***for*** (Preposition HUPER = On behalf of) ***you, and to desire*** (Present Middle Participle AITEO = Keep on asking) ***that ye might be filled*** (Aorist Passive Subjunctive PLEROO = That you might fill up a deficiency in you, fill up yourselves with a certain quality) ***with the knowledge*** (EPIGNOSIS, Full knowledge) ***of his will*** (Genitive Singular THELEMA = Of His sovereign purpose and design) ***in all wisdom*** (EN + Instrumental SOPHIA = by means of wisdom) ***and spiritual*** (PNEUMATIKOS = spiritual) ***understanding;*** (SUNESIS = technical knowledge of a subject, complete perception of) ***That ye might walk*** (Aorist Active Infinitive PERIPATEO = that you might begin to walk) ***worthy*** (AZIOS = with merit) ***of the Lord unto all pleasing,*** (Prepositional Phrase with EIS = With a view toward pleasing God) ***being fruitful*** (Present Active Participle KARPOPHOREO = continually bearing fruit) ***in every good work, and increasing*** (Present Passive Participle AUZANO = constantly receiving growth) ***in the knowledge*** (Prepositional Phrase EN + locative EPIGNOSIS = In the sphere of full knowledge) ***of God; (Genitive of Source THEOS = from the source of God)*** "

2 Timothy 2:18-21 "***Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If***

a man therefore purge himself from these, (Refers to false doctrine) he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

2 Timothy 2:15 "Study (SPOUDAZO = Make an effort, be diligent in attention to) to shew thyself approved (DOKIMOS = sound as currency, tried and found solid) unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, (ANEPAISCHUNTOS = Having no cause to be ashamed) rightly dividing (ORTHOTOMEIO = Making a straight cut through, a reference to correct interpretation of the Holy Writ) the word of truth."

The Bible is very clear on this point, yet so many Christians miss it. What is being *commonly taught* in the Church is that "to be strong for God we must get out and work". Believers have been taught and teach other believers that you mature by "working for God". It may shock you, but God does not want uninformed believers working for Him. He does not want new and uninformed believers coming forward for "full time Christian service". You cannot produce Divine Good unless you know the Divine Handbook, the Word of God. Paul said to the Colossian believers, "We keep on desiring that you might *fill up your deficiency of growth* with the full knowledge of God's sovereign purpose". You can only learn God's sovereign purpose through a steady diet of the Word. Once the Colossian believers began to study God's Word Paul said that they would "walk with merit before the Lord, with a view toward pleasing God, constantly bearing fruit and *every good work*". Study of the Word of God *must come before production*: without knowledge of the Word you cannot know how to produce works that are pleasing to God.

Gaining knowledge of the Word of God requires two things. First, you must be in an assembly of believers. *Every believer* has at least one Spiritual Gift from God, and these Gifts are *only operational* within a local assembly of believers. One of the more crucial Gifts in

the Body is that of the Pastor/ Teacher. The Pastor/ Teacher is the spiritual leader of the local assembly. It is his job to guide you in ***rightly interpreting*** the Scripture. You must be ***consistent*** in attending your assembly. You must be ***objective*** when the Pastor/ Teacher guides you. If you meet this criteria you are on the way to Christian maturity.

Satan has two tools that he uses to destroy your momentum to maturity. His first tool is to play on your pride and sensitivity. One gambit he uses is to tell you that you ***need no one to mature***, that you can make it on your own as a Christian. The Bible is very clear that you ***cannot*** make it on your own to maturity. You ***desperately need*** the Spiritual Gifts of the members of your local Church to keep growing. If the gambit of pride fails, Satan tries to provoke you into leaving the Church by using your sensitivity against you. Rather than sit and listen to the Pastor objectively, you apply everything that is said to yourself subjectively. You get hurt, then start thinking other believers are hypocrites or worse. Or you build your Christian way of life on another believer's life so that when he falls you fall with him. Be aware: you must ***objectively*** listen to the teaching of the Word. What everyone else is doing does not have a thing to do with your maturity.

Satan's second attack will be directed at the believer's ***requirement*** to study the Word. In order to reach maturity you must ***consistently study*** the Word of God on your own. You must diligently weigh what you ***hear*** to be true against what the Bible teaches ***is true***. Satan will bring false doctrines into the picture, and some of these doctrines will sound good at first. If you are not certain as to the validity of the Doctrine, ask an elder in your Church. False doctrine in your soul will immediately stop your move to maturity. Christian maturity is based on how you apply the Word of God to your soul, and Doctrines of Scripture are built on other Doctrines of Scripture. One rotten brick in your Scriptural life and the whole structure is suspect. As

Paul said to Timothy, "If a man therefore purge himself from these (false doctrines) he shall be a vessel unto honor, prepared unto every good work".

2 Timothy 3:16-17 "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, (Literally = "God Breathed") and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, (Literally = "Mature") thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

3. We are designed by God to do Divine Good.

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

Believers get on the "let's work for God platform" because they are scared they will not get rewards when they get to Heaven. The fastest way to ***lose reward*** in Heaven is to get out and work without first knowing the Book. Prepare yourself first. God has designed us to do Divine Good. He has ordained us in eternity past to produce Divine Good. Since we are equipped to produce Divine Good in this life, if we are obedient to His Will we will do it. But being ordained to do Good does ***not guarantee*** we will do it if we forsake God's Plan. If we supersede God's Plan by failing to study the Word, then we also supersede the ordination of God. You can do the same thing with your life. God has given you X number of years to live, but you can supersede this Plan at any time by committing suicide. Trust in God and study the word first. He has designed us to produce Divine Good, so you can be certain (if you are obedient) you will be used as you were designed.

4. Divine Good production from the believer is a sign of Christian maturity.

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work."

The mature believer is the one who ***consistently*** produces Divine Good. The "Let's get out and work for God" crowd are consistently immature, attempting to do things for God under the ***power of the flesh***. Maturity demands growth, and Spiritual growth comes only by consistent study of the Word of God. The foolish Christian is the one who tries to work for God without first obtaining the necessary knowledge and application of Scripture. Believers like this run around all their lives doing good, but their good is ***never*** acceptable to God. They have no idea as to what God wills. They go off on crusades, trying to get unbelievers to act like believers. Unbelievers are ***not required*** to act like believers, and the unbelievers moral excellence will not get him into Heaven. Through these crusades the immature believer leads the unbeliever into thinking that fine moral living will give him entrance into Heaven.

As a part of his "works theology" the crusading believer tries to establish moral codes for other believers. Ignoring or not knowing the teaching of Romans 14 he tries to judge God's servants. This type puts all believers in the same mold. They establish ***human laws*** that the Church is not under, then brands all who fail to meet these standards as non spiritual or not saved. This all goes to prove that maturity can not come by "working". Godly works are the byproduct of a mature Christian. The mature become that way by ***first*** knowing the will of God through the Scripture. After this Divine Good will naturally follow.

There are many dangers in ignoring the Scripture as the means toward Christian maturity. I was saved in what is called a "holiness"

denomination. The believers there were wonderful, though mixed up people. The "Works Theology" was taught, and we were not above doing a little crusading on the side. While in this Church it took me about three years before I turned to studying the Scripture. If you did what the elders said, this was enough. I (along with the rest of the Church) was too busy crusading, acting self righteous, and preaching to unbelievers to study the Word of God. The standards of our Church were *very strict and judgmental*, so I felt that this was where a harsh and holy God would have me serve Him. I led a young man to Christ while in this assembly. The standards of the Church were so strict that this young man soon became convinced that he *could not* be saved if he could not meet these man made standards, so he left God completely. I know that this person was saved, and is still in Christ today because of the Grace of God. My immature crusading and ignorance of the Scripture pushed a young believer into despair. The dangers of spiritual immaturity and a "Works Theology" are very real, very viscous. They not only hurt the user, but also hurt those around him.

5. Human and Divine Good are separated and judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:10 "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. "

Since we have talked about the Judgment Seat of Christ before I will not go into detail here. But it is a *fact* that God has no use for human good. Before you, as a believe, will ever become a part of the Bride of Christ in Heaven, God will remove all traces of human good from your past life. Human good will be burned at the altar of God, only Divine Good will remain. God will give us *rewards* based on the Divine Good we produced in this life as a testimony to its value. But we will get *nothing* out of the human good but ashes that blow away,

a reminder that human good is only temporary, worthless in God's eyes.

6. Grace empowers the believer to produce Divine Good.

2 Corinthians 9:8 "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work"

The force behind Divine Good is Grace, whereas the force behind human good is the Old Sin Nature. The Grace behind Divine Good makes itself known in many ways. First, it is imperative that you study and know the Scriptures in order to produce for God. God ensures you have the ***ability*** to do this by giving you the Holy Spirit at the ***point of salvation***, the Spirit then teaching you all things, "calling all things to your remembrance".

John 14:25-27 "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. 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."

The only thing you put forth in your move to maturity is the ***willingness to obey the Spirit***, to heed His teaching, to open the Scripture. If you have the willingness then ***God supplies the learning*** and the subsequent growth.

Second, after growth God will ***put you in situations*** where you can produce Divine Good. God wants you to have a crown of reward in Heaven. He supplies the situations for witnessing and service ***once you are ready*** for them. The situations are supplied ***through God's***

Grace. You do not have to chase down some poor unbeliever and force him to the Cross. By Grace God will help you to mature to the state where you can produce good works. Divine Good is God's standard. He will ensure that you can meet that standard if you are *obedience* to his will.

The Total Depravity of Man

We have discussed the spiritually dead state of the unbeliever and what God considers "Good" in detail (perhaps too much detail). But all this background was necessary to understand God's attitude toward man. As noted before, man is *spiritually* dead before God at the point of physical birth. Being spiritually dead man is *cut off* from God, totally and irrevocably lost but for the Grace of the Cross. John Calvin called this hopeless state of man ***Total Depravity***, a very good descriptive term to use. Let's fully define Total Depravity.

The Biblical concept of Total Depravity is that man is *fully cut off* from God. Man is enslaved by his Old Sin Nature, and his very will is *controlled* by the same. Man does have free will, but with reservations. The will of man is subject to its master, the Sin Nature. If man is given a choice between good and sin he will naturally choose sin, just as the alcoholic will naturally choose a bottle over a Bible. Any choice the unbeliever makes will naturally be against God. Any work the unbeliever does will be *disgusting* to God. The morality of the unbeliever is abhorrent to God, for this morality is driven by the Old Sin Nature and not the Holy Spirit. Man is *unable to accept God* in his current state, for his will demands godlessness at every point.

Calvin went a little beyond what the Scripture teaches on Total Depravity. Calvin taught that: (1) Since man cannot accept God in his current state, then (2) God has to *make* man come to the Cross.

God does this by (3) issuing an efficacious or *undeniable call* to certain people who are the elect. The elect are those out of humanity whom God has determined *will be saved by any means*. God did not designate the elect based on their own *merit*, but arbitrarily chose some to salvation. Others He did not use, but if they come to Christ God will accept them anyway. Calvin further taught that God did not elect to Heaven and Hell but only guaranteed some would go to Heaven.

Hyper Calvinism creates a lot of *problems* that are not resolved Biblically. The Bible makes it plain that man has a freewill, and this freewill is the main element toward salvation. John 3.16 and other "whosoever will" passages make it plain that man *does* have a choice to accept or reject salvation. To take the will of man out of the picture completely is to disregard a large portion of the Scriptural teaching about salvation. Hyper Calvinism also implies robotics on the part of God. Those whom God has elected *will* be saved. Those He has not elected *will* be damned. Man becomes a pawn in a great Celestial chess game between Satan and God. With God the assured victor, man has *no more choice in salvation than a robot* or a chess piece. Hyper Calvinism also takes great pains to define the *justice* of God, and how it relates to God's Plan of Salvation. It notes that God's justice does *not guarantee* men to salvation. In fact, God's justice demands that we get what we deserve (damnation). This is true, the justice of God does demand that we be punished for the Old Sin Nature in us. But what Hyper Calvinism fails to recognize is that the *love of God* is equally distributed over all of mankind. John 3.16 says that "God so loved the world":

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

1 John 2.2 says that Christ "died for the sins of the whole world":

1 John 2:1-2 "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

Since God's love is so *evenly distributed* over the whole of the world that Christ "died for the sins of the whole world", then it is certain that God's Grace would ensure that every man get an equal chance at salvation at least *once* in his life. There is no *stacked deck*, with God choosing some to guaranteed salvation, while failing to choose others, effectively guaranteeing their damnation. The Bible says that it *is* the will of God all men be saved:

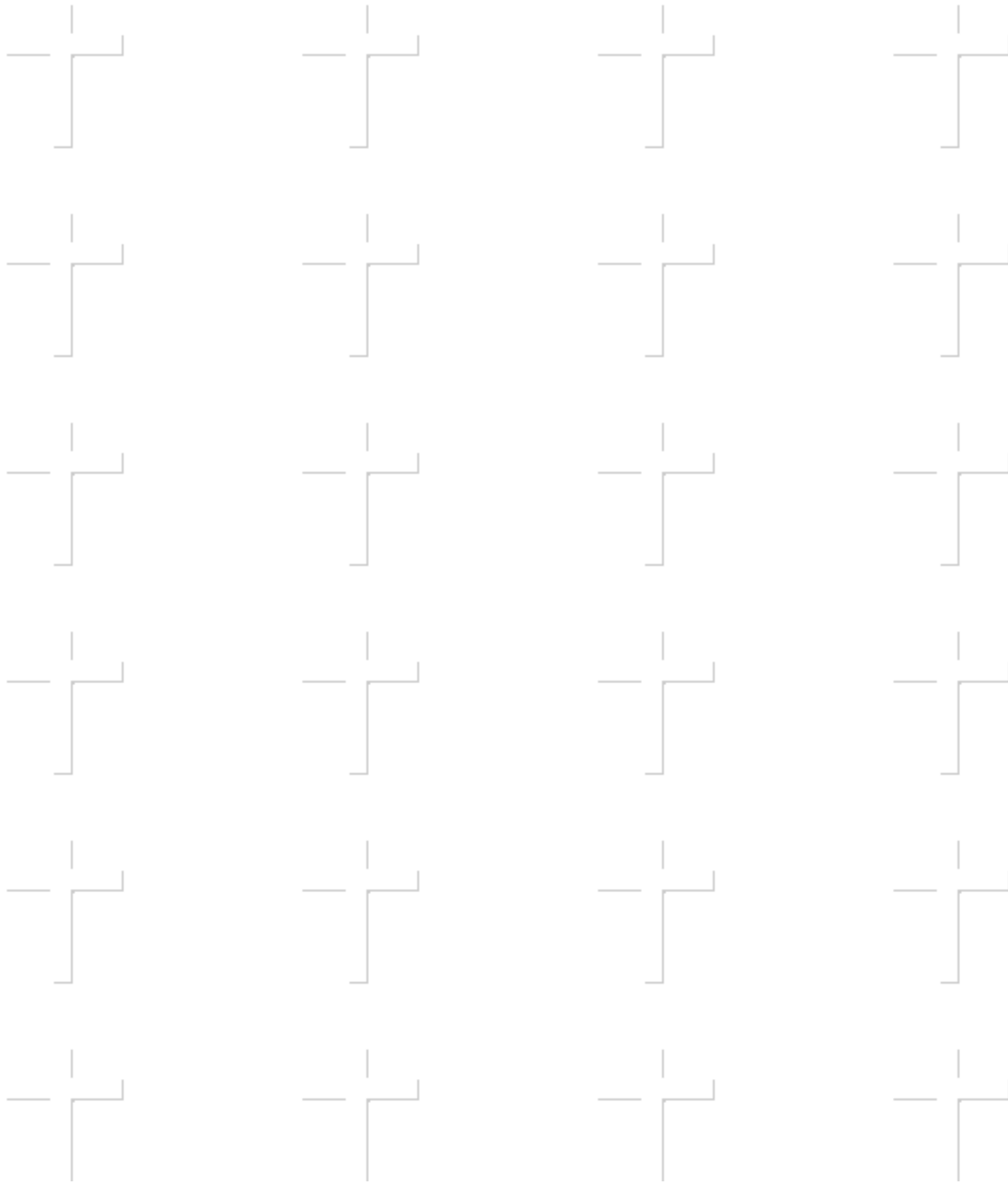
1 Timothy 2:3-4 "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

This will of God *guarantees* that there will be at least *some* free choice for all men. If hyper Calvinism is true, and God destines man to salvation, then Biblically He has destined *all men* to salvation, for what God wills He will do. We know that this is not true, and know that the Bible teaches that some will go to Hell while others will go to Heaven.

Calvinism could not reconcile the problems of election, predestination, the freewill of man, and the Will of God. This is because the system went a little *too far* in defining these doctrines and skipped another series of very important doctrines. In our next lesson we will see if we can get the *Biblical view* of the process of salvation with man's free will in mind.

**Continue with "Common Grace, The Path To Salvation" in this study's [part 6](#).
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Systematic Theology

The Path To Salvation

Introduction

Can man do good before God? What is God's attitude toward the unbeliever? Why does God allow the wicked to have money and other goods along with His believers? What does the term "Common Grace" mean, and what are its implications? In this study we will try to answer all these questions (and more) as we see how God views and protects man, whether believer or unbeliever. One question that we want to answer is: "Can the unbeliever, who is spiritually dead, accept the spiritual concept of Jesus Christ as Savior?"

The Common Grace of God to Man

As we noted before, it is God's will that all men be saved:

1 Timothy 2:3-4 "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."

Since God wills that *all* men be saved He has taken certain steps to

give all men a *chance* for salvation. The first step He took was in the Plan of Salvation. When Jesus was sent to pay for man's sins, God could have sent Him to die for *just a select few* or, to die *for all mankind*. Since God willed that all men be saved, He chose the latter method for Christ's atonement.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 "For the love of Christ constraineth (Literally, "Keeps on pressing us from all sides") us; because we thus judge, (Literally, "conclude") that if (EAN, First Class Condition = If, and it's true) one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

1 Timothy 2:5-6 "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

1 Timothy 4:10 "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."

Titus 2:11 "For the grace of God (HE CHARIS TOU THEOU = The Grace of the God) that bringeth salvation (Adjectival Use of SOTERIOS = Imparting Salvation) hath appeared (Aorist Passive Indicative EIPHAINO = has been clearly manifested in a point of time) to all men."

Hebrews 2:9 "But we see (BLEPO = Have been caused to glance at) Jesus, who was made a little lower (ELATTOO, Perfect Passive Participle + BRACHOUS = Having been made inferior for a brief time) than the angels for the suffering (DIA + Accusative PATHAMA = Because of the suffering) of death, (THANATOS =

Death. A reference to Christ's death on the Cross for us all)
***crowned* (Perfect Passive Participle STEPHANOO = Having been**
crowned) *with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God*
(HOPAS + Instrumental Singular CHARIS + Ablative of Source
THEOS = That He by means of the Grace from God) *should taste*
(Aorist Active Subjunctive GEUOMAI = Should taste once for all
death for every man. (HUPER + Accusative PAS = For Everyone) "

1 John 2:1-2 "My little children, these things write I unto you, that
ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate
(PARAKLATOS = lawyer, council for defense) *with the Father,*
Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation (ILASMOS =
means of appeasing God) *for our sins: and not for ours only, but*
also for the sins of the whole world."

There are numerous verses that teach Jesus died for the sins of the ***whole world*** (as you can see above). Theologically this reflects the Biblical Doctrine called ***Unlimited Atonement***. Unlimited Atonement teaches that ***Christ paid*** for the sins of the whole world. In other words, the account that mankind owed God for disobedience have been paid. All man has to do is to ***accept*** what has been done. It is like having a signed check with your name on it. The money is in the bank, the check is available, but you have to take it to the bank to get any benefit from it.. Holding on to the check is useless, for the check is nothing but a slip of paper. But if you cash it, it becomes money that you can use. The Atonement is the same way. Jesus has paid for the sins of everyone with the result that from the moment of physical birth your name is placed in the Book of Life. The cash is in the bank. If you die without cashing the check, without accepting Christ as Savior, then your name is blotted out of the Book. The check will be passed its due date, and will no longer be valid. This is what Unlimited Atonement teaches.

The account has been paid, and all man needs to do is accept it. But

man is *spiritually dead*, having no human spirit nor ability to truly interact with God. Men are carnal, controlled by their Old Sin Natures. The Old Sin Nature controls mankind; yet our sins are paid for: this seems like a stacked deck. We have *no way* of accepting what has been done for us on our own. It is because of this seemingly insurmountable problem, Christ's payment and man's inability to accept it, that caused Calvin to over emphasize the Doctrine of Election. To Calvin it seemed that the only way to reconcile the controlling Old Sin Nature of man in the Unlimited Atonement was to make God the main controller in man's acceptance of Christ. If God elected some to predestination in eternity past, and guaranteed their coming to this salvation with an undeniable call, then Calvin felt that Christ's death was not in vain. If God did not do this, then man would be *unable* to accept Christ as Savior, making the death of the Cross a wasted sacrifice.

Though Calvin was a great Theologian and a great Reformer, he did not go quite far enough into the Scripture to find the answer. The answer is found in the Doctrine of God's Common Grace to man. After God did all the background work (Unlimited Atonement), He *knew* that it would be necessary to free man (at least temporarily) so he could *freely choose*. Two things were necessary to allow man to freely choose between Christ or the world. Man would have to *physically* live long enough to make a free choice, and man would have to be freed from the overwhelming influence of the Old Sin Nature. These two facets of God's Grace would have to be distributed *equally* among all mankind so that *all would have equal chance* for salvation. He did this through His provision of Common (for everyone) Grace.

In the first stage of Common Grace, God had to keep man alive long enough to *make a choice* for or against Christ.

Acts 14:17 "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that

he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

In order to keep man alive God had to give him food, clothing, and shelter. Without these *basic* necessities man would quickly die before he could hear the message of the Gospel. The wicked and unbelieving prosper because God gives them nourishment, just as He nourishes His believers. God cares for unbelievers, not because they are moral or good, but to sustain their lives for one more day so they *might* accept His Son. If the unbeliever continues to reject Christ, God often *removes* this provision of Common Grace. With suffering man often turns to God, whereas in prosperity he rejects Him. By controlling the flow of prosperity to the unbeliever God gives man ample opportunity to accept or reject the Savior.

In the second stage of Common Grace God had to protect man from the overwhelming power of the Old Sin Nature.

Romans 2:14-15 "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)"

The Old Sin Nature in mankind is *directly opposed* to anything that God decrees. This Sin Nature is corrupt, the source of all depravity:

Galatians 5:15-21 "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. 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."

Had God not put *some* control on this Sin Nature, men would have *quickly destroyed* one another. In order to counteract their unnatural tendencies God placed a *conscience* in man. The conscience gives *all* men a moral code of right and wrong. When that code is broken the offender feels guilt. If society discovers an offender, then the offender is condemned socially. The conscience *can* be hardened by repeated acts of violation, but an operating conscience is the norm among mankind. In all societies it is *wrong* to murder, lie, steal, and so on. By putting a conscience in mankind God protects man from himself so that he *can* be evangelized.

The third stage of Common Grace is a branch from the second stage: the installation of governmental law and the authority to prosecute offenders of the social conscience:

Romans 13:1-7 "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render

therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."

As noted before, the *individual* conscience can be hardened by repeated acts of sin. The first murder is always the hardest, then if the evil act is repeated it gets progressively easier. In order to avoid this problem God established *national and local governments*, with bureaucrats running these governments *according to the group conscience*. Police officers and judges restrained the power of the Old Sin Nature in man by fear of punishment. To break the law (group conscience) is to bring a fine, imprisonment, or death to the offender. The group conscience even establishes rules of war, so that no one national entity can take unfair retribution over another on the battleground. Prisoners of war cannot be tortured without fear of national retaliation, for those who do such things are considered a war criminals.

