FOUNDATIONS OF PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY

STUDY GUIDES INCLUDED

Guy P. Duffield
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Foundations of Pentecostal Theology

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and
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PREFACE TO THE REVISION

Foundations of Pentecostal Theology has served as a primary doctrine book for numerous Pentecostal denominations, churches, groups and pastors since its publication in 1983. The authors, Guy P. Duffield and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave, were asked by Pastor Jack Hayford, the president of LIFE Bible College, to write a textbook that would function as an introduction to the Christian faith from a Pentecostal perspective. At the time this book was originally written, both authors were professors at LIFE Bible College and both had also served for many years as pastors in the local church. This brought theological and practical insight to their writing. Consequently, Foundations of Pentecostal Theology is rich in both theological depth and ministerial wisdom.

In 2011, a thoughtful and prayerful revision of this textbook was undertaken to clarify and strengthen the language of the existing text. The goal was not to alter doctrinal truths but rather to highlight, bolster and expand upon the Pentecostal foundational truths contained within the original text. Also, it was our sincere desire to give Doctors Duffield and Van Cleave a fresh voice to speak to a new generation.

The following are some of the changes that were made in this revision: all Scripture quotations are now in the New King James Version instead of the King James Version unless otherwise noted; language is gender neutral when appropriate to demonstrate a respect for both men and women in ministry; sentences or paragraphs have been added or removed for the sake of clarity; the order of some material within chapters has been changed along with chapter subheadings; and statements and footnotes have been added to clarify doctrinal positions. The goal of these changes has been to strengthen a greatly respected text.
It is important to note the profound unity that accompanied the revision of this book. The Doctrine Committee of the Foursquare Church spent hundreds of hours in the process of editing and revising each sentence, paragraph and chapter. Then every final draft was examined and approved by the Board of the Foursquare Church. Along the way, many people proofread, edited and gave invaluable feedback to help make this the best revision possible, but special recognition must be given to Doug and Jennifer Bursch for their extraordinary work as lead editors. By preparing the initial drafts, month after month, they carried the majority of the hard work. We are very grateful for their insight, sensitivity and deep respect for the original text.

This was truly a labor of love. It has given us all great joy and deep satisfaction to participate in crafting a revision which will strengthen the foundations of anyone desiring to grow in his or her Pentecostal theology.

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Doug and Jennifer Bursch, Lead Editors

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INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EDITION

A series of sweeping waves of revival have coursed across the face of the twentieth century already. At least four discernible “times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord” have been manifest in this era, and all seem to have these two things in common: (1) they have touched every sector of the church, with all denominations being impacted to some degree; and (2) they have been uniquely marked by an expanded realization of the role of the Holy Spirit—Third Person of the Godhead—in the life and task of the church.

It is neither sectarian nor self-serving for any Pentecostal to observe the now historical fact that the revival which God used to introduce this succession of revivals bears His own name, one which is drawn from the birth of the church itself—Pentecost. At the onset of this century, first in Topeka, Kansas, and then at Azusa Street, in Los Angeles, California, the manifestation of the Holy Spirit resulted in an awakening which even today continues to affect the church everywhere. What God did through Luther in recovering the message of salvation, and did through Wesley in recovering the message of holy life and service, He did through the early Pentecostal revival in recovering the dynamism of the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit to the church. Since then, the evidence abounds to the fact that growth in evangelism has been compounded by broader, warmer response to the Spirit and His workings, as believers everywhere open to seasonal outpourings from Heaven.

And now, this book appears at a crucial season; a time in which we stand expectantly anticipating a new outbreak of God’s Grace across the face of the earth. The renewal of the past two decades has receded as a tide, only to prepare us for the rise of a new and mightier wave of blessing. With deep
conviction, I view this volume as suited to a new age of Spirit-filled service in the authority of Jesus’ name.

But it is not only the timeliness of this book which gives it special value, it is its uniqueness.

This is an unusual and noteworthy book, which I take great joy in being asked to introduce and to commend to the church at large. It was begun at my request during the years I served as President of L.I.F.E. Bible College at Los Angeles. To now hold the massive manuscript in hand is a thrill, not only by reason of the confidence I have in its content, but to know we have captured the wealth of two lifetimes of scholarship.

There can hardly be found as complete and functional a doctrinal study from within the Pentecostal movement. This is neither to reflect on any of the fine work that has been done by other authors nor to presume to offer this work as conclusively complete. But there is an unquestionable distinction present in the wedding of two such remarkable scholars and preachers for the formation of so thorough and usable a doctrine textbook and authoritative reference resource. First, the scholarship for which both Guy Duffield and Nathaniel Van Cleave have become known lends a depth and thoroughness to this work, attested to both by its content and sheer size. Each man has an unimpeachable record of faithfulness to “the Word and the doctrine” in public ministry for more than a half-century. Second, the unshakeable realities of Eternal Truth come from their pen with a purity and power verified through decades of study and ministry. These are trustworthy men who handle God’s Word with honesty, and who “by manifestation of the truth commend themselves to everyman’s conscience in the sight of God.”

Further, it is in the fact that the ministries of the authors have been marked by effective preaching and pastoral work that this book holds promise for all Christian workers. It is a practical book, featuring systematic theology in a form which is readily adaptable to nourishing the flock of God. Both men have equally distinguished themselves as pastors, preachers, college professors, lecturers and writers. Such a confluence of training and experience, flowing through men of character and faith, warrants the highest expectations
of the reader or the student taking this volume in hand. Such expectations will be justified and will be confirmed.

The title of this volume has been thoughtfully chosen, indicating it is answering to a specific need:

“Foundations,” because we live in a philosophically relativistic culture which has lost any mooring to the stedfast and absolute. The “rooted and grounded” realities of Divine revelation need to be freshly asserted, that this generation of believers be firmly planted and built up “according to the pattern.” The plumbline of God’s Word is the standard with which all teaching and preaching must align, and it is firmly adhered to throughout this book.

“Pentecostal,” because all truth must be made alive by the Holy Spirit in order to be reproductive, and refreshing. E. M. Bounds warned of truth without life as the “letter which kills,” and which, though of excellent scholarship, becomes “as barren as a field sown with pearls.” In contrast, the quality inherent in this volume is that same trait which enabled Peter to rise with a text from Joel in hand, and to infuse it with contemporary relevance. The Holy Spirit wants to speak to today, and the vitality of the Spirit manifest herein makes ancient verities throb with life.

“Theology,” because all that we ultimately need, now or forever, is summarized in knowing God, and in knowing Him in terms of all His counsel. It is in that respect that Drs. Duffield and Van Cleave have served us especially well. They not only expound the riches of traditional theological themes, but with depth and balance provide a development of those facets of God’s Being, Working and Power, which have become better understood to the church at large in the last fourscore years—the Working of the Holy Spirit in the church, the Gifts of the Spirit distributed through the church, and the Healing Life of Christ amid the church. These and other related themes deserve to be understood and exercised in all the church throughout all of the world.

This, then, is not a theology for Pentecostals alone. Its Pentecostal quality does not take its thrust from a movement a short century old but from that
Spirit which brought forth the church on a day by that name. Here is truth for the Body of Christ, which will cause the preaching of the saving Word and the teaching of sound words to glorify Jesus Christ the Lord and to edify His people.

—Jack W. Hayford
The Church On The Way
Van Nuys, California
August 10, 1983
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FOR THE FIRST EDITION

“Then said Jesus...If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

The reality of this scripture was repeatedly impressed upon my soul and spirit as the work progressed towards publication. As editor, numerous tasks required my attention, but none were as pleasurable and inspiring as the repeated readings of the manuscript that necessitated my own confrontation with the truths of God’s Word. As a result, my beliefs were both challenged and confirmed, and I was again convinced of the life-changing effects of the living Word.

All of us at L.I.F.E. Bible College, who were requested to be a part of this project, are grateful to God for His grace to us in this endeavor. A special acknowledgement must go to the Administration of the college for their initiative and direction to proceed with this book; and a special thanks to Dr. Dorothy Jean Furlong, who coordinated and facilitated each phase of the project. In addition, we thank all the staff and personnel who contributed their skills and faithful assistance to the various processes of preparing a manuscript for publication.

We are indebted to the following pastors and leaders for their review of various chapters, and for the helpful suggestions that were the result of their responses:
Dr. Leslie R. Eno  
Dr. Clarence E. Hall  
Rev. Jack E. Hamilton  
Dr. Jack W. Hayford  
Dr. Charles L. Hollis  
Dr. Harold W. Jefferies  
Rev. Paul McEachern  
Rev. Coleman Phillips

May the Lord receive glory for all that has been done as we have united our efforts to proclaim His truths.

—Connie R. Kingsbury  
Editor
According to the World Christian Encyclopedia, edited by David B. Barrett, and published in 1982 by the Oxford University Press, in 1980 there were over 51,000,000 Christians in Pentecostal denominations throughout the world (Global Table #9, p. 14); plus, some 11,000,000 more within other denominations who worship in Pentecostal fashion (p. 64).

As late as 1956 this number was considered to be about 10,000,000. Thus, this movement appears to be the fastest growing segment of the Christian church in the world today.

This large group of Christian believers has experienced a significant ministry of the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, which has not only manifested itself in the realm of blessing and empowerment but has affected every phase of their lives.

The Pentecostal movement is not just based on an inspirational experience. It is grounded upon the entire Bible as the Word of God. We are a Bible-believing people. We subscribe to “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). Our spiritual blessings are balanced by the doctrinal teachings of the Scriptures, so that we might be “rooted and built up in him and established in the faith” (Col. 2:7); “That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:17).

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to compile the Scriptural teachings concerning the great doctrines of our faith as contained in this book. It is the earnest desire of the authors that this work may be a means under God to
ground and settle (Col. 1:23) our Pentecostal family throughout the world, and to encourage others to receive and enjoy all the blessings of a rich spiritual life in the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

—Guy P. Duffield and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave
Los Angeles, California
August 16, 1983
ABBREVIATIONS
TRANSLATIONS AND VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE

RSV — Revised Standard Version
NIV — New International Version
ERE — English Revised Edition
ASV — American Standard Version
NASB – New American Standard Bible
NKJV – New King James Version*
ESV — English Standard Version
TMB — Third Millennium Bible
WNT — Weymouth New Testament
JB — Jerusalem Bible
Rotherham — Rotherham’s Emphasized New Testament
CEV – Contemporary English Version
NCV — New Century Version
AMP – Amplified Version

*NKJV is being used for all Bible references unless otherwise noted.

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# ABBREVIATIONS

### BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

**Old Testament**

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Chapter One
The Doctrine of the Scripture

Bibliology

INTRODUCTION

God reveals Himself. He does not remain silent. The Lord takes pleasure in making Himself known to His children. God is love; love must always communicate itself, and that revelation must come from God. The thoughts of a person can only be disclosed by that person. Likewise, only God can make Himself known. The God of the Bible is a God who speaks. He spoke the universe into existence: “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth” (Ps. 33:6). God has conveyed His will and purposes by speaking to chosen men and women with the greatest of all His revelations being found in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:1-14). Hebrews states, “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds” (Heb. 1:1-2).
God preserved these revelations of Himself in the Bible. Some claim God’s revelation is best found in nature. They see no need for the special revelation contained in the Bible. It is true that, if God is the creator of all nature, then nature will reveal much about the One who brought it into existence (Rom. 1:20). However, nature’s revelation of God is very limited. Certainly the God who created this amazing world and the vast universe of which the earth is a minute part must be a God of great wisdom and power. But the revelation of nature is incomplete. Nature alone cannot fully reveal the marvelous love of God, God’s holiness or the grace of God that has provided salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. Rather, it is the written Word, the Bible, that best reveals the testimony of God’s great purposes and plans for humanity.

Some view the Bible as only a collection of stories about man’s effort to find God. If this were so, the Bible would have no authority or sense of divine revelation. Instead, it would merely be the account of humans groping for truth they cannot obtain. The Bible is not just the story of humanity’s attempts to find God. Rather, the Holy Scripture is the account of God’s effort to reveal Himself to every human being. Consequently, it is tremendously important that we understand something concerning the Bible’s origin, formation, authority, inerrancy and divine inspiration. These issues will be considered under the study of bibliology.

I. The Names of the Scripture

A. The Bible

The English word Bible comes from the Greek word *biblos*, meaning “a book.” “The book [biblos] of the genealogy of Jesus Christ…” (Matt. 1:1). Scripture also use *biblion*, a diminutive form of *biblos*, meaning “little book”: “And he was handed the book [biblion] of the prophet Isaiah. And when he had opened the book [biblion]…” (Luke 4:17). *Biblos* comes from the word given to the inner pulp of the papyrus reed on which ancient scrolls (books) were written.
B. Other names

The Bible is also called Scripture (Mark 12:10; 15:28; Luke 4:21; John 2:22; 7:38; 10:35; Rom. 4:3; Gal. 4:30; 2 Pet. 1:20) and the Scriptures (Matt. 22:29; Mark 12:24; Luke 24:27; John 5:39; Acts 17:11; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; 2 Pet. 3:16). These terms signify holy writings. Paul also used the Holy Scriptures (Rom. 1:2; 2 Tim. 3:15) and the oracles of God (Rom. 3:2). One of the most descriptive and satisfying names is the Word of God (Mark 7:13; Rom. 10:17; 2 Cor. 2:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12).

II. The Divisions of the Scripture

A. The two testaments

The Bible is divided into two sections known as the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word testament was originally translated “covenant” to signify the Old and New Testament are both covenants God made with His people. There are 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament.

B. Divisions in the Old Testament

The Hebrew Old Testament was commonly divided into three sections:

1. The Law (Torah):

   Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

2. The Prophets (Nebhiim):

   Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel, 1 Kings and 2 Kings
   Latter Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, The Twelve (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)
3. The Writings (*Kethbhim*):

Poetical Books: Psalms, Proverbs, Job

Five Rolls (*Megillot*): Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Esther, Ecclesiastes

Historical Books: Daniel, Ezra/Nehemiah (combined), 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles¹

These divisions are in keeping with Jesus’ words, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me” (Luke 24:44). Sometimes the Old Testament is referred to as the Law and the Prophets (Matt. 5:17; 11:13; Acts 13:15) or simply the Law (John 10:34; 12:34; 15:25; 1 Cor. 14:21).

C. Divisions in the New Testament


2. Historical: Acts

3. Pedagogical: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude

4. Prophetic: Revelation

Sometimes the following alternate divisions are suggested:


The Acts of the Apostles

D. Chapters and verses

The Bible was not originally divided into chapters and verses. For convenience of reference, these were added much later. It was once assumed that chapter divisions were first introduced by Cardinal Hugo (died 1263). Later investigations attribute the divisions to Stephen Langton (died 1228), Archbishop of Canterbury. The New Testament was first published with verse divisions by Robert Stephans in 1551. The first Bible to be published entirely divided into verse was the Geneva Bible of 1560.

It is important to realize these divisions were not in the original texts and were not inspired. Most of the divisions are very helpful, but some have proven to be quite misleading, especially when a division comes in the middle of a specific event, idea or flow of thought. Chapter divisions tend to suggest that a new subject is being introduced even though this is frequently not the case. Consequently, it is important at times to ignore the chapter division when analyzing the meaning of the text. For example, when John 7:53 and John 8:1 are read together without the chapter break, a significant contrast is evident: “And everyone went to his own house. But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.”

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III. The Writers of the Scripture

The Bible is one book, but it is also many books written by at least 40 authors over a period of not less than 1,500 years. Many of the authors never met each other, yet the Bible’s unity and continuity is so apparent; it is easy to think of it as having just one author, God Himself.

Of the 66 different books in the Bible, the authors of 55 are well identified by history and tradition. The 11 books whose authors are not known are Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel, 1 Kings and 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles, Esther, Job and Hebrews. Some books, such as Genesis, Judges, 1 Kings and 2 Kings, and 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles, cover such long periods of history it is possible that they are collections of ancient records brought together and edited by one individual towards the end of the historical period described in the book.

For instance, Moses could be the compiler of the book of Genesis. If this is so, then the actual number of writers contributing to the Bible may be considerably more than 40. Psalms and Proverbs have several authors. The superscriptions that appear at the head of many of the Psalms suggest at least seven different writers. In addition to naming Solomon as the author of Proverbs, two other authors are mentioned. Agur is mentioned in Proverbs 30:1 and King Lemuel in Proverbs 31:1.