Governmental law under Common Grace also protects the person's right to worship God as he sees fit, and allows for *freedom of choice* either for or against God. No one religious group *has the right* under the law to persecute another group because they worship differently. God alone will judge as to who is right and who is wrong in the after life. All men *must be free* to make a choice for or against Christ, otherwise salvation is not effectively a free choice. You cannot *force* a man to the Cross and expect him to be saved. The Church tried this in the Dark Ages, causing unsaved pagans to flood into the Church with their own polytheistic beliefs. This is why the Church still has remnants of false doctrine existing in it today, such as the Rosary, Stations of the Cross, worship of the saints, Mary as the mother of God, and Easter egg hunts on Church grounds.

The fourth stage of Common Grace directly effects the salvation of the unbeliever. The unbeliever is, as we saw before, spiritually dead. Being spiritually dead he is *under the control* of the Old Sin Nature.

While under Sin's control the unbeliever is *not* free to accept or reject Christ as Savior. The only option open to this spiritual corpse is *to reject* Christ. God established the fourth stage of Common Grace to temporarily remove this barrier.

John 16:7-11 "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter (PARAKLATOS = Lawyer, Advocate) will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove (ELEGCHO = Convict, convince) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

In the fourth stage of Common Grace God sends the Holy Spirit to convict (ELEGCHO) the world of their own Sin Nature. The Spirit will *not force* an unbeliever into accepting Christ, but He will *provide a balance* between the Old Sin Nature and the call of God so that man *can be free* to accept or reject Christ. Calvinism teaches that this ministry of the Spirit is *to the elect only*, and that this call is indisputable or *efficacious*. If this is true, then the *whole world* will eventually be saved, for the Spirit's convicting ministry is, according to Jesus, to the whole world. Since we know that there is a Hell and unbelievers will go there, we know that many will *reject* the calling of the Spirit.

At least once in every unbeliever's life the Spirit will come to him, break the hold of the Old Sin Nature, and allow enough balance in his or her life for a free choice. If the Spirit eliminated the Old Sin Nature completely there would be no real choice, for man would naturally accept Christ as Savior. If the Spirit allowed the Old Sin Nature to reign then there would be no free choice, for man would naturally choose the world. But the Spirit comes to the unbeliever and *provides a balance* between the call of the world and the call of God. The

unbeliever is then free to accept or reject Christ, as free as Adam was in the Garden. If he accepts Christ then he does so of his own free will. If he rejects Christ he does this of his own freewill. In either case the choice lies with the unbeliever.

The Spirit's ministry has *nothing* to do with the conscience. God has already provided conscience in the second and third stages of Common Grace. The Spirit's ministry is all about giving the unbeliever an *even break*. When the Spirit comes and convicts the sinner of his utterly lost state, He makes it plain to the unbeliever that all he does before God is unacceptable. He convicts the unbeliever of his unrighteousness, and explains to the unbeliever that he *can enter Heaven* only on the basis of Christ's righteousness if he only accept what has been done for him on the Cross. If the unbeliever ignores the conviction of the Spirit, the Spirit warns him of impending judgment. He makes it plain to the unbeliever that if Christ is rejected he will be judged.

The Spirit's ministry goes much further. Again, the unbeliever is spiritually dead and cut off from God. But if the unbeliever accepts Christ as Savior, the Spirit *immediately* regenerates him. In fact, God, through His Spirit, immediately performs the following ministries for each new believer:

**The Spirit reconciles the new
believer to God**

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 "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. "

Colossians 1:20 "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."

Romans 5:10 "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. "

Ephesians 2:14-18 "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: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. "

He applies redemption to the new believer. We are bought back from the slavemarket of sin.

Romans 3:24-26 "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; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

Colossians 1:14 "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:"

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

The penalty of sin is removed.

John 3:18 "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 5:24 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

Romans 8:1 "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Propitiation is applied to the believer's account.

Romans 3:25 "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; "

1 John 2:2 "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

All personal sins are covered by the death of Christ.

Romans 4:25 "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. "

1 Peter 2:24 "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

The Old Sin Nature is dethroned, and the Spirit is free to reign in the believer's life.

Romans 6:6-7 "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."

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

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. "

**The believer is freed from the Law,
and is now under control of the
Spirit.**

Romans 7:4-6 "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."

Galatians 3:24-26 "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."

The believer is "born again"

1 Corinthians 6:11 "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."

John 3:7-8 "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."

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

The believer becomes an adopted Child of God.

Romans 8:15 "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

Ephesians 1:5 "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will"

God's righteousness is imputed to the believer's account, so he is now fit to enter Heaven.

1 Peter 2:5-6 "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 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."

Romans 3:21-22 "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: "

Colossians 1:12-14 "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:"

The Spirit declares the believer righteous (justification) before God.

1 Corinthians 6:11 "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."

<p>The believer is given a Heavenly citizenship.</p>	<p>Luke 10:20 "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."</p> <p>Ephesians 2:19 "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;"</p> <p>Philippians 3:20-21 "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."</p>
<p>The believer is delivered from Satan's Kingdom, and transferred into God's Kingdom.</p>	<p>Colossians 1:13 "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"</p>
<p>The believer becomes a royal priest before God.</p>	<p>1 Peter 2:9-10 "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."</p> <p>Revelation 1:6 "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."</p>
<p>The believer comes under the special care of God.</p>	<p>Titus 2:14 "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."</p>

The believer now has rapport with God.

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

Hebrews 10:19-22 "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."

The believer has an inheritance in Heaven.

Romans 8:17 "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."

Ephesians 1:13-14 "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."

Hebrews 9:15 "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."

The believer receives the promise of eternal life.

John 3:15 "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

John 10:28-30 "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."

John 20:31 "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

The believer is united with the Godhead.

1 Thessalonians 1:1 "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Ephesians 4:6 "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Romans 8:16-17 "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."

The believer is Baptized with the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:13 "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

He is indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

John 7:38-39 "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.)"

Romans 5:5 "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

1 Corinthians 3:16 "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

Galatians 4:6-7 "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."

The believer is Sealed by the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 1:22 "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

Ephesians 4:30 "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

The believer is reserved Spiritual Gifts that he or she will be able to use after reaching maturity.

1 Corinthians 12:11 "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

1 Corinthians 12:27-31 "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

All past influences of the Old Sin Nature are removed from the new believer's soul.

interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way."

Isaiah 43:25 "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. "

Isaiah 44:22 "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee."

The *fifth stage* of Common Grace deals with the preaching of the Gospel. The fourth and fifth stages work together: God sends a minister (led by the Spirit) to an area to evangelize. The minister preaches the clear Gospel as the Spirit *provides a balance for choice* in the unbeliever.

Romans 10:14-15 "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! "

The fifth stage of Common Grace is actually another ministry of the Spirit. In this ministry the Spirit uses the preacher and other lay members as tools to evangelize selected groups of unbelievers. There are many lessons in this for believers to learn. First, you must be a *mature believer* to effectively witness your faith. The immature believer goes to witness regardless as to the leading of the Spirit. If the Spirit does not lead us to witness to a group of unbelievers, then nothing will come of our efforts. The mature believer *yields his will* to the leading of the Spirit. In doing so the Spirit leads him to unbelievers who are susceptible to the preaching of the Gospel. The

Spirit provides balance in the unbeliever's soul so that he can freely choose or reject Christ. Maturity as a believer brings the ability to yield to and listen to the Spirit. Immaturity knows nothing of this ability. As we have emphasized before Divine Good production (such as witnessing) always comes by mature growth brought on by faithful study of the Word of God.

In Summary

A wealth of Bible doctrine has been covered in this study. The main points we have covered are:

1. The unbeliever is ***spiritually dead***. Being spiritually dead he is cut off from God, unable to do anything acceptable or pleasing to God. Human Good works will be the basis of the unbeliever's damnation at the last Judgment (the Great White Throne).
2. Though spiritually dead, the unbeliever's sins ***have been paid for*** by Christ's work on the Cross. At physical birth the unbeliever's name is placed in the Book of Life. If he accepts what Christ has done for him before he meets physical death his name is left in this Book. With his name in the Book, he is welcomed into Heaven in the afterlife. If the unbeliever ***continues to reject*** Christ until he meets physical death, then at his death his name is ***blotted out*** of the Book of Life. If his name is not in this Book he will be cast away unto eternal damnation.
3. God has provided ***five stages*** of Common Grace, each designed to lead the unbeliever to Christ. The first three stages extend the unbeliever's life so that he will have ***sufficient time*** to freely choose or reject Christ. These three stages are (1) The provision of food and shelter, (2) The individual conscience, and (3) The establishment of the Group Conscience or Governmental Law. The last two stages of Common Grace are ***directly related*** to the unbeliever's call to salvation

from God. These are (4) The balancing (convicting) ministry of the Spirit, and (5) The preaching of the Gospel. None of these stages *guarantee* the unbeliever will accept Christ as Savior. The Spirit's Call is not undeniable or efficacious, but a Divine invitation. The ministry of the Spirit only provides *temporary balance* in the unbeliever's soul. The power of the Old Sin Nature is dethroned so the unbeliever may freely answer or deny the call of God. The Spirit provides this Convicting ministry to everyone on earth *at least once* in his or her lifetime.

4. If the unbeliever accepts the work of Christ, thereby becoming a believer, God then gives many blessings to his life. Among these blessings are (1) Spiritual new Birth, (2) Adoption as a Child of God, (3) The imputation of righteousness to his spiritual account, and (4) Union with the Godhead. The new believer is equipped so he can grow to maturity and produce Divine Good for his Master. This Divine Good production will be rewarded in Heaven when we all stand before the throne of our Lord Jesus. Any Human Good that the believer produces in this life will be burned or destroyed at this same throne, yet he himself shall be saved, so as by fire. God Bless you all!

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Systematic Theology

STUDY SEVEN

The Doctrine of Sanctification

And It's Four Theological Aspects

We need to clarify the *different* views concerning "Sanctification". I do not intend on spending an inordinate amount of time discussing the history of the doctrine in the Church, yet when we are able to see all of the different viewpoints it helps us to fix in our minds the Scriptural truth about Sanctification.

A Brief History of The Doctrine of Sanctification

In the Roman Catholic view, there is *no difference* between Sanctification and Justification. Catholics hold that the sacramental water of Baptism removes all the stain of original sin from man. If a Christian commits a "mortal sin", the stain is placed back on his soul by the act of the sin. "Mortal sin" can only be removed by an act of penance (a good work), preceded by confession to a Catholic priest. The Catholic view holds that Sanctification is a *job of improvement* which enables God to Justify man while the job itself is done by man. The Catholic view is equal, in essence, to that of the historical Pelagian view.

Saint Augustine was the first person in the Church age to seriously ponder the acts of the Spirit in relationship to the Sanctification of the believer. He held that Sanctification was a *supernatural infusion* of life newly acquired by the believer.

Augustine also held that Sanctification came by the Spirit and operated only *through* the Church and its sacraments.

Taking the teachings of Augustine along with Thomas Aquinas (a Roman Theologian), the Catholic Churches held to this as the true Doctrine of Sanctification ever since. The Church never sought to define the detailed mechanics of the act, often confusing Justification and Sanctification as one in the same.

In the Weslian View Sanctification is a *process of improvement* which may be completed while the believer is in the flesh. Sanctification is a work which is a *partnership* between God and man. Weslians hold that man *may reach perfection* while in this life, if we walk the earth sinless and without blame.

The Reformed View of Sanctification is based on the Scriptural injunction:

2 Corinthians 3:18 "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

The Reformationists hold that Sanctification is a series of processes all accomplished by the Holy Spirit of God. They believe that the work is *separate from the ability of man* because man is, in essence, unable to contribute due to the oppression of sin.

With the rise of the Reformation movement, the act of Sanctification was seen as a different action from Justification. Justification was taught as the legal action performed on the believer by God when he, by faith, accepted Jesus Christ as Savior. Through Justification God placed our sins on Jesus Christ while placing His righteousness (imputed righteousness) in us. Sanctification is viewed as a *continuing process* directed by Spirit of God whereby the believer is improved in maturity through study of the Word of God. Justification is immediate, at the point of salvation. Sanctification is progressive, an act that continues throughout believer's life.

The Reformers also held that the sacraments were only a *lesser part* of Sanctification, but certainly not the entire act. The sacraments (the Lord's Table, Water Baptism) are useful in that they help to conform the believer to the image of Christ. But the sacraments do not bring total Sanctification on the believer.

The Biblical Terminology

In order to fully understand all the *aspects* of sanctification we need to understand the word as it is found in the original language.

In the Hebrew text we find the word KADESH, meaning "to withdrawal or to separate from a common gathering". The word does not have a moral connotation unless used with the Godhead.

Deuteronomy 23:17-18 "There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel. Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the LORD thy God."

In the Old Testament there were false religions in which worship consisted of having sexual intercourse with harlots. The above word, ***whore***, has no good moral definition. Yet the root of the Hebrew word for ***whore*** (KADESHAH) is the same as the word KADESH. In other words, the temple prostitute was "set apart" to serve evil.

Let me further illustrate the use of KADESH. If I have a box of pencils and take one out for use in ***a specific task***, it may be said that I KADESH the pencil. The word has no moral or religious meaning to it: it just means "to be set apart". It eventually became associated with holiness because of its frequent use with God, but in the beginning it was not so.

In the New Testament there are two basic words used for Sanctification. The first is HAGIOS, which translated means "separated one, Saint". The word again carries no specific moral connotation. It merely refers to those whom God has set

apart as a tool for a *specific purpose*. The second of these words is HAGIAZO, which translated means "to set apart or sanctify". As it is with HAGIOS, the word in its original meaning had no specific moral connotation, yet gained one from its continual use in reference to God.

The Biblical Breakdown of The Aspects of Sanctification

PRIMARY SANCTIFICATION

In our study of Grace we briefly mentioned that we briefly mentioned *Primary Sanctification*. We should fully explore this subject so that this Bible truth will be fully fixed in your mind, as you will need this "foundation" doctrine later in our other studies.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: If primary citations the act by which God to set apart his children or marked his children as his own. Notice the wording: the. God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit."

Remembering that "Sanctification" or HAGIAZO means "to set apart", Primary Sanctification is that act of God whereby He *set apart* the human race within the Plan of Salvation. God *chose* to offer us a way out of the mess that Adam led us to, chose to offer up His only Son in substitution for the punishment that we so richly deserved. God also chooses to *offer each person* on earth salvation through the Spirit of God at least one time in their life. Notice the wording:

".. God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit .."

This "choosing" or setting apart does not *guarantee our salvation*, but guarantees

that salvation *will be offered* at least once. God's act of Primary Sanctification made it possible that we be saved. This is a recurring theme in Scripture:

1 Peter 1:2 "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."

We are **Elect** or "Chosen Ones" because we were chosen to participate in the Plan of Salvation from eternity past. The Angels who fell do not have that luxury, for they will be cast into Hell in the latter days without chance of penance. We are also **Elect** for, once we accept Christ as Savior, we are "set apart for God's use" from the moment of salvation on.

1 Peter 2:9 "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:"

The believer is a "chosen" vessel, set apart for God's use. We only chose God because He first chose us.

Ephesians 1:4 "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: "

Mark 13:20 "And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days."

Calvinism takes the "choosing out" of God to the extreme: They teach that only the Elect will be saved, and only the Elect were chosen by God. I do not believe that Primary Sanctification extends so far as to completely rule out all human free will. However, there is Biblical evidence that God maintains humanity on this earth for the sake that the Elect all be gather to Him. We can interpret this to mean that (a) God has sanctified or "set apart" a specific people to Himself in the Plan of Salvation, or (b) God has sanctified or "set apart" a specific *number* of people to be within the Church in His Plan of the Ages. I honestly do not know the right

interpretation to these texts other than to say, "Let God be God". Primary Sanctification (Election) and the FreeWill of man are like two rails on a railroad. When viewed up close they seem forever separate, forever disunited from one another. Yet as they approach the horizon (eternity) they seem to merge together as one. When we meet Him face to face we will understand the solution to this age old dilemma.

POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION

After the believer enters the Plan of God by faith in Jesus Christ, he enters a state called *Positional Sanctification*.

1 Corinthians 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:"

..to them that are sanctified is better rendered from the Greek, "To them who *have been* sanctified". Positional Sanctification is found described in:

Hebrews 2:10-11 "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,"

Positional Sanctification is a *finished work of separation* done to the believer because he was *justified* through the sacrifice of Christ. We who believe are now separated from the unbeliever in the eyes of God because we accepted what Jesus did for us. Primary Sanctification is an act of setting apart *because God chose* us. Positional Sanctification is the state of being separate *because of the finished work of Christ*. In Primary Sanctification we were chosen, but not yet born again as Children of God. In Positional Sanctification we are regenerated, set apart because of the work of Another.

Hebrews 10:10, 14 "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ... For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

Positional Sanctification *runs hand in hand* with Justification. Positional Sanctification is *entirely Spiritual*: Spiritually we are perfect and sinless because of the Blood of Christ; physically we are imperfect, still sinful, because of the flesh that we still reside in. Positional Sanctification is, in reality, below the level of human consciousness, non experiential. We are set apart *in God's eyes* because of Christ, not because we are good or moral creatures.

PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION

2 Corinthians 7:1 "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

The words *perfecting holiness* are literally, from the Greek, "maturing in Sanctification". *Progressive Sanctification* is that work of God whereby we, through the power of the Holy Spirit, grow in Christian maturity. We become "more set apart" on a daily basis if we are obedient to His will.

Romans 8:13 "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."

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 "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 4:3-4 "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;"

Through Progressive Sanctification the believer is gradually "pruned" by the Spirit

until he becomes a fit vessel to serve the Will of God. It is a *steady process* of renewal by the Spirit of God to the body and soul of the *believer*, a process that only ceases at death. The work is experiential, yet only within the grasp of human consciousness *after the fact*. Progressive Sanctification may be described by relating it to the hour hand of the clock. You may not see the hand move by watching it, yet if you come back later you definitely *know* that it has moved. We may not notice the effects of Progressive Sanctification until one day we reflect back on the way we used to be.

PROSPECTIVE SANCTIFICATION

The fourth act of spiritual separation is called *Prospective Sanctification*. Prospective Sanctification better known under the theological term *Glorification*, and is the state in which both the spirit and body of the believer is totally separated unto God.

Romans 8:17-18 "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."

Hebrews 12:14 "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:"

holiness in our Hebrews passage is the Greek HAGIASMOS, translated "sanctification, being set apart". Without Prospective Sanctification man is never fully cleansed in both body and spirit. Without Prospective Sanctification we can not enter into Heaven. It is written:

Revelation 21:8, 27 "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. 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."

Prospective Sanctification is that stage of the believer where *both Positional* and *Progressive* sanctification meet.

The Misconception of Perfectionism

The orthodox reform faith has always held that Sanctification is a "steady growth period which touches the whole man at once, *through and by* the Spirit of God". The orthodox Church also holds that the work *never reaches full maturity* while we are in this life.

Just as you may take a tomato and ground, pulverize, or burn it, it will always chemically be a tomato. For man to reach perfection there must *first* be a work of God in *recreating* the old flesh into one that is completely new and *untainted by sin*. We as "tomatoes" must be turned into butterflies by God in order to reach perfection.

Sanctification can be likened to the physical growth of man. We are physically born once, then move through different stages of growth. From infant to tot, from tot to child, from child to puberty, from puberty to adult. Yet there is never a time in the life of man where we cease growing, for we are never fully developed, never know all there is to know.

The Scripture most perfectionists (Pelagians) use to prove their Theology is:

Matthew 5:48 "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

The text is better rendered from the original language as:

"YE SHALL BE perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven IS perfect."

Alford (*Alford's Greek Testament*) states: "*.. It is not altogether imperative in meaning, but including the imperative sense: such shall be the state, the aim of*

Christians .."

Alford further says that the *historic idiomatic translation* of the word **perfect** should be: ".. complete in your love of others, not one sided or exclusive, but all embracing and God like." "No countenance is given by this verse to the ancient Pelagian heresy of perfectibility in this life. Such a sense of the words would be utterly at variance with the whole of the discourse (see especially verses 22,29, 32) in which the imperfections and conflicts of the Christians are fully recognized."

The text does not offer the possibility of Christian perfection in this life, but points out that this is the long-range goal of every Christian at the end of his earthly walk.

Another verse which the Pelagians use to support their doctrinal view is:

Philippians 3:15 "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."

The word **perfect** should have been translated *mature*. Paul was speaking in reference to maturity *in the Christian life*, not perfectionism in the flesh. If he was referring to the latter (perfectionism) then he is doing so in contradiction to his earlier statement:

Philippians 3:11-12 "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."

Paul states that he was not "perfect". Who among us can say that they have surpassed Paul in their spiritual walk? If Paul could not reach the Pelagian mystique of "perfectionism", then why do you think we can?

Pelagians also call on 1 Peter 1.16 in support of their false doctrine:

1 Peter 1:16 "Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

The Greek word for *holy* should have been translated "sanctified, separated unto God". God calls all His children to separate themselves from the world, to avoid the lusts of the flesh. He does *not* call us to perfectionism in this life, for He knows that this is an office we cannot occupy while in the flesh. All that we are, we owe to our Heavenly Father. We are fallible, He is faithful. If we remember these absolutes, recognize our weaknesses, we will better able to walk at peace with our God and our world.

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Systematic Theology

STUDY EIGHT

The Holy Spirit and Regeneration

John 3:3-5 "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."

The New Birth which our Lord Jesus speaks about is what we theologically know as **Regeneration**. Do we really understand this act in its fullest degree? What is "New Birth", and what is its effect on the believer? Let's begin our study with a look at the history of the Doctrine of Regeneration:

A Historical Perspective On Regeneration

The Pelagian View: Pelagius taught that Regeneration was no more than a **moral transformation** brought about in man **by man**. In a way Pelagius ignored the power of God in Regeneration, for it is written:

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

Most *liberal theologians* hold the Pelagian view. They teach that man is getting better and better, and by the power of our self improvement we will eventually bring the Millennial Reign of Christ to earth. Not only do the Scriptures teach this view is *wrong*, but human history also shows it to be a foolish doctrinal position. If you don't agree try reading a newspaper sometime. As the time rate goes up, the Pelagian view is shown to be more and more impossible.

Roman Catholic: Roman Catholics have traditionally taught that Regeneration is brought on the believer through the sacraments of the Church (Water Baptism and the Lord's Supper). The *specific act of Regeneration* is brought on the believer when he undergoes Water Baptism. The believer may lose this act of cleansing by *willfully sinning*. Note that both Roman Catholic and Pelagian views fail to recognize the power of God the Holy Spirit in the work. Regeneration is viewed as a *work of man in obedience to God*, not a work of God on man.

Anglican Church: The Anglicans hold two distinct and separate denominational views:

- One view agrees *entirely* with the Roman Catholic view of Regeneration. Regeneration is strictly a work of man in obedience to God.
- The second view holds that there *two degrees* of Regeneration.
 - The view holds that Regeneration is a rite, much like circumcision. When you join the physical Church of God you are "Regenerated".
 - The second view is that Regeneration is a New Birth in a higher sense. It is a new change in the *moral character* of the believer that is *not* necessarily dependent on Water Baptism. They recognize Regeneration as a work of the Spirit.

Lutherans: The Lutheran view of Regeneration is that Water Baptism is the *usual means* to accomplish the act, yet not the *necessary means*. In other words, Baptism does not accomplish Regeneration yet *aids the act*. Regeneration occurs during Water Baptism, and the object of Regeneration is passive during the act. Lutherans hold that man may *ruin* this act of cleansing by falling into willful sin.

They teach that Regeneration is a gift from God, yet man has *no assurance* of the permanence of this gift.

The Arminian view. The Arminian view holds that the act of Regeneration is *not exclusively* either God's or man's work. They hold that "it is the fruit of a man's choice to cooperate with the Divine influence being exerted". By this statement the Arminians raise the power of man to equal that of God. If man's will is equal in power to God's will, then it is reasonable to say that man is equal in power to his Creator. The Arminians also hold that Regeneration gained may become *Regeneration lost* by an act of willful sin. There is *no guarantee* or assurance of salvation or Regeneration. To the Arminian Regeneration is *not a Gift*, but a *partnership* with God.

In all these views of Regeneration where the free will of man is stressed we see several things:

1. There is *little or no* emphasis on the work the Holy Spirit in the act. At the very most it is considered a work of the Spirit *in cooperation* with man. At the very least it is *entirely* a work of man. Man is, in effect, raised to the level of God.

2. In these inflated claims of the ability of human freewill there are several major Biblical doctrines that are ignored:

- A. The Bible emphasizes that man is *totally dead* in his sins before coming to Christ. In this state of death can be human free will have *any* real effect toward salvation?

- B. With an over-emphasis on the human freewill there is a de-emphasis on the power of God. If man has *total* free will then can God really be all powerful. Total free will cannot be *out guessed* for it is fluid, ever changing. A total free will is *not subject* to any appetites, therefore it is totally unpredictable. How can God foreknow all things if He does

not, in His omnipotence, render some things certain?

C. With over-emphasis on the human freewill we also, in some degree, make man out to be equal with God. To quote another scholar, "Man permits while God submits". This is arrogance, and blasphemy.

3. All of these views discount any personal assurance of the permanence of Regeneration. Since man creates himself, he may certainly also destroy himself.

The presupposed power of the human free will is illogical in the way that liberal Theologians present it, because:

If man *along with God* are the authors of Regeneration, we are still *dead in our sins*. The Bible tells us that the unregenerate person is spiritually dead. A corpse cannot create life of it's own dilution.

If man along with God are the authors of Regeneration, they are therefore *in partnership*. The lesser partner (man) cannot destroy what is created in partnership unless the greater partner (God) agrees to the destruction.

We can see on the basis of logic, the humanistic ideologies of Regeneration fall far short of the Biblical truth. Let's look at Regeneration in the light of the Holy Scripture.

Biblical Analysis of the Doctrine

Matthew 19:28-29 "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."

Titus 3:4-7 "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

Above we see the *only* occurrences of the word **regeneration** found in the Bible, though the same concept is discussed in other terms such as "born again", or "new birth". In the Matthew text the word **regeneration** refers to the *creative renewing* process of God *through the presence* of Christ on the earth. When Jesus sits on His throne in Jerusalem during His Millennial Reign (Isaiah 11, Romans 8), His very presence will bring about the *renewal of creation*. In the Titus text **regeneration** refers to the *washing process performed by God the Holy Spirit* on the individual believer.

In both texts the word carries the implication of re-creation, or to be newly created. In both texts the Controller and Bringer of Regeneration is **God alone** (either God the Spirit or God the Son). Nowhere is there *any* implication that we as frail humans are involved in Regeneration other than as *passive recipients*. Man is *not* a partner with God in the act of Regeneration, as the liberal theologian would have us to believe.

If man is *not a partner* with God, what does this logically imply?

1. Since the act is done by God and God alone, then the act is *perfect*. God would not needlessly perform a perfect act on man if He knew man has the power to destroy it.
2. The act may *not be destroyed* by man because it is completed according to the plan of God. God will not trust His plans to the hands

of fallible man. God foreknows all things because He renders certain things as *absolutes*. The act of *Regeneration is a absolute*.

3. Since the act is wholly ordered by God, then God's honor rests on the permanence of the act. *He* has *made certain promises* that are legally binding in the Bible:

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

If a Christian could be condemned to Hell by falling into willful sin, God shows Himself to be *less than righteous*. Nowhere does it teach us in Scripture to believe in Christ AND do something else. The road to salvation (and hence Regeneration) is an act of believing in Christ *alone*. Man has added the AND to the rear of God's covenant promise; it was never added by the Almighty.

Regeneration may be defined as the "Completely Divine act of communicating Spiritual life to a believer who was previously in Spiritual death. This act is eternally permanent, and no act of sin may change its effect".

The Biblical illustrations of Regeneration permit man to be passive only in its reception. For instance:

John 3:3 "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."

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

1. Those who are Regenerate are those who are "born again". If we did *not cause ourselves* to be physically born, then why should the Biblical concept of "new birth" be any different?

2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature:

old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Galatians 6:14-15 "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. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

2. Those who are Regenerated are "new creations". Did you call yourself into being from nothing.? Man *can not create himself*, this is strictly an act of God.

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

Isaiah 64:8 "But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand."

Romans 9:21 "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?"

3. Those who are Regenerated are recognized as the "handy work of God". When you are working on a cabinet, did you build the cabinet or did the cabinet build itself? Any person would answer "I built the cabinet". The cabinet was entirely passive in the role of its building. We are entirely passive in the role of our Regeneration.

Why is Regeneration Necessary?

Ephesians 2:5-6 "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:"

The Bible teaches that we, prior to God's act of Regeneration, were ***completely and irrevocably Spiritually dead***. The word ***dead*** in the above text is the same word, NEKROS, used throughout the Bible in reference to those who are physically dead, corpses without life. An object that is NEKROS is totally without animation, totally unable to function in the world around it. As those who were Spiritually NEKROS we were unable to serve God, unable to do anything of worth for Him. We were ***corpses***.

Colossians 1:21-22 "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:"

Not only were we NEKROS, but we were at ***war with God***. You cannot be a friend of God and reject the Son. You cannot be a friend of God if you are unregenerate. We could not be partners with God in Regeneration because we were ***alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works***. You cannot be NEKROS and be His friend and partner!

Ephesians 4:18-20 "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ;"

Not only were we NEKROS and enemies of God, but ***we were blind as well***. The unsaved unregenerate man is interested in his own life, in his own ways, not in the ways of God. Our understanding was darkened. The only time we ever actively sought out God was when we were in trouble, and as a last ditch effort cried out "God, help me".

Ephesians 2:13-14 "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;"

Man in his unregenerate state has a **great void** between himself and God. There is a great river of sin and death that stands between God and man, and Christ is the only bridge that will help us cross that void.

Romans 6:20 "For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness."

As unregenerate creatures we were slaves to our own lusts, our own desires. Seeking to be free we actually enslaved ourselves to the death that separated us from the peace of God. The unregenerate man, even if outwardly a "good man", is a slave to his own appetites, totally separated from God.

1 John 3:8-10 "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 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."

Wherever the infernal doctrine that "all men are brothers" came from is a mystery to me. It certainly did not come from the Word of God. The Bible teaches us that we are to care for our neighbor. Yet nowhere does it command that we accept an unregenerate person as a brother. Those who are unregenerate are **the children of Satan**, not of God. Their father is heading toward hellfire, and the unregenerate are deftly following.

Regeneration is necessary in order that man **become a Son** of the living God. Regeneration cannot be a work of man, for we do not adopt God; God adopts us. If there is no act of Regeneration in the sinner, that person is **condemned to hell** following physical death. Just like the song says: "Sin shall not enter in there". No child of Satan shall be received into Heaven with open arms. It is not possible that the father of lies will enter Heaven, and is equally **not possible** for any of his followers to share in eternity with God.

2 Peter 2:9 "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and

to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:"

Regeneration is necessary because of the literal truth of Heaven and Hell. Those who have not received Regeneration by faith in Christ shall stand before the Great White Throne Judgment of God and be judged according to their own evil works. All men are sinners in the sight of God unless the blood of Christ is applied. Those who have not accepted the finished work of the Cross shall go into eternity separated from God, in order that the justice of God may be satisfied. The character of Heaven *demand*s that there be a work of Regeneration by God on those who would enter in.

Revelation 21:27 "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

The only way in which a man's name may enter the Book of Life is if that person has accepted Jesus Christ as his only Savior. This acceptance is *not based on good works* but on faith alone. Once we accept by faith the finished work of Christ, we are Regenerated by the Spirit of the living God.

Further Scriptural Proofs

1. Regeneration is solely a work of God:

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

Ephesians 2:5-6 "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:"

Regeneration is both an act of creation as well as an act *of resurrection*. Only God can contribute to either act.

2. Man is totally passive in Regeneration. The act is instantaneous at the point of salvation, below the level of human consciousness.

3. Regeneration is accomplished without any means or sacrament. Water Baptism does not bring about Regeneration, neither does the Lord's Table. These are all sacraments that the Regenerate believer enjoys *because* he is in union with Christ.

4. Regeneration resurrects the human spirit so we can once more have communion with God.

Ephesians 1:18 "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,"

1 Corinthians 2:12-13 "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."

The will of Regenerate man is *enlightened* so he can do works pleasing to God. Man is no longer enslaved to his appetites to the degree he previously was, now having the power *through the Holy Ghost* to break the enslavement completely.

Regeneration is not just a *mere correction* of our attitude toward God, it is much more than this. Regeneration is a form of resurrection, but one which does not change the *ego* of its recipient. Regeneration does not change the essence of man. I was David prior to Regeneration, I am still David. The human is *still human* even after the work. What generation does change is the *nature of man*.

Man in the Garden was created as *one unit* composed of three indivisible and yet

distinct parts. Man was Body (the outer shell of the person), soul (that which makes us who we are. Our personality), and human spirit.

The human spirit was designed to receive orders from God and transmit these orders to the soul so we could serve God. After man fell by disobeying God, the spirit of man died just as God so promised:

Genesis 2:16-17 "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

After Adam brought spiritual death on man, man's soul became dominant in the place of the human spirit. The soul was not equipped to handle the job of the human spirit, so the body of man stopped responding to and serving God. The soul was like a child without parent, without guidance. Ill equipped to do the will of God the soul developed a whole new set of negative emotions: lust, anger, hatred, envy. The soul grew farther and farther from God into new levels of sin. Because of sin the life span of man shortened. Rampant sin slowly killed the house of the soul.

With the coming of Regeneration through the Holy Spirit the three-part harmony of man was re-established. The human spirit is resurrected so it can discipline the soul and protect the body. We now have a functioning line of communication with God, reunited with the One whom we were so long estranged from.

Logical Order Of Regeneration

The logical order in man's lifetime leading to to his Regeneration by faith is:

1. First, we were dead because of sin:

(Abraham Kiper) "As a dead body is incapable of any other act than inclined to

dissolution, so is a dead soul inclined to all evil. But this does not imply a dead soul is devoid of any activity any more than a dead body. As the latter contains blood, carbon, and lime, so does the former produce will, feeling, intelligence, and imagination. And these elements of a dead soul become equally more active with still more terrible effects that are sometimes fearful to behold. But as the dead body by all its activities can never produce anything to restore its organism, so can the dead soul by all its workings accomplish nothing to restore a harmony of utterance before God .."

2. God bestows *Common Grace* on humanity to preserve them so that we might all hear the Gospel of Christ. Through Common Grace the soon to be believer hears the message of salvation by an Evangelist, and in faith accepts Christ as Saviour.
3. The Holy Spirit brings the work of Regeneration to the new Believer, resurrecting the human spirit.

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

1 John 3:9 "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."

The *incorruptible* seed that brought our Regeneration is the Holy Spirit of God. We are Regenerated by His actions alone. The Word of God is an instrument that helps the Evangelist spread the Gospel of Regeneration, but does not actually Regenerate us.

(Shedd) "The unenlightened understanding is unable to apprehend, and the unregenerate will is unable to believe. Vital force is lacking in these two principle faculties. What is needed at this point is the life and the force itself. Consequently the Author of spiritual life Himself must operate directly without the use of means or instruments, and outright give spiritual life and power unto the dead. The new life is not implanted because man perceives the truth, but he perceives the truth because the new life is implanted .."

The Conclusion Of The Matter

All three members of the Godhead are active in Regeneration. God the Father is the Author of the act, for He decreed it through His Plan of Salvation. The Holy Spirit is the **Agent** in the act, for it is He who accomplishes it. And Jesus Christ, by His atoning sacrifice, made the act **possible**.

How can we, as believers, **know** that another person has been Regenerated? Well, there is no substantial mark, no unerring flag that lets us know another person has been saved. Yet there are **clues** that may lead us to conclude that a person is saved.

1 John 5:1-2 "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments."

If a person shows outward signs of godliness, if he **keep his commandments**, this is a good indication that he has been Regenerated by the Holy Spirit of God.

1 John 2:19-20 "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. But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things."

Also, the Regenerate have "staying power". This is not to say that the believer will not fall into sin and out of fellowship: this is entirely possible. But if he does fall, a truly born again Christian will **not stay** in this state. The Father will bring him back to fellowship, even if discipline is required.

Hebrews 12:8-9 "But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?"

Yet who can truly know, but the man his own self. That is why we end with this verse:

Philippians 2:12 "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

If you are not ***certain*** of your own salvation today, then now is a great time to make certain. Accept Jesus Christ alone as your Lord and Saviour. May I see you all in Heaven!

Please feel free to E-mail me your questions, comments, and any difficulties you experienced accessing this study at [DIDASKALOS Ministries](mailto:info@didaskalosministries.org)



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Systematic Theology

STUDY NINE

The Holy Spirit's Work Of Baptism and Filling *The Spiritual Gifts*

Matthew 3:11-12 "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."

The entire Charismatic Movement is one of the fastest growing Christian groups in America today. Before I start, let me state that I believe the Charismatic practicing believer to be as much a Christian as the non-Charismatic practicing believer. We are all saved by faith in Christ and Christ alone. This section of this Systematic Theology is not designed to attack the Charismatics. However much I love these believers, though, it is the calling and responsibility of *every Christian* to earnestly search the Scriptures to see if we are serving God according to His wishes. When what we preach and teach diverts from the teaching of the Word of God then we must change our behavior to *conform to the Word*.

This portion of our Systematic Theology was developed from the original two chapters into a ten part study (also found on this site) called "[Tongues of Fire](#)".



Didaskalos Ministries

Systematic Theology

STUDY TEN (Part One)

The Absolutes of Salvation

The Doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints

Biblical Evidence to Support "Eternal Security"

Though it saddens me to say it, the Doctrine which is the most clear, the most majestic, the most glorifying to the Lord in the Bible, is the same Doctrine that is spurned by many Christians and non Christians alike. This Doctrine is that of "Eternal Security" (or, as some snidely call it, "Once Saved, Always Saved").

The basis of most of the sins we commit in humanity is *pride*. "I can do it myself", "I am an island", "I don't need anyone". When man is confronted with a teaching where *only God is magnified*, where man's accomplishments are minimized, then this teaching automatically held up to ridicule. The same is true of Perseverance of the Saints (which we will refer to as "Eternal Security").

Eternal Security teaches that the Grace which God offers to man is founded on God's power alone. Eternal Security in no way relies on the works of man for man is enslaved to sin, unable to do any good in the sight of God. Any works which man does of his own power is sinful because *we just aren't able*. Any work which man does *through the power of God* is acceptable, certain to succeed. Eternal Security is reliable because it is entirely "God powered".

The great Preacher, Charles H. Spurgeon, wrote:

"Now you are aware that there are different theories of redemption. All Christians hold that Christ died to redeem, but all Christians do not teach the same redemption. We differ as to the nature of the Atonement, and as to the design of the redemption. For instance, the Arminians hold that when Christ died, He did not die with the intent to save any particular person. And they teach that Christ's death does not secure beyond a doubt the salvation of any one man living (in other words, Christ died for all men) and whosoever believes is saved. They believe that Christ died to make the salvation of all men possible, and that by doing of something else, any man that pleases may obtain eternal life. Consequently they are obliged to hold that if any man's will did not give way, and voluntarily surrender to grace, then Christ's Atonement would be unavailing. Now we believe no such thing. We hold that when Christ died He had an object in view, and that object will most assuredly and beyond a doubt be accomplished. We cannot so belie our reason as to think that the intention of God Almighty could be frustrated, or that the design of so great a thing as the Atonement can by whatever way be missed. We hold that we are no afraid to say that we believed that Christ came into this world with the intention of saving a multitude which no man can number, and because of this every man by which He came into the world to die for must, beyond a shadow of a doubt, be cleansed from sin and stand, washed in blood before the Father's throne. "

When we talk about "Eternal Security" we want to make it plain that the believer does *absolutely nothing* to remain in a state of salvation once he has entered in it. As Spurgeon also wrote:

"It is not man who perseveres, but God .."

When we say "Eternal Security" we say it meaning that we believe that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ *alone*. The work of salvation is an *unconditional* covenant from God to the person who accepts that Gift. Salvation is secure, as secure as God's Word is pure.

Preliminary Considerations And Misconceptions

I had a conversation with a young man the other day on salvation. He had recently attended a Church service where the Pastor preached a "hellfire and brimstone" sermon (something sadly lacking in our pulpits today). The young man was frightened because he wasn't sure if he was going to hell or Heaven after his death. He thought that by just ***acknowledging*** the fact that Christ died for him was enough, that he was saved with God's guarantee of Heaven, yet the sermon made him examine his life and realize that the fruits of salvation were not evident.

Eternal Security is often confused with "on the fly" salvation. Some people promote Eternal Security without repentance on the part of the believer. Be aware: such doctrine is ***never taught*** in Scripture.

In the early Church a group of hedonists rose up from among our congregations known as the ***Gnostics***. The Gnostics taught that once you accepted Christ as Saviour you were ***free*** to return to your old sinful way of life, certain that you were Heaven bound no matter what. In other words, the Gnostics did not believe that salvation worked any lasting change in the nature of the person who was saved. I want you to understand this: Eternal Security does ***not*** teach that a man is saved so that he is free to seek out sin. If, after salvation, you do not experience a change in your walk (if you do not walk as a Child of God, or attempt to), a change in your desires, a change in your relationship with God, ***then you were never saved in the first place***. This is exactly what I told that young man. Salvation brings with it a new nature, one that wants to please God.

2 Peter 2:22 "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."

1 John 2:19 "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."

The true Christian will, in his walk, persevere in works that honor the Lord while seeking to minimize those that do not. This is the outward evidence of the inward change that salvation brings.

1 John 3.9 - Greek Text Literal Translation "Whoever is born of God does not habitually commit sin, for His (God's) seed remains in him, and he cannot habitually commit sin, because he is born of God."

Though good works *do not save* you, nor keep you in salvation, they *are evidence* that let you know you have, indeed, been saved. Good works (or perhaps better, Godly works) are a natural by-product of Godly saving faith. They are a natural by-product of the new nature you receive at the point of salvation. If you go forward to be saved as a dog (unsaved), and return from the altar a dog (unsaved), then it is certain salvation has not occurred. But if you go forward as a dog and return as a lamb of God, you have been saved.

Conversely, true Salvation does not mean that a Christian *never sins*. As long as we are in the flesh we are able to sin, and sometimes fall out of fellowship. Although salvation in Christ does bring a change in the *nature* of the believer, that change occurs only in our *nature*, not in our flesh. Until we reach our glorified states in Heaven our bodies (the flesh) will retain it's weakness, it's propensity to sin. As long as we are in this sinful flesh there may be occasional acts of sin, and the possibility of falling out of fellowship with God.

Hebrews 12:8 "But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."

The true Christian knows that, when he willfully sins (breaks the discipline of the family), God will discipline him for this act. If a professing Christian enters a state of habitual sin and *no punishment* is forthcoming, then it is certain that this *professing* Christian was not saved in the first place. As the writer of Hebrews put it, *then are ye bastards* (illegitimate children, never children of the Family),

and not sons.

Any person who enters salvation (is under Eternal Security) will have a *new nature* from God. This new nature will cause the believer to have a *new relationship* with his Heavenly Father, and his Father will have a intimate relationship with him. If you have not experienced this new relationship you had best re-examine your state of salvation: do not be deceived.

Biblical Proof of Eternal Security

1 Peter 1:3-5 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

If Eternal Security is not Biblical, then God is *not Sovereign* in matters concerning His own Family. If this is true then it is obvious that the above text is *not* an inspired writing, and that the Bible is only a work of man, not of God. But this is *not true*, for I believe the Bible to be an inspired writing of God to His Family. What is this passage telling us?

The Christian is *kept in salvation by the very power* of the eternal God. How strong is our God? The foundational declarations of the Christian faith hold that our Creator is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent. In other words, God *is Almighty*. This verse teaches that the strength of the Christian's salvation is based on the *very power and sovereignty of God*. Notice that the verse says that we are ***kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation***. How assured is the Christian of his salvation? According to this text, the Christian will remain in salvation as long as *God is truly God*. In other words, if a Christian ever loses his salvation, then we can be certain that there is indeed no Creator God, and we are

all yet dead in our sins.

The power of God brings the Christian to salvation *through faith*. Faith is not a work of man, but something our Father enables at the point of salvation. Faith is *the means* by which God leads a person to salvation, and this faith is a gift from God to man:

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

It is certain and Biblical that salvation is a work of God only. In *no* way, shape, or form is man a *partner* with God in the work. Since man is *not a partner* then there is no way that he can lose his salvation by an act of sin. The glory of the Gift of Salvation goes to God alone. Since *God is God* the work is effective and complete. Did creation cease to be creation because man fell under sin? Absolutely not! Does salvation cease to be salvation because the Christian falls out of fellowship? Absolutely not!

John 6:39-40 "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

2 Timothy 1:9 "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"

In the Gospel of John, Jesus paralleled the Eternal Security of the believer to the Sovereign will of God. Jesus said, *this is the Father's will* that *all which he hath given me I should lose nothing*. It is God's *omnipotent Will* that those who are saved, in the arms of Jesus, *not be lost, but resurrected* in the latter days. What is the resurrection our Lord is talking about?

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 "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."

This resurrection is the ***bodily resurrection of the believer*** in Christ on the day of Rapture. On this day we shall be ***personally*** resurrected by the Lord Jesus Christ, the previously dead in Christ first, to be followed by those yet living. Whether or not you are in fellowship with Lord at the time of Rapture is not an issue, nor is it made an issue by the Scripture. As God is Sovereign, then all who are Christians shall meet Christ in the air in resurrection. Since we meet Him in Rapture, then it is ***certain*** that our salvation is secure in this earthly sphere.

Can the Pelagian prove, through the Scripture, that man is a ***partner with God*** in the work of salvation? According to the Gospel of John the believer is ***entirely passive*** in the work of salvation. Notice that we were ***given*** to Jesus by the Father. If you give something to someone else, does the thing given ***have any say so*** in the exchange? No, for the thing given is entirely passive in the episode. Even though God has created men to a higher level of intelligence than the animal, and even though God has been more merciful to us than we should ever have deserved, in the end we are still God's creatures. The Creator God does not have to ask your permission to give you to the Son. To think that man has the ***ability*** to be a partner with most Infinite Being of all is foolish. We are not now nor will we ever be equal to God!

In the Timothy passage we see two things:

1. We were ***not saved according to our works***, but according to the ***purpose and grace*** of God. Since we were not saved according to our works then how is it possible that we can become ***lost according to our works***? It is not only illogical, it is impossible. God alone brings the believer to salvation, and only God is able to cast him away. Yet

according to His Covenant God will not cast anyone; man, woman or child; away if they have accepted His Son as their Savior. We were chosen *according to God's plan* of the ages. God is not man that He changes His mind. God knows all things and has already foreseen *all obstacles* that may lay in the future way. God knows your life from beginning to end. He knows when you sin, and knows all the sins you will commit in your lifetime. *He knows*, and because of this knowledge He had Christ pay the penalty for all that you would do in this life. He has planned *all things*, even the smallest aberration of your life, into His plan so that it can be truthfully written:

Romans 8:28 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.