All of the authors, with the exception of Luke, were Jews and wrote in the context of the Jewish religion. Yet the words they wrote have more universal appeal and interest to people of all nations than any words ever written. Also significant is the variety of occupations represented by the known authors:

- David and Solomon were kings.
- Jeremiah and Ezekiel were priests.
- Luke was a physician.
- Peter and John were fishermen.
- Moses and Amos were shepherds.
- Paul was a Pharisee and a theologian.
- Daniel was a statesman.
The Doctrine of the Scripture • Chapter One

Matthew was a tax collector.
Joshua was a soldier.
Ezra was a scribe.
Nehemiah was a butler.

IV. The Canon of the Scripture

The word canon comes from the Greek *kanon*, meaning “a measuring rod or reed,” and signifies a rule or standard. Hence, the Canon of the Bible consists of those books considered worthy to be included in the Holy Scripture. According to authors Selby and West, the Canon’s formation went far beyond religious edicts:

Canonization was the result of a centuries-long development, whereby only those writings that proved useful for faith and worship were elevated to such a decisive role. The Canon, that is to say, was determined not so much by Rabbinic or church decree as by the intrinsic merit of each separate book and its reception by the worshipping community for the inspiration or edification it offered.³

N.H. Ridderbos expressed the concept this way: “The various books possessed and exercised divine authority long before men ever made pronouncements to that effect. Ecclesiastical councils did not give the books their divine authority but merely recognized that they both had it and exercised it.”⁴

A. The Canon of the Old Testament

Scholars have many opinions concerning when the Canon of the Old Testament was closed. The Old Testament says nothing on the close of the Canon; however, it does contain many passages concerning God’s desire that His word should be written down, read and followed. Exodus 17 tells of the victory of the children of Israel over Amalek as Moses’ hands were held up before the Lord. Exodus 17:14 reads: “Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua…” Exodus 24:3-4 records the writing of God’s words and judgments: “So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, ‘All the words which the LORD has said we will do.’ And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD.” Deuteronomy 31 gives the account of Moses writing the Law, which was to be read to the people of Israel every seven years:

So Moses wrote this law and delivered it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying: “At the end of every seven years, at the appointed time in the year of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing” (Deut. 31:9-11).

This occasion could well mark the earliest beginning of the Old Testament Canon, for we read: “Moses commanded the Levites…saying: ‘Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there as a witness against you…”’ (Deut. 31:25-26). Joshua, Moses’ successor, also wrote words, “in the Book of the Law of God” (Josh. 24:26). Samuel recorded certain events of his day in a book: “Then Samuel explained to the people the behavior of royalty and wrote it in a book and laid it up before the LORD’” (1 Sam. 10:25, RSV). Prophets in later times engaged in writing books. God spoke to Jeremiah and said: “Take a scroll of a book and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel,
against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah even to this day” (Jer. 36:2).

Later generations were found consulting the writings of their predecessors. Daniel searched “in the books” and found the prophet Jeremiah recorded that the duration in which Jerusalem was to be ravaged by the enemy was to be 70 years (Dan. 9:2). Later, when the people were assembled back in Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity, it was the Law of Moses that was read and honored (Neh. 8:18). During the reign of Josiah in Judah, the Book of the Law of the Lord, which had been lost, was found: “Then Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, ‘I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD’” (2 Kings 22:8). Josiah gathered the elders of Judah and Jerusalem together: “And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant which had been found in the house of the LORD” (2 Kings 23:2). Thus, we see the beginnings of what later became the Old Testament Scriptures.

George L. Robinson’s article in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* concludes (following the Hebrew’s threefold division of the Old Testament) that the books of the Law were recognized as canonical during the time of Ezra (444 B.C.); the Prophets were recognized around 200 B.C.; and the Writings received authorization around 100 B.C. Robinson is not saying there were three separate canons, but that “there were three separate classes of writings, which between 450 B.C. and 100 B.C. doubtless stood on different bases, and only gradually became recognized as authoritative.”

Other scholars hold to the belief that there were only two periods of canonization corresponding to “the law and the prophets,” and that the Old Testament Canon was completed about 400 B.C. It is difficult to say which of these positions is correct. What is important is the Old Testament Canon was, no doubt, complete at the time of Christ. Jesus referred to it as “the Scriptures,” saying, “You search the Scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life…” (John 5:39). We read: “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded

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6 Geisler and Nix, 85.
to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:27). In Luke 11:51 Jesus made an interesting statement speaking of the time “...from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the temple.” Jesus was referring to the martyrs of the Old Testament. Abel was the first, as recorded in Genesis 4, and Zechariah was the last, recorded in 2 Chronicles 24:20-21. In the Hebrew Bible, 2 Chronicles is the last book, while Genesis is the first. Thus, Jesus not only put His stamp of approval upon the entire Old Testament, from Genesis to 2 Chronicles, but gave indication that these books were in existence and were approved at the time He was on earth.

As further evidence of the completeness of the Old Testament Canon at the time of Jesus, we have the testimony of the celebrated Jewish historian Flavius Josephus. In Against Apion, he wrote:

For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another, (like the Greeks have) but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which we justly believe to be divine ... and how firmly we have given credit to these books of our own nation is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them, to take anything from them or to make any change in them; but it is become natural to all Jews immediately, and from their very birth, to esteem these books to contain Divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be, willingly to die for them.7

In the Christian Bible, there are 39 books in the Old Testament, while the Jewish Old Testament has only 24. This is because the Jewish Old Testament counts the 12 books of the Minor Prophets (Hosea through Malachi) as one book. Also, the book pairings of 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel, 1 Kings and 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles and Ezra/Nehemiah are considered one book each in the Jewish Old Testament. Josephus counted 22 Old Testament books.

because he joined Ruth to Judges and Lamentations to Jeremiah. Regardless of the different ways the Old Testament Scriptures have been ordered, classified and numbered, the wording of the books is the same.

B. The Canon of the New Testament

It is much easier to trace the canonization of the New Testament than the Old Testament because far more evidence is available. The books of the New Testament were written during the last half of the first century A.D. The newly-formed Christian church had the Old Testament Scripture as the basis for their faith. In addition to the Old Testament, great importance was placed on the words of Jesus and the teachings of the apostles. Thus, it was not long until the Gospels were being placed alongside of the Old Testament. The authority of the apostles is fully attested. John declared, “…that which we have seen and heard we declare to you” (1 John 1:3). Peter wrote that the apostles “were eyewitnesses of His majesty” (2 Peter 1:16). In Acts we read that the early believers “…continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship…” (Acts 2:42).

From their inception, the New Testament writings were widely distributed. Paul wrote his epistles to meet the specific needs of local churches and individuals. On several occasions, Paul gave definite instructions that his letters should be read and circulated (Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27). As this practice spread, it is easy to see how compilations of Paul’s letters became available. God instructed John to send his book to the seven churches in Asia (Rev. 1:11). The book of James was addressed to Jews dispersed throughout the world (Jas. 1:1). Even Peter’s first epistle was addressed “…the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia …” (1 Pet. 1:1). The following verses strongly suggest the early Christian church considered a compilation of apostolic writings to have the same authority as Old Testament Scripture:

…and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which
are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures (2 Pet. 3:15-16).

Early in the second century, the church fathers quoted copiously from the writings that would later become the New Testament canon. Their reverential use of these writings validates the authority of the books from which they quoted. The Gnostic Marcion (A.D. 140) compiled a canon rejecting many letters and books that were considered authoritative to Christians. Consequently, many church leaders and scholars began to take a closer look at the need to define an agreed upon canon. Emperor Diocletian’s persecution of the church (A.D. 302-305) also made it necessary for Christians to determine the books for which they would suffer and die.

Within 25 years of the Diocletian persecutions, Emperor Constantine ordered Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea and church historian, to prepare and distribute 50 copies of the New Testament. Constantine’s decree made it absolutely necessary to decide which books should be included or excluded from the New Testament. By the end of the second century, the church recognized most of the 27 books of the New Testament as canonical. Seven books not fully recognized at that time were Hebrews, 2 John, 3 John, 2 Peter, Jude, James and Revelation. At the Third Council of Carthage (A.D. 397), the Western Christian churches settled on the final form of the New Testament Canon. Thus, by the end of the fourth century, the church had received all 27 books.

C. Tests used to determine canonicity

Biblical scholars have cited the following principles for determining a book’s right to be placed in the Canon:

1. Apostolicity: Was the book authored by an apostle or someone closely associated with the apostles? This criterion is especially important in relation to Mark, Luke, Acts and Hebrews since Mark and Luke were not among the original 12, and the authorship of Hebrews is uncertain.
2. Spiritual content: Does the content of the book provide spiritual edification for the believer? This was a practical but necessary test.

3. Doctrinal soundness: Is the content of the book doctrinally sound? Any book that contained teachings contrary to already accepted canonical books was rejected.

4. Usage: Was the book universally recognized throughout the early church and widely quoted by the church fathers?

5. Divine inspiration: Does the book give true evidence of divine inspiration? However mysterious, “This was the ultimate test; everything finally had to give way to it.”

D. Writings excluded from the Canon

1. The Apocrypha, meaning “hidden” or “concealed,” refers to books that are not part of the Protestant Bible but are considered inspired by some individuals and communities of faith, particularly the Roman Catholic church. The Old Testament Apocrypha contains 14 books: 1 Esdras and 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, The Rest of Esther, The Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch with the Epistle of Jeremiah, The Song of the Three Holy Children, The History of Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, The Prayer of Manasses, 1 Maccabees and 2 Maccabees. The Septuagint (LXX), the translation of the Old Testament into Greek made between 280 B.C. and 180 B.C., contained the Apochryphal books. Jerome included them in his Latin translation of the Old Testament called the Vulgate. These books are not a part of the Hebrew Bible.

The books listed as the New Testament Apocrypha were those held in high esteem by at least one of the church fathers. Though they contain helpful information concerning the history of the church, they were never accepted into the New Testament Canon. Some of the most popular of these writings

are The Epistle of Pseudo-Barnabas (70-79), The Epistle to the Corinthians (96), Shepherd of Hermas (115-140), The Didache (100-120), Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians (108) and The Seven Epistles of Ignatius (110). The Reformers were largely responsible for eliminating the Apocrypha from the Bible because it contains things which are inconsistent with Protestant doctrine (e.g. the doctrines of prayer for the dead and intercession to the saints). Although parts of almost all the books of the Old Testament Canon are either quoted or directly referred to in the New Testament, there is no quotation or reference to any of the Apocryphal books.

2. The Pseudepigrapha includes a group of spurious and heretical books generally considered false writings and never recognized by any council or quoted by the church fathers. A number of false doctrines are found in these books including the doctrines held by the Gnostics who denied the incarnation of Christ; the Docetics who denied the reality of Christ’s humanity; and the Monophysites who rejected the dual nature of Christ. The more than 280 pseudepigraphical writings are grouped under the headings Gospels, Acts, Epistles, Apocalypses and others. Geisler and Nix state: “Whatever fragments of truth they preserve are obscured both by their religious fancy and heretical tendencies. The books are not only uncanonical but are not of much value for religious or devotional purposes. Their main value is historical, revealing the beliefs of their composers.”

V. The Inerrancy of the Scripture

A. Definition of inerrancy

Inerrancy as it applies to Scripture means the autographs (the original manuscripts) contain no mistakes. In its original written languages, the Bible is infallible—without error whatsoever. For centuries this has been the position of evangelical churches. Some teach a “limited inerrancy,” claiming the Bible to be without error in matters of faith and practice, but not necessarily in matters of science and history. The problem with limited inerrancy is it leaves each

9 Geisler and Nix, 116, 117.
individual as the arbiter of truth. The issue of inerrancy is vitally important; if people do not have positive faith in the infallibility of the Bible, they are limited in their ability to speak with final authority concerning matters of eternity.

B. The testimony of inerrancy

1. The Bible testifies to its own inerrancy: The primary testimony to the doctrine of inerrancy comes from the Scripture. There are many instances where the Bible claims to be inspired by God. Second Timothy 3:16 states: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God…” The apostle Peter wrote, “For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21).

   a) The Old Testament writers repeatedly asserted that they were speaking the Word of God (2 Sam. 23:2; Isa. 1:2a; Jer. 1:7, 9). In fact, 3,808 times they directly claimed to be transmitting God’s words. Samuel declared, “The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue” (2 Sam. 23:2).

   b) The New Testament writers also testified that the Old Testament presented the literal speech of God.

      (1) In the Gospels: Matthew referred to Old Testament scripture as “spoken by the Lord through the prophet” (Matt. 1:22). Luke stated, “God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets” (Luke 1:70). Mark noted that the Psalms were written under the anointing of the Holy Spirit (Mark 12:36).

      (2) In the Epistles: The apostles gave witness to the perfection of Old Testament Scripture. Paul wrote, “Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good” (Rom. 7:12). The author of Hebrews regarded the Word of God as “living and powerful,” going so far as to judge even “the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). James described God’s Word as “the perfect law of liberty” (Jas. 1:25). John brought Revelation to a close with a warning to neither add nor take away from the words “which are written in this book” (Rev. 22:18-19).
(3) The testimony of Jesus: Jesus specifically bore witness to the inerrancy of the Scripture. He confirmed the whole of the Old Testament and did not identify a single error or inconsistency. He continually based His arguments and exhortations on the authority of the Old Testament. Jesus said, “…these are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me” (Luke 24:44). These three sections compose all of the Old Testament. Jesus referred to specific people and events, bearing testimony to the authenticity and authority of the Old Testament. Jesus put his stamp of approval on some of the events and miracles of the Old Testament that have received the greatest scrutiny by critics. The following are some of the Old Testament events Jesus referenced:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Creation and marriage</td>
<td>Matthew 19:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Flood and Noah’s ark</td>
<td>Luke 17:26-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah</td>
<td>Luke 17:28-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Passover</td>
<td>Matthew 26:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Law</td>
<td>John 7:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Commandments</td>
<td>Matthew 19:7-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Jewish law of divorce</td>
<td>Matthew 19:7-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The burning bush</td>
<td>Mark 12:26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The story of Jonah and the great fish</td>
<td>Matthew 12:40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The glory of Solomon</td>
<td>Matthew 6:29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The wisdom of Solomon</td>
<td>Matthew 12:42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Feast of Tabernacles</td>
<td>John 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The eating of the showbread by David</td>
<td>Matthew 12:3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The heavens shut up in the days of Elijah</td>
<td>Luke 4:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The healing of Naaman the leper</td>
<td>Luke 4:27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The record of the brazen serpent</td>
<td>John 3:14-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The murders of Abel and Zachariah</td>
<td>Matthew 23:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mission of the Messiah</td>
<td>Luke 4:16-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mission of John the Baptist</td>
<td>Matthew 17:10-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mission of Elijah</td>
<td>Matthew 17:10-13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. The Bible is a unique revelation of truth: The Bible reveals truths about God and humanity that could never be discovered any other way but through the Bible. It is uniquely human for individuals to ponder their existence, origins and destiny. Questions of immortality, heaven, hell, judgment and eternity have filled the minds of individuals throughout the ages. These questions remain unanswerable apart from the divine revelation of the Bible. No humanly authored document can reveal or has ever revealed a god such as the God of the Bible. Pentecostals believe the Bible is the complete source of essential information about God. The Bible demonstrates most clearly and authoritatively God’s works, characteristics and desires for humanity. In the Scripture, God reveals Himself through true epic stories, historical occurrences, instructive speeches, parabolic teachings and prophetic discourses. Ultimately, through the Bible, we discover a message of love, grace and salvation rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ. In one sense, the Bible is a conversation between God and His children. In another sense, it is the divine schematic for living a life that is both fulfilled and fulfilling in Christ. The Bible is dependable, reliable and inspired. As a revelation of the truth, it is unequaled in all of human history.

3. The Bible is an unchanging revelation: Philosophers, religious leaders, scientists and even some Christian theologians have at times challenged the veracity of Scripture, yet the Bible continues to survive these challenges. Some philosophers have called into question the truths of the Word of God through arguments devaluing or deconstructing the meaning and message of the Scripture. Many in the scientific community have adopted theoretical perspectives that deny historical accounts in the Bible such as the creation account of Genesis. Even so, scientific research and discoveries in biology, anthropology, physics, geology and mathematics have frequently supported the accuracy and legitimacy of the Bible’s content. While the Bible is not a science textbook, science has never specifically disproved the Scripture’s narrative concerning natural phenomena.\(^{10}\) The Bible is unchanging and irrefutable truth.

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4. The Bible is true both morally and spiritually: The Bible demonstrates its utmost meaning in the moral and spiritual realm. Myer Pearlman asserted, “Intellectual defenses of the Bible have their place; but after all, the best argument is the practical one. The Bible has worked. It has influenced civilizations, transformed lives, brought light, inspiration and comfort to millions. And its work continues.”11 Thus the Scripture declares: “For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe” (1 Thess. 2:13).

VI. The Inspiration of the Scripture

A. The miraculous fact of inspiration

The Bible is inerrant and infallible. There are no errors in the original words, phrases and sentences of the Scripture. Even though God used imperfect people to bring us the Word, the Bible is in all ways perfect and complete. Consequently, nothing should ever be removed or added to the Scripture. God brought us the Bible through the writings of 40 different authors over the span of 1,500 years. Many of these writers never interacted directly with each other. Even so, their writings are in complete agreement. The perfect agreement and compatibility of their various texts can only be rightly explained as a miracle of divine inspiration.

B. The source of the Bible’s inspiration

“All Scripture is God-breathed…” (2 Tim. 3:16, NIV). The Bible was produced by the creative breath of God. Just as God breathed life into Adam, He also breathed His life into the body of Scripture. Note in 2 Peter 1:21 that “holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” This verse literally reads: “For the prophecy was not borne [or brought] by the will of

The term used here is specific, not to be confused with guiding, directing, controlling, or even leading in the full sense of that word. It goes beyond all such terms, in assigning the effect produced specifically to the active agent. What is “borne” is taken up by the “bearer,” and conveyed by the “bearer’s” power, not its own, to the “bearer’s” goal, not its own. The men who spoke from God are here declared, therefore, to have been taken up by the Holy Spirit and brought by His power to the goal of His choosing. The things which they spoke under this operation of the Spirit were, therefore, His things, not theirs.  

C. Distinguishing inspiration from revelation and illumination

Revelation is the act by which God directly conveys to people truth not previously known—truth that could not have been known in any other manner. Illumination refers to the influence of the Holy Spirit, common to all Christians, which helps them grasp the things of God. Jesus, the Word incarnate, promised spiritual illumination and revelation for all believers (Luke 10:21). In contrast, inspiration deals with how truth is communicated. The inspired writers may not have been fully cognizant of the meaning or importance of the Scripture they wrote. However, the Holy Spirit directed and influenced the writers through inspiration, thus preventing any error of fact or doctrine.

D. Theories of inspiration

1. Liberal views of inspiration: Many liberal theologians believe the Bible contains a varied admixture of the words of men and the “Word of God.” They believe the Bible contains some revelations that God gave to pious

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12 Warfield, 137.
individuals. However, they understand this divine revelation to be limited by and intermixed with human error and fallibility. In other words, they view the Bible as a religious scrapbook containing stories, legends, genealogies and love poems, which are classified and arranged without particular regard to chronology or literary perfection. The greatest problem with this view is that it places the determination of truth in the hands of the individuals instead of in the authority of the Scripture. Consequently, the truth of Scripture becomes relative to the preferences and biases of each individual. Instead of submitting to the Scripture as universal truth, individuals force the Scripture to submit to their preconceived notions of God and humanity.

2. Neoorthodox views of inspiration: The following statement summarizes neo-orthodoxy, or dialectical theology: “The Bible becomes the Word of God.” Two prominent theories are the existential view and the demythologizing view.

   a) The existential view popularized by Barth: Karl Barth taught that many human errors and imperfections exist in the Bible—even in the autographs. According to Barth, the Bible becomes the Word of God as God personally speaks to an individual through an act of revelation. In this existential experience—crisis encounter—the meaningless words and phrases on the page leap from the Bible to speak to people concretely and meaningfully. At that “moment of meaning,” the Bible becomes the Word of God to the believer.

   b) The demythologizing view of Bultmann and Neibuhr: According to this view, stripping the Bible of religious myth uncovers the real meaning of God’s self-giving love in Christ. It is necessary to look through and beyond the historical record, with all its myth and error, to the super-historical. Rudolf Bultmann and Reinhold Neibuhr proposed that significant events, such as the fall of man, the crucifixion and the resurrection are not necessarily the objects of verifiable and factual history. Rather, the Bible becomes a revelation when, by the proper (demythologizing) interpretation, a person is confronted with absolute love as set forth in the “myth” of God’s selfless love in Christ. This approach ignores that it is illogical to believe the gospel writers intentionally
provided inaccurate historical facts in an effort to teach perfect doctrine. Further, it is implausible that God would choose to communicate His infallible words through the falsehoods of biblical authors. Using error to teach truth seems inconsistent and contradictory to the very nature of God as truth.

3. Liberal and neo-orthodox views influenced developments concerning inspiration: Liberalism and neo-orthodoxy have spawned myriad theologies and theories. All of these theological trends have nuanced viewpoints concerning inspiration. Even so, many of these theological theories seem to embrace either a human-centered or mystery-centered understanding of the inspiration of Scripture.

   a) Human-centered understanding of inspiration: Some theologians and biblical scholars view God as either unknowable or nonexistent. Within this worldview, they understand the Bible to be a collection of stories that are no more authoritative than any other literary work. Believing God’s influence to be absent or nonexistent, these theories place inspiration solely within the motivations of the human authors.

   b) Mystery-centered understanding of inspiration: Some scholars believe inspiration is to be accepted as a mysterious truth or unknowable truth. Post-modern thought argues that human understanding of truth is relative to individual experience. Consequently, every individual experiences and understands truth from a different perspective. In this conception of reality, the truth of inspiration is accepted as an agreed upon mystery or rejected as an unknowable reality.

4. The conservative views: While liberal theologians contend the Bible merely contains the Word of God, and neo-orthodox scholars assert the Bible becomes the Word of God in an existential “moment of meaning,” conservative theologians believe the Bible is the Word of God. Within the conservative school several different theories exist.

   a) The verbal dictation theory: This theory posits that God dictated to humans every word of the Bible, including the punctuation. Thus the
Bible is a verbatim transcript of God’s voice. This theory is also called “mechanical inspiration” or “verbal dictation.” Very few evangelicals subscribe to the verbal dictation theory of inspiration. A notable weakness of this theory is it overlooks the personal writing styles of the divinely chosen human author.

b) The inspired concept theory: Some conservatives believe God gave divine thoughts to the authors but allowed the authors to record those divine thoughts in their own words. In this theory, the thoughts are inspired but not the words. Sometimes known as “dynamic inspiration,” this theory helps explain the Bible’s human qualities but may also overly minimize the Scripture’s divine nature. While the mechanical theory deifies human aspects of the Bible, the dynamic theory humanizes divine aspects.

c) The verbal plenary inspiration view: This view holds that all the words written in the Scripture are God-breathed and therefore inspired (2 Tim. 3:16). “Verbal” signifies the words while “plenary” means full or complete. Thus the verbal plenary inspiration view understands every single word of Scripture to be inspired by God and without error. God gave full expression to His thoughts in the words of the biblical record. He guided the choice of the words used within the personality and cultural context of the writers. Therefore, in some inscrutable manner, the Bible is the Word of God through the words of men. Inspiration, then, is the process whereby Spirit moved men (2 Pet. 1:21) produced Spirit-breathed writings (2 Tim. 3:16, NIV).

Gaussen gives an excellent definition when he writes that inspiration is “inexplicable power which the divine Spirit put forth of old on the authors of the Holy Scripture, in order to their guidance even in the employment of the words they used, and to preserve them, alike from all error and from all omission.”13 The means, or process, of inspiration is a mystery of God’s providence, and the result of this process is a verbal (the words), plenary (extending to all the parts equally), inerrant

(errorless) and authoritative record. Of all inspiration theories, verbal plenary inspiration best expresses the convictions expressed in this book as well as most Pentecostal communities.

VII. The Symbols of the Scripture

The Bible frequently uses symbolic language to teach. The Word of God is described symbolically or metaphorically throughout the Scripture. The most apparent references are listed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Scripture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seed</td>
<td>1 Peter 1:23, “Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.” See also Luke 8:11.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Ephesians 5:26, “That He might sanctify and cleanse her [the church] with the washing of water by the word.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamp and Light</td>
<td>Psalm 119:105, “Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.” See also Proverbs 6:23.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Jeremiah 23:29, “‘Is not My word like fire?’ says the Lord…” See also Jeremiah 20:9.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hammer</td>
<td>Jeremiah 23:29, “Is not my word…like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sword</td>
<td>Ephesians 6:17, “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>1 Peter 2:2, “As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honey</td>
<td>Psalm 119:103, “How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


VIII. The Holy Spirit and the Scripture

Inspiration accounts for inerrancy, and inerrancy proves inspiration. This miracle of infallible inspiration is the ministry of the Holy Spirit. All Spirit-filled believers have known the miracle of divine inspiration by the Holy Spirit but not like that experienced by the writers of Scripture. While Pentecostals value Spirit-led manifestations, they believe these experiences must be rooted in biblical truth. This is primarily because the Scripture was born out of the work of the Holy Spirit. Throughout Scripture, the manifestations of God’s Spirit always work in harmony with His Word. The following are just a few examples:

A. 2 Samuel 23:2 “The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue.”

B. Proverbs 1:23 “... Surely I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you.”

C. Isaiah 59:21 “… My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth…”

D. Acts 4:31 “… they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”

E. Ephesians 6:17 “… and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God…”

F. 1 Peter 1:12 “… those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit…”

A distinctive of Pentecostal faith is the belief that the works and gifts of the Holy Spirit are active in the world today. Even so, believers are to judge all manifestations by the Scripture. A person’s claim of a divine revelation is not sufficient in and of itself. Rather, there must be a standard, a final court of appeal, by which to judge all purported manifestations of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit-inspired written Word is the “court of appeal” to which people must go to judge the validity of any spiritual activity. The apostle Peter wrote,
“And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place…” (2 Pet. 1:19). Those who minister are never so fully “in the Spirit” as when they are ministering in full accord with the clearly revealed teaching of the Bible, the Word of God.

IX. How the Scripture Came to Us

The story of how the Bible came to us in its present form is a long and fascinating one. It begins with the original manuscripts, or “autographs.” Ancient writers penned these works as they were “moved upon” by the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). For many years, skeptics claimed Moses could not have authored the first part of the Bible because writing was unknown at that time (1500 B.C.). However, archaeologists have since proven that writing existed thousands of years before the time of Moses. Some Egyptian and Babylonian writings date to 3500 B.C., while Sumerian writings go as far back as 4000 B.C.

A. Ancient writing surfaces

1. Stone: Scholars have identified many famous writings in Egypt and Babylon inscribed on stone. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone (Exod. 31:18). Other examples are the Moabite Stone (850 B.C.) and the Siloam Inscription found in Hezekiah’s tunnel by the Pool of Siloam (700 B.C.).

2. Clay: The predominant writing material in Assyria and Babylonia was clay. Formed into small wedge-shaped tablets, the clay was baked in an oven or dried in the sun. Archaeologists have uncovered thousands of these tablets.

3. Wood: Ancient peoples used wooden tablets quite extensively. For many centuries these tablets were the common writing surface in Greece. Some believe this type of writing material is referred to in Isaiah 30:8 and Habakkuk 2:2.
4. Leather: The Jewish Talmud specifically required the copying of Scriptures on the skins of animals, i.e., leather. Scholars are certain Old Testament authors wrote on leather. Skins were sewn together to produce rolls of a few feet to over a hundred feet long. An author inscribed the text in columns perpendicular to the roll, then wrapped it on one or two sticks.

5. Papyrus: It is likely the New Testament authors wrote on papyrus since it was the most important writing material at that time. Thin sections of the papyrus reed were shaved into strips, soaked in several baths of water, then overlapped to form sheets. Individual sheets were layered crosswise and placed in a press until the layers adhered together. The sheets produced were six to fifteen inches high and three to nine inches wide. Sheets were pasted together to create a roll, usually averaging about 30 feet long.

6. Vellum or parchment: Vellum came into prominence through the efforts of King Eumenes II of Pergamum (197-158 B.C.). He endeavored to build up his library, but the king of Egypt cut off his supply of papyrus. Searching for a new type of writing material, he perfected a process for the treatment of skins. The result was vellum or parchment. The terms are now interchangeable, but originally vellum was from the skins of calves and antelopes while parchment was from the skin of sheep and goats. Fine quality leather was produced from these skins and was specially and carefully prepared for writing on both sides. This material was used from several hundred years before Christ until about the fourth century A.D. Almost all known manuscripts were written on vellum.

B. Writing instruments and materials

1. Chisels were used for writing on stone.

2. Styluses made of metal or hard wood were used for writing on clay tablets.

3. Pens for writing on papyrus or vellum were made from hollow stalks of coarse grass or reeds. The maker cut the stalk diagonally with a knife, shaved
it thin on the point and then split the point. In order to keep pens in good condition, scribes carried knives with them, thus, the derivation “penknife.”

4. Early inks were made from soot or lampblack and gum diluted with water. The first inks were all black. The Essenes, who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls, used burnt lamb bones and oil.

C. Languages

The Bible was originally written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. All remain as living languages in some parts of the world today.

1. Hebrew: Almost all of the 39 books of the Old Testament are in Hebrew. Originally the writers used block-like capital letters without vowels, punctuation marks or spaces between words, sentences or paragraphs. Vowel points were added later (approximately A.D. 500-600) by Masoretic scholars.

2. Aramaic: Related to Hebrew, Aramaic became the common language of Palestine after the Babylonian Captivity (approximately 500 B.C.). Small portions of the Old Testament were written in Aramaic: one word in Genesis 31:47; one verse in Jeremiah 10:11; about six chapters in the book of Daniel 2:4b-7:28 and several chapters in Ezra (Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26). Aramaic continued to be the vernacular of Palestine for several centuries, so some Aramaic words are preserved in the New Testament: Taliitha cumi (“Little girl…arise.”) in Mark 5:41; Ephphatha (“Be opened.”) in Mark 7:34; and Eli, eli, lama sabachthani (“My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?”) in Matthew 27:46. Jesus also habitually addressed God as Abba (Aramaic for “Father”). Note the influence of this in Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6. Another common Aramaic phrase of early Christians was Maranatha, meaning “O Lord, come” (1 Cor. 16:22).

3. Greek: Though the spoken language of Jesus was apparently Aramaic, New Testament writers used Koine, the common Greek dialect of the time. Greek was the universal language of the first century, making possible the spread of the gospel throughout the then-known world.
D. Manuscripts

In relation to the Bible, the term “manuscript” is restricted to copies of the biblical text in the original language. Approximately 4,500 manuscripts of the New Testament exist. This number is significant as scholars usually require only 10 or 20 manuscripts of a classical work to consider it genuine. Based on that standard, there is abundant evidence supporting the genuineness of the New Testament writings.

1. Classifications: Manuscripts are divided into four basic classes.

   a) Uncials are manuscripts that are written in capital letters. Most of the older manuscripts are uncials. Many older manuscripts are called uncials because the authors wrote in large capital letters. Some scholars think the name comes from the Latin word *uncia* *libris*, meaning inch. Approximately 300 of the New Testament manuscripts are uncials and approximately 200 of those are written on vellum.

   b) Cursives are manuscripts written in a cursive or running hand. They were written later than uncials. They date from the 10th to the 15th centuries A.D. Approximately 4,200 of the New Testament manuscripts are cursives. Probably more would have survived had it not been for Diocletian’s order to destroy them in A.D. 302.

   c) Lectionaries, a special group of manuscripts, are selected passages of Scripture designed to be read in public services. Lectionaries were written both as uncials and cursives. Most lectionaries are from the Gospels, but some are from Acts and the Epistles. These carefully crafted lectionaries provide exceptional copies for comparison studies. More than 1,800 have been discovered to date.

   d) Other specific discovered manuscripts have played crucial roles in the compilation of the Bible. There are many manuscripts besides those listed here, mostly smaller fragments of the Old or New Testament. However small these remnants may be, each gives testimony to the accuracy of the present scriptures.
2. Sinaitic Manuscript—Codex Aleph: One of the earliest of the uncial manuscripts, the Sinaitic (A.D. 340), was discovered in 1844 at the monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai. Written in Greek, it contains a part of the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, all of the New Testament and about half of the Apocrypha. It also contains the Epistle of Barnabas and much of the Shepherd of Hermas. It contains 364½ leaves of excellent vellum, 13½ inches wide and 14¾ inches high. Each page has four columns about 2½ inches wide, except the Poetical Books, where there are two wider columns. Each column has 48 lines. Constantine Tischendorf, a German professor and scholar, discovered the manuscript and was able to salvage 43 pages from the monks who were using them to light their fires. It was not until 15 years later he was able to procure the remaining pages. In 1933 the British Museum purchased the manuscript for 100,000 English pounds. It still resides there today. In 1975 researchers discovered a formerly unknown room in the monastery of St. Catherine holding 13 more pages of the Sinaiticus. Along with the Vaticanus, scholars consider the Sinaitic one of the two most important manuscripts in existence. It is the only one containing the complete New Testament.