How could all things be *good* for the Christian unless God rendered all things *certain*? The God who renders all things good for the believer is the same God who guards our salvation in this life. We are Secure.

2. We were *not called* according to our works. Some Christians get the idea that since *they are better* than the others around them God called them out of the world. Yet the Bible teaches we were chosen for one reason only: God desired to call us. Before we were saved we were *just as evil* as the lowest sinner. We are *not saved* according to our merit, we were *not called* according to our works.

John 10:27-30 "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."

Jesus makes several important statements in these passages:

a. Those who follow Jesus are *freely given* eternal life by the Son. Once a person is born again there is a *change in the nature* of that person. With that change comes a *willing desire* to follow Jesus. In other words, we want to do good works, to serve our Lord after salvation. Believing in Jesus is the act which leads to salvation, and *following* Jesus is the natural fruit of the new saved nature. Following Jesus alone does not bring a person to salvation, for Simon the sorcerer followed the Apostles (Acts 8.9-24), and yet remained lost. If you profess belief in Christ, yet show no evidence of salvation, chances are *you have not been saved*. Belief is the basis which brings us to salvation, yet Godly works are the *fruit* of salvation. The fruit follows the belief, and both must be present in the Christian life.

Those who are freely given eternal life by the Son are *completely secure* in their newfound possession. The text tells us that no one shall plug these out of the signs hand. It also tells us that *no one* shall pluck us out of the Father's hand. The Greek text says *no one* not *no man*. What is the difference between the two?

If the Greek text said *no man* then the Pelagian could argue that the text meant "no other man besides yourself" could take you out of God's hands. But instead the text reads *no one*. By using the broader generic term Jesus makes it plain that *not you*, not Satan, *no one at all* may take you out of the Father's hands. Jesus then reinforces this statement by saying, *My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all*. As God is Sovereign those who are in the realm of His Grace are secure.

In this text we also see how man is *passive in the work of salvation*. Notice again that Jesus says *My Father, which gave them me*. We were given to Christ by the Father, totally passive in the work of salvation. We may have believed in Christ, yet it was God who, through His Spirit, made it possible for us to believe. We may have accepted, yet it was God who wooed us to Grace.

John 14:16-17 "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom

the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

We are secure in our salvation because we have received the indwelling Spirit of God. Jesus used emphatic verbs in referring to the promised Spirit: ***I will, he shall, he may abide***. The Holy Spirit fully indwells all who accept Christ as Saviour.

1 Corinthians 12:13 "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

If you are a Christian you were ***not given a choice*** as to whether the Spirit would indwell you or not. You were ***all made to drink into one Spirit***. The Holy Spirit indwelt you at the point of salvation, immediately after you accepted Christ as Saviour. Looking back at our John 14 text we see that this same Spirit does not just come to visit the new believer, but ***abide(s) with you for ever***. How can the believer ever lose his salvation if the Spirit comes to stay? Will God cast the out of fellowship believer in hell, dragging the Spirit along with him? Absolutely not! Jesus promised that the Spirit would come and abide ***forever***, and places no conditions on His coming. Since we have the ever abiding Spirit, we have Eternal Security in our salvation.

Romans 5:1-2 "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Romans 5:9-11 "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."

The believer is secure in salvation because of the death and resurrection of Jesus

Christ. We are *saved from wrath through him*. In both of our Scriptural passages now in view the major *focus* is on Justification by Grace *alone*. We are Justified by faith in Christ because of His Hypostatic Union and Atoning sacrifice at the Cross.

If you do not understand the theological term "Hypostatic Union", you can find a series of studies that explore this Biblical doctrine: [Study One](#), [Study Two](#), [Study Three](#). You will need to use your BACK button on your browser to return here, or re-enter the study through the [index](#) listed at the end of each of these studies.

Among the Jews there was a yearly sacrificial atonement to God to "pay for" the sins of the people. These sacrifices never, in reality, made a lasting atonement for any sin. If they did then why was it necessary that the sacrifice be repeated every year? If the Jewish sacrifices were sufficient to atone for the sins of the tribes of Israel then why did not God forgive these sins *forever*? In true atonement God not only *forgives* the sin, but He also *forgets* it. By repeating the sacrifice of atonement every year it was evident that God, though He did forgive the sins, did not permanently wipe out the effect of the sin. The Jewish sacrifices were ineffectual and temporal because:

a. The first stage of true atonement rests in the *satisfaction of the wrath of God*. The people were supposed to bring a *willing sacrifice* who would stand as a *substitute* for the sinner. It was imperative that the substitute be completely *innocent*, free from sin. The sacrifice of an impure object would not fully satisfy the righteous judgment (or wrath) of God.

The Jewish sacrifice in no way fully satisfied the first stage of God's atonement. There was no sinless human in Israel that could bear the penalty, so they used "unblemished" animals for the sacrifice. But animals were not sinless, nor were

they a fit substitute for man. When Adam fell to sin all creation fell with him. Animals were also unable to *willingly submit* itself to the sacrifice. They did not have the mental capacity necessary to perceive what was taking place.

A true substitute for atonement must *be equal* in being to it's object. An animal, contrary to what Darwinism teaches, is not equal to man, nor will it ever be. The Jewish atonement for sin did not satisfy the judgment of God, though it did serve as a teaching tool and a shadow of the Christ who would one day come. But the Jewish atonement was, in reality, only a weak facsimile of the true satisfaction of the Cross and Jesus Christ.

b. The second stage of atonement requires the satisfaction of the *purity* of God. The people who are atoned for must *live a sinless life* in the sight of God after the atoning sacrifice. Yet man is and will always be sinful. The Jews, after the sacrifice, returned to their sin and spoiled their walk in God's eyes. Since we are unable, by our very constitution, to live sinless before God, it was necessary that a *substitute* stand in our place, satisfying the purity of God. This *living sacrifice* would stand in our place. Who would be that substitute?

The substitute would be Christ, our risen Saviour! The Hypostatic Union of Christ satisfies the Atonement of God fully. Christ is fully sinless man, a perfect substitute for man. As a man He willingly underwent the atonement for His people. He did not go to the sacrificial altar as a dumb animal did. Christ is *absolutely pure* from sin. He is also God. Within Him is all the attributes (characteristics) of the Godhead. He is as pure and holy as God the Father for He is *God the Son*. The sacrificial death of Christ *fully satisfied* the first stage of God's atonement: It satisfied the wrath/ judgment of God.

Christ is Divine, and in the light of this was able to resurrect from the dead in order that He could be a *living sacrifice* for the people of God. His substitutionary life for us satisfies the second stage of God's atonement.

How do these facts apply to the believer's Eternal Security within salvation? Since Christ *not only* died but *also resurrected* from the dead to live as a

substitute for us, then how in the world can the believer *sin and be cast into hell* for that sin? It is utterly impossible! God is not looking at the life of the human believer to determine whether or not he enters Heaven. God is looking at the substitutionary *life of Christ*, and accepts the believer into His family on the basis of whether not you have accepted Christ as Savior. On the *basis of the sacrifice of Christ* no man who has accepted Him as Savior shall ever become lost.

Logical proof for the Doctrine of Eternal Security

There are three logical points that *prove* the Doctrine of Eternal Security:

1. In John 19.30 Jesus said "*It is finished*". Too many people take these words and assume that they were uttered by someone who has been defeated, trodden down, or destroyed. The Greek text does not agree with this interpretation of the word TETELESTAI. The Greek is set forth in such a tense as to assert that Jesus was making a *victory cry*. These were not the words of a defeated man, but the words of a Victor. Jesus realized that His death *had redeemed* the people of God. The *work of salvation was and is finished* in Christ. Salvation is not made perfect by the work of finite man. "Finished" denotes that the work is, was, and ever will be perfect in the eyes of God. The work is fully mature. How can something be added to perfection? Salvation is not what Christ did PLUS what man does after, it is what Christ alone has accomplished for us.

2. If the Doctrine of Eternal Security is *not true*, and it is possible that a man may be saved - lost - and saved again, then this saved - lost - saved concept will certainly be reflected in the Word of God. Yet throughout the entire witness of the New Testament there is *no record* of any man who was ever saved - lost - and saved again. A good example is found in the Church of Corinth. The Apostle Paul recognized the Corinthians as carnal people:

1 Corinthians 3:1 "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ."

How carnal were these Corinthians? Paul recognized these believers as puffed up with pride:

1 Corinthians 4:18 "Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you."

1 Corinthians 5:2 "And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you."

They were fornicators:

1 Corinthians 5:1 "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife."

They were covetous, idolaters, revilers, drunkards, and extortioners:

1 Corinthians 5:11 "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."

If the saved - lost - saved concept ever applied to a group of believers, it certainly ought to apply to the Corinthians. Yet Paul called these non-functioning Christians *brethren*:

1 Corinthians 3:1 "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ."

and *Sanctified* by the Holy Spirit:

1 Corinthians 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:"

As those who were *Baptized* by the Holy Spirit:

1 Corinthians 12:13 "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

And as believers who were *indwelt* by the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

1 Corinthians 6:16 "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."

Paul *never recognized these believers as non Christians*, though their actions were a shame to the Family of God. Where is the saved - lost - saved principle so vaunted by the Pelagian? It is non-existent.

When a person comes to accept Christ as Savior he gives a *physical testimony* of his conversion by means of the sacrament of water baptism. If the saved - lost - saved theory is correct, then you would expect to find at least *one* passage in the Bible where a person was re-baptized because he had lost his salvation. As water baptism is *commanded by the Lord* Jesus Himself, you would expect at least one of the disciples to tell us to re-baptize a person who *returns* to fellowship after a bout with sin. The concept, neither historically or Scripturally, is contained in the Bible. From this point alone it is evident that the saved - lost - saved theory is *not Scriptural*.

If saved - lost - saved is Biblically correct, then there should be at least one

teaching in the Bible telling us to cast a wayward member from the local Church. We are supposed to rebuke the wayward, refuse to serve them the Lord's Table, but never are we exhorted to cast them out of the Church. What is my point? If a Christian may *become* a non Christian by the action of sin, then Christ as well as the Apostles would have made it plain that this "newly lost" person should be cast from the physical body of Christ. If a person is *not* in union with Christ anymore, then he has no reason to stay in the the physical Body, the Church. Yet no where in the Scripture is such a teaching established.

Logical Defense of the Doctrine of Eternal Security

It is quite natural that the Pelagian, acting as Devils advocate, pull certain Scriptures out of context in order to affirm the teaching of the saved - lost - saved concept. In this section we will try to answer all objections to Eternal Security while staying within the context of each Scriptural passage.

Preliminary Considerations

The Greek word for sin is HARMARTIA, which is defined as "*an offense against God, failing to hit the mark of righteousness, a bad action or evil deed, and error of understanding or a mistake*". There are many sects within Christianity that believe that if you *sin* you lose your salvation and are hell bound, but if you *make a mistake* you are *not* going to hell. They say that mistakes are justified by the Grace of God, and certainly do not carry as much weight as premeditated sin. Yet what the Bible teaches is that there is no distinction between a mistake and a sin. A sin is a mistake against righteousness and a mistake against righteousness is a sin. There is no difference. These same sects also teach that the Christian is no longer under the Mosaic Law, yet each make up their own laws that are used to determine whether a person is a Christian or not.

James 2:10 "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one

point, he is guilty of all."

Suppose a person is able to go to Heaven on his good works. Well, let's look at a hypothetical situation. Suppose a man accepts Christ as his Savior at an early age. For twenty years this individual lives a life concentrated to the Lord. One day he needs some money for his sick and hospitalized wife. He asks all his friends for money, but all either do not have it to spare or refuse outright. The man, in desperation, steals funds from the company to provide for the needs of his wife. Will this man go to hell if this sin is left unrepentant and unpaid for?

Well, if the individual was saved based on what Christ did for him PLUS what he does for Christ then he will burn in the Lake of Fire. The Scriptures teach that, if you commit the *least* of all sins, regardless of motive, then you're guilty of breaking *all the laws* of God. When this man took from the company he was guilty of, not only theft, but also murder, fornication, idolatry, etc. If the man is saved on the basis what *Christ alone* did, then he will still be Heaven bound (though disciplined of God). The same is true of the believer who back stabs another believer, commits character murder, slips into sexual sins, or lies. Eternal security covers all sins because of the sacrifice of Christ.

Let's rid ourselves of the idea that the Christian can make "mistakes" and yet not sin in the process. There is *no difference*, according to the Bible, between a mistake and a sin. They are both the sign thing.

Colossians 2:20-23 "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? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh."

Here I want to give you Dr. Blackwelder's translation of the above verse is from the Greek new Testament:

"If through union with Christ you died to the crude notions of the world, why, as though you still belong in the world, do you allow yourselves to be subjected to decrees such as 'do not handle this, do not handle that, do not touch those'. reference to things which cease to exist as soon as they are used? Rules of that kind are only man-made injunctions and precepts. Such regulations make a pretext of wisdom by advocating self imposed worship and so-called humility and austere asceticism, but are worthless in combating the desires of the unregenerate nature."

What Paul was stating is this: if you have been *truly regenerated* through the blood of Christ, if you have been truly cleansed through His redemptive substitution, then why do you create man-made laws by which to live? Among the holiness Churches today there have been laws established as "Christian behavior" like:

1. If you wear jewelry you are in disobedience to the Word and are hell bound.
2. If you braid your hair you're in disobedience to the Word and are hell bound.
3. If you do not keep your hair trimmed short you are in disobedience to God and are hell bound.
4. If women wear bermuda shorts or any clothing which does not extend below the knee, they are hell bound.
5. A man cannot be a Christian and smoker a cigarette.
6. A man cannot be a Christian and take a drink of wine.
7. A man cannot be a Christian and say a curse word.
8. A person cannot be a true Christian who does not periodically "fast".
9. A true Christian does not chew gum, for it is unseemly.

And on, and on, and on. Paul plainly states that these man-made laws have neither earthly nor heavenly value. The only thing they do is to pervert and cloud the true Gospel of Christ. These laws create a type of asceticism that breeds not humility, but pride. A person truly in Christ will allow God to direct him in *what to do* and *what not to do*. God directs His children to avoid fornication, lying, stealing, and murder. Yet nowhere in the Bible are we told anyone will lose their salvation if they fall into any sin. In all matters the Christian is directed to live his life guided by the Spirit of God. This applies to smoking, drinking, the way we wear our clothes, or in the way we groom our bodies.

Can we prove the statement, "A Christian is still a Christian, even if he sins?" There are several places in the Bible where people known as Christians fell into sin, yet were still recognized as Christians.

1 Corinthians 5:1, 5 "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Do you lose your salvation if you fall into fornication and incest? The Corinthian man was not only in fornication, but in fornication with *his father's wife*. According to Paul this man was still a believer, still under Eternal Security. He specifically directed the Corinthians to commit the believer to Satan *for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*. It is obvious from Paul's command that he still considered this person a soul under the familial care of God. Is this concept furthered by other Scriptures?

Hebrews 12:8-11 "But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we

might be partakers of his holiness. 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."

The Doctrine of Divine Discipline *demand*s that there be a Doctrine of Eternal Security. God does not chastise or punish the unsaved. He only extends this Fatherly rebuke toward His children. Note the Hebrew text: *if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.* Why does God chastise the believer? Just like any earthly Father, He only uses the rod of punishment on His children when they are disobedient. If disobedience to God leads to *loss of salvation*, and the unsaved are not punished, then why would God *ever* have to chastise one of His children? If you are no longer a child God after disobedience then God would never chastise the Family, for there would be none disobedient in His family. It is a circular, and irrefutable argument.

"But", the Pelagian states, "a little sin gleans only chastisement whereas a *big* sin brings damnation". Yet we have seen earlier in James 2.10 that a little sin *breaks the law* of God *equally* as much as the alleged *big sin* does. Stealing a dime breaks God's Law just as does murder, and murder is as evil as fornication. If the saved - lost - saved doctrine is true, then God has *unnecessarily* created the Doctrine of Divine Discipline, a principle that He will *never carry out*. If you steal a dime you are eternally damned, not His son, and with no need of Divine Discipline.

But if there is such a thing as Divine Discipline (and there is), there is such a thing as Eternal Security.

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it,

because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

The Doctrine of the Judgment Seat of Christ also supports the Doctrine of Eternal Security. Why?

The Bible tells us (above) that the children of God will have their works tested *by fire*. Some of these works will burn, whereas others will survive the flame of spiritual judgment. God realizes the weaknesses of His children. If you try to serve God earnestly and the work is ineffectual, the work will *not necessarily* be destroyed because it failed. The success of the work does not guarantee its rewardability. Rather, the Father looks at *the heart* to determine the *intent* of the work, then rewards the believer based on his motivation.

Say, for instance, you give one million dollars to the Church out of pride, without the intent of glorifying God. The gift may be effectual, it may help the Church, yet the work is not rewardable in the eyes of God. Yet if a pauper gives one cent to the Church with *the intent of glorifying God*, this work will be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

What are the works that will be burned at the Judgment Seat? Works that were initiated out of pride, conceived from lust, out of greed, out from the flesh. These works have a foundation not of righteousness, but of sin. These are not done in obedience to Christ, but in a desire for worldly gain. It is evident that these erroneous works (conceived in sin) were not repented in this life, for the Bible teaches us that when God forgives a sin He *forgets it* as well.

Jeremiah 31:34 "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Hebrews 8:12 "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

Hebrews 10:17 "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

Those who are being judged at the Throne of Christ are being judged, not for their fitness to enter Heaven, but to determine the relative righteousness of the works they did while on the earth. If their works are burned (because the foundation of the work was sin), they ***do not lose their salvation***. If we do not lose our salvation at the Judgment Seat of Christ (though some of our works are built on sin, and since all sins are equally repugnant to God), then there is no reason to believe sins ***in this life*** will cause us to be removed from Heaven. If there's truly a Judgment Seat of Christ where our works are judged, then there ***must*** be Eternal Security. Anything else just doesn't make sense!

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Systematic Theology

STUDY ELEVEN, Part One

The Holy Spirit of God, His dealing with man, and work among the Church of God

In any study of the Scripture it is *imperative* that we study the Holy Spirit of God. This Spirit is the power of the Church, the Third Person of the Godhead sent to us by Christ to enable us to do the will of the Father on the earth. This study is broken down into several subchapters, each viewing the Spirit from a slightly different perspective as presented by the Scripture. So let's get busy and see what the Bible has to tell us about the believer's closest friend, the Holy Spirit.

Historical Views of the Spirit

John 14:16-17 "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit to be our power, a means of building the Church He so loves. Many liberal theologians advance the theory of the *self sufficiency of man*. Many pastors teach that it is the "I" who must do the work of God if it is to be done on the earth: *I* will edify the saints, *I* will persevere to glorification.

Whenever man feels that he can do good of his own accord, whenever we begin

to believe that it is our works that promote the Kingdom of Heaven on the earth, there is an immediate *de-emphasis* of the work of the Spirit. We are not gods, nor can our finity ever approach the infinity of God. Because we are limited God gave us His precious Spirit so we could do His work on the earth.

From post Apostolic times to the Reformation era the Church neglected the power of the Holy Spirit in it's everyday life. Pelagianism was in full swing, teaching that *only* be ascetic acts of holiness would we ever be fit to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Man and man's power was glorified over the omnipotence of God's Plan. God was literally placed *in a box*.

Following the Reformation the Church once more restored the Word of God to the people. Whereas Romanism limited study and interpretation of the Scriptures to the "holy seers", the Reformation taught that each person should individually study the Scripture under the guidance of God's Spirit.

Arminian thought rose up in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, teaching that salvation was, in fact, a partnership between God and man. The Arminians placed a strong emphasis on the will of man and downplayed the will of God. As man's will was held supreme, the power of the Holy Spirit was de-emphasized in the believer's life.

Following Arminianism came the groups dedicated to Mysticism. The Mystics taught that *no Christian needed* fellowship with another, that the believer only needed to be submissive to the will of God the Holy Spirit. The Mystic beliefs, formed in opposition to Arminianism and Catholicism, was an excess in the opposite direction, for it ignored Christ's institution of the Church on the earth. If God did not want the Church to fellowship together on the earth then why did He establish the Gifts of Teaching and Pastoring? Again, Mysticism was an excess far removed from Scriptural thought.

Rationalism was another sect that rose up, twisting the Scriptures to suit their needs. Rationalism placed great emphasis on the human facilities of reason as opposed to the guiding hand of God. Many of our modern theologians are

rationalists. By stressing the power of man over God, God the Spirit is made to seem superfluous. Many rationalists have even stepped so far beyond Scripture that they teach God as an impersonal force, not a Creator with an all encompassing Will. In the words of the New Age philosophies, "Use the force, Luke"!

In opposition to these excesses there arose groups such as:

- The Puritanists, who sought to seek a balance between the free will of man and the Will of God.
- The Pietists, who brought new life back into Church worship by a level headed view of the ministries of the Spirit.
- The Evangelicals, who rose from the ministries of Edwards, Whitfield, and Wesley. Their teachings restored the Holy Spirit to His proper perspective during the seventeenth century.
- Irvingism and Plymouth Brethrenism rose up in the nineteenth century, restoring the Holy Spirit to the Churches of this era.

Reformed Theology today holds the following views of the Holy Spirit:

- All men are sinful, fully unable on their own to do good works for God. The Holy Spirit was sent to indwell us who believe so we would be able, in His power, to serve God on the earth.
- Man does have free will, but God has sovereign will. God controls His Plan of the Ages through His Will, regardless as to the relative freedom of our Wills. If God uses the Holy Spirit to sway our will to His Plan, such actions are totally righteous and justified: He has absolute control over His creation.
- The Holy Spirit is not a life force, but a separate Divine Member of the Godhead.
- The Holy Spirit has *always been coexistent* with the Father and the Son. He is *not* a created Being.
- The Holy Spirit is *not* inferior to either Father or Son in His substance or power. He willingly submits Himself to the eternal Plan of God, not out of coercion. He is, in all ways, fully equal with both Father and Son.

The Biblical View of The Spirit

The Scriptures clearly teach that the Holy Spirit is a distinct Divine Person, totally separate from both Father and Son yet in one accord with both.

Genesis 1:2-3 "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."

The Holy Spirit is able to act based on His own intelligence. An impersonal "force" could not do so, nor would it have volition apart from God. The Holy Spirit is a Person.

John 14:26 "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."

The Holy Spirit, our Teacher, has obvious intelligence, an attribute of personhood. Our Holy Spirit is not just intelligent, but He is ***super intelligent***, for He will teach us ***all things***. If the Spirit does not ***know*** all things, then how can He teach ***all things***? The super intelligence of the Spirit is evidenced throughout Christianity. C.S. Lewis, though certainly not an evangelical, was a brilliant theologian directed by the Spirit of God. Francis Schaeffer, another brilliant theologian, has taught thousands of believers as he was led by the Spirit. No mindless force could have imparted the wisdom that these men showed. This wisdom came by a Living God, the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:27 "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."

In this verse we see that the Holy Spirit has a ***mind***, that He manifests the intelligence of His mind by the ***ministry of interceding*** for the Saints. That the

Spirit is *a Person* is proven through this manifested act of intelligence. The Spirit is a *distinct* Person, separate from the Father, because He consciously intercedes in collaboration with the Will of God. *because he maketh intercession* clearly shows the independent intelligence of the Spirit. Only an intelligent being can have a "will" or a "plan". The second Person (the Father) guides or directs the first Person (the Spirit).