3. Vaticanus Manuscript—Codex B: This famous uncial dates from the fourth century (approximately A.D. 325-350). It is in Greek and contains the following: the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, (with the exceptions of the books of Maccabees and the Prayer of Manassas) and the New Testament. Genesis 1:1-46; 2 Kings 2:57; 2 Kings 10:13; and Psalm 106:27 through Psalm 136:6 are missing from the Old Testament. Mark 16:9-20; John 7:53-8:11; 1 Timothy; 2 Timothy; Titus; Philemon; Hebrews 9:15-13:25 and Revelation are missing from the New Testament. This manuscript is located in the Vatican Library in Rome where librarians first catalogued it in 1481. The Vaticanus Codex B contains 759 leaves, 617 of the Old Testament and 142 of the New. The pages are 10 inches wide and 10½ inches high. Each page contains three columns of 42 lines, except the Poetical Books which have two columns. While considered to have the most exact copy of the New Testament known, it is of note that the Vaticanus does not contain Mark 16:9-20. Intriguingly, the scribe left more than a column blank at this place as though he knew of these verses but was undecided whether to include them or not.
4. Alexandrian Manuscript—Codex A: This uncial dates back to the fifth century (approximately A.D. 450). While it is of both the Old and New Testament, some parts are missing. Missing from the Old Testament are Genesis 14:14-17; 15:15, 16-19; 16:69; 1 Kings 12:18-14:9; and Psalms 49:19-79:10. Missing from the New Testament are Matthew 1:12-5:6; John 6:50-8:52 and 2 Corinthians 4:13-12:6. This manuscript is composed of 773 leaves, 639 of the Old Testament and 134 of the New Testament. Each page is 10¼ inches wide and 12¾ inches high and has two columns of 50 or 51 lines. It was probably written in Alexandria, Egypt and is said to have been presented to the Patriarch of Alexandria, thus the name “Codex Alexandrinus.” It is now in the National Library of the British Museum in London. It does not quite measure up to the high standard of the Vatican and the Sinaitic Manuscripts.

5. Ephraem Manuscript—Codex C: This contains portions of both the Old and New Testament. There are now only 64 leaves of the Old Testament and 145 leaves of the New Testament. The pages are 9½ by 12¼ inches. Each page has one wide column of 40-46 (usually 41) lines. It is thought to have been written in Egypt, probably Alexandria, and is dated to the fifth century (approximately A.D. 450). This manuscript is a “palimpsest,” meaning, “rubbed out.” Vellum parchment was scarce and expensive, so at times writers would rub out or erase existing text and inscribe new text. In this case, the writer wrote between the original lines. In the 12th century, a religious worker partially erased the original writings of this manuscript and inscribed the sermons of the Syriac Father Ephraem (A.D. 299-378) between the lines. Near the end of the 17th century, a student of the library noticed traces of older writing under the sermons of Ephraem. In 1834, restorers applied a chemical solution and partially revealed the original writings of the Greek Bible. In 1840, Tischendorf uncovered the underlying text more fully and was the first to read it successfully. In 1843-45, he edited and published the manuscript.

6. Beza Manuscript—Codex D: This dates from the sixth century (approximately A.D. 550). With some omissions, it contains the Gospels, 3 John 11-15 and Acts. It is located in the library at Cambridge University, England. It is composed of 406 leaves, each 8 by 10 inches, with one column
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of 33 lines to a page. This is the oldest known manuscript written in two languages. The left hand page is in Greek, while the corresponding text in Latin is on the right side. In 1562, Theodore Beza\textsuperscript{14} found it in the monastery of St. Irenaeus at Lyons, France. In 1581, Beza gave the manuscript to Cambridge University.

E. The versions

A version is a translation from the original language of a manuscript into another language. As the message of Christianity spread beyond Palestine, translating the Scriptures into other languages became necessary. Compared to the manuscripts, translated versions are of secondary value, but they do help in understanding the meaning of the original text. A few representative examples will be considered.

1. The Septuagint: This is perhaps the most important of the versions because of its early date and its influence on other translations. The Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. Begun about 280 B.C. and finished around 180 B.C., it is probably the oldest attempt to reproduce a book of any language into another language. It is the oldest existing scriptural document. “Septuagint” means “seventy”; the abbreviation of this version is LXX. An alternative name is the “Alexandrian Version” because the translation work was done in Alexandria, Egypt. This notable work is called the “Septuagint” because of a legend that 72 scholars came from Palestine (six from each of the 12 tribes of Israel) to Alexandria where they are said to have completed the work in 72 days. According to the fictitious story, the scholars were isolated from each other and placed one or two to a room. Later, examiners found that their completed translations were identical. Recent research reveals that Alexandrian Jews (rather than Palestinian) performed the work in Alexandria. The Pentateuch represents the best of the translation. Other portions of the Old Testament are excellent, but some are more of an interpretation or commentary. In addition to the 39 books of the Old Testament, this translation contains much

\textsuperscript{14} Beza, a well-known French Bible scholar, went to Geneva, Switzerland and became assistant to, and then successor of John Calvin, the famous Protestant reformer.
of the 14 books known as the Apocrypha. The Septuagint, commonly used in New Testament times, has been of great use in subsequent translations.

2. The Samaritan Pentateuch: The Samaritan race came into being after the Assyrians conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 721 B.C. and carried most of the ten tribes into captivity. Sargon, king of the Assyrians, sent many idolatrous people from his eastern provinces into Israel (2 Kings 17:5-6, 24). The Assyrians intermarried with Israelites still in the land and thus formed the Samaritan race. The Samaritans set up a rival worship to the Jews, building a temple on Mount Gerizim. They accepted only the Pentateuch as Holy Scripture. The Samaritan Pentateuch is a Hebrew Pentateuch written in Samaritan letters. Not a translation, it is actually a form of the Hebrew text itself. The date for its writing is about 430 B.C. Second Kings 17:26-28 tells of a priest, from among the Jews taken captive in Assyria, sent back to Samaria to teach the people. It is likely he took a copy of the Hebrew Pentateuch with him, ultimately resulting in the creation of the Samaritan Pentateuch. There are about 6,000 variations from the Hebrew text in this work. Most are of minor importance except where the Samaritans deliberately made alterations to suit their particular beliefs. There are probably around 100 copies of this version in different places in Europe and America. The New York Public Library holds the oldest known dated manuscript (1232). A Samaritan roll at Nablus (ancient Shechem) in Israel also appears to be very old.

3. Syriac Version: The Syriac language was the chief language spoken in the regions of Syria and Mesopotamia. It is almost identical to Aramaic.

   a) The Old Syriac version was discovered in the mid-19th century; it contains two chief manuscripts:

      (1) Named after its editor William Cureton of the British Museum, the Cureton Syriac is a fifth-century copy of the Gospels, consisting of 80 leaves.
(2) Discovered at St. Catherine’s Monastery at Mount Sinai, the Sinaitic Syriac is a palimpsest with only about three-fourths of its writings decipherable. The date assigned is the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century A.D.

b) The Peshitta, a name that means “simple” or “common,” is known as the Syriac Vulgate or Authorized Version of the Church of the East. It has been in use since the fifth century A.D. It contains all of the New Testament with the exceptions of 2 Peter, 2 John and 3 John, Jude and Revelation. There are about 250 manuscripts in existence. It has been a valuable aid to textual criticism and has had a wide circulation, even in China. An English translation was done by George Lamsa.

4. The Latin versions: It is noteworthy that Latin served as the basis for the first English Bible translation.

a) The Old Latin manuscript dates back as early as A.D. 150. There are about 20 copies in existence. It is of primary importance as a witness to the genuineness of the biblical text because of its antiquity and its faithfulness to the text.

b) The Latin Vulgate is the great version of the Bible in the Latin language. It is called the Vulgate because it was written in the common language of the time. Because of the many mistakes of the copyists of the Old Latin Version, Damasus, Bishop of Rome, secured the services of Jerome to produce an authoritative standard revision for the Latin speaking churches. Jerome completed this version in Bethlehem: the New Testament (A.D. 382-383) and the Old Testament (A.D. 390-405). Jerome’s Vulgate has had tremendous influence on our modern Bible translations. For more than a thousand years, the Vulgate served as the basis for every Western European translation of the Scripture. Eventually, it became the official Bible of the Roman Catholic church as it still is today. The traditional English version of the Roman Catholic Bible is a translation of the Vulgate rather than a translation from the original Greek language. After the invention of the printing press in 1450, the Vulgate was the first book ever printed from movable type (1455).
F. Biblical criticism

1. Higher criticism, also called historical criticism, examines the books of the Bible from the standpoint of their history. Dealing with age, authorship, genuineness and canonical authority, higher criticism looks at the origin, preservation and integrity of each biblical book. Higher criticism has helped in the ascertaining of a genuine canon of Scripture.

2. Lower criticism deals with understanding the exact words of the original texts of the Bible. This method gathers and compares ancient manuscripts, versions and quotations of Scripture to determine the true reading of every doubtful passage.

G. Evidences of biblical text

The sincere Bible critic uses the manuscripts, the versions and the writings of the early church fathers to determine the true wording that is closest to the original manuscripts.

1. The writings of the church fathers: The church fathers were the prominent leaders, theologians, teachers and scholars during the first few centuries after Christ. They were dedicated Christians who wrote sermons, commentaries and homilies. They contended for the faith amid the onslaught of false religions. The following are some of the better known names from a group said to number about 200 individuals during the first seven centuries:

   a) A.D. 96-150: Clement of Rome, Hermas, Ignatius and Polycarp

   b) A.D. 150-325: Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian and Tatian

   c) A.D. 325 and later: Eusebius, Athanasius, Jerome and Augustine
These men quoted freely from the Bible, citing not only all 27 books of the New Testament but also virtually every verse in those books. Geisler and Nix asserted, “Five Fathers alone, from Irenaeus to Eusebius, possess almost 36,000 quotations from the New Testament.”

Some years ago, Sir David Dalrymple was at a dinner with a group of scholars when the question was asked, “If the whole New Testament were destroyed in the fourth century, would it be possible for it to be put together from the writings of the church fathers of the second and third centuries?” Two months later he said to one of the company, “The question aroused my curiosity, and having all existing works of the Fathers from the second and third centuries, I commenced to search. Up to this time I have found all the New Testament except eleven verses.” The testimony of the writings of the church fathers to the authenticity of the text is of significant importance. First, because of their devotion to God and His Word, they were careful in their copying of the Scriptures. Second, because they lived so close to the apostolic days, it is probable that they had access to manuscripts not in existence today. Some may have had access to the originals.

2. The Dead Sea Scrolls: In 1947 a Bedouin boy was herding goats near the northern end of the Dead Sea when he discovered these scrolls in a cave. Approximately 350 scrolls in all, the Dead Sea Scrolls are considered one of the greatest archaeological finds of the last century. Written by the Essenes between the first century before and the first century after Christ, the scriptural portions of the scrolls are hundreds of years older than any other previously known manuscripts. Portions of every book of the Old Testament, with the exception of Esther, are contained in the scrolls. Of special interest is the scroll that contains the entire book of Isaiah. This Hebrew Isaiah manuscript is 1,000 years older than any previously discovered text. Even more remarkably, the scrolls confirm the accuracy of the Masoretic text of the Old Testament.

3. The Papyri: Of great interest to Bible scholars are the papyri found in Egyptian graves during the 1900s. Many assert these are the most important gains for New Testament textual criticism since Tischendorf announced the discovery of the Sinaitic Codes. Sir Arthur Chester Beatty (died 1968) acquired the papyri, now housed in the Beatty Library in Dublin, Ireland. Others are in the possession of the University of Michigan and private individuals. They contain parts of the Old Testament in Greek with considerable portions of Genesis, Numbers and Deuteronomy as well as parts of Esther, Ezekiel and Daniel. Three manuscripts in the group are of New Testament books. These include portions of 30 leaves of the Gospels and Acts, 86 leaves of the Pauline Epistles and 10 leaves out of the middle section of the book of Revelation. This material is of great importance for it dates from the third century or earlier. The text is of such high quality that it ranks with the Vatican and Sinaitic Codices.

The John Rylands Fragment is a papyrus fragment that measures only 3½ by 2½ inches. Though small, it is the oldest recognized manuscript of any part of the New Testament. It was obtained in 1920, has writing on both sides and contains portions of the gospel of John (John 18:31-33, 37-38). In 1956, Victor Martin, a professor of classical philology at the University of Geneva, published a papyrus codex of the gospel of John called Papyrus Bodmer II. The manuscript contains John 1:1-14:26. Dated A.D. 200, it is probably the oldest book of the New Testament in substantial condition.

4. Textual criticism conclusions: Although textual critics have discovered variant readings, none of these have altered Christian doctrine. In fact, “Wescott and Hort, Ezra Abbot, Philip Schaff, and A.T. Robertson have carefully evaluated the evidence and have concluded that the New Testament text is over 99 percent pure.”

16 Geisler and Nix, *From God to Us*, 180.
X. The Scripture in English

The beginnings of the English Bible go back to the seventh century when an uneducated laborer named Caedmon arranged stories from the Bible in verse form. The first English translation was done by Aldhelm, who translated Psalms in A.D. 705. The Venerable Bede, an early English historian, finished translating the gospel of John with virtually his last breath (A.D. 735). Toward the close of the ninth century, King Alfred translated the Ten Commandments, other laws of the Old Testament, the Psalms and the Gospels (though these were unfinished at his death). Approximately A.D. 1000, Aelfric, Archbishop of Canterbury, translated the Gospels, the first seven books of the Old Testament, Esther, Job and a part of Kings. The following are important events related to the development of the English Bible.

A. John Wycliffe’s translation

Oxford professor, John Wycliffe, with the help of his students, translated the entire Bible into English from the Latin Vulgate. He completed this task in 1382. In 1388, John Purvey thoroughly corrected and revised Wycliffe’s Bible to better harmonize the different styles of the original translators. This revised edition was prominent until the 16th century.

B. William Tyndale’s translation

Historians recognize William Tyndale as the true father of the English Bible. In 1516, the monk scholar Erasmus published the first printed Greek New Testament. Tyndale sought to translate this Greek version into English. However, he faced so much opposition from the Roman Catholic church that he had to flee to Hamburg, Germany. From there he finished the translation and sought to have it printed in Cologne. By this time, Tyndale had become associated with Martin Luther and the Reformation. Thus, the enemies of the Reformation became Tyndale’s enemies as well. He was forced to flee from Cologne with the sheets of his partially printed New Testament.
Tyndale found a friendlier environment at Worms, Germany, where he completed the printing of his translation of the New Testament in 1525. Early the next year, copies of his translation were smuggled into England and received with great enthusiasm. However, Roman Catholic authorities condemned the translation as heresy, purchasing and publicly burning all copies found. In the meantime, Tyndale continued his work of translating the Old Testament into English. He finished the Pentateuch in 1530, the book of Jonah in 1531, and revised Genesis in 1534. Betrayed and imprisoned in 1534, Tyndale was strangled and burned at the stake after 16 months in prison. His dying words were, “Lord, open the King of England’s eyes.” It seems that God answered his prayer over the course of time. Both the Great Bible and the King James Version were approved by the English monarchy and are essentially later revisions of Tyndale’s work.

C. Important 16th and 17th century translations

1. The Coverdale Bible: In 1535, the Coverdale Bible was printed and has the distinction of being the first complete Bible printed in English. It was the work of Miles Coverdale, a friend of William Tyndale. The Coverdale Bible was a translation of a translation from the German and Latin. It was the first Bible to have the approval of the king of England.

2. Matthew’s Bible: Appearing in 1537, this was the work of William Tyndale’s friend, John Rogers. It was a combined edition of the work of both Tyndale and Coverdale. Actually, Matthew’s Bible was Tyndale’s Bible complete, as far as his translation went, supplemented by Coverdale’s work. It was the first Tyndale revision and formed the basis of all future revisions: the Great Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Bishop’s Bible and the King James Version. It bears the name “Matthew’s Bible,” because Rogers was afraid that if Tyndale’s name were attached to it there might be greater opposition to its acceptance.

3. The Great Bible: Published in 1539, the Great Bible was actually a revision of Matthew’s Bible, which was a revision of Tyndale’s. Coverdale, a meticulously careful reviser, did the work. It is known as the “Great Bible” because of its large size, 13¾ by 7½ inches. It is the first “authorized” Bible
because King Henry VIII officially approved it. He issued a proclamation that it be placed in and read publicly in every church throughout the land so that all might have the opportunity to learn from it. Chained to the desk of the churches to prevent theft, the Great Bible also became known as the “Chained Bible.”

4. The Geneva Bible: Published in Geneva (1560), this was destined to become the most popular Bible of its century. The publishers printed it in small size and legible type with appropriate illustrations and commentaries. The Geneva Bible was the first Bible divided entirely into verses. It became popular in homes just as the Great Bible had been popular in churches. The Geneva Bible was the Bible of Shakespeare and of the Pilgrims who came to America.

5. The Bishop’s Bible: This version was published in 1568 by authority of Bishop Parker and other bishops who felt the Geneva Bible undermined their authority. The Bishop’s Bible was never a popular edition because it was too cumbersome in size and its language too stiff, formal and difficult for the common person to understand.

6. The Rheims Douai Bible: As a result of a flurry of Bible translations by the Protestant church, the Roman Catholic church produced its own English translation. In 1582, Catholics produced an edition of the New Testament at the English college at Rheims, France. From A.D. 160-910 the Old Testament was produced at the same college, which had moved to Douay, France. Thus, the Rheims Douai Bible became the first Roman Catholic edition of the English Bible. It was translated from the Latin Vulgate.

7. The King James Version: Published in 1611, The King James Version is also known as the Authorized Version. At the Hampton Court Conference (composed of religious leaders from various and diverse groups called to discuss the question of religious tolerance) a proposal was made to produce a new translation of the Bible. King James received the suggestion with enthusiasm and laid down the rule that no divisive comments should be included. About 48 Greek and Hebrew scholars worked in six groups: two at Westminster, two at Oxford and two at Cambridge. Each group translated assigned books
and sent the results to the other two groups. Thus, the translation was indeed the work of all rather than any single individual. Actually, it was a revision of the Bishop’s Bible, which in turn was a revision of Tyndale’s work. The Authorized Version is the fifth revision of the Tyndale translation. Begun in 1607, after two years and nine months, it was sent to the printers and was first presented to the public in 1611, seven years after the convening of the Hampton Court Conference.

D. Modern translations

1. English Revised Edition (ERE): As excellent and popular as it was, the King James Version had certain weaknesses. The most valuable witnesses to the original autographs, the Vatican, the Sinaitic, the Alexandrian and the Ephraem Manuscripts were not available to the King James translators. Many archaic expressions exist in this translation, and some minor mistakes are observable. In February 1870, a motion to consider revising the King James Version passed in the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury. Unimpeachable scholars in both England and America engaged in the translation work. On May 17, 1881, the New Testament was completed followed by the Old Testament on May 19, 1885. The revised work is known as the English Revised Edition.

2. The American Standard Version (ASV): Published in 1901, the American Standard Version incorporated an improved textual base beyond that available to the translators of the King James Version. This effort cleared many of the archaic expressions of the King James, yet it was not without criticism. Though it clarified the understanding of the Greek, it lost the beauty of the English.

3. The Revised Standard Version (RSV): In 1929 the Thomas Nelson and Sons publishing company gave the expiring copyright of the American Standard Version to the International Council of Religious Education. This council appointed a committee of scholars to consider revising the American Standard. Funds were difficult to obtain, and it was not until September 30, 1952 that the entire Bible was completed. The revisers wanted to take advantage of many new manuscripts and papyri that had been uncovered since the
publication of the 1901 version, yet they wanted to retain the beauty of the King James language. This version has been widely received though has not been without its critics, chiefly among conservative scholars.

4. The New American Standard Bible (NASB): Published on July 31, 1970, the New American Standard Bible has received the endorsement of many conservatives. It is based on the American Standard Version of 1901.

5. The New International Version (NIV): This completely new translation has been enthusiastically received. The New Testament was published in 1973 and the complete Bible in 1978. The work was done by scholars from the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand; thus, it has an international flavor. Scholars from more than thirteen denominations participated in the work of translation. The NIV is now the best selling English translation in the world having even outsold the King James Bible since 1987.

6. The New King James Version (NKJV): First released as an entire Bible in 1982 by Thomas Nelson, the New King James Version sought to retain the devotional language and intrinsic literary beauty of the 1611 version while updating to modern English. The NKJV enjoys wide popularity throughout the English-speaking world.

7. Other Translations: Over the past several decades, a flood of new translations have endeavored to provide a clearer or more nuanced understanding of the Scripture. More translations will most assuredly follow.

Conclusion: Does the abundance of translations and paraphrases indicate that we cannot depend upon our present English Bible to declare the true message of God? Perhaps the following quotation from Sir Frederic Kenyon, director of the British Museum, will answer the question best: “It is reassuring at the end to find that the general result of all these discoveries and all this study is to strengthen the proof of the authenticity of the Scriptures, and our conviction that we have in our hands, in substantial integrity, the veritable Word of God.”

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Chapter Two
The Doctrine of God

INTRODUCTION

The study of God is of great importance, for God is humankind’s highest good. John Calvin said, “Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts; the knowledge of God and of ourselves.” Consequently, to know ourselves we must to some degree know God and His will for our lives.

Theology is the study of God. The term theology comes from the Greek words theos meaning “God” and logos meaning “idea, word, speech, discussion, reason, study.” Through theology we understand and develop the doctrine of God. Generally speaking, there are three categories of theology:

(1) Natural Theology—The study of God in the universe and nature

(2) Biblical Theology—The study of God in the Scripture

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(3) Systematic Theology—The systematized study of God using the Scripture as well as scientific, philosophical and ethical reasoning

While Christian theology is based primarily on the Holy Scripture and the revelation of God through Jesus Christ, His Son, there are also intellectual and philosophical arguments that help communicate the truth of God. Consequently, this book will also employ systematic and formalized ways of communicating theology and doctrine. In the context of the Doctrine of God, the term theology will be used to specifically describe the study of God’s existence, nature, names, attributes and works.

I. The Knowability of God

A. Greater than human comprehension

God is the Infinite One. In one sense, He is incomprehensible. How can finite beings comprehend the infinite, limitless God? How can the created fully understand the Creator? Isaiah 55:8-9 declares, “‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.’” The apostle Paul exclaimed, “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!” (Rom. 11:33). The fullness of God’s nature, plans and designs far exceed the limits of human comprehension.

B. Knowable

Although God is infinite, He is also profoundly knowable. Through Jesus, God has clearly revealed Himself to humanity. Paul wrote that Jesus is “…the image of the invisible God…” (Col. 1:15). Hebrews refers to Jesus as the “brightness” and “the express image” of God (Heb. 1:3). In John’s gospel Jesus said, “…He who has seen Me has seen the Father…” (John 14:9). While people unaided cannot come to fully know the infinite God, it
is clear that God has revealed Himself and can be known to the extent of His self-revelation. In fact, redemption and eternal life are grounded in knowing God: “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3). Even so, this knowledge is limited until we reach our heavenly home: “For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known” (1 Cor. 13:12). Although God is infinitely greater than human comprehension, He is still intimately knowable.

II. The Existence of God

A. The value of the argument for God’s existence

Some question the value of formulating arguments for the existence of God. They view a belief in God’s existence to be primarily an issue of faith. Even the Scripture seems to dedicate little or no space to arguing for the presence of a creator. The Scripture begins with the certainty of God: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). For the most part, the Bible conveys the existence of God as a reality to be received by faith or to be rejected. Even so, this faith does not contradict reason or the natural world. The psalmist sang, “The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork” (Ps. 19:1). Paul wrote that humans who reject God are responsible for their rebellion: “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse…” (Rom. 1:20). The Scripture supports the validity of a natural theology. However, while natural theology may point to a knowable creator, it offers no real solution for the problem of sin (John 1:29). It is important to note that limited arguments from finite beings cannot fully communicate the existence of an infinite God. Consequently, the arguments that follow are not a substitute for Holy-Spirit-empowered, scriptural revelation. Rather they provide assurance that the natural world confirms, defends and bolsters God’s supernatural revelation.
B. Arguments for God’s existence

1. The argument from reason: The first phase of the argument from reason revolves around the concept of cause and effect. Human existence takes place within the context of matter and motion. The existence of matter and motion has three possible explanations: (1) they exist eternally, (2) they emerged from nothing or (3) they were caused. It is unlikely the universe exists eternally, for all evidence points to a universe whose energy is dissipating rather than increasing. According to the second law of thermodynamics, the sun and the stars are losing energy at a measurable rate. Radioactive materials are also losing their radiation. Furthermore, spectrographic studies show all heavenly bodies are travelling outward from the center. This information seems to indicate the sun and stars share a single point of origin and a decisive beginning. Second, the argument that matter and motion emerged from nothing is a contradiction. The ancient Greek philosopher Parmenides argued, “Nothing comes from nothing.” Therefore, the most reasonable explanation is that matter and motion were created at a specific time by an initial cause. Most scientists believe the universe is between five and twenty billion years old. Some propose its beginning occurred through a series of emergences or the work of an impersonal creator. Considering the universe’s great complexity, it is logical to view the universe’s existence as the work of an intelligent creator.

Another support of the argument from reason is that humans seem to possess an innate belief in the existence of a creator. Sociologists and scientists have repeatedly evidenced humankind’s apparent natural propensity to believe in God or gods. All people groups appear to have historical and cultural foundations deeply rooted in deity worship and religious practices. This does not mean all people have a fully developed belief in God. However, it does seem to indicate that religious belief and the propensity to worship a deity are natural to humanity.

2. The argument from nature: Almost everything in nature appears to have an intelligent design and purpose. There is astounding balance and interconnectivity in the natural world. For instance, the earth is tilted on its axis in relation to the sun, thereby providing the seasons and the best
distribution of light and heat throughout the year. The earth’s distance from the sun is ideal for avoiding searing heat and freezing cold. The chemical composition of the atmosphere is perfect for animal and vegetable life. The ratio of land and water on the earth’s surface provides the proper amount of rainfall and humidity. Even the wind and sea currents bring just the right amount of cooling and warmth to foster and sustain life.

A study of water also points to a divine design and order within nature. Water is one of the most common substances on the earth. While most other substances become denser with lowered temperature, water expands and becomes less dense when frozen. Ice floats on top of lakes, rivers and seas. If water became denser when frozen, many bodies of water would never thaw, making the earth’s surface glacial and uninhabitable. Certainly, such a design variance points to a wise creator.

Beyond the utility of nature, the glorious sights and sounds of the natural world speak of a creator who designed ears and eyes to experience beauty and pleasure. To believe an impersonal force or random process brought such a remarkable and ordered universe into being seems illogical. As scientific discovery progresses, the words of the psalmist perpetually ring true, “The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork” (Ps. 19:1).

3. The argument from history: The argument from history rests upon the foundation of divine providence. Although God does not cause every individual event, He is in control of the stream of events that ultimately brings to pass His overarching purposes. Throughout history God has fulfilled the prophecies of the Scripture. A discernable pattern, focused upon Jesus Christ, is divinely woven throughout the Bible as well as human history. God’s purpose in Christ is seen in Israel’s documented history as well as Israel’s indestructibility throughout the centuries (Gen. 12:13; Isa. 52:10-53:12). This purpose is further evidenced through the New Testament in Christ’s incarnation, life, death and resurrection as well as in the church’s historic triumph over manifold opposition. Many key events in human history point to a superintending God.
4. The argument from the human condition: The distinct character and moral nature of humans point to the existence of a creator. The Word of God declares that humans are uniquely defined as being created in the image of God:

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them (Gen. 1:26-27).

Since humans are made in God’s likeness, they are uniquely set apart from all other created things. That uniqueness is expressed in humans having dominion over the creatures of the earth as well as capacity for and yearning for fellowship with God. Humans also express God’s likeness in their moral nature, sense of duty and the possession of a conscience. Paul wrote that the human conscience attests to “the work of the law written in their hearts” (Rom. 2:15). C. S. Lewis said:

These then are the two points I wanted to make. First, that human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it. Secondly, they do not in fact behave in that way. They know the Law of Nature; they break it. These two facts are the foundation of all clear thinking about ourselves and the universe we live in.²

The conflicted conscience of humans points to the fact that a personal God holds people responsible for their conduct and attitude. People were made to commune with God and to yield their God-given capacity to God’s will and authority. When humans refuse to acknowledge their God-ordained

² Clive Staples Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, (New York, Macmillan and Company, 1952) 21. C.S. Lewis’ writings have been very effective in presenting the Christian message to educated people.
created purposes, they live with a guilty conscience. While it is possible to sear the human conscience or quiet it by self-deception, every person will inevitably try to work out a value system that defends the worth of their life. In trying to defend or justify the moral rightness of their existence, humans acknowledge that they have a created purpose for existence.

5. The argument from Scripture: The argument from Scripture rests upon the validity of its claims and upon its accuracy. The Bible claims to be the inspired Word of God (Jer. 1:1-13; 1 Cor. 2:12-13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). Many have questioned the Bible’s accuracy, but archeological findings have repeatedly confirmed its correctness. The renowned archeologist Dr. W. F. Albright wrote, “Nothing tending to disturb the religious faith of Jew or Christian has been discovered…Discovery after discovery has established the accuracy of innumerable details, and has brought increased recognition of the value of the Bible as a source book of history.”

No other book compares with the Bible for elevated moral and spiritual teaching. It never ceases to speak with power and healing to the deepest problems of the human soul and spirit.

C. Erroneous theories about God

The Bible teaches that God is the all-powerful, all-wise creator of everything. He is just and holy while still loving and merciful. He is transcendent (above and distinct from the creation) yet also immanent (resident in and involved with his creation). He is a personal God who seeks fellowship with His redeemed people. He punishes ultimate rebellion with eternal death. He rewards faith with eternal life through His Son and Mediator, Jesus Christ. He is the Supreme Being: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He spoke into being the immeasurable universe, yet He notes the sparrow’s fall and hears the faintest cry. He made the galaxies, but He stooped to Bethlehem’s manger. Believers tremble before His majesty but also seek solace in His unconditional love. This is the Christian’s God. There are, however, different views held by those who ignore the scriptural doctrine of God.

1. Atheism: Atheists deny the existence of any deity. They believe the universe came about by chance, or that it has always existed and is sustained by resident, impersonal laws. There are two kinds of atheists: (1) the philosophical atheist who denies that God exists and (2) the practical atheist who lives as if God does not exist.

2. Agnosticism: Agnostics do not deny the existence of God. Rather, they deny the possibility of truly knowing whether or not God exists. Professor Thomas Huxley coined the word agnostic from the inscription “Agnosto Theo” (the unknown god) found on the Athen’s altar the apostle Paul referenced in Acts 17:23. Paul used this reference to the unknown god in a very different manner than Huxley. In fact, Paul referred to the Athenian “unknown god” as the only real God. In contrast, the other Athenian deities were only human heroes or myths elevated to the status of gods by the Greeks. Paul’s entire message was centered upon declaring the “knowability” of God. Agnostics question the ability to know God. However, the Bible assures every person that God is close and knowable.

3. Materialism: Materialists deny the existence of spirit or spiritual beings. They believe reality is merely matter in motion. Materialists believe the human mind and soul are only functions of the physical brain developed over billions of years by gradual evolution. In this view of existence, there is no life after death; heaven and hell are only earthly states of pleasure or pain, success or failure. If materialists are consistent in their logic, they have no real basis for morality because doing good would only be doing what brings the greatest pleasure to the greatest number. With a materialist worldview, there is no reason for individuals to feel a deep obligation to be moral other than to avoid losing esteem because there is no judgment above the human level, and sin is only an issue of imperfection.