By these different actions within the Godhead we see that the Spirit is a separate Being from the Father. When we as humans make a decision to drink a glass of water we do not tell our hands "Now you fill that glass and hold it to your lips". This would be ludicrous! When we make a decision to do something we perform the act by *subconscious direction*. The same is true of God's being. The Father does not tell Himself "Now you do this, now you do that". This, too, is ludicrous. If the Spirit were a part of the Father He would not be addressing Him. Instead, the Father is directing *another intelligent Person* to function in a specific way. By the action of direction and obedience we see that there are two Persons here, both distinct and yet equal in substance. The Father and God the Holy Spirit.

Acts 5:9 "Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out."

Ephesians 4:30 "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

Isaiah 63:10 "But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them."

The Holy Spirit may be grieved, vexed, saddened, angered, and tempted. These are all attributes of a Person, *not a force*.

Now that we have seen sufficient evidence that the Holy Spirit is a distinct Person from the Father, can we determine whether or not this same Spirit is *equally divine* in Being?

Isaiah 6:8-9 "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not."

Acts 28:25-26 "And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:"

In these parallel passages we see direct proof of the deity of the Holy Ghost. In the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah, we see that this Word came by the "*voice of the Lord*". The Hebrew word for "*Lord*" is ADONAY, a word used *only* for the Almighty God. We see the same word used in Isaiah 7.7, which reads:

".. Thus saith the Lord God .."

By reading our parallel in Acts chapter 28 we see that the Apostles applied the prophecy of Isaiah (which came by the *voice of the Lord*) *specifically* to the Holy Spirit (*spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias*). This is a clear indication that the Holy Spirit is equal in His Deity to God.

Acts 5:3-4 "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."

The Holy Ghost is equal in deity to God. This is clearly emphasized by Peter in this text alone. The Apostles did *not* consider the Holy Spirit to be a *thing*, or an *extension of God*, but co-equal with God while completely separate from the other Members of the Godhead.

1 John 4:16 "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."

We can also prove that the Holy Spirit is a separate member of the Godhead, though completely equal with it's other Members. God recognizes Himself as perfect love. In order for Him to have recognized this attribute in Himself, He must have *experienced* love. God does not grow or change:

James 1:17 "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

He does not increase in perfection daily. Any attributes (characteristics) that God possesses have been His for as long as He has been in existence. God is infinite in His Being, and since He is infinite then these attributes have been with Him throughout eternity. Love is one of these eternal attributes of God.

Since the Love of God has been evident in Him from eternity past, then it was in operation *before the Creation* of man and the Angelic Hosts. Love *must* have an object to be exercised. You can not love just yourself and recognize true pure love in yourself. Self love is selfishness. There must be *an object* for love. Since God's attribute of love is eternal, the object that the attribute is exercised on *must be* eternal also. For God to recognize Himself as perfect love, it must indeed be an *unconditional love* that He shows to love's object. If the object of God's love is lesser than Himself, then the love He exercises would be conditional. If the object of God's love is greater than Himself, then the love He exercises would be slavish or servatile. The object of God's love must be *equal to God Himself*, else it would not be unconditional and perfect love.

In order for God's love to be completely unconditional, God would need to exercise that love on at least *two other Persons* equal to Himself. Why? If God the Father exercised love toward only God the Son, He would be exercising that love knowing that it *must be returned*. God the Son would also have to exercise

His attribute of love in order that recognize it in Himself. The only way God could recognize Himself as unconditional love from eternity would be if He exercised that attribute toward *two other Beings* equal to Himself. God the Father could love God the Son who could love God the Holy Spirit who in turn could love God the Father. Each Member of the Godhead would be giving unconditional love, giving and expecting nothing in return. This is a deductive proof of the Trinity of God. If we remove one of than members from the Trinity by stating that the Holy Ghost is not a Separate Person, then we proclaim, by this very belief, that God is *less than perfect*. A proper understanding of the unique Person of the Holy Spirit is not only essential to any proper study of the Trinity, it is also essential to any proper understanding of the Infinity and Perfection of God.

The Holy Spirit and His Ministry To The Word of God

1 Corinthians 2:10-14 "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."

We need to have a proper understanding of God and His Word now, more than ever. Not only the unregenerate, but the *fearful regenerate* as well, have come up with the unfounded belief that the Bible is errant in it's content, that the Holy Word of God contains contradictions. Many theologians are turning from the long proven truths of the Bible to erroneous doctrines such as because of fear. They fear what the man-made sciences have "discovered" as "truth". Many Christians

fear science like a rabbit fears a wolf. This should not be! The reverse should be true, for we are the Children of the Almighty, the Creator of all that science studies.

The Human mind has a God-given capacity for logical system, not confusion. We were created this way because we were created by Him in the image of God. The textbook which God gave to man for our good is systematic and complete in it's content, and when we study it we need to approach it as a complete work. You can see the system of Scripture through teachings like the Ten Commandments. In the first part of the Commandments we are told to **love God**. In the second part of the commandments we are told to love our neighbor.

When man fell into sin, he fell from the **stability** that God put in him into **confusion**. The only way we can return to this former stable state of mind is by accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior. At the point of salvation the Holy Spirit **regenerates** us (makes us spiritually alive again) so that we can have a right relationship with God, along with **peace of mind**.

Isaiah 26:3 "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

The Christian who fears what science has to say about the Word of God is needlessly giving up that peace. Those who condemn the Word from the standpoint of science are unregenerated unbelievers. They are in a confused state! They have no power to understand that wonderfully systematic work of teaching set forth in God's Word. It is only natural for the unbeliever to attack the Bible as contradictory or full of error. To fear that which an unregenerate person says is true is foolish. The unregenerate mind does not have **the capacity** to perceive the pure truth of the Word.

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

The Holy Spirit is the literary agent of the Holy Scriptures. How much of the writing came from man, and how much from the Spirit?

"by the Holy Ghost" The word **by** in our passage is the Greek HUPER. In the passive voice (which it is in this text) it denotes **direct agency**. The Holy Spirit was **in complete and direct control** of the prophecies given; both in reception and in transmittal. The Spirit controlled the writers of Scripture in such a way that there could be **no error**. As the woodworker uses tools to create masterpieces, the Spirit used the writers to create the masterpiece of the Scripture. The Word of God is completely and totally free of error, as God would **not** transmit error to His children.

Psalms 95:7-11 "For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: Unto whom I sware in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest."

Hebrews 3:7-11 "Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)"

By paralleling these two verses we can, again, see that the Holy Spirit wrote the Scriptures. But did the Spirit alone write our Scriptures, or was it a work created by all Members of the Trinity? The Israelites believed that it was God the Father who spoke to them through David, yet the New Testament passage clearly indicates that it is the Holy Ghost who spoke. The Father was the **source** of the writing of Scripture, and directed the Spirit in its writing. The Holy Spirit was the author of the writing. He personally directed man in the writing. Christ made the

writing of the Scripture *possible*. If He had not agreed to become a substitutionary sacrifice for our sins then there would have been *no need* for the work. Without the regeneration provided through salvation we would be spiritually unfit to receive the truths of Scripture. Without the Son's substitutionary sacrifice we would be living a empty life without hope of salvation. What the Son did made it all possible, and in this capacity we recognize Jesus as the *direct reason* for the writing.

John 14:16, 26 "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; ... 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."

Since the Holy Spirit is the direct Author in the writing of Scripture, who is better qualified to teach its content? There are teachers in the Body of Christ, placed there by God to disciple His sheep, yet without the internal teaching ministry of the Spirit, the Believer could *never comprehend* what he was being told. When false teachers enter the Body of Christ, it is the illumination of the Holy Spirit that keeps us from falling into error.

Mark 13:22 "For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect."

False prophets and Christs will *try* to seduce the Christian (notice the phrase, "*if it were possible*"), yet it is not possible. Why? If a person is truly born again, and is indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God, then God protects His people from falling into blasphemous false doctrine. The truly saved are protected from the false prophets by the Spirit of God, if they heed His call!

2 Timothy 3.14-17 (Greek Textual Translation) "But you, Timothy, abide in the things you have learned, and of which you have become certain. Knowing from you have learned them, and that from a babe you have learned the holy writings, which are able to make you wise unto salvation, through faith which

is in Christ Jesus. Every Scripture is God breathed and inspired of God, profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for discipline in righteousness; that the person of God will reach maturity, completely equipped to do every good work.."

There are three very important points that we can gather from the above passage:

(1) The Scriptures play a very important part in the role of salvation. Though Salvation is through faith in Christ alone, the Scriptures *point us in the direction* of Christ. They guide us to accepting Jesus, convict us to repentance so we can enjoy the regeneration of the Holy Ghost. This guidance of the Scriptures comes to every man by the preaching of the Gospel by holy men of God gifted in ministry. Preaching is a function of God's Common Grace to mankind.

The scriptures call all men to salvation, even though this pathway is spurned by many. God is entirely just and righteous to all; those who reject His offer of salvation have only themselves to blame for their eternal damnation.

2) The Apostle recognized *all of the Scripture* as inerrant, totally free from error. states. Paul said *Every Scripture*, not just those which we agree on. What does this specifically mean?

a. The *narrative parts* of the Bible are exactly recorded, word for word, as they were spoken. Just because God *exactly* recorded these words does not mean that He agreed with all that was recorded. When He recorded Satan's raving "I will be like God" (Isaiah 14.13), God did not exactly record the statement so as to affirm that He agreed with it. But God recorded the statement *exactly* as it was made.

b. The *doctrinal passages* are exactly and absolutely true. We may not understand portions of the Scripture in it's entirety (such as the difficult doctrine of the Trinity), yet this does not diminish the truth of the passage.

3) The Scriptures were given to man so that we can reach and retain a certain level of Spiritual maturity. The Scriptures are *the means* of sanctifying the

Christian when his mind is illuminated *by the teaching ministry* of the Holy Spirit.

How does the Holy Spirit teach the Christian?

There are three words we must define before we can understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God:

1. ***Revelation***: The unveiling, uncovering, or manifestation of God's truth to man.
2. ***Inspiration***: The mode by which God secured an *infallible* communication of His revelation unto man; the recording of God's revelation perfectly.
3. ***Illumination***: The teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit whereby He *grants us an understanding* of the revelation which we have received; an enlightening of the human mind by the infinite intelligence of God so that we can understand infinite truth.

There are two degrees of revelation from God. They are:

Special Revelation: This is the mode of communication where the Holy Spirit directly and personally speaks to man. The Word of God, Visions, Dreams, prophetic trances, and certain historic events (The Cross and The Exodus) are all forms of Special Revelation.

General Revelation: This is the mode of communication by which God speaks to man through impersonal and mediatorial ways. *Nature* is a form of General Revelation. In nature you *cannot see* a clear message of God because of the taint of sin on it, yet you can *see by it's design* that there *had to be an intelligent Creator*.

Doctor B. B. Warfield advanced the idea that there were three periods of time

where the Holy Spirit revealed God to man through Special Revelation. He states:

"Revelation has been given to man in three fairly marked periods of time ... the Patriarchal Age, the Prophetic Age, and the Apostolic Age. In the Patriarchal Age revelation was given largely through outward manifestations (burning bush,, Pillar of Fire, etc.) ... It was given by symbols, by Theophanies (The Appearance of God in human forms) ... In the Prophetic Age, this was the age of internal suggestion. The Holy Spirit moved on the hearts of the Prophets and the Prophets gave to men words that God was giving to them .. In The Apostolic Age, this was the age of concursive operation. .. The Age of the Spirit through the medium of the written word by human organisms .."

Of the accuracy of these forms of revelation, Doctor Warfield states:

".. As light that passes through the colored glass of a Cathedral window is light from heaven, but is stained by the attempts through the glass in which it passes, so any Word of God that is passed through the mind and soul of man must come out discolored by the Personality through which it is given (and just to that degree ceases to be the pure Word of God). But what if this personality itself has been formed by God into precisely the personality it is for the expressed purpose of communicating, to the Word given through it, just the coloring which it gives? What if the colors of the stained glass window have been designed by the Architect for the expressed purpose of giving the light that floods the Cathedral precisely the tone and quality it receives from them? What if the Word of God, that comes to His people, is framed by God into the Word of God it is precisely by the means of the qualities of the men formed by Him for the purpose through which it is given? When we think of the Lord giving by His Spirit a Body of authoritative writings to His people, we must remember that He is the God of Providence and of grace ... and that He holds all the lines of preparations as fully under His directions as He does the specific operation, which we call technically in the narrow sense, by the name of inspiration.."

2 Peter 1:19-21 "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."

To what extent did the Holy Ghost inspire or authorize the texts of the original Autographa? The word used for ***moved*** in the above verse is the Greek PHERO, which translated means "to bear along, to lift up and carry". The same word would be used when speaking of carrying a crippled person to bed. The word ***does not*** mean moving in the sense of a father telling a lazy son to go to work. It also ***does not imply*** a forced moving. The prophets were moved or controlled by God the Holy Spirit while writing the Scriptures, but not forced into this movement. They were carried along by the Spirit while surrendering their wills to Him. How much of the Bible, then, is of God and how much is of man?

The individual ***style of the writer*** is retained by the writer himself. Yet on further consideration might we not also agree that God, being sovereign, prepared each writer ***from birth*** so that the Word of God could be manifest through that writer's ***peculiar style of writing***? The Bible is a work of God in its entirety. Surely there is no jot or tittle within it that was not placed there by God the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 1.22 -- Greek Textual Translation: "Now this whole thing has come to pass in order that which was spoken directly by the Lord through the intermediate agency of the Prophet might be fulfilled."

The Prophets were only ***intermediate agents*** that the Lord used, as tools, in order to accomplish His Work. Were they forced into this position? No, but they were persuaded (with a persuasion that they did not want to refuse) to do the holy work they were called to do.

How Are The Finite To Comprehend that Holy

Work?

There are two ways of learning the truths we find in the Word of God, neither method inseparable from the other. The human element in Bible research is called "Inspiration". We use our God given capabilities of logic and reason to seek to understand the whole of the Bible. This method is finite, and subject to failure. Often human emotion creeps into what we would otherwise intelligently comprehend. This rampant *emotionalism* often leads us to accept that which "feels right" as Biblically accurate.

Our Father understands our fallibility. Because of this He created a second means of learning Scripture. To facilitate this means the Father sent the Holy Spirit to earth to indwell the believer. The Spirit's activity in teaching us the Word is known as Illumination. Through Illumination the Spirit empowers our understanding so we can grasp (understand) the truths of our infinite God. There are many radio waves in the air around us at this very moment. We cannot hear what is being said without using a radio receiver. Even so, the Holy Spirit is our radio receiver for the spiritual things of God.

1 Corinthians 2:14 "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."

The natural men are those who do not possess the Holy Spirit. They do not hear the directives of God, for they are unable to do so. Even if they heard them, they would still refuse to follow these directions, for they could not *comprehend* them. The unbeliever is *totally dead* to the preaching of the Gospel, dead to the call of God Almighty.

1 Corinthians 3:1 "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ."

The carnal Christian has slipped back into the sin of his old ways. This is a person

totally out of fellowship with God, and therefore *not attuned* to The Holy Spirit of God. When we first accepted Christ as Savior it is *quite natural* that we be babies. Yet when we have been in Christ for many years, and are yet unable to explain the rudimentary doctrines of Scripture, then it is certain that we are fallen from fellowship with God. *Every time* the Christian sins, he commits an act which to some degree impedes his spiritual growth. Maturity in the Body of Christ is *not measured* by time. You may have been a Christian for fifty years and even now be a baby in spiritual maturity. Our growth is measured by our willingness to follow the directives that God the Holy Spirit has given us. The pupil who will not pay attention to the teacher will perhaps grow a little. Yet it is certain that he will *not* grow as much as he would have if he had been more attentive in class. So it is with the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Christian that is out of fellowship with the Lord will grow only a little, if at all. The Christian will only see true growth when he is in submission to the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The two facets of learning, interpretation and illumination, are inseparable. The Christian *must* "Study to show himself approved" so he can place in his mind materiel for the Holy Spirit to teach or illuminate. The Lord God expects us to participate in our progressive Sanctification. We must participate in our own growth if we are to grow at all. Many have the idea that, after salvation, they can lay back and say "Ok Lord, Grow Me!". Nothing is farther from the truth. We either participate in our growth by studying God's Word, or we remain carnal and useless within the Plan of God.

On the other hand, the unbeliever cannot study God's Word and hope to gather anything of worth out of it. If you do not have the Holy Spirit in your life *illuminating* that which you study it is only dead and useless text. A good example is Isaac Asimov's study of the Bible. A very scholarly work, very thorough, and yet very dead.

John 14:16-17, 26 "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye

know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in 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."

It is God's Plan for your life that you learn His Word. Christ said, "*he shall teach you all things*". If the Christian falls out of fellowship the Father will chastise him until he repents and returns to the fold. God wants us to grow, to participate in our sanctification *through the illumination* of the Spirit. It would be well if all of us, would remember this maxim:

"Unless the Spirit empowers the work it shall only be like trash before the eyes of God."

The Holy Spirit and His Ministries In The Old Testament

Doctor B. B. Warfield "..the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit of God is exclusive to the Bible. It is foreign to Hellenism, it is foreign to thoughts outside the world of the Bible."

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit is *not exclusive* to the New Testament. In the Old Testament the Spirit is *mentioned in all but sixteen books*. In both Old and New Testaments the Holy Spirit was active in *three spheres* in connection with man:

- 1) **In the world:** The Holy Spirit was active in creation. He was active in forming its order.
- 2) **In the Theocracy:** The Holy Spirit was concerned with the creation of the people of God. He installed order and government in Israel and the Church. He worked to prepare a kingdom for these people for when they have reached full maturity.
- 3) **In the Individual:** The Spirit ministers to the people of God. He *individually prepares* a people for the Kingdom of God. His ministries of Calling,

Justification, and Sanctification are evidenced in this sphere of activity.

Genesis 1:2 "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."

This is the ***first*** mention of the Holy Spirit in the Bible. Please note there is ***no introduction nor explanation*** of who He is or where He came from. From this fact we can say that the Hebrews fully understood the presence of the Holy Spirit. If not, if they were just becoming to understand Him, then why were they so ***familiar*** in their speech toward Him?

We can learn more about the Holy Spirit from this text by looking at it in the original languages. The Hebrew for ***moved*** in this passage means: "To hover over as a bird hovers over its young". We can see the Holy Spirit's ***attitude of love*** toward creation.

Job 33:4 "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life."

Genesis 2:7 "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

How did the Spirit of God work in the Creation of man? God the Father is the Chief Executive of the Godhead. God the Holy Spirit is the Active Agent in the Godhead. The Father speaks and directs, the Spirit moves in obedience to this direction. Specifically:

- It was the Father who planned the event, who finished the event by breathing life into the lungs of newly created man.
- It was the Son who ***made the event possible***. As God is Sovereign He foresaw that, even before Creation, man would fall. The Son agreed to pay the penalty for man's eventual disobedience from eternity past.
- It was the Spirit of God who actually formed man out of the dust of the

ground. The Spirit is the spiritual hands and feet of God, the Agent who does the work of the Godhead on the earth.

Job 34:14-15 "If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust."

The Holy Spirit of God is not only *the source* of all spiritual life in creation, He is also the source of all physical life. Man is not self sufficient. If God the Spirit were to *draw back from this earth* for but a moment, then all that was life before His withdrawal would cease. We would all become just so much dust.

The Holy Spirit is also the source for the retention of all *decent life* in the world. He wills order in society to cause us to create governments and laws for our own preservation. Because of the Holy Spirit's prompting of mankind we have laws like the Rules of the Geneva Convention (which protect the soldier against cruelty from the enemy during times of war). In this country we have freedom to worship God as we will. We have the freedom to accrue materiel possessions, and laws to protect our freedom.

Psalms 104:30 "Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth."

When life was created in the Garden this was not the only time that the Holy Spirit was to perform this ministry. He repeats the act of creation somewhere in the world every day by delivering new life. Every time a baby is born it is because the Holy Spirit has united the sperm and ovum of its parents. Every time a plant grows, it is because the Holy Spirit breathes life into it. We live and breathe because of the loving ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Genesis 6:3 "And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years."

What is this passage telling us? In the Hebrew text the word translated *spirit* is

the word RUACH, which means "spirit, wind, or conscience". The Holy Spirit also ministers to mankind by *directing our conscience*.

Romans 2:14-15 "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)"

The Holy Spirit directs mankind into *external acts of good*. He does this by either of two ways: (a) He *persuades* the conscience of man into doing that which is right, and (b) Using *peer pressure* the Spirit creates laws and governments that work together to protect creation.

Our verse in Genesis also states that the Spirit shall *not always strive* with man. The Hebrew word for *strive* is DUWN, meaning "to contend with or remain among". What do you think the effect will be when the Holy Spirit no longer influences mankind to external good? Imagine walking into the department store knowing that you might not get home. Imagine having to carry a weapon with you no matter where you go. Imagine having no Bible to read from nor to cherish, for even if they were still printed, owning one would be an open invitation to death. Imagine all these things, and worse, and you will have a proper conception of a world devoid of the control of the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit withdraws there will be an equal insinuation of evil into the vacuum left by His departing. When the Spirit departs the morality of mankind will also break down, along with civilization and government.

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Systematic Theology

STUDY TWELVE

God's Design Of The Family

Roles of Man And Woman In Both Church and Family

Introduction

Today many Christians have taken a world view totally contrary to the Word of God. They have ignored the Divine designs of creation and began to blur the roles of man and woman into a unisex sort of thing, a perversion of what God originally intended in the Garden. This is obvious from the many letters I have received from feminists and Christian women's liberation movements. Some have responded with "Well, back in Jesus' day men were chauvinists, and this shows in the writings of the Scripture". To which I reply, I believe the Scripture to be God inspired, not written based on the whims of men. Others have formed in their minds a vast conspiracy among Christianity to "put women in their places". This is foolish, and paranoid.

Let me be plain: I believe women are just as capable as men, perhaps moreso, in all areas of life. I believe women are just as intelligent, just as thoughtful, just as able as any man. I am glad that women have the right to vote in this country, and frankly I wouldn't have it any other way. But having stated this, I am also certain that God designed men and women to fulfill specific roles in the Church and in the family. When we depart from these roles we harm ourselves and others who

come in contact with us.

In our society today same-sex marriages are becoming more and more acceptable, as is fornication and adultery. The Christian and the Church are called by God not to be swayed by the world, but to exist in such a way as to convert the world to Christ. When we modify our views to that of the world to please feminism, God is not pleased. When we address God as "she" in order to placate militarism, we sin in His eyes. He is not man as we know man, but He incarnated Christ as man for a specific reason. Yes, Christ *could have* been incarnated as woman, but He would have been ineffective as our Savior. Christ had to be man. We have to follow God's roles. There is no in-between.

Solo Scriptura

In this highly charged debate about men and women the standard we *must adhere* to is "What saith the Scripture?". This should be a frank and untwisted study of the gender role as taught by Scripture.

Galatians 3:13, 28 "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: 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."

The feminist movement in Christianity have taken this verse, ***there is neither male nor female***, and tried to use it to teach that the God designed roles between man and woman were erased by the atonement of the Cross. Not only is this false doctrine, it is faulty interpretive practice. The intent of the verse is to show that God is no respecter of persons, but He offers salvation equally to all. As it is written:

2 Peter 1:4 "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."

If the verse is teaching that gender roles are erased at the atonement, then it is equally teaching that *race roles* and *working roles* are also erased. Though slavery was and is an abominable practice, it was commonly practiced in the ancient world. Slaves were not suddenly "freed" after accepting Christ as Savior. Paul's letter to Philemon proves that point. And Jews do not cease being Jewish, nor Gentiles as they are. This is foolish! You maintain your race after Christ, just as I maintain mine. And we all, male or female, bond or free, Jew or Gentile, can equally approach the Throne of Grace in prayer and thanksgiving after salvation. But do we cease being who we are? Absolutely not! We are who we are, but now we are saved. Our roles, as designed by God, are still intact for this earthly time. The Apostle Paul understood this:

1 Corinthians 14:34-37 "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. What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."