4. Pantheism: Pantheists believe that everything is God or that there is no separation between God and the natural world. The term comes from theos meaning “god” and pan meaning “all.” Philosophers Spinoza and Hegel were the best known European pantheists. Hinduism and Taoism are rooted in pantheism along with other eastern religions. Pantheism argues against the
concept of a personal God. Rather, spiritual enlightenment is often viewed as achieving the desireless, passionless, soulless state of nirvana.

5. Polytheism: Polytheists believe in many gods. The word comes from the Greek poly, meaning “many” and theos, meaning “god.” Many ancient cultures believed every facet of nature was ruled over by a god or goddess. Some people groups believed that their tribal heroes became deities ruling over rivers, rainfall, agriculture, human passions, various planets, seasons of the year and other natural or supernatural phenomena. Israel’s neighbors were polytheists, and polytheism often corrupted Israel’s worship even though the Bible strongly condemns the practice of worshiping and believing in other gods (Isa. 44:9-20).

6. Deism: This word comes from the Latin word deus which means “god.” Deists believe in a transcendent but “absentee” God. This God made the universe and humankind but left His creation to sustain itself by natural laws. Deists usually deny humanity’s sinful nature and the need for atonement or a redeemer. Deists believe God is distant. They reject miracles as well as the divine inspiration of Scripture.

7. Dualism: Dualists believe in the existence of two opposite yet equal realms. These may be thought of as spirit versus matter, light versus dark or good versus evil. Zoroaster, a Persian philosopher of Moses’ time, first advanced the idea of two gods of equal power, neither triumphing over the other. The Bible teaches of good and evil; however, Satan and God are not equal in force, authority, power or substance. Satan is a created being. God is God! God’s Kingdom will triumph over Satan. The light and life of God will vanquish all evil and darkness. Gnostics and Manicheans in post-apostolic times were dualists, teaching that all matter was evil and that only spirit was good. The New Testament does not have a dualist view of matter and spirit. Scripture teaches that material things may be good and useful to God’s kingdom when they are managed with a dedicated stewardship and yielded to God and His purposes. See 1 Corinthians 3:21-23 and 1 Timothy 6:17. Ultimately, dualism denies the incarnational power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
III. The Nature of God

It is important to study the nature of God with humility and reverence, for God’s magnificent essence surpasses human comprehension. God proclaimed through the prophet Isaiah, “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:9). Even so, God has revealed as much of His essential nature to us as is needed to serve and worship Him. Although the Bible does not provide a single, comprehensive definition of God, it is still important to articulate a view of God’s nature that aligns with Scripture. The following historical definition serves as a good starting point: “God is a Spirit, Infinite, Eternal, and Unchangeable in his Being, Wisdom, Power, Holiness, Justice, Goodness and Truth.” Several statements about God in Scripture also help us define various aspects of His nature: “God is Spirit…” (John 4:24); “God is light…” (1 John 1:5); “…God is love” (1 John 4:8), and “…God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:29). The following section will focus upon four aspects of God’s nature.

A. God is Spirit

The statement that God is Spirit means He is not limited to a physical body or to the dimensions of space and time. He is the invisible, eternal God: “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him” (John 1:18). Jesus pointed out that a person must be “born of the Spirit” to enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5). Since “God is Spirit…those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24).

Some difficulties arise when individuals attempt to grasp the concept that God is Spirit. First, some Bible passages seem to represent God as having human features such as eyes, ears or arms (Isa. 52:10; Ps. 34:15). These references are figures of speech called "anthropomorphisms" (meaning “manlike”). When God is described as having “ears” to hear a cry or “arms” to provide help, the figurative language is employed to help readers comprehend God in

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4 The Westminster Catechism.
relatable human terms. Although human imagery is used to describe certain attributes of God, it is important to realize that God’s nature contrasts the limits of humanity:

“To whom then will you liken Me, Or to whom shall I be equal?” says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, And see who has created these things, Who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, By the greatness of His might And the strength of His power; Not one is missing. Why do you say, O Jacob, And speak, O Israel: “My way is hidden from the LORD, And my just claim is passed over by my God?” Have you not known? Have you not heard? The ever-lasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable (Isa. 40:25-28).

The Eternal Spirit does not need eyes to see people’s need, nor is He wearied in His redeeming activity. God is not limited by earthly constraints.

Another difficulty in understanding God as Spirit is that in the Old Testament God is sometimes represented as appearing in human form (see Gen.17-19; Josh. 5:13-15). For example, God appeared to Abraham to assure him that he would have a promised son who would bless all nations. This appearance and other visible manifestations of God are called theophanies. Such appearances, however, do not contradict the reality of God as Spirit. Although God is in essence Spirit, He can also assume any form that best suits His purposes.

The greatest mystery in comprehending God as Spirit is found in what God the Son did when He took on human form to become the believer’s Redeemer, High Priest and Eternal King. Although God is Spirit, the Son of God became the incarnate manifestation of God. In other words, Jesus was God in the flesh, dwelling among us. Jesus said to Philip, “…he who has seen Me has seen the Father…” (John 14:9). Although Jesus was God in the flesh, He was not limited by the flesh. After the resurrection, Jesus had a spiritual
body that was not subject to natural, physical limitations (John 20:19-29) although there is some indication that Jesus may, in His spiritual body, eternally bear the marks of Calvary’s suffering.

B. God is perfect

Jesus said to His disciples, “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48). God is complete perfection, truth and holiness. All of His ways are blameless. He is pure righteousness and complete love. His ways and His being are beyond reproach. There is nothing dirty, unclean or incomplete in God. God is holy and therefore wholly perfect (Lev. 11:44; 1 Pet. 1:16).

C. God is personal

A personal being possesses self-consciousness, intellect, feeling and will. The God of Holy Scriptures is personal. Although God is a transcendent God who stands apart from the universe as its creator, He is also at the same time, an immanent God who resides within His creation, preserving and caring for His creation as a heavenly Father.

The personality of God is revealed in His dealing with Moses when He declared His personal name *Yahweh* (Exod. 3:14; 6:2-3), which both clarifies His identity and reflects His character. The name of God, *Yahweh*, is derived from the Hebrew “to be” verb. “I AM THAT I AM” is one possible translation of *Yahweh*. In revealing His meaningful name to Israel, God showed that He was not merely an impersonal soul of the universe but rather a relational, personal God. His actions demonstrate this as well. God spoke and entered into a covenant with the Israelites as an intelligent being. He answered the inquiries of Moses as one who empathizes with and responds to human anxieties, fears and feelings. He personally chose a man to carry out His will and lead Israel as a witness nation among nations. He heard the groanings of His people in Egypt. Their anguish mattered to Him. The Israelites were not led by a distant, uncaring, impersonal force. Rather, they were directed by a personal God.
The most convincing display of God’s personal nature occurred in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, “Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:6-8). God literally spared no expense to save His children from their own sins. He took on flesh and gave His own life as a perfect sacrifice for the sins of those He created. Such redeeming love cannot come from an impersonal principle; love is a personal characteristic of a personal God.

D. God is One

The Law of God given on Sinai begins with the declaration, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!” (Deut. 6:4). The nations surrounding Israel worshiped many false gods represented by images and idols. Israel’s downfall resulted from the people’s continual flirtation with these deities. Israel’s King Ahab introduced the worship of Baal, a false nature god. Elijah confronted this idol worship by challenging the priests of Baal and Ashtoreth to a spectacular contest with Yahweh, the living God (1 Kings 18:21-40). Yahweh answered Elijah’s prayer by consuming a waterlogged sacrifice with fire. In response to this miracle, the Israelites acknowledged in one accord that Yahweh is the only true God. Consequently, the catastrophic trend toward polytheism was temporarily halted.

The uncompromising call for the worship of the one true God resonates throughout Scripture. Isaiah declared, “Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: ‘I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God’” (Isa. 44:6). Jesus championed the same great truth as He prayed to the Father: “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3). The apostle Paul commended the Thessalonians for having turned away from idols to the true God (1 Thess. 1:9). Some have thought that religion evolved from animism and polytheism to monotheism. However, archeological and missiological evidence indicates early cultures were originally monotheistic before developing an increasingly corrupted view of God. Although a proper
understanding of the Trinity will be addressed later, it is important to first clearly establish that God is one God.

IV. The Names of God

Scripture employs a number of names for God. In Jewish culture names often represented an attribute or characteristic of the person named. Thus, the names of God that appear in the Bible are significant because they provide insight into God’s character and personhood.

A. The Old Testament personal, covenantal name of God

_Yahweh_ (Heb. *YHWH*) is the personal name of God revealed to God’s chosen people. Although scholars disagree on the exact etymology of *YHWH*, it is quite certain that God’s name is a variant of the “to be” verb. The context of Moses’ encounter with *Yahweh* lends credence to the notion that God’s name is, in fact, translated something akin to “I AM” or “I AM WHO I AM”:

> Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?” And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I Am has sent me to you.’” Moreover God said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel; ‘The LORD (Yahweh) God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations’” (Exod. 3:13-15).

In disclosing his personal name to Moses, _Yahweh_ invited His creation to call upon Him and to know Him personally. In revealing His name to His creation, God revealed Himself as the one true God, the sovereign over all
other powers, the great “I AM.” His name speaks of His autonomous, self-determined, perfectly complete nature. The self-disclosure of His name carries significance in that it not only identified God to the Israelites but also allowed the Israelites to identify themselves with God. More than a generic title for a deity, God’s personal, covenantal name is *Yahweh*. Therefore He is known as “LORD (Yahweh) our God” (Exod. 3:18).

*Yahweh* occurs in the Old Testament 5,321 times and is usually translated LORD in all capital letters. The Hebrew form of the divine name is *YHWH*, but the exact pronunciation is uncertain as the Israelites eventually stopped pronouncing God’s name for fear of violating the commandment to not take the name of “The LORD (YHWH) in vain” (Exod. 20:7). Vowels did not appear in the original Hebrew Masoretic text. However, when vowels were added for pronunciation, the vowels for *Adonai*, “my Lord,” were mixed with the consonants of *YHWH* to keep readers from accidentally saying the name of God out loud. Furthermore, the Greek translation of the Old Testament (LXX) rendered *YHWH* as *kyrios*, “Lord.” Most scholars believe the correct pronunciation is *Yahweh*. An abbreviated form of *Yahweh* is *Yah*, which essentially has the same meaning. *Yah* is found 48 times in the Old Testament. It occurs mostly in Psalms and is always used in a context of praise (Ps. 68:4). In the New Testament, Jesus identified Himself with the divine name by proclaiming, “…Before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8:58). Throughout the Old Testament, the personal, covenantal name of God is also paired with other terms to express the nature of God’s relationship with humanity. The following is a list of the *Yahweh*-related names of God:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Meaning / Emphasis</th>
<th>Scripture References</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yahweh Jireh</td>
<td>“The Lord Will Provide”</td>
<td>“And Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide [Yahweh Jireh], as it is said to this day, ‘In the mount of the Lord it will be provided!’” (Gen. 22:14, NIV).</td>
<td>God provides for His people. God provided a substitute for Isaac, that he might go free. God has likewise provided for us a substitute, the Lamb of God (Rom. 8:32).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yahweh Rapha</strong></td>
<td>“The Lord is My Healer”</td>
<td>“And he said, ‘If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer’” (Exod. 15:26, NASB).</td>
<td>A significant number of physical healings in the Old Testament exemplify this attribute. A large part of the ministry of Jesus and his apostles was given to physical healing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yahweh Nissi</strong></td>
<td>“The Lord is My Banner”</td>
<td>“And Moses built an altar, and named it The LORD is My Banner” (Exod. 17:15, NASB).</td>
<td>Aaron and Hur held up the hands of Moses so that Israel prevailed in the battle against Amalek. To commemorate the victory, an altar was built and named <strong>Yahweh Nissi</strong> (Exod. 17:8-15).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yahweh Shalom</strong></td>
<td>“The Lord is My Peace”</td>
<td>“Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and named it The LORD is Peace” [Yahweh Shalom] (Judg. 6:24, NASB).</td>
<td>When God called Gideon to lead Israel in battle against the Midianites, <strong>Yahweh Shalom</strong> assured him that Israel would triumph. Shalom means prosperity, health, well-being and faith in the face of conflict. (John 14:27; Eph. 2:15-16).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yahweh Raah</strong></td>
<td>“The Lord is My Shepherd”</td>
<td>“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want” (Ps. 23:1).</td>
<td>Israel thought of <strong>Yahweh</strong> as the great Shepherd who provides such rich pastures that no one would be left wanting. The Christian believer has the same assurance (John 10:11; 1 Pet. 5:4).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts [Yahweh Sabaoth], He is the King of glory” (Ps. 24:10).

Elisha found the Lord of hosts surrounded his people when the enemy attacked (2 Kings 6:13-17).

“…the name of the city from that day shall be: THE LORD IS THERE” (Ezek. 48:35).

Our transcendent God, creator of the universe, is also immanent, ever present with His people.

B. Other Old Testament names of God

1. *Elohim*, plural; *Eloah*, singular: *Elohim* is the first word used in Scripture for God (Gen. 1:1). It is used approximately 2,500 times in the Old Testament. Its probable root meaning is “strong and mighty one.” The name *Elohim*, like the word “god” in English, may refer to the true God, to pagan gods or even to human dignitaries. When used with the definite article, *Elohim* almost always refers the one true God of Israel.

   a) *El*, “God, god, mighty one, strength” (Deut. 32:4): *El* is an ancient and generic reference for “deity” or “god” that is found in some form in all of the Semitic (ancient Near Eastern) languages. While the polytheistic nations surrounding Israel used this term in reference to their gods, in the Bible, *El* usually refers to the true God of Israel. The term does not frequently appear alone but is most often used as a compound with other concrete, descriptive terms such as *El Elyon* (“God Most High”), *El Shaddai* (“God Almighty”). *El* also occurs in common names, as in Daniel, meaning “God is my judge.” This name, as well as most of the common divine names, is found in Deuteronomy 32.

   b) *El Elyon*, “the Most High” [from *alah* which means “to ascend”] (Deut. 32:8): *El Elyon* is identified with the one true God of Israel. He is pictured as the powerful Creator of heaven and earth: “Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High [El Elyon]. And he blessed him and said: ‘Blessed be Abram of God Most High [El Elyon], Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God
Most High [El Elyon], Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.’ And he gave him a tithe of all” (Gen. 14:18-20).

c) El Olam, “the Everlasting God”: Since “Olam designates the ‘fullness’ (totality) of the experience of time and space,”5 the thought conveyed by El Olam is not only the eternal duration of God but also His everlasting faithfulness. As recorded in Genesis, Abraham called on Yahweh, the Everlasting God [El Olam], who keeps His covenants: “Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God [El Olam]” (Gen. 21:33). While El Olam does not occur prolifically in Scripture, this same concept of God is consistent with other passages of the Bible in which God is portrayed as a solid and perpetual dwelling place (e.g., “everlasting Rock,” Isa. 26:4, NASB).

d) El Shaddai, “the Almighty God”: A number of Biblical texts refer to the God of Israel as El Shaddai. The first occurrence is in Genesis 17:1 (see also Gen. 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; Exod. 6:3). The title’s origin, history and etymology are relatively uncertain, but the general emphasis of the name El Shaddai is God’s omnipotence. The compound form, El Shaddai, is found seven times; the single word Shaddai meaning “the Almighty” is found 41 times, 31 times in Job alone.

2. Adonai (pl.); Adon (sing.), “Lord, lord, master, ruler”: The terms “adon” and “adonai” may be translated “lord.” They can refer to a person who is a master or ruler: “Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, ‘After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord [adonai] being old also?’” (Gen. 18:12). The terms can also refer to the Lord God as the Master of everything: “…I saw the Lord [Adonai] sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple” (Isa. 6:1). Adonai is used in reference to the Lord 449 times throughout Scripture. The title evokes images of royalty and denotes a relationship of distinct authority.

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3. Ha Tsur, “The Rock”: The metaphorical name for Yahweh, Ha Tsur, is found five times in Deuteronomy 32. The first instance is in verse 4: “He is the Rock, His work is perfect…” This term stresses the stability, faithfulness, surety and immutability of God, the Rock of Ages (see also Deut. 32:15, 18, 30-31; Ps. 19:14; Isa. 17:10; 26:4; 32:2; 51:1). In the New Testament, the apostle Paul refers to this image when he writes “…For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ” (1 Cor. 10:4).

C. New Testament names of God

1. Theos, “God or god”: Theos is applied to both God the Father and to Jesus: “In the beginning was the Word [logos], and the Word was with God [Theos], and the Word was God [Theos]” (John 1:1). The Greek word theos, like elohim, can mean “God” or “gods.” It is the standard word for “God” in the New Testament.

2. Kurios, “Lord or lord”: Kurios is the Greek word for “Lord” and is the predominant term used to translate the divine name Yahweh in the LXX (Greek translation of the Old Testament). All three New Testament divine names are used in the following verse: “And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord [Kurios], to the glory of God [Theos] the Father [Pater]” (Phil. 2:11).

3. Pater, “Father”: In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus called God His Father with both the Greek word Pater and the Aramaic word Abba. Believers have been given this same privilege because of Christ’s work of redemption; we may call upon the Omnipotent One as our heavenly Father. “…But you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father’” (Rom. 8:15).
V. The Attributes of God

God’s unparalleled glory makes it impossible to fully illustrate His character and nature. Even so, God has made Himself known. Through Scripture God has revealed to us the aspects of His nature He deems essential for our redemption and ability to worship and fellowship with Him. Consider the following Scripture:

“To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?” says the Holy One. Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing. Why do you complain, Jacob? Why do you say, Israel, “My way is hidden from the Lord; my cause is disregarded by my God”? Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom (Isa. 40:25-28, NIV).

This passage extols God as both creator and provider demonstrating His power, wisdom, providence and immutability. This is just one small passage of Old Testament scripture. When we consider the entirety of the Scripture and the revelation of God through Jesus Christ, the Bible becomes an invaluably rich and living source for understanding the attributes of God. While it is not easy to categorize the attributes of God, two general classifications may be identified: “absolute” attributes and “moral” attributes. Absolute attributes are those characteristics belonging to God alone; moral attributes are those characteristics God shares with humans to a limited degree.

A. Absolute attributes

1. God is self-existent: He is the absolute source of all life and being, the Uncaused Cause: “For as the Father has life in Himself; so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself” (John 5:26). God is not one in a series of
emanations. He is the Eternal Living God, Creator of all beings and all things that have ever existed (Col. 1:17). God’s being or essence is not dependent upon any source outside Himself. He is self-existent.

2. God is immutable: The immutability of God means His character never changes. God is forever faithful, dependable and steadfast: “For I am the LORD, I do not change…” (Mal. 3:6). The author of Hebrews wrote: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8). God will not fail in His love, His truth and His grace because His essence is unchanging. All of the covenants and promises of God are as reliable as the foundations of heaven. Although humans are inconsistent and disobedient in their relationship with God, this does not compromise the faithfulness of God. Psalms states, “Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides” (Ps. 119:90).

3. God is eternal: He exists outside the boundaries of time and space. Scripture declares, “…Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God” (Ps. 90:2b). God’s existence spans from everlasting past to everlasting future. Revelation states, “‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,’ says the Lord, ‘who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty’” (Rev. 1:8). Believers have hope for everlasting life, for the Eternal God is the giver of eternal life through His Son.

4. God is omnipresent: He is everywhere present. God said through the prophet Jeremiah, “‘Am I a God near at hand,’ says the Lord, ‘And not a God afar off? Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall not see him?’ says the Lord; ‘Do I not fill heaven and earth?’ says the Lord” (Jer. 23:23-24). God is everywhere present. Believers have wonderful, scriptural assurance that everywhere they pray, worship or serve, God is there. It is equally true that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved, no matter where they are on the face of the earth.

5. God is omniscient: He is all-knowing. People are limited to the sphere of human understanding, but God sees all and knows all. Two aspects of God’s “all knowledge” are emphasized in Scripture. First, God is aware of everything. Humans cannot hide their actions nor their thoughts from God. For
example, He brought to light and judged the deceitful schemes of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). In His instructions to the seven churches of Asia, the Lord clearly described both the activity and inward spiritual condition of each gathered community (Rev. 2:13-22). Nothing escapes God’s vision. Second, God is allwise in His plans and purposes. He knows all things from the beginning. He has, in His wisdom, planned the redemption of His people, the building of His church and the triumph of His kingdom (Eph. 1:9-10; 3:8-11). Although humans have freedom of will and choice, God has already established plans He will carry to completion. Furthermore, “...we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28).

6. God is omnipotent: He is all-powerful. Nothing is beyond His ability to accomplish (Jer. 32:17). God’s power is maintained in perfect balance with His perfect character. Some have asked, “If God is all powerful, then why does the Scripture say He cannot lie, sin or deny Himself?” This philosophical musing fails to take into account one important factor: God will not do anything contrary to His nature or anything that is a contradiction in terms. His seeming “inability” to perform such tasks is not due to a lack of power. Rather, God will always display His power in perfect harmony with His resolute and unfaltering character. The following areas evidence that God is omnipotent:

   a) God’s creative power: The vastness of the universe staggers human imagination. We have been “fearfully and wonderfully made” by an awesomely powerful Creator (Ps. 139:13-16).

   b) God’s sovereign rule: One of the most convincing evidences of God’s power is the fulfillment of biblical prophecies showing God does indeed rule the affairs of kings and nations. Through a series of astounding miracles, God delivered Israel from slavery (Exod. 14:30-31). God’s rule exceeds all human authority. He is sovereign over the earth, ruling over angels, principalities and powers, demon spirits and Satan himself. God rules in heaven, on earth and under the earth (Rom. 8:37-39; Phil. 2:6-11).
c) God’s power through the church: More than two thousand years ago, God, through His Son, selected 12 seemingly ordinary disciples. Jesus Christ saved these disciples and filled them with the Holy Spirit. Immediately they “turned the world upside down” (Acts 17:6). The same church that was empowered in the upper room at Pentecost remains vital, influential and ever-expanding in its impact on the world today.

d) God’s power over death: On the day of Pentecost, Peter explained that King David’s body remained buried in a tomb; however, Jesus was no longer dead but living (Acts 2:29-32). Only God holds the keys of eternal life. It is because of the resurrection of Christ that Paul said, in agreement with the prophet Isaiah, “But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, ‘DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?’” (1 Cor. 15:54-55, NASB). Believers share in the hope of the resurrection for everlasting spiritual life, and we will all partake of the power that was at work in the life and resurrection of Jesus (Eph. 1:18-20).

7. God is sovereign: He has supreme, permanent authority. However, much debate revolves around the interplay between God’s sovereignty and humankind’s free will. Paul stated in Ephesians that God has “…predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will” (Eph. 1:5). This passage seems to imply that each person’s salvation is predetermined by the will of God. However, it is more likely referring to the fact that God predestined the plan of salvation in Christ to be revealed at a specific moment in time, a specific moment that can be received or rejected by faith. Revelation states, “And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17). This passage clearly communicates that the water of life is available to anyone on the basis of choice and human free will.

Although the Bible portrays God as sovereign, it also portrays humans as responsible for the acceptance or rejection of God’s grace (John 3:16). In
other words, God is sovereign but not arbitrary. He is sovereign without violating His creation’s essential freedom. To understand the nature of God we must respect the mysterious interplay between humankind’s will and God’s will. On one hand, God said, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last” (Rev. 22:13). God is the author and finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:2). On the other hand, humans are “without excuse,” accountable for their acceptance or rejection of the gospel (Rom. 1:20). Any theological attempt to explain the sovereignty of God is clearly limited by humankind’s finite perspective. Even so, a healthy Biblical perspective must hold these truths in proper tension.

B. Moral attributes

The following are characteristics God shares with humans to a limited degree:

1. God is holy: The Hebrew word for “holy” is *quadosh*; it is defined in *Old Testament Word Studies*: “Ascribed to all those things which in any way pertain to God, or his worship; sacred; free from defilement of vice, idolatry, and other impure and profane things.”6 The Greek word is *hagios*, which is defined in the *Greek Lexicon*: “Dedicated to God, holy, sacred; reserved for God and his service; pure, perfect, worthy of God, consecrated.”7 God is holy; separate and exalted, absolutely perfect in every way (Isa. 6:1). For humans, holiness is an issue of dedication and consecration, the quality of being separated to God. Things are holy when dedicated exclusively to the worship and service of God. People are holy if they are wholly God’s people. In the Old Testament, Israel is called a holy nation (Exod. 19:6). In the New Testament, the Lord’s people are called “saints” meaning “holy ones” (Rom. 1:7). Holiness also means separation from all defilement and from all forms of idolatry. Israel’s adulterous worship of pagan deities was a perpetual defilement of God’s call for Israel to be holy, separate and distinct from their pagan neighbors. In the New Testament, holiness is presented as the fruit of Christ’s

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atonement (Col. 1:21-22). Thus, purity of life and separation from immoral-
ity is understood to be the sanctifying overflow of a transformed, Spirit-filled life (see Rom. 6:19-22; 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 4:24; 1 Thess. 3:13; 4:7; Tit. 2:3; Heb. 12:10-14; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; 2 Pet. 3:11).

2. God is righteousness (justice): God’s perfect character is reflected in His perfect deeds. God’s righteousness is His holiness in action. His justice is His righteousness in rule and government. The Hebrew word for “righteous” is *tsedek*, which means “Rightness, straightness, rectitude; justice of a judge, of a king, of God exhibited in punishing the wicked, or in avenging, delivering, rewarding the righteous.” Another Hebrew word related to righteousness is *mishpat*, which means “righteous judgment as a judge.” The Greek word for “righteous” is *dikaios*, which means “of God—just, righteous, with reference to his judgment of men and nations, a righteous judge; of men—upright, just, righteous conforming to the laws of God and man, and living in accor-
dance with them.” God is righteous because He acts at all times in complete conformity with His holy nature and will. God’s righteousness is immutable. For example, He is called a ‘Rock’ five times in Deuteronomy 32. His righ-
teousness never changes, and His justice is unfailing. He is faithful in dealing with His people according to His nature and His revealed laws and covenants. He will both punish and reward, but always according to His promises and covenants. All His decisions are just, and all His ways are upright. In the New Testament, the English words “righteousness” and “justice” are translations of the same Greek word. This is seen in the definition of the word “justifica-
tion,” which means “the act of declaring one righteous.”

God requires perfect righteousness from all of us, but in our fallen state, we all fall short of perfection. God’s grace, appropriated through faith in Jesus, has provided a new basis for righteousness (Rom. 3:21-26). God made a way to justify sinners by sending His infinite Son to be the perfect sacrifice for sin. Jesus Christ lived in perfect obedience to the holy will of the Father. The Father offered Jesus as the punishment for our rebellion. On the cross, Jesus Christ became the punishment for our sins. In dying for our sins, Jesus demonstrated the righteousness of God, for God both condemned sin and

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8 Wilson, s.v. “tsedek.”
9 Arndt and Gingerich, s.v. “dikaios.”
freed sinners through the death and resurrection of His Son (Rom. 3:26). Consequently, in Christ we stand fully righteous before God.

3. God is love (mercy, goodness): Scripture states, “...God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them” (1 John 4:16). Perhaps all of God’s moral attributes are encompassed in His holiness and in His love. In His holiness He is unapproachable; in His love He approaches us. In His holiness He is transcendent; in His love He is immanent. For fallen humanity these two seemingly irreconcilable attributes are brought together through the finished, atoning work of Christ. In Christ the demands of holiness are satisfied, and the outpouring of love is realized. The Hebrew word for love is *ahab*. It shares a similar range of meanings with the English word and can express both divine love and human love. In Deuteronomy God expressed His love for His chosen people and clearly communicated that love was the basis of His covenant with Israel (Deut. 7:6-8). God’s love is evident throughout Israel’s history in His patience, provision and longsuffering. In the face of Israel’s perpetual complaining and rebellion, God has remained faithful. In the New Testament, several Greek words are used for love. However, when reference is made to God’s love, *agape* is typically used. The noun *agape* is scarcely found in classical Greek writings. Consequently, our understanding of its meaning is rooted in the Scripture. The apostle John gave us a great example of the nature of *agape* when he wrote, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Other virtues such as mercy, longsuffering, goodness, forgiveness and compassion fit within the category of God’s love. Along with being an attribute of God, love is also a defining characteristic of Christian witness. Jesus stated, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35).

4. God is truth: The introduction of John’s gospel unequivocally states that God is full of both grace and truth (John 1:14). Later in John, Jesus proclaimed, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). Truth is a part of God’s holy nature and could rightly be discussed under the heading of holiness and righteousness. However, truth may also be viewed as a distinct attribute of God. The following are three reassuring applications concerning God and truth:
a) The Word of God is true: God’s Word reveals His nature, will and plan of salvation. God’s promises and covenants are made in truth and are, therefore, unfailingly dependable (Ps. 119:89; John 17:17).

b) God is the only true God: As the creator of all things, God is the only one worthy of worship. All idolatry is rooted in deception and lies. God is truth! Therefore, His truth is the only truth worth following (John 4:23-24).

c) Because God is truth, He is faithful to keep all His promises and covenants. God cannot lie (Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18). He keeps and fulfills all His promises. God is able to do what He promises because He is omnipotent. However, it is important to understand that the fulfillment of God’s promises often depends upon the obedience of His creation and the wisdom of His timing. God in His infinite wisdom and perfect timing will faithfully fulfill all His promises (1 Kings 8:56; 2 Cor. 1:20; Heb. 10:23; 2 Pet. 3:9).

VI. The Works of God

A. Divine purpose

The Bible declares that even in the face of willful human rebellion, God’s purpose stands firm (Isa. 14:24; Eph.1:11). All the events and activities of each nation and every individual have been known by God from the beginning. God’s purpose and plan has taken into account the activity of rebellious, willful humans. Although God does not cause human rebellion, He does work all human activity to His ultimate glory. God spoke in Isaiah through His prophet, “Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure’…Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it” (Isa. 46:10-11). God is omniscient, knowing all things from the beginning. He will carry out His plans and purposes in His power and wisdom for His glory and for the redemption of His people.
God created humans with freedom of will to obey or disobey. The Bible does not say why God permitted sin, evil or even human choice. Even so, we have strong intimations that a redeemed people demonstrates God’s glory and love vastly more than a race of conforming automatons. Regardless, it is certain that God is not the author of sin (Jas. 1:13-15). Depravity, pain and crime resulted from humanity’s disobedience. Before God created human-kind, He had already purposed to bring redemption by Christ Jesus (1 Pet. 1:20). God’s purpose includes His church, and He is aware of each person that will make up that number (Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1:4). This does not indicate that God arbitrarily elects some and excludes others. Rather, this is an issue of the foreknowledge of God (1 Pet. 1:2). The foreknowledge of God is not causative. Ultimately, God’s purpose for all humanity culminates in the redemptive work of Christ Jesus; a work that involves the church, the Body of Christ. Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus:

To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph. 3:8-11).

B. Creation

The Bible states that the original creation was an immediate creation (Gen.1:1). The physical universe, as we know it, was spoken into being by God. It did not exist previously in some other form. Rather, God said, “Let there be,” and “there was” (Gen. 1). Hebrews states, “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible” (Heb. 11:3). Further, nothing was made apart from God because all things have a divine origin (John 1:3). Before Genesis, God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit existed.
God’s full triune nature participated in the creation (Gen. 1:2; John 1:1; 17:5, 24; Col. 1:16). Before the world was made, the Trinity existed in perfect love. For God so loved the world that He commissioned the Son to the work of redemption before creation, before human existence, and before the Fall (John 3:16; Eph. 1:4-6). God’s redeeming love was not an afterthought but rather an overflow of His heart. The ultimate result of creation will be a redeemed multitude, forever worshiping, serving and glorifying God.