Paul made it plain that his treaty on women *keep(ing) silence in the churches* was not based on Jewish custom of the day, nor on the basis of his own prejudice. This proclamation was made as a series of *commandments of the Lord*. A commandment is *not* something subject to interpretation, or to the whim of the Christian. Paul taught in our Galatians text that there is no *spiritual distinction* between men and women - we are all of equal worth to God. Yet the New Nature brought on by salvation *does not* remove the distinctive roles between the sexes. There is equal worth, but does *equal worth demand equal function* in the Body?

To hear the feminists speak, worth and function are one in the same. Much of this type of generalization is an over-reaction to the over abuses of yesteryear, when men refused women even the most basic rights in America. Yet equal worth *does not* demand equal function. Within the Godhead there are Three equally powerful

Beings, each possessing the same capabilities as the other. Yet of these Three only **One**, the Father, leads the Trinity. Both Son and Spirit are in subjection to the Father's will, and the Spirit is in subjection to the Son's will. Though all Three are equal, they each adopt their own roles without diminution. The Godhead functions so well because each maintains His activities within His role, setting a prime example of how we as humans should maintain our human activities and marriages.

Furthermore, Paul's command to women in the Church was **not based** on the Mosaic Law. Many teach that, since we are no longer under the Law, we are not bound by the restrictions of the Law. Yet Paul's command did not stem from the Mosaic Law, as is evident in his statement:

" ..they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law .."

That small phrase, **as also**, makes it clear that the command to be under obedience was a Law that **was in addition to** the Mosaic codes, a Law present at Creation, a Law on a totally separate set of books. This Law is ethereal, eternal in being, a Law of unity and order used by God and handed down to His Creation. This was not a Law that we were freed from with the death of Christ. The Mosaic Law comprehended and repeated this Law and incorporated this Law into it's working. But when the Mosaic Law was transcended by Christ the former Law, a Law of Creation, still stood.

Genesis 1:26-27 "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

Both male and female were created in the image of God (**male and female created he them**). The Hebrew for **image** is TSELEM, which means "a phantom or resemblant likeness, a representative figure". The word was often used to refer to the image of something that came out of a mold: it was not the

mold, but looked *exactly* like it. In other words, finite man was created in such a way as to reflect the infinite God, inasmuch as that is possible.

In what was did ISH (man) and ISHA (woman) represent God before the Fall? They were both equal in value to God, and they were free from sin. In their union they represented God. In God's union, the Trinity, all Three have equal worth though each possesses different roles and submission to the other. The Father is in authority over both Son and Spirit. In the marital union ISH was to be in authority over ISHA. Though mankind would later fall under the weight of sin, this order or "Image of God" would never be countermanded by the Father.

Genesis 2:18, 22-23 "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. 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."

God established the standard and the roles in marriage through the act of creation. God is omnipotent: He could have easily raised both ISH and ISHA from the dust of the ground simultaneously. Nothing hinders His absolute power but His own will. Yet God chose to create ISH first, and draw ISHA out of man's rib. Did God forget to create woman at the start, and draw her from man's rib to correct this oversight? No, God did not forget, but waited for man to *desire* woman, to feel a hurt, a need for her before He created that beautiful creature. God created in a specific order:

- Man was drawn from the earth, symbolic of God Himself. God had no rib to draw man from, but drew him out of all He created. Man was to be submissive to the Creator above all.
- Woman was created from the rib of man, and was to be in submission to him as her mate. In the words of an old Chinese proverb, "Woman was not created from the head of man so she could rule over him, nor from the bones of his feet so that she could be trod upon, but from his rib to walk by his side and be protected from harm."

Genesis 2:19 "And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof."

Notice the *pattern of creation*. As God created each animal, He brought it to ISH to see *what he would call them*. God did this to show that Adam, ISH, was to *have dominion over* creation. This was God's design, God's plan. Notice the following:

Genesis 2:22-23 "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."

Just as God did with the animal creation, He brought ISHA to man who in turn gave her her name, *Woman*, or the Hebrew ISHA. Woman submitted to the naming, man did the naming, and God corrected neither: it was His design that woman be in submission to her mate. Did this submission *lessen* ISHA's worth in the eyes of God?

Genesis 1:28-30 "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so."

God gave both ISH and ISHA control over creation (*God said unto them*). There is no doubt that both were of equal value to God, though within their union ISHA

was to be under the leadership of ISH. Again, the idea that equal worth demands equal roles is totally foreign to the Scripture. Even in the Church, the Body of Christ, there are varying roles and lines of authority drawn that in no way diminish those who must follow.

1 Corinthians 12:14-18 "For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."

In both ISH and ISHA God developed their frames (bodies) and emotional levels in such a way that they would be able to carry out their functions, their God given roles. The male frame is made long, with a long reach and heavily muscled. Man's nature, if uncorrupted by evil, is protective and aggressive, the traits of leadership. Woman's build was slighter, less muscled, with a different temperament. She was built to **respond** to the leadership of the man. This is not a series of roles that changed after the Fall, nor after salvation.

Ephesians 5:21-31 "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be

joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."

Paul parallels the unity of Christ and His Church with the relationship between man and wife. This parallel is ***highly interesting***, and lends itself to many applications. No believer in his right mind would make the statement that the Church, the Bride of Christ, is ***equal in authority and rule*** to the Savior. The Church is in subjection to Christ, under His ruling authority. Does this make us less, somehow diminish us? Again, absolutely not! In the same way the wife, ISHA, is to be in submission to her husband ***in everything***. Again, the words of the Apostle: ***Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing***. The man in marriage is to be the ruling authority, the wife the helper, the follower. Different roles, though equally saved in Christ.

Did the Church become co-equal with Christ when it accepted Christ as Savior? No, but came under Christ's rule to an even greater extent. Does the woman become co-equal with the man after the vows of marriage are made? Again, no, but she is designed and destined by God's plan to become even more under his rule, to recognize him as the leader of the household. Television sitcoms love to berate man, to show him as foolish within his household. Home Improvement shows Tim to be the foolish male often emasculated by his wife, who obviously has all the common sense in the family. The Cosby Show depicted Heathcliff, a bumbling husband barely in charge of himself, superbly dictated to by his wife Claire. American society has watched these male emasculating shows for years and become to believe that this is the norm, the way things should be. Yet television does not portray the reality of God's Plan, nor does it show the norm that is His way. Christ is not the bumbling husband, dictated to by the whims of the Church. The husband is not the bumbling sexually driven male, dictated to by the whims of his wife. These things are contrary to the order of Scripture.

What is man's role in the marriage relationship? He is to ***love*** his wife (***love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it***), to sacrifice himself for her benefit, to do what is necessary to nurture and help her grow in Grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. I find it interesting that ***no where in***

Scripture is the woman commanded to love the man, but man is commanded to love the woman. As we discovered earlier, woman was designed to be a *responder* to the advances of her leader. When a woman is loved by her man she will respond with love. When a woman is neglected by her man, she will respond with neglect. Many of the marriages failing today are failing because the man dropped the ball in the relationship. Love requires doing the highest good toward one's object. Love means correcting when correction is righteous, not when we as men feel like it. Love means showing tenderness and love, the caress of the heart, frequently and without rationing. Love means supplying the woman's needs, both physical and spiritual.

1 Timothy 5:8 "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

Christian men, in particular, need to pay heed to Paul's warning: If we ***provide not for his own*** then we have become ***worse than an infidel***, or godless unbelievers. Heed Paul's warning, men! Often we are to blame for the discord that plagues our households.

In 1 Timothy Paul gives directions for the government of the Church and the training of it's members. Within this same context Paul writes:

1 Timothy 2:11-15 "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. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."

Again, a very straightforward statement. Does Paul tell the woman that she is forbidden to teach at all in the Church? No, for each believer, regardless of gender, is given Spiritual Gifts once they enter the Body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every

man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

1 Corinthians 12:13-18 "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."

The Bible says that these Spiritual Gifts are divided to *every man* severally as He will. The Greek word for *man* is HEKASTOS, which is better rendered as PERSON. The Holy Spirit gives Gifts to both men and women in the Body. Just as there is no "dead weight" in the human body, each member in the Body of Christ has a Gift and a duty to perform. Our Spiritual Gifts are not given based on race or sex, nor based on merit. They are distributed as the Spirit of God sees fit. Going back to our Timothy passage, is Paul teaching that God gave women Spiritual Gifts, then disallowed their usage? Absolutely not! However, all Gifts, whether possessed by man or woman, must be exercised in accordance with the *will and plan of God*.

The woman's Gifts is not to be used to exercise authority over the man in the Body. This is very plain, based on *I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man*. The Gift given must not be used in opposition to the order of rule, nor in opposition to the gender design that God's Law of Creation established. Women may indeed teach:

Titus 2:3-5 "The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior 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."

Women, though forbidden to teach in authority over the man, are definitely needed as teachers in the Body of Christ. The woman must teach and preach, as God has called them, but to ***other women*** in obedience to God's design. As long as her Gift is not used as a lever of authority over man, it is not only permissible but ***commanded*** that the woman exercise her Gift. If our women taught one another as God commands I suspect that we'd see the divorce rate among Christianity radically lowered. Many marriages dissolve because both men and women enter that holy state thinking it is nothing but sex, sex, sex. There is much more to marriage than sex. Women, just as men, should be taught ***how to make the marriage work***. They must learn to be level headed, how to keep their household, how to discipline their children, how to be obedient to their husbands. This is half of the battle against the rampant divorce rate in our Churches today.

Christian feminists also point out:

1 Corinthians 11:5 "But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven."

teaching that this verse allows the woman to pray or preach out loud in the meetings of the Church. This is indeed a stretch of the imagination. No where in this verse does Paul mention ***where*** women are when this action is done, whether in the public meeting of the Church or while segregated from the men. The verse simply teaches that the woman should pray or prophecy with her head ***covered*** (a reference to her unshorn hair), a sign of her submission to her husband. In the continuing context:

1 Corinthians 11:6-9 "For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. 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."

we see that the woman's longer hair is a sign of her role within the marriage, in submission to her husband. As Paul stated: ***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.*** Again, the creation order highlights God's design in the marriage. Women are commanded to be in obedience to their men, not to be co-equal rulers with man in the Church.

1 Corinthians 14:34 "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."

Christian feminists have used numerous tactics to discount this Scripture. There is the camp that says, "But this is only one verse in the Bible, and written by a chauvinistic man". We've already refuted this, for all Scripture is God inspired. If the Gospel of Christ was offered in only "one verse", would you discount it? No, because Scripture is Scripture. Other feminists have attacked this verse at its root, in the original languages. The Greek word for ***speak*** is LALEO, which the feminists say means "to make an unintelligible noise". Based on this mistranslation they formulated the theory that in the early Church women sat on one side of the Church, men on the other. When the women did not understand what was being taught they leaned across the aisle and whispered questions to their husbands (hence, unintelligible noise). This is a neat response to the verse IF LALEO means "unintelligible noise". However, it ***does not mean this***.

1 Corinthians 14:19 "Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue."

In the same context just prior to this, Paul uses LALEO in reference to his own preaching. He says ***in the church I had rather speak (LALEO) five words with my understanding***. Obviously this is a reference to ***intelligible speech***, not babble. If LALEO is used here to refer to intelligent and clear speaking, it is

certain that it is used in the same way by the same writer just a few verses later.

As to the charge that Paul was a chauvinist woman hater, nothing could be farther from the truth. Paul was a ardent supporter of women in the Church, as long as they followed God's design in their lives:

Romans 16:1-5 "I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also. Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ."

Paul went so far as to name Phebe as a deacon (DIAKONOS = *servant*) in her Church, and to commend Priscilla and Aquila who maintained a Church in their own house. It is true that in the ancient world the custom was to regard women as inferior to men, less than citizens. Paul was not of this opinion: he revered women, just as did our Lord, and promoted their ministries *within their proper design* in the local Church. God designed women to obey the leadership of their men, regardless as to what society might teach. Paul's teachings were not based on chauvinism, but on God's order and design. To correct any further error on this point, let me quickly point out that Phebe was not *an ordained* deacon or minister in the Body of Christ. When Paul gave the qualifications of minister and deacon to Timothy:

1 Timothy 3:1-2, 12 "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well."

These positions of *leadership* were clearly offered only *to men*, not to women.

Again, God's design and order must be maintained in the Body regardless as to the ways of the world. An old preacher I know said, "When a woman can become the husband of one wife, she can become a ordained deacon or minister". This statement wouldn't wash today, for in our depraved world a woman *can* become the homosexual husband of one wife. Again, this is contrary to God's plan and design, an abomination to Him. But is it any less an abomination than women who refuse to follow God's design in marriage? Is it any less an abomination than the woman who, contrary to God's Word, seeks the pulpit in the local Church? Both homosexuality and women in authority over men are from the same root, the root of disobedience to God's design. Both are equally unacceptable to God.

1 Corinthians 14:36 "What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?"

The word which Paul gave Corinth applies to us today. It was not a command given just to the Corinthians, but to all Christian families and Churches everywhere. In all that God does He has a specific plan, a plan that He alone controls and understands. When God created woman He made her to be a helper to man, and placed in her emotional makeup the qualities necessary to help her accomplish this goal. Man was given the role of leader and protector, woman the role of follower and helper. When men and women adhere to these rules their lives run smoother. When men and women switch roles, or refute God's creation order for them, then trouble starts.

Romans 1:26-28 "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;"

When the man substitutes his God given design for the design of the world, he in essence loses his manhood. When his manhood goes a vacuum is left in his soul,

and something must rush in to fill this vacuum. As man moves farther and farther away from God's design, he moves closer and closer to aberrant lifestyles like homosexuality. The same is true for the woman. As she moves out of her God given role she loses her femininity, moving deeper into false masculinity or lesbian behavior. Let us not lose sight of our femininity or our masculinity. Live in the role that God equipped you for. Women are not less than men when they walk in subjection to their husbands, but are a reflection of the beauty of ISHA in the Garden. By obeying God's design woman builds up the Church of God, strengthens her family, and helps her husband maintain his role within God's economy.

What duties can the woman serve within the Church? She can aid in all extra-curricular ministries, bus ministries, tape ministries, sound and audio ministries, tract distribution, and door to door visitation and witnessing. She can volunteer to keep the chapel clean. She can tend to the children, nurturing them and leading them to Christ. She can teach the children and women's classes, visit the sick and elderly, and care for those who are disabled. Women are *vitaly needed* in the Church today, not as preachers and deacons, but as helpers to the whole Body. Let us each live our lives according to God's plan and purpose, fulfilling His will in our lives. Let the world stay outside of the Church and outside of our families: God's way is best!

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Systematic Theology

STUDY THIRTEEN

God's Design Of The Family

The Christian Man

Divine Design

In our previous study we discovered that both Adam (ISH) and Eve (ISHA) were created in the image of God, and both were given dominion over all creation. Though both were equally given this dominion, God designed ISH to be the head of the family, and the ultimate Federal Head of creation. This was shown through numerous Scriptures, as well as the *order of Creation*. Man was first created, then Eve to be his assistant. Other signs in Genesis point to the truth that ISH was designed to be the head of the family unit.

Genesis 3:6-7 "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."

When ISHA took and ate the forbidden fruit, neither she nor man fell into sin. However *immediately* after ISH ate of the fruit the Scripture says *And the eyes of them both were opened*. Though the Father gave the command not to eat of this

fruit to both man and woman, man was ultimately responsible for keeping this covenant as God regarded him to be the federal head of creation. Paul referred to this later in the New Testament epistles when he stated:

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

The fall did ***not*** come by ISHA, but by Adam's transgression (***in Adam all die***). Since the transgression came by Adam, salvation from sin would also have to come from ***the Man Jesus Christ***. The federal head of creation, Adam, caused the mess, and an ***exact substitute*** for the start of this whole mess would have to atone for it (***in Christ shall all be made alive***). As we mentioned in the last study, God could have incarnated Christ as a woman, but it would have been ineffectual. Woman could not pay the price for the fall, for woman did ***not cause*** the fall. She was not federal head, and was not responsible; Adam was.

1 Timothy 2:12-14 "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."

The woman was deceived by Satan, tricked into partaking of the fruit. But Adam was ***not deceived***, and knew full well the consequences of his actions. He knew that his action ***alone*** would cause the fall of mankind yet pursued the action anyway, whereas the woman though her action would only be an isolated act of disobedience. Paul ties the fall of Adam and mankind to his admonition of ***I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man***. This seems to be quite a doctrinal stretch until you analyze what happened during the fall of man. Look at our Genesis passage again:

Genesis 3:6-7 "... 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..."

Adam did not just walk up on ISHA and Satan while they were having their discussion on partaking of the fruit. Adam *was with ISHA* all the time, watching the exchange as it progressed. Rather than fulfill the role that God designed him for, the role of leadership, Adam *stood and watched* and then followed the lead of the woman in disobedience. Eve stepped outside of her Divine design and partook of the fruit and, acting as the leader, gave that fruit to man. Adam stepped outside of his Divine design and, rather than reject the fruit, became a follower and accepted the tainted gift. It was at this moment that creation fell to sin.

It was for this reason Paul aptly ties the admonition to forbid a woman to usurp authority in the Body of Christ to the fall of man. Whenever we depart from the Divine design in our lives we invite disaster. When Adam and Eve departed from the Divine design mankind fell to sin. When the Church ignores Divine design to accommodate society, to maintain a "politically correct" status quo, it invites disaster. For this reason women are commanded to serve God within their own designed roles, and men are commanded to serve within their designs.

I say this now to the shame of Christian men everywhere: Too often in our Churches today women have been *forced* into positions of leadership, contrary to their Divine design, because men will *not serve as they are called*. Men have allowed society to emasculate them, and have bowed to the feminist demands to the detriment of both Church and family. Many Churches now have female Pastors, totally contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture, totally outside of their design. It seems harmless enough, certainly, but many of these denominations now tolerate homosexual liaisons as righteous in God's eyes. As our Lord warned, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump". When we say, "God, I refuse to believe this part of your Word because it's just not fair", then where do we stop? When we ignore the numerous Scriptures that clearly teach the Divine design in the genders, how can we justify any part of the Scripture? When women are placed in leadership roles in the Body because we men are just too lazy to commit, we harm the woman, we harm ourselves, and endanger the well being of the Body.

The Christian Man and the Family

How should the Godly man behave himself? There are a number of self help books on the market today that all talk about raising the family, yet each gives information that conflicts with the other. Men have increasingly become targets in our world today, on television and in the movies, as buffoons that can barely tie their shoes without the competent leadership of a woman. In fact, society has made it almost criminal to be a man. In a recent Promise Keepers conference (and I am not a Promise Keeper, nor do I endorse the movement) there were repeated interviews on television emasculating the men present because women were not invited to the conference. It's odd that men are never invited to women's conferences (nor baby showers) and feel no threat from the liberal media, but if men have a men's conference without women "it's a conspiracy". At a recent Southern Baptist Convention the attendees adopted a measure that recognized the Biblical roles of man and woman in the family and Church. Shortly afterward I had a United Methodist brother tell me this joke:

"I asked a Southern Baptist man how his wife took the announcement that men are now supposed to be leaders in the family and at Church. He told me, 'She took it fine. After I told her, I didn't see her for a while. But after the third day the swelling in my eyes went down and now we're doing fine' "

Not much of a joke, but it's what's going around Christian circles. In Christian newsletters and e-mail lists there are always jokes emasculating men. I recently wrote and asked the sender of one of these little funnies if she knew any good jokes about African Americans or women. Odd, I never got a reply.

In the middle of all the idiocy that the world has injected into the Church, how is a Christian man to know how he should behave? The answer is simple: What saith the Scripture?

Proverbs 23:26 "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways."

Matthew 4:10 "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."

Whether within his family, in the Church, or in his secular job, the man is to set an example of Godliness and adherence to God's Word. If each Christian man made a commitment to serve God to his utmost capability, God would glorify him and bless these efforts.

Christian men must be examples *to their families*. If he sets a perverted example or refuses to lead within the family unit, this action, like a disease, spreads to all the family members. If you have bad habits, if you curse, if you are a slob, your family will follow that example of leadership whether you want them to or not. The children of alcoholics are often alcoholics themselves. The children of child abuse will usually abuse their own children. A foolish and unthinking commander often puts his troops in harm's way by poor action or pitiful inaction.

As the leader of the family the father is best able to influence his children toward Godliness. If he sets an example of honesty and diligence the children will seek to emulate him. If he studies his Bible daily, the wife will surely follow.

1 Corinthians 7:2 "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband."

The Christian man is to devote himself to his wife faithfully and fully. He must *never* forsake his wife in lieu of another woman, nor allow pornographic materials in his house. No, even the "Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Edition" is forbidden. It belittles your wife when she sees you looking at other women, fantasizing about other women. We have no excuse for actual or *mental* unfaithfulness, not if we plan to walk as Christian men.

1 Corinthians 7:3 "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and

likewise also the wife unto the husband."

The husband is to treat his wife with the ***utmost respect*** in private and in public. I cannot count the number of times I have heard a Christian man belittle his wife in public, joke about her cooking, make snide remarks about how she tends her household. Careless remarks are barbs that stick in the wall of the marriage, that will one day come back to haunt you. The husband is to be better tempered than a child, careful to hold his tongue and think, never to fly off the handle at his wife. If you haven't grown up, then don't take a wife! If you're married, grow up!

1 Corinthians 7:4-5 "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."

The Christian man will love his wife both emotionally and ***physically***. Your wife needs your touch, your love. Sex should never be used as a hammer or a weapon in the marriage. I have heard of women "withholding" themselves from their husbands as a punishment, or men doing the same to their wives. This is not in God's will, nor is it righteous. Sexual activity in the marriage is God's Gift to the marriage:

Hebrews 13:4 "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."

and ***absolutely not*** a weapon to be used for reward or punishment. This holds true of ***all things*** in the marriage. Men allow their marriages to dissolve into a battle of wits with their wives out of pride, out of a desire to win the argument at all costs. The Bible commands us:

Colossians 3:19 "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."

The Christian man is to have a strict control over his temper, particularly as it

relates to the wife. If he is wronged by the wife then *explain the wrong* to her. Perhaps her action was a lapse in judgment with no harm intended. But if the wife errs (and we all make mistakes) and you chew her out, she *will respond* by attacking back. This will turn into a cycle of accusations and railing flying back in forth, an argument that will cause scarring in the marriage. Such altercations are avoidable if the Christian man will hold his temper *and think*. We should also *limit the duration* of our anger if we do fall into anger. The Bible offers a simple solution:

Ephesians 4:26-27 "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. "

In the Jewish custom the setting sun signaled the *start of a new day*. If you, either man or woman, must get angry at your spouse, *grow up and get over it* before you go to bed that night. In looking back over the past 25 years of my marriage there are a few times I've been angered by my dear wife. In all instances the anger could be worked out, and compromise reached within an hour or so. Highly immature people allow their anger to control them to drag them along like an undertow. The mature person *controls* his anger, *directs* the emotion to achieve a Godly result rather than destroy the relationship.

Let me put it another way: When you are angered, and allow that anger to remain into the next day, you do two things. First you cause scarring in the marital relationship. Second, you are engaging in *active sin*. Yes, sin! Remember this - You do not have to win the argument, but you, as the husband, *do have to initiate* the reconciliation. Vengeance is totally in the providence of God. If the wife is in open rebellion and will not repent, the Father will discipline. If the man makes no move toward reconciliation the Father will discipline. Be very careful how you use your anger, lest you fall into the chastening of God!

Colossians 3:21 "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged."

When children disobey the parents are well within their calling by God to

discipline them. If a father loves his children he can do no less than to punish disobedience. Yet punishment must be exercised with the goal of bettering the child, not just to gain the satisfaction of vengeance. Punishment must *never* be excessively cruel. If the father chastens his children within the boundaries of Godliness and love the children will see it and in turn love him for his care. These same children will grow up to emulate their own fathers, and become a legacy of good discipline throughout the generations. But if a father *abuses* his children, beating them unmercifully for real or imagined acts of disobedience, the child will carry this same behavior to his or her future families. You are the example: discipline wisely and carefully, for what you do today will effect your grandchildren tomorrow.

1 Timothy 5:7-8 "And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless. But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

As women have been given greater and greater freedom in our society (and this is good), more and more have moved into the workplace. Again, this is not a bad thing, especially in our society. Even so, do not lose sight of the fact that the *man is responsible* for providing for the needs of his family, *not the woman*. This is an injunction from God that has been in place since the Adamic curse:

Genesis 3:16-19 "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

When ISH and ISHA caused the fall, God gave both a unique punishment. To

woman He caused sorrow in childbearing (*I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children*). Women, from the time of Adam and through today, *suffer when giving birth*. To all those who think the curse of God was removed after the Cross let me ask you, who do you know that has had a happy, comfortable delivery? Every woman I know has suffered in the delivery room, even with the advances of medical science. This is a constant, and this curse will stay in effect until we are united with Jesus in Heaven.

Men, on the other hand, were given the curse of toil (*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*). As a woman must labor to give birth, the man must labor to provide for his family. This is our part in the curse. Granted there are a few who, because of the toil of their parents, are rich and without need of toil. This is artificial, and such people are "labor free" because others before them sacrificed so much. But for the majority of us, toil is our curse.

Whether the wife works or not, according to Paul *the man is responsible* for providing for his wife and children or he is *is worse than an infidel*. I have heard stories of ministers who have put their wives to work so they could go to Seminary and train for the ministry. How can you reconcile such an action to Godly behaviour? It is *your responsibility* to provide for your family, not your wife's, just as it is her responsibility to suffer the pains of childbearing. When the minister provides such a poor example to his flock he perpetuates a world view rather than God's view to his assembly. These things must not be!

Romans 13:1-5 "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."

The man must be an example in following the laws of his government. The 1998-1999 Clinton presidential scandal is a good example of poor male behavior and it's effect on others. William Jefferson Clinton, President of the United States, engaged in immoral and illegal sexual activities with a White House intern. Once these activities were discovered Clinton, rather than repent, made a conscious decision to *lie under oath* while being interviewed by a Federal Grand Jury. When the lie was discovered Clinton *continued to lie*, refusing to repent in order to hold on to the Presidency. After the House of Representatives voted to impeach the President the Senate, contrary to all good sense, voted to acquit the President on all charges. What effect did Clinton bring on the nation?

First, the American people with an overwhelming majority acknowledged that the President lied, but the same majority decided to *overlook the matter*. The Senate also understood that the President lied, but decided to *overlook the matter*. One man's action caused a snowball effect in our country, coarsened it's moral fabric, and left a legacy of evil that we will one day look back on in shame.

The man *sets the standard* for all things in the family, whether it be the immediate family unit or the American family. Without proper government we would cease from living in an orderly society. A land without government is an anarchy where only the strongest survive. A land without government has no laws to *suppress the sin nature* of man, no laws to maintain orderly human behavior.

When the man avoids paying his lawful taxes he in effect steals from God, for God is the source of all governments in power. When you become a Christian you are not released from governmental law; on the contrary, you are expected to be *more subject* to the law than your godless counterparts. Our government gives us the freedom to worship the Lord as we please. We should cherish our government, love it for it's freedoms, and protect it from all those who would see it destroyed. Shame on Clinton, and on every man who selfishly jeopardizes his

government for his own selfish gain!

Matthew 22:36-39 "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. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

As Christian men our first and greatest commandment is to Love our God, to serve Him, to follow His commandments. The second commandment we must follow is to love our neighbors, love those in our periphery. What is love?

In our society we often confuse God's ideal of love with lust, or emotional excess. This is not AGAPE, God's ideal of love. AGAPE is based on ***doing the highest good toward the object of our love***. If you have AGAPE for someone who is homeless you will not only feed them, but you will try to help them better themselves by leading them to a job or a shelter.

The husband and father must always show AGAPE toward his wife and children. Reward and praise them for following righteousness, gently correct when they move outside of the boundaries of Godliness. Because AGAPE is not based on emotion, but on doing the ***highest good***, it is a particularly hard love to commit to. It is not easy to punish your child when he or she falls into disobedience, nor is it easy to correct the love of your life. Yet we are commanded by God to exercise AGAPE toward our family, our friends, and the people we meet, always following the direction of the written Word of God.

Proverbs 4:1 "Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding."

The Christian man must instruct his children in the ways of the Lord. He must teach his children without partiality, knowing that the seed he plants will flower in the life of the child as he grows. Teach only the truths of the Scripture; It is easier to plant the seed of truth now than to weed out false doctrine later. Be careful how you teach your children, for the things you show them will stay with

them all their lives.

Proverbs 4:3-4, 10-13 "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. ... Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many. I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble. Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life."

The Scripture emphasizes, over and over again, the importance of the father teaching his children. In many instances and to our shame, the education of the children is often left to the mother and the schools. To all those who rely on the schools to do their job let me warn you: When I was young the schools taught me how to read, write, and gave me mathematic skills. These same schools taught me how to shoplift, how to drink, how to have promiscuous relationships, how to drug my body. If the father neglects the training of his children they may receive an education far from God's standard. If the father gives the children a poor role model, these same children will perpetuate this poor behavior on their own children. Break the cycle of immorality and godlessness. Get involved with your children!

The Christian Man and the Church

The Church, in God's economy, is not run as a democracy nor as an anarchy. The New Testament Church was designed to be managed by earthly God called leaders, ***all men***, holding the office of Bishop or Elder.

Acts 20:16-17 "For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church."

Acts 20:28 "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

Philippians 1:1 "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons"

James 5:14 "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord"

The three titles for leadership in the Church, ***Elder***, ***Overseer*** and ***Bishop***, are used interchangeably in the Scripture. When the term ***Elder*** is used it emphasizes the dignity of the office of the servant leader. You can only be called to the position of leader when you have matured to a certain point in Christ, hence ***Elder***. The title ***Bishop*** is used when the function of leadership is being emphasized. The title ***Overseer*** is used when the servant leader's loving concern for the whole flock is being emphasized.

As the Church of Christ has both a spiritual as well as a physical presence, it must have a physical as well as a spiritual leader. Our spiritual leader is, of course, Jesus Christ. The Bishop acts as the physical leader of the local Church on earth. The Bishop holds general charge over the local Church in all matters. In our Churches today we appoint committees, task forces, and other "teams" who make recommendations to the Bishop and the local Church. It must be kept in mind, though, that the Bishop Pastor has final control over the action that the Church will take, as he exists to watch over our souls.

Hebrews 13:17 "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

We are commanded to ***obey them that have the rule over you, and submit ourselves***. I heard a Christian man once say, "Ain't nobody gonna tell me what to do but Jesus". This is a false and sinful attitude to have. God assigned your Pastor

to your local Church. While he is fulfilling this assignment you are commanded to obey him, for he must give an account of his actions to God. If you cannot obey the Pastor, move to another local Church. Too many Churches have had severe divisions in them because disobedient believers, usually men, became thorns in the Pastor's side. You do not have the right, under God's theocracy, to sow the seeds of discontent in your Church.

1 Timothy 3: 1-7 "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

The Bishop of the local Church is a man (***the husband of one wife***), ***not a woman***. We have already had this discussion in full detail in study twelve, so this statement should not surprise you. God called men, from the Garden and through today, to fulfill the leadership positions in home, society, and Church. Women were not designed for this role, and stand in opposition to God's calling if they attempt to do so. The other qualifications of the Bishop are fully explained in our verses above. He should be a level headed, mature Christian man (***Not a novice***) who has shown, in his life, the calling to leadership (***One that ruleth well his own house***). He should have a good reputation of honesty and integrity (***he must have a good report of them which are without***) in all his business dealings. He should be a good example to his flock, not a hindrance to their growth.

1 Timothy 3:10-13 "And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have

used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

The Greek for Deacon is DIAKONOS, which literally means "servant, attendant, helper". The Deacons are a group of men (*the husbands of one wife*) in the local Church that are ordained to help the Bishop fulfill his duties to the flock. Deacons are *not co-rulers* with the Pastor, but are his right hand men. Too many Churches have had divisions started because the Deacons sought to over rule the direction of the Bishop. Just as with the Bishop, Deacons should have shown a clear outward sign of their calling to leadership (*ruling their children and their own houses well*). They should have good moral reputations, and be known as honest business men. They should be examples to the Church, not anchors around the Pastor's neck.

The offices of the Bishop and Deacon work hand in hand in the local Church to help the Body of Christ grow. The Deacons do not *demand* that the Pastor follow their advise; they merely advise, and trust that the Pastor will do God's best for the flock. Both offices are vitally necessary for the leadership of the Church, and neither should abandon or weigh down the other.

Conclusion

Many of the woes that the family and the Church face today are a direct result of Christian men who refuse to behave as God has decreed. Men who have allowed pettiness and a desire for power to corrupt their actions, causing a negative impact on these God given institutions. It is time that we, as Christian men, started to live the calling that God has given us. We can only do this when we begin to hold our Bibles in the same regard that we hold our fishing poles, our golf clubs, or our football games. Inactivity among the male population of the Church has sent the wrong signals to society and to our spouses. God give us the strength of will to turn this tide by repenting. It is significant that only once in Scripture a woman was ordained by God to rule men. This is found in the case of Deborah, a Judge of Israel. Just prior to her commission the Bible tells us:

Judges 4:1-4 "And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, when Ehud was dead. And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel. And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time."

Your calling, Christian men, is to lead with all dignity and godliness as God has called you. You do not need an organization like the Promise Keepers to do this. You only need heed and apply the Word of God to your hearts.

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Systematic Theology

STUDY FOURTEEN, Part One

Dispensational Theology

Mankind From Birth To Infinity

"One must point out that Christianity is a statement which, if false, is of no importance; But if it is true, of infinite importance.." (C.S. Lewis)

The Seven Dispensations Of Time

Our Creator has dealt with mankind in periods of time or *dispensations*, each of these dispensations being fully illustrated in the Scripture. We want to take a look at these dispensations as they relate to man, because a proper understanding of Dispensational Theology is *imperative* to rightly dividing the Word of Truth, the Scripture.

Let me emphasize, I interpret dispensations as *periods of time in human history dispensed by God*. I do not consider isolated events, like the Ascension of Christ, to be a dispensation. The Ascension of Christ occurred just prior to the beginning of the Church Age in the Age of Israel (two different dispensations). As such, the ascension was *part of* the Age of Israel, but not a dispensation in itself.

Having laid the groundwork, let's look at these dispensations.

Dispensation Of Innocence

Genesis 1:31 "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."

In the five days preceding the creation of man God created and, after each instance, declared that what He had made was "good". There was no evil or confusion in the world, nothing to mar the beauty of creation. But God did not declare creation ***very good*** until after mankind was created. Why is that?

First, creation was ***not complete*** in God's plan until man was created. The Bible teaches that God is omniscient, so He knew when He put man in the Garden that Adam would fall. He knew this, and from eternity past elected the Son to one day bear the brunt of our sins. You might ask, "If God knew that we would fall, why even create us in the first place?". The only answer to this question is ***because He wanted to*** create us, because we were in His eternal plans concerning creation. Until man was made creation was only "good", but after our creation it was "***very good***".

Man was God's ***signature*** on the work of creation, the final flourish to let all who viewed it know who it's Author was. We were created in the image of God:

Genesis 1:27 "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

We are His living signatures, the part of creation made to be the expression of God on the earth. The Hebrew word for ***image*** is TSELEM, which means "something created as if from a mold, a reproduction that bears a likeness to the original". Adam was created sinless, sanctified, righteous in God's eyes. He reflected the holiness of God. Just as God has free-will, Adam was given a will totally free of restraints. Of course, man's will was under the control of his own appetites (like hunger and sleep) whereas God's will was unrestrained by such limits. Yet man's will had, of yet, come to the state where it was enslaved to any

outside sources (like sin).

God took Adam and placed him in the middle of a Garden full of luscious fruit, an infinite variety of things to eat and do. Man should have been happy with this, but the one thing he was restricted from taking (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil), this he wanted.

Genesis 2: 8-17 "And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 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."

The pact made between God and man in the Garden is known as the ***Edenic Covenant***. Man was given authority and use over all creation save one tree; he was forbidden to eat of the tree of knowledge of Good and Evil. One small exception should not have caused any problems. Man was given a glorious endowment, absolute freedom, a perfect wife, and simple guidelines for obedience. It should have been easy.

1 Corinthians 15:22 "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Since God made the Edenic Covenant with Adam, Adam was the *Federal head* of creation. When this Federal head disobeyed and partook of the one forbidden fruit, not only he, but the entire creation plunged into the abyss of sin. Man's offspring followed in the same spiritual death, a will to disobey rather than to obey God. Man came into a state of being that John Calvin called *total depravity*. What do we mean by total depravity?

When we talk about total depravity, we do not mean *absolute* depravity. Total depravity means that everything man does prior to salvation is inherently sinful, whereas absolute depravity means that everything man does is externally evil.

Most men never reach a state of absolute depravity, though all unsaved men dwell in total depravity. Why did mankind as a whole enter a state of total depravity? When Adam fell, he introduced sin like a disease into the human race. This disease so permeates mankind that the Scripture states:

Psalms 14:3 "They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

Psalms 53:3 "Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

Romans 3:12 "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

Mankind has two possible responses outside of God: Either he does outwardly evil, breaking the laws of God and of man, or he inwardly does evil while outwardly appearing to be righteous and moral. Adam had a conscience that led him to act morally, and convicted him after he sinned, making him hide from God (Genesis 3.8). But the conscience of man can be *hardened by sin* until it reaches a point of absolute depravity. This is what triggered the Lord to bring a catastrophic flood on the whole earth in the days of Noah.

Noahic Dispensation

Genesis 9:1-3 "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things."

When Noah came out of the Ark, the commission that God gave to him was nearly parallel to that which was given to Adam. Man was still given authority over creation, but now that authority was ***tempered by the sin*** that man introduced into creation. Whereas before man exercised dominion and ate of the Garden, now man exercises dominion and eats of both vegetables and animals.

Sin always brings a harsh tempering to whatever it touches. Adam ruled to animals in peace and tranquility before the fall, but Noah established rule by brute strength and fear. Adam ruled the animals and protected them from death, whereas Noah ruled the animals in order to feed from among them. Adam was to reproduce so that his progeny would rule the world in peace, whereas Noah reproduced so his progeny could rule the earth by force.

Both the Adamic and Noahic covenants were righteous, for they were enacted by a righteous God, but one was best and the other was second best. God often offers us the best, yet we reject it because of sin and have to settle for the second best. This is true in your life, it is true in mine. Had man accepted and clung to God's best (the Garden of Eden) we would have all prospered, yet we rejected the best for the second best (Noah).

Did the Noahic flood bring any lasting change on mankind? Well, man, through a hardened conscience, turned farther and farther away from God into absolute depravity. The Noahic flood was a chance to purge this depravity from humanity, to re-direct man's focus back to God. Yet later at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11) God had to confuse man's language because, once more, man moved into

absolute depravity, seeking to usurp God. The Noahic flood was a surgical procedure by God to eradicate depravity like a cancer from among His creation, but He knew that this was, at best, a temporary solution. Sin cannot be controlled from the outside, but must be controlled from within the heart. Man *must be willing* to change for the change to be successful.

Abrahamic Dispensation

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

In order to effect permanent change in mankind God had to plant a seed in a people. This was not something that God just one day "discovered" to be true, but He knew it from the start. He chose a people to be stewards of His Word, a people from which one day He would incarnate His Son.

God called this people according to His provisions of Grace, not according to their talents or predisposition to righteousness. It is evident that Abram knew God, and was faithfully serving Him as best he knew how. Yet Abram shows no particular holiness that sets him out above his peers. Abram did have a remarkable *degree of faith*, for when God told him to get up and leave his home place, Abram did so without hesitation. Abram *believed*..

Genesis 22:16-18 "And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the

nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

Genesis 15:8-18 "And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years. And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:"

In Genesis 12.1-3 God called Abram and "pre-promised" the Abrahamic Covenant to come. Abram only had to get up and leave his homeland in order to inherit this blessing. Abram's response to the call conditioned when the blessings would start, yet he only had to give a *positive response* in order to be blessed.

The Abrahamic Covenant gave Abram personal, national, and spiritual blessings:

1. In Genesis 12.2 God promised Abram great *personal* blessings, blessings that were his alone. God promised *I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing*. God fulfilled this blessing literally, for among the three great religious movements of history (Judaism, Christianity, Islam), all three revere Abram as the father of that faith.
2. In Genesis 12.1 God promises *national* blessings to Abram. God promised

unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation.

God gave Abram's seed, Israel, possession of a promised land (Genesis 15.18-21). This promised land is ***two and a half the times*** the size of Ireland and Britain combined, over 300,000 square miles in diameter!

3. In Genesis 12.3 God promises Abram ***in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed***. Abram would bring blessing on ***all nations*** of the earth, whether Jew or Gentile. How could this be?

Through Abram there were two children born, one child of Promise, the other of the Flesh.

Romans 9:7-11 "Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (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;)"

Ishmael was the child born of the flesh, born because of Sarah's faithlessness, but Isaac was born from Sarah, the child of Promise. The child of promise was the line that God desired, a line that would one day be known as Israel, the promised nation, but the child Ishmael would also be a great nation, the Arab nations.

Genesis 21: 13-19 "And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of

heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink."

The entire world, whether Jew or Gentile, were blessed through the Abrahamic Covenant. The Jew and Arab were blessed with greatness as direct descendants of Abram. The remaining Gentile nations were blessed, for Jesus Christ came out of Israel to bless all who believe with eternal life. God truly honored His word when He promised, *And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.*

The Abrahamic Covenant was a conditional covenant in the sense that Abram had to obey the calling of God, but once granted was truly *unconditional*. In the Genesis 15:8-13 passage we see that God had Abram cut several animals in half, with the exception of the turtle dove and the pigeon. In the Old Testament when two people wanted to make a covenant with each other, they cut the animal in half and *both* walked between the two halves. This was to signify that both parties swore to the oath that they would not break the covenant until *death parted them*. Yet in the Abrahamic Covenant we see:

Genesis 15:17 "And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces."

.. only God walked between the two halves of the animals. When God walked between the two halves He never indicated that He expected Abram to do the same. God *alone promised*. The entire fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant was on God alone, not on Abram.

Jeremiah 31:35-37 "Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name:

If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.

The promises of the Abrahamic Covenant are eternal, for they are totally established by God, irrevocable and without change. Those promises *will be fulfilled in their entirety*, regardless as to the obedience or disobedience of Israel. Israel's spiritual state conditions the time of the covenant's fulfillment, but does not ever negate the covenant which God, in Grace, gave to Abram.

Mosaic Dispensation

The moral indicator, the *conscience*, that God instilled in man was not sufficient to guide man in the way of God. During Adam's time the conscience was attended, but as man moved deeper and deeper into sin that same conscience could be hardened and denied. The conscience could lead man to God if it was unscarred by repeated acts of sin, but did not always lead to the True God. This was not a surprise to God, nor was the Law given to correct some inherent flaw in God's plans. God waited until the time was right, until man was in a position to want to know more about the True God, and at that moment gave the Law of God to mankind through Moses.

The *ten commandments* were the foundation of the Mosaic Covenant and Law:

Exodus 24:12 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them."

Exodus 20: 1-17 "And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto

thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's."

These commandments were given to the nation Israel to guard, protect, and **obey**. The commandments were based on two absolute concepts of behavior. First, the commandments listed the duties of *man to the True God*. Specifically, we were to:

- Have no other God, nor swear fealty to any other God than the One True YHWH.
- Make no graven images of God to bow down to them. Graven images are statues, idols, either of man made or natural substances.
- To avoid taking God's name in vain. This does not mean just to use His name frivolously in conversation, but also to swear an oath by His name then refuse to abide by that oath.

Second, the commandments listed the duties of *man to man*. Specifically we were to:

- Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. In other words, take one day out of seven *off from work* in obedience to God.
- Honor our parents.
- Refuse to murder our fellow man.
- Refuse to commit adultery, illicit sex outside of marriage.
- Refuse to steal from one another.
- Refuse to lie to one another, speak only the truth.
- Never covet another man's possessions.

Jesus recognized the two-fold focus of the Law when He said:

Matthew 22:36-40 "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. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

The ten commandments all boil down to one point: *love*. Love God, love your neighbor. Treat both God and your neighbor the way you would want to be treated. The righteousness of God is only reflected from our lives when we exercise love both upward and outward, both Godward and manward.

Though the Law was given to Israel, it was issued to all mankind. Israel became *stewards* of the Law, but all were to follow its tenets. God established several things when He gave the Law to Moses.

First, man was given a *definite guideline* by which he was to live his life. This took away our ability to say, "Well, I just never knew". This guideline not only covered the moral codes, but also enacted dietary and sacramental/ religious codes.

Second, the Law was so stringent that it soon became evident that *no one* could enter Heaven by following it. God's righteousness was so far above that which we, on our own, could attain that it became evident that a Saviour would have to come, or else we would be hopelessly lost.

Third, the Law established governmental codes that helped form the theocracy of Israel. Before the Law Israel was formed along lines of tribal authority, but after the Law Israel had a more cohesive governing body.

The Law, though long lived, was only temporary, only maintained until the coming of the Messiah. The Bible teaches us:

Galatians 3:23-25 "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."

Just as God waited until the right time to send us the Mosaic Law, He waited until just the right time to send us Jesus Christ. We had to see the need for the Law before we could receive it, and had to see our failures highlighted by the Law until we could receive Christ. Thank God for the Law, and thank Him that we who believe are no longer under it's rigid code but now under the salvation that only comes by faith in Christ Jesus.

Dispensation of Grace

John 6:29-35 "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the

true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

John 6:47-50 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die."

With the coming of Jesus a new era in man's history was revealed. The satisfaction of Christ (the fact that God was satisfied with the atonement He made for our sins) made God's Grace available to all mankind. Our relationship with God (vertical relationship) and with man (horizontal relationship) changed. These changes were *radical*, unprecedented in human history:

- In our vertical relationship (Godward), we were given *one commandment* to replace the many requirements of the Mosaic Law: "Love the Lord Our God with all our heart and mind".
- In our horizontal relationships (manward) we were given a simple command: "Love your neighbor as you love yourself. Treat him or her as you would be treated".
- Since God loved us, we could come to understand that *we have worth*, that we must love our own selves. No person should hate or put themselves down .. lift yourself up by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- To he or she who believes, God now is able to look at each believer and accept them as His *adopted children*. God's attitude changed because of the satisfaction of Christ. Or perhaps better, we changed because of what Christ did for us. Since we are "blood washed" we are no longer viewed as sinners fit only for His vengeance, but children of the King fit *only for Grace*.

These horizontal and vertical relationships only change when each one of us accept Christ as Saviour. This change makes all the difference. Contrary to the

sentimental songs of Christmas, there will never be "peace on earth and goodwill" to all men until the work of Christ is accepted by faith.

I had a discussion with a young Christian the other day who told me that once you're saved, nothing else really matters. Not Biblical truth - nothing. This is a foolish and shallow position to take, but one echoed by many people who write me. Several have written me to say "What does all this matter, and why devote a site to Bible materials. If we're all saved, then what else matters?". Yet salvation is more than just a "saved then forget it" proposition. At the moment of salvation the new Christian *instantly* receives multiple blessings from God. Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer called these real but non experiential blessings "The Benefits of Grace". These benefits are:

- We enter the Eternal Plan of God
 - We are Foreknown: Acts 2.23; Romans 8.29; 1 Peter 1.2
 - We are Elected: Romans 8.33; Colossians 3.12; 1 Thessalonians 1.4; Titus 1.1; 1 Peter 1.2
 - We are Predestinated: Romans 8.29-30; Ephesians 1.5, 11
 - We are Chosen: Matthew 22.14; 1 Peter 2.4
 - We are Called: 1 Thessalonians 5.24
- The believer is reconciled:
 - By God: 2 Corinthians 5.18-19; Colossians 1.20
 - To God: Romans 5.10; 2 Corinthians 5.20; Ephesians 2.14-17
- The believer is Redeemed: Romans 3.24; Colossians 1.14; 1 Peter 1.18
- The penalty of sin is removed: John 3.18; 5.24; Romans 8.1
- We are under Propitiation: Romans 3.24-26; 1 John 2.2
- All our personal sin is canceled in God's eyes: Romans 4.25; Ephesians 1.7; 1 Peter 2.24
- We are dead to our Old Sin Nature:
 - The believer is crucified with Christ: Romans 6.6; Galatians 2.20
 - The believer is dead with Christ: Romans 6.8; Colossians 3.3; 1 Peter 2.24
 - We are buried with Christ: Romans 6.4; Colossians 2.12

- We are raised with Christ: Romans 6.4; Colossians 3.1
- The believer is freed from the Mosaic Law:
 - We are dead to the Law: Romans 7.4
 - We are delivered from the Law: Romans 6.14; 7.6; 2 Corinthians 3.11; Galatians 3.25
- The believer is regenerated, Born of God: John 13.10; 1 Corinthians 6.11; Titus 3.5
 - We are "born again": John 3.7; 1 Peter 1.23
 - We are children of God: Galatians 3.26
 - We are sons of God: John 1.12; 2 Corinthians 6.18; 1 John 3.2
 - We are new creations in Christ: 2 Corinthians 5.17; Galatians 6.15; Ephesians 2.10
 - We are adopted as adult sons: Romans 8.15, 23; Ephesians 1.5
- God imputes or bestows righteousness on us: Ephesians 1.6; 1 Peter 2.5
 - We are made righteous in God's eyes: Romans 3.22; 1 Corinthians 1.30; 2 Corinthians 5.21; Phillipians 3.9
 - We are *positionally* Sanctified, that is, in God's eyes we are "set apart": 1 Corinthians 1.30; 6.11
 - We are *perfected* forever in His sight: Hebrews 10.14
 - We become qualified to enter Heaven: Colossians 1.12
- The believer is Justified: Romans 3.24; 5.1, 9; 8.30; 1 Corinthians 6.11; Titus 3.7
- We are forgiven *all* trespasses: Ephesians 1.7; 4.32; Colossians 1.14; 2.13; 3.13
- We are brought into Heavenly citizenship: Luke 10.20; Ephesians 2.13, 19; Phillipians 3.20
- The believer is delivered from the kingdom of Satan: Colossians 1.13; 2.15
- We are transferred into God's kingdom: Colossians 1.13
- The Christians is given a secure foundation: 1 Corinthians 3.11; 10.4; Ephesians 2.20
- We are a gift from God the Father to the Lord Jesus Christ: John 10.29; 17.2, 6, 9, 11-12, 24
- The believer is delivered from the power of the Old Sin Nature: Romans

- 2.29; Phillipians 3.3; Colossians 2.11
- We are appointed priests unto God:
 - This is a *holy* priesthood: 1 Peter 2.5
 - This is also a *royal* priesthood: 1 Peter 2.9; Revelation 1.6
 - We are under the care of God as an elect race: Titus 2.14; 1 Peter 2.9
 - We are given access to God: Romans 5.2; Ephesians 2.18; Hebrews 4.14, 16; 10.19-20
 - We become God's inheritance: Ephesians 1.18
 - We become beneficiaries of Heaven: Romans 8.17; Ephesians 1.14; Colossians 3.24; Hebrews 9.15; 1 Peter 1.4
 - We are placed within the *superior care* of God: Romans 5.9-10
 - We are objects of His love: Ephesians 2.4; 5.2
 - We are objects of His Grace: Ephesians 2.8-9; Romans 5.2; 1 Peter 1.5; John 17.18; Ephesians 4.7; Titus 2.12
 - We are given a new position: Ephesians 2.6
 - The believer is a partner with Christ in life: Colossians 3.4
 - The believer is a partner with Christ in service: 1 Corinthians 1.9
 - We become workers together with God: 1 Corinthians 3.9; 2 Corinthians 6.1
 - Each believer is a minister of the New Testament: 2 Corinthians 3.6
 - We are ambassadors for Christ: 2 Corinthians 5.20
 - We become living epistles: 2 Corinthians 3.3
 - We are ministers of God: 2 Corinthians 6.4
 - The believer is a recipient of Eternal Life: John 3.15; 10.28; 20.31; 1 John 5.11-12
 - We are members of the family and household of God: Galatians 6.10; Ephesians 2.19
 - We become the light in the Lord: Ephesians 5.8; 1 Thessalonians 5.4
 - We are united to the Trinity:
 - In God the Father: 1 Thessalonians 1.1; Ephesians 4.6
 - In God the Son: 1 Corinthians 12.13; John 15.5; Ephesians 2.21-22; 1 Peter 2.5; John 10.27-29; Ephesians 5.25-27; 1 Peter 2.9; 2 Corinthians 5.17

- In God the Holy Spirit: Romans 8.9, 16
- We are recipients of the ministries of the Spirit:
 - The believer is born of the Spirit: John 3.6
 - The believer is baptized with the Spirit: Acts 1.5; 1 Corinthians 12.13
 - The believer is indwelt by the Spirit: John 7.39; Romans 5.5, 8.9; 1 Corinthians 3.16; 6.19; Galatians 4.6; 1 John 3.24
 - The believer is sealed by the Spirit: 2 Corinthians 1.22; Ephesians 4.30
 - The believer is given Spiritual Gifts: 1 Corinthians 12.11, 27-31; 13.1-2
- We are guaranteed to receive Glorification: Romans 8.30
- We are completed in Christ: Colossians 2.10
- We become possessors of every spiritual blessing: Ephesians 1.3
- Unlike the spiritually dead, we are given a functioning human spirit: Romans 8.16; 1 Corinthians 2.12; 2 Corinthians 7.13; 1 Thessalonians 5.23
- Finally, all scarring is removed from the soul of the believer: Isaiah 43.25; 44.22

So salvation is not just a "one time and it's done" proposition, but a momentous work that literally changes the life of the new believer. If you accept Christ as Saviour and yet see no outward change in your life, then you have not received the benefits of salvation. And if you haven't received the benefits of salvation, then you are yet dead in your sins!

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Systematic Theology

STUDY FIFTEEN (Part 1)

Of Repentance and Water Baptism

Can Our Works Secure Our Salvation?

Repentance

There are two errors in the modern day evangelist's idea of Biblical Repentance. When we think of repentance we associate weeping or some other display of emotion accompanying Godly repentance. Yet this is a mis-conception. Emotional displays *may accompany* true Godly repentance unto salvation, but do not necessarily have to.

There are eight original language words used in our Bible, each rendered as the English word "repent":

1. NACHAM (Hebrew), meaning "to sigh, to breath strongly, to be sorry for".
2. SHUWB (Hebrew), meaning "to turn back or change one's mind".
3. NOCHAM (Hebrew), meaning "to regret".
4. NICHUM (Hebrew), meaning "to have compassion on, to feel pity for someone or something".
5. METANOEEO (Greek), meaning "to change one's mind for the better, to change one's attitude toward (sin)".
6. METAMELOMAI (Greek), meaning "to regret the consequences of an

action, but not the cause. Human sorry for poor behavior without intent to undo the wrong".

7. METANOIA (Greek), meaning "to change the attitude toward an action and it's cause. Godly sorrow".
8. AMETAMELETOS (Greek), meaning "a heart of disbelief, unwilling to repent".

There are only two words amongst all of these that characterize repentance unto salvation, the Hebrew SHUWB and the Greek METANOIA. Both words emphasize *changing one's mind* from one thing (the world) to another (Jesus Christ). Though the words are not divorced from emotion, they do not imply that emotion *must be exercised* in order for the action to be effective. People are different. Some people are predisposed to emotion (as I am), whereas others show very little outward emotion. The emotionally constrained believer is not less saved than the emotional believer; their repentance is just as effective as any. Godly saving repentance is not dependent on an outward display of emotion, though such a display may be entirely natural for that particular person.

The second error that the modern evangelist falls into is the belief that *believing* and *repentance* are one in the same. This is far from the truth. When you repent you turn from one situation to turn toward another. Belief in the Godly sense means that that which you turn to is Jesus Christ. You can repent your actions, change your lifestyle, and turn toward the wrong thing in belief. Many people repent their lifestyles and turn to Yoga, Buddha, New Age Philosophies, Spirit Worship, Wicca, Positive Thinking, or Charismatic Emotionalism. None of these (or any one of a thousand other belief systems) will bring a person into a Biblically Saved state. You must repent *and* believe to be saved, but is important that the second element (believe) be directed toward the right object of faith (Jesus). If not, repentance is ineffective.

When we preach the Gospel we should refrain from making the statement: "You must make Christ the Lord of Your Life". To tell a heathen that he must make Christ the Lord of his life is ludicrous. This man is totally unable to do this for himself. The only thing any person can do is, like a drowning man reaching for a

lifesaver, reach out and cling to Christ as Savior. *After* salvation we work on making Christ Lord of our lives. Before salvation all we can do is reach out in faith, accepting Christ as our only hope.

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

Psalms 51:5 "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."

Romans 3:10-18 "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 sepulcher; 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."

Another misleading call to faith is to "make a public profession of your faith". It is certain that each Christian should be willing to publicly confess that he has accepted Christ as Savior. Jesus said:

Luke 9:26 "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels."

Yet we should be careful when including works within the call to salvation. We are, of our own power, unable to do anything to effect our salvation. Our works prior to salvation are all utterly worthless in God's sight. When we add the work of public profession to the call to salvation we give the impression that our works bring us to salvation. Nothing is farther from the truth. Salvation is a free gift from God, something accepted by *faith alone*.

The root of salvation is our inward faith. If there is a true inward faith to salvation, then there will be a *change in the nature* of the new believer. A new believer does not need to confess his salvation before other people in order to be saved, but he should be willing to do so *after salvation*. Ministers (myself included) often feel that their message was ineffective if people do not come forward or otherwise show some outward sign of change. It makes us feel that we were effective when we have the penitent sinner rise and walk the aisle to the altar. Yet, truth be told, this walk is *not* a necessary part of salvation. If a person accepts Christ as Savior in a deserted woodland he is still just as saved as if he did so in a church of a thousand. Our salvation does not rest on our actions, but on God's actions when we in faith ask.

Does Baptism Save?

"Believe and be baptized". From past years and through today, there have been ministers who felt that salvation demanded the act of water baptism on the part of the believer. Salvation was viewed as a two staged event: believe unto salvation, then be baptized to lock that salvation into place.

Much of the misunderstanding of water baptism's place in salvation has been caused by certain passages in the King James version of the Bible. Before I start, let me assure you that what follows is in no way an attack on the King James Version. If you have studied the materials on this site you'll notice that I use the King James version exclusively. I love the KJV, and was saved 23 years ago under it's preaching. Though I am not of the "King James only" camp, I understand their love for this text, for I love it too.

Even so, the King James text has, in many cases, departed from the original language texts. This was not done deliberately by the KJV translators.

(Encyclopaedia Britannica Micropaedia, volume 5, page 819) ".. an English translation of the Bible published in 1611 under the auspices of James I of England. Forty seven scholars worked individually and in groups, **utilizing**

previous English translations and texts in the original languages .."

The King James Version is *not solely* a direct Hebrew and Greek translation of the original manuscripts. The roots of the KJV stem all the way back to 1530 AD when the Tyndale translation of the original language Biblical manuscripts was made. The Tyndale translation was a good scholarly work, yet as time passed it was felt that there was a need to revise it's text. In 1535 AD the Cloverdale translation was made, then the Cloverdale translation was again revised in 1537 AD into the Matthew translation, which in turn was revised in 1539 AD into the Great Bible translation. The Great Bible translation was revised and updated between 1557 and 1560 AD into the Geneva Bible translation, which was in turn revised into the Bishop translation of 1568. The King James translators, though they used original language manuscripts in the translation, also used these *previous English translations* to guide them as they worked. The translators used the Bishop translated text when they felt it was accurate, and translated directly from the original texts *when they felt this was warranted*. The King James version was the best of eight English language Bibles translated to that date, and **"the new version was more faithful to the original languages of the Bible and more scholarly than any of it's predecessors (Britannica, Macropaedia, volume 2 page 891)"**.

But is it flawless?

Well, no, obviously not. Since 1611 some **5000** original language Biblical manuscripts have been discovered by archeologists making textual criticism of the Scriptures much more accurate. The number of texts the King James translators had to compare for textual accuracy was *very small* in comparison. So is the King James a good translation? Absolutely! Is it flawless? Absolutely not!

Acts 2:38 "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

This passage seems to place *two requirements* on salvation: (1) repent, and (2) be baptized. This misunderstanding is caused by a mistranslation of the word **and**

following the word **Repent** in the above text. The word rendered **and** is the Greek EIS, which should be rendered **causally** in this context. Properly rendered the text would read: **Repent, and because of this be baptized.**

The following scholars say of this verse:

" .. The metanoesate {repentance} demands the change of ethical disposition as the moral condition of being baptized, which directly and necessarily brings with it faith (Mark 1.15); the Aorist (repentance) denotes the immediate accomplishment (Acts 3.19; 8.22), which is conceived as the work of energetic resolution.. " (Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles, pg 66)

" ..the miserable absurdity of rendering metanoesate (repentance) by 'do penance', or understanding it as referring to a course of external rites, is well exposed by this passage - in which the internal change of heart and purpose is insisted on, to be testified by admission into the number of Christ's followers .." (Alford's Greek New Testament)

Matthew 3:11 "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:"

Again, the King James renders EIS (translated here as **unto**) as purposive instead of causally, which would be the correct translation. The immediate context bears this out, as John the Baptist **only baptized** people who had **previously repented** (Matthew 3.6). The baptism was only an **outward sign** of what previously occurred (salvation). The passage should read:

"I indeed baptize you with water because of repentance .."

or

"I indeed baptize you with water because of your previous repentance .."

Says Dr Mantley (The Causal Use of EIS In The New Testament, Journal of Biblical Literacy, LXX, part 1, 1951):

"Confirmatory of the necessity of repentance *before baptism*, and consequently also of a causal translation for EIS in Matthew 3.11 and elsewhere is the expression found four times in the New Testament (Mark 1.4; Luke 3.3; Acts 13.24; 19.4) 'a baptism of repentance', which implies, since we have a genitive of description here, 'a baptism symbolic or expressive of repentance ..'"

"Acts 22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

This translation seems to give firsthand evidence of Baptismal Regeneration. Yet if we read the Book of Acts we know that Paul was *already saved* on the Damascus Road (Acts 9.1-17). This in itself points to the fact that this verse is mistranslated.

The mistranslation stems from the Greek compound word EPIKALESAMENOS, an Aorist Participle translated ***calling on*** in our Acts text. This cannot be a correct translation for the common action of the Aorist normally signifies antecedent action. The word should have been rendered, ***having called on the name of the Lord***. This corrected translation makes sense as Paul's salvation came long before his invitation to water baptism. Water Baptism is merely an outward testament of an inward change (salvation)

1 Peter 3:21 "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ ."

.. not an integral key to salvation. A repentant believer accepts water baptism as a testimony to the change he has undergone. But an unrepentant heathen, if baptized, is only a wet unrepentant heathen.

John 3:5 "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."

Is the New Birth authored by the Holy Spirit and water baptism, or the Holy Spirit alone? If water baptism is a necessary factor in salvation then why did Jesus only *mention it once* in His talk with Nicodemus? If it is a necessary factor then Jesus would certainly have mentioned it several times to make sure that we understood it's importance. Yet only once?

The problem is, again, a mistranslated word. The word translated ***and*** in the context of ***of water and of the Spirit*** is the Greek conjunction KAI. When used as a connective conjunction it is translated "and", as we see above. But if translated ***ascensively*** it would best be rendered "even". The difference:

" .. Except a man be born of water even of the Spirit .."

The meaning of the text changes drastically when properly translated. Jesus was water as a ***symbolic reference*** to describe the Holy Spirit. This is not the first time the Bible uses a common earth element to describe the Spirit (and His ministry), for we can also read:

Matthew 3:11 "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 (ascensive KAI = even) with fire:"

Luke 3:16 "John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and (ascensive KAI = even) with fire:"

John described the ministry of the Holy Spirit, equating it with ***fire***. If KAI is not rendered ascensively then the verses make ***no sense***, for no believer is baptized with literal fire at the point of salvation. In the same way the ascensive KAI parallels the Holy Spirit (and His ministry) to water. The verse does not teach

water baptism as a necessary element for salvation.

1 Corinthians 15:29 "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?"

The translation of the Holy Scriptures has contributed to a lot of confusion within the Christian faith. Some denominations and Catholicism faith believe that this verse supports water baptism of a dead body in order that the recently departed soul can enter Heaven. Mormonism also supports this strange custom, based on this verse.

Imagine baptizing a dead body, believing that the departed soul will roam the nether world until this rite is satisfied! The Bible amply teaches that the soul immediately, on departing the body, is either face to face with God in Heaven or in Hell. There is no such thing as wandering between the two waiting for water baptism.

Again, this verse is mistranslated by one little word. The Greek HUPER, translated

baptized for the dead, should have been translated *causally*. If properly translated it would read:

"Else what shall they do which are baptized because of the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized because of the dead?"

Close relatives of dying Christians were, on seeing the demeanor of those about to depart (no fear, only joy at the idea that they would shortly see Jesus), becoming Christians themselves and submitting to water baptism. J. Vernon McGee tells a story that illustrates what Paul was talking about.

I'll See You Tomorrow! By – J. Vernon McGee

Years ago, a man with a large family lay dying. His children had been called

from the four corners of this country. All of them were Christians except the youngest boy. As they all gathered around the bedside, the father tried again to bring the youngest boy to Christ – but he would not come. The others had received Christ and were living creditable Christian lives in other communities.

Finally the father began with the oldest, and as he came by, he shook hands with him and said to him, “I’ll see you soon.” And he shook hands with the next one, a daughter, and said to her, “I’ll see you tomorrow.” Finally at the end of the line the youngest boy came to him. The father looked at him for a moment and tears came into his eyes as he said, “Son, good-bye.”

The boy asked, “Dad why do you say good-bye to me?” He replied, “Son I’ll never see you again. If you continue to reject Jesus Christ as you’ve been rejecting Him, you are spiritually dead, a separation from God.”

The boy broke down, knelt at his father's bedside, and received Christ as his Saviour.

This boy was baptized *because of* the dead, because of the demeanor of his dying father. This is all that Paul was saying: Many were coming to Christ when they saw their loved ones depart this life in joy.

Mark 16:16 "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

The verse alone, as translated, gives an indication that it is mistranslated. In the first part of the verse it seems to be saying that belief PLUS water baptism leads to salvation, and in the second part of the verse ONLY unbelief leads to damnation. If water baptism (or the lack of it) was a necessary element in salvation then the last part of the verse should have read "he that believeth not and is not baptized shall be damned".

The whole problem of poor uniformity in this verse is solved when we look at the

Greek EIS, translated ***believeth and is baptized***. EIS should have been translated ***causally***, which would correctly read as:

"He that believeth and because of this is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Salvation is a work entirely of God, needing none of our efforts to make it secure. The self righteous like to add to God's program, in pride putting it out of the reach of the common man. Yet God's Plan of Salvation, unlike our misconceptions, is pure. A free gift of Eternal Life to ***whosoever will*** accept it. Have You?

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Systematic Theology

ADDENDUM

Why Should I Study The Scriptures Systematically?

Romans 6:17 "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you."

Systematic Theology is the *human side* of Biblical interpretation. It is a system of *rightly dividing* the Scriptures to determine their truths, then to apply these truths to our lives. Or as the great theologian Charles Hodge defines it:

"The exhibition of the fact of Scripture in proper order and relation with the principle or general clues involved in the facts themselves, which pervade and harmonize the whole."

The idea behind Systematic Theology is to study the Bible in such a way that the believer can know God, know himself, and put this knowledge of God and self into constructive practice. You are *not* what you eat, but you *are* what you believe. Every Christian has a series of beliefs that he structures his Christian walk after. If these foundational beliefs are false then the Christian is patterning his life after a lie, not after the Word. The major reason Christianity often seems so crippled in America today is because so many Christians have become satisfied with the easy lie rather than the hard truth. We are content to chase ecstasies, to laugh and faint in the Spirit, to speak gibberish while the world looks on in dismay at the fools we seem to be. We chase apparitions, look for statues that sweat blood, look for manifestations of the virgin Mary, and wonder why our

Churches have become so ineffectual in the world today.

Harsh words? Perhaps, but true. A hundred years ago America would not have given the nod to mass abortion of the children, nor would its Churches have tolerated same sex marriages and other "alternate" lifestyles. Men have always been sinners, but when the Church forgets the Word and modifies its stance to become acceptable to the world, then the sin becomes more pronounced in society.

It is true that the Christian is saved, washed by the sacrifice of the Cross. But God expects more of us. He wants us to understand Him, to know and apply the truths that He has set out for us in His Word. Correctly studying God's Word is therefore imperative for the believer, not an option to be discarded when it ruffles our feathers.

Systematic Study of God's Word is imperative, yet how can we, as finite beings, hope to understand this Book which has filled libraries with its teaching? We are fallible, prone to sin. How can we study without error creeping in? Jesus provided what we need:

John 14:16-17 "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

God the Son, Jesus Christ, sent the Holy Spirit to indwell each and every one of us who believe. This ***Spirit of truth*** came, not to help us have emotional ecstasies in Church, but to help guide us as we ***study God's Word***. Who can reveal the truths of God's Word better than God Himself?

Deuteronomy 29:29 "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."

John 14:26 "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."

Systematic Theology is the human side in Bible study, whereas the Holy Spirit guiding us (theologically called "Illumination") is the Divine side in our search for the truth. The Spirit enlightens the mind of the believer, ***teach(ing) you all things***, so that we can understand and apply what we study. This work of the Spirit's Illumination goes hand in hand with our study of the Word. If either element is missing, then the truth of the Word is in jeopardy.

To learn about God does not require a ***theological degree***, but does require that each and every one of us ***submit*** ourselves to the Spirit as we ***faithfully study*** the Word. If you want to grow in God, to reach the spiritual heights that God has planned for your life, you must be consistent in studying His Word and in heeding the Spirit. Nothing else will do. Nothing else ***can*** do.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

If you want to be ***perfect***, TELEIOO, ***mature*** in service to God, then you must submit to studying the Bible and the leading of the Spirit. No other option is left open to us who believe.

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