C. Providence

God providentially guides and cares for His creation (Matt. 5:45b; Acts 14:17). God’s preservation of His creation is a sign of His providence. In Jesus Christ all things are preserved for “...he is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col. 1:16-17, ESV). Strong’s Concordance defines preservation as “that continuous agency of God by which He maintains in existence the things He has created together with the properties and powers with which He has endowed them.” Thiessen said of providence: “The Christian view affirms that God has not merely created the universe together with all its properties and powers, and that He is preserving all that He has created, but that as a holy, benevolent, wise, and omnipotent Being, He also exercises sovereign control over it. This sovereign control is called providence.” Consequently, individuals can find comfort in God’s providential care even in the midst of profound, personal adversity or global calamity. As God considers the lilies, He will also care for His creation (Luke 12:22-28). The following are some of the ways God demonstrates His providential care:

1. God governs the physical universe: God has set in place natural conditions to regulate the earth. He created the correct proportions of sea and land, trade winds and sea currents, evaporation and precipitation to maintain weather congenial to life and agriculture. He preserves these processes by His oversight. Some may survey the world’s varying conditions, such as climate and food supplies, and question God’s equity in His care for different people. These seeming inequalities within nature are the result of the curse upon the earth that accompanied Adam and Eve’s rebellion (Gen. 3:17-19). However,

10 Strong, 410.
11 Thiessen, 177.
to those not blinded by unbelief, even an earth under the curse displays God’s design and care.

2. God cares for the animal creation: Not even the smallest creature’s welfare escapes the concern of God (Matt. 6:26a). While animals have been given instincts that enable them to care for themselves, like people, they also depend upon the creator and sustainer of the earth to provide rain, vegetation, oxygen and a stable climate.

3. God providentially governs the nations: Scripture declares even the mightiest nations are “as a drop in a bucket” in the eyes of God (Isa. 40:15). He sovereignly and graciously governs the earth’s kingdoms (Ps. 22:28). It is important to note God does not ultimately violate free will to make His word come to pass. Likewise, He is not responsible for the individual actions and rebellions of people and nations. Even so, in spite of human rebellion, God providentially governs the world in accordance with His master plan.

4. God cares about the details of every person’s life: The Lord’s providence encompasses the minute, personal aspects of every individual. Scripture states that “the very hairs of your head are all numbered” by God (Matt. 10:30). The Bible teaches that God has a plan for individuals even before they are born. Jeremiah states, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations” (Jer. 1:5). The psalmist best recognized and reaffirmed this lifelong care of God: “My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them” (Ps. 139:14-16).

5. God provides protection for the righteous: The psalmist wrote, “Let those who love Your name Be joyful in You. For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; With favor You will surround him as with a shield” (Ps. 5:11-12).

6. God supplies the needs of His people: God is faithful to provide for every individual’s needs “according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19). Jesus told His followers not to worry about food, drink and
clothing, “For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt. 6:32b-33).

7. God hears and answers prayer: God knows our needs even before we ask Him (Matt. 6:7-8). Because God is concerned with every detail of every person’s life, Paul admonished believers to “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6). God’s providential care is demonstrated in how He hears, understands and answers our prayers.

VII. The Trinity (Triunity) of God

The study of the Trinity should be undertaken with a deep sense of awe. All theology is limited in defining God. However, the triunity of God is one of the greatest divine mysteries. It’s a sacred-ground reality. The nature of God cannot be translated into a simplistic formula any more than the Pacific Ocean can be transferred into a teacup. Even so, the study of the Trinity is vital as it is the center gem of divine revelation. To finite humans, understanding God as both one and triune appears to be a contradiction. However, both realities are clearly taught throughout the New Testament.

Throughout church history, whenever the doctrine of the Trinity is compromised, other major Bible tenets have also been compromised, corrupted and abandoned. Many church heresies are rooted in a misunderstanding of the persons of the Godhead. In the second century, two major heresies arose that denied the doctrine of the Trinity: Monarchianism and Sabellianism. Monarchianism denied the deity of Christ and the personality of the Holy Spirit. Sabellianism denied the separate identities of the three persons of the Godhead, declaring that Jesus and the Holy Spirit were only different modes of the one person, or different guises by which God manifested himself. Adherents of both of these groups thought they were guarding the unity
of God. Unitarianism and “Jesus Only” or “Oneness” doctrines are modern expressions of these heresies.

The mainstream of the church has persistently rejected these false teachings. Developed in the fourth century, the Nicene Creed is the earliest creed to articulate the orthodox understanding of the Trinity:

We believe in one God—And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, light of light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father—And we believe in the Holy Ghost, who is the Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and Son, is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets.

The major Protestant bodies have closely followed this ancient creed of the fourth century. The best known of the Reformation creeds is the Westminster Confession:

There is but one living and true God. In the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Father is one, neither begotten or proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.

These creeds and confessions do not attempt to remove the mystery of the Trinity, nor do they try to reconcile the scriptural statements with finite reasoning. Rather, they attest to the stated scriptural record that there is one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Although human-produced creeds are certainly not infallible, throughout history the majority of the church has held a Trinitarian view similar to the Nicene and Athanasian creeds.
A. The concept of the Trinity in the Old Testament

It was absolutely essential that the unity of God was clearly articulated and emphasized in the Old Testament. Israel was surrounded by polytheistic nations that had departed from the original knowledge of the one true God. God revealed himself to Abraham as God Almighty (El Shaddai). To Moses and the Israelites God revealed Himself as Yahweh (I AM), “The LORD (Yahweh) our God, the LORD (Yahweh) is one!” (Deut. 6:4). The Old Testament gives us intimations of the triune nature of God, but they are clear only in the light of the New Testament’s fuller revelation of Christ. Having received the deeper insight provided by the Incarnation and the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, it is possible to see aspects of the Trinity in the Old Testament.

1. Plural Names for God: The Old Testament contains plural names and pronouns for God. Elohim and Adonai are plural forms of God. Even though Elohim is a plural noun, when used of the true God, it is accompanied by a singular form verb. Deuteronomy 6:4 which declares God’s unity to all Jews, also contains God’s plural name, Elohim. This display of grammatical plurality in unity seems to be an intimation of the Trinity.

2. References to the Angel/Messenger of Yahweh: The Angel of Yahweh is called God. This term appears a number of times in the book of Genesis and from time to time in other Old Testament passages. In these scriptures, a distinction is made between the Angel of Yahweh and Yahweh, yet they are one. In such events, when God appears as an angel or as a man, the appearance is called a theophany. Theophany comes from the Greek words theos (God) and phaino (to appear) (see Gen. 16:7-13). In Genesis 18, God appeared to Abraham as “three men,” yet Abraham addressed them as Lord in the singular. Two of the men appeared to Lot in Sodom, but he addressed them as Yahweh. In Genesis 22:1-19, Abraham was ordered to sacrifice Isaac, but the Angel of the Lord spoke from heaven releasing him from the order. In Genesis 22:16, the angel called himself Yahweh. In Genesis 32:24-32, Jacob wrestled with “a man” and prevailed to receive a divine blessing. In Exodus 3, the Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses at the burning bush, giving him the promise that he would lead the Israelites out of Egypt. In this conversation with Moses, the terms “Angel” and “Yahweh”
were used interchangeably. Some theologians believe these encounters were appearances by the pre-existent Christ, otherwise known as “Christophanies.” Christophany comes from the Greek *christs* (Christ) and *phaino* (to appear).

3. Jesus, the commander of the army of the Lord: In Joshua 5:13-6:2, a “man” with a drawn sword appeared to Joshua who called himself the “commander of the army of the Lord.” Joshua was commanded to loose his shoes because he was on holy ground. In Joshua 6:2, the “man” is referred to as the LORD, or *Yahweh*. This seems to be another example of a Christophany or preincarnate appearance of Jesus.

4. Psalmic references to Jesus: The Psalms have many references to Jesus. The following scriptures are selected from among the Messianic Psalms fulfilled by Jesus:

   a) Psalm 110:1 “The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’” Jesus applied this to Himself in Mark 12:35-37.

   b) Psalm 2:7 “…The LORD has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You…’” Paul applied this passage to Jesus in Acts 13:33.

   c) Psalm 45:6 “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever…” The writer of Hebrews ascribed this to Jesus in Hebrews 1:8.

5. Jesus, the Promised Messiah: Isaiah prophesied that Messiah would be born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14). Isaiah 9:6-7 depicted Jesus as the Prince of Peace, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, Son of David. Micah prophesied that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2). Isaiah 53 referred to Jesus as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, bruised for our iniquities. Jesus is the only reasonable identification for this Servant of *Yahweh*. Further, Philip the evangelist applied Isaiah 53 to Jesus. Several addressed Jesus as the “Son of David” (Matt. 9:27; 21:9). After His resurrection, Jesus Himself attested to the fact that He is the Messiah referred to in the Old Testament Scriptures (Luke 24:27).
B. The concept of the Trinity in the New Testament

After the resurrection of Jesus and the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, the doctrine of the Trinity was crystal clear to the New Testament church. When the apostles began to preach the gospel and write epistles, they did not waver in declaring Jesus as God and the Holy Spirit as God. Yet they also viewed the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as one God (1 Cor. 8:6). The following are proofs of the Trinity in the New Testament:

1. The baptism of Jesus: The three persons of the Godhead were present at the baptism of Jesus. Jesus ascended from the waters of baptism, the Holy Spirit descended from heaven in the visible form of a dove, and the Father spoke from heaven (Matt. 3:17; see also Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:32-34). All three manifested at the same time. The Father spoke of the Son as a separate identity, and the Spirit was present as an identity separate from the Son and the Father.

2. The proclamations of Jesus: John 14 provides clear proof of the three distinct persons of the Trinity. First, in John 14:9, Jesus said to Philip, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.” In this proclamation it is clear that Jesus and the Father are one yet have separate identities. Jesus said to the disciples, “And I will pray to the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever…But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you” (John 14:16, 26). Jesus spoke of the Father as “He,” of the Holy Spirit as “He,” and of Himself as “I.” Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as “another Helper,” separate in identity. The Spirit would come when Jesus went away. Yet Jesus also said, “…And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age…” (Matt. 28:20). Herein is the mystery: There are three separate identities (not individuals), yet there is one God, not three.

3. The Great Commission: The baptismal formula given by Jesus in the Great Commission clearly reveals the Trinity as well as the oneness of God: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19). The
three identities are given as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, grouped together in equality. The word “name” is not repeated, indicating the unity.

4. Early church benedictions: The apostolic benediction in 2 Corinthians 13:14 clearly shows the trinitarian thinking of the early church. A similar trinitarian statement appears in Jude 20:21, “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” In these two benedictions, Jesus is placed first in one, and the Holy Spirit is first in the other. This indicates that the Son and Holy Spirit are not inferior but, indeed, equal to the Father and to each other. Other examples include: 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; Ephesians 4:4-6; 5:18-20, and 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14.

**VIII. God the Father**

The general doctrine of God has already been addressed under the sections on the existence, nature, names and attributes of God. However, to understand God’s triunity it is important to look at the concept of God as Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The relationship of the Father and the Son is an issue of God’s self-revelation in the context of redemption. God’s fatherhood does not mean that the Father existed alone and then begot the Son. All the persons of the Trinity are coeternal and coequal. Lexicons define the Greek word monogenes (often translated as “only begotten” in reference to Jesus) to mean “of the same kind.” John spoke of Jesus as the Word: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God [lit. face to face with], and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God [lit. already was]” (John 1:1-2). John continued by writing, “And the Word (Christ preincarnate) became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Although the Word became flesh at a certain time in history, the Word has always been a coequal, coeternal member of the Trinity. Jesus also identified Himself as one with the Father when he prayed, “And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was” (John 17:5). Before the universe was created, our triune God
existed in perfect, eternal, loving community. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit have always been and always will be one in nature, will and purpose.

**IX. God the Son**

A. His virgin birth

Jesus’ conception was miraculous. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Angelic announcements to Joseph and Mary preceded His birth (Matt. 1:20b-25; see also Luke 1:26-38).

1. Theological implications of the virgin birth: The entirety of the Christian faith is dependent upon Jesus having been born of God. If Jesus’ father had been human, the following would have been true:

   a) He would have inherited Adam’s fallen nature, and His death would not have been vicarious or substitutionary.

   b) He would not have been infinite, and even if some method could have been arranged to avoid a corporate identity with Adam, He could not have died for the world. He would have been merely a sincere, zealous but finite religious leader.

   c) He could not have been the “only begotten” of the Father, the unique, infinite Son of God. The denial of the virgin birth is a virtual denial of the deity of Christ.

   d) He would have been, at best, a spiritual genius with unusual religious insight, not the Lamb of God who fulfilled and satisfied all requirements of the Law and the Old Testament sacrificial system. Only a divine and infinite offering could make an effective, all-encompassing, once-for-all sacrifice for sin. Christ’s sacrifice had the authority to free all creation, for He is the creator of all things (Col. 1:15-18).
2. New Testament support for the virgin birth: In Matthew 1:16, the conclusion of Joseph’s genealogy states that Jesus was born of Mary: “And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.” The “by whom” in the Greek (ex hes) is singular, feminine gender, making the birth to be “by Mary” only even though the genealogy is Joseph’s. Paul stated that Jesus was “born of a woman” (Gal. 4:4). That terminology, in conjunction with the other genealogical references, undeniably indicates Christ’s virgin birth.

3. Old Testament prophecies regarding the virgin birth: Progressive revelation in the Old Testament points toward the supernatural virgin birth of Jesus. Various New Testament scriptures confirm that the Old Testament prophecies listed below were fulfilled in Jesus’ birth.

   a) Genesis 3:15 prophesied about the woman’s Seed: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.”

   Fulfillment: Matthew 1:16 states that Jesus was born “of Mary”; Galatians 4:4 states that He was “born of a woman.”

   b) Genesis 22:18 prophesied of the seed that will bless the entire earth: “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

   Fulfillment: “Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ” (Gal. 3:16).

   c) Isaiah 11:1-2 prophesied of the rod and branch of Jesse: “There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.”
Fulfillment: Matthew begins his gospel with the words, “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David…” (Matt. 1:1).

d) Isaiah 7:14 prophesied of the virgin birth of Immanuel: “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”

Fulfillment: An angelic announcement preceded the birth of Jesus. Mary was told that she would bring forth a child who would be the Son of the Highest, and in spite of her not “knowing” a man (Luke 1:34), it would happen by the Holy Spirit’s “overshadowing” (Luke 1:35).

4. Orthodox creeds concerning the virgin birth: The Westminster Catechism defines the doctrine of the virgin birth as follows: “Christ the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her yet without sin.”12 The Apostles’ Creed, which sums up the belief of the early church, states this of Jesus: “conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.”13

B. His nature

Jesus had a divine nature and a human nature, yet He was one person, not two. He was the “Son of God” and the “Son of Man.” However, Jesus’ two natures did not result in a dual personality. Rather, God and flesh-and-blood existed in perfect harmony in Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5). Jesus existed in the form of God and was equal with God, but He took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of humanity. The Greek homoioa means “real likeness,” but His likeness was not merely human. Jesus was a real man, but He was not merely a human. Jesus was born in the flesh, lived a physical life and died a physical death. Even so, He was also the Ancient of Days (John 8:58).

1. The humanity of Jesus: John warned against a heresy that denied the humanity of Jesus (1 John 4:1-3). Some believers have been so intent on maintaining the deity of Christ Jesus that they have minimized His humanity. Jesus did not merely have a brush with humanity; He took to Himself a genuine human nature with every human attribute except sinfulness. His human nature was in submission to His divine nature without sacrificing any of its humanness. The following is evidence of His humanity:

   a) Jesus was born a natural infant in Bethlehem (Luke 2:7).

   b) He grew up in the normal manner of a child (Luke 2:39-40).

   c) He grew up in subjection to His parents (Luke 2:51-52).

   d) He was traced through two genealogies: one of Joseph (Matt. 1), and one of Mary (Luke 3:23-38).

   e) Scripture refers to Him as “The Seed of Woman,” “The Seed of Abraham” and “The Son of David.” These references link Jesus to the human race.

   f) Jesus was tempted and tested at every point of human weakness, yet He remained without sin. It was perfectly in order for Him to be tested to demonstrate, as the “Last Adam,” His perfect obedience, and as the Lamb of God that He was “without spot or blemish” (Matt. 4:1-11; 26:36-46; Luke 4:1-13; Heb. 2:18; 4:15).

   g) He called Himself a “man” (John 8:40); others called Him a man: “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). He called Himself or was called the “Son of Man” 70 times throughout Scripture, e.g., John 8:28.

   h) The Bible declares that Jesus is the believer’s High Priest (Heb. 4:14-16). The Old Testament stated that priests were to be chosen from among the people to be their representative. To be the High Priest of all...
believers, Jesus had to share the believer’s state (Heb. 5:1-10). The true High Priest must also be able to approach the throne of God on his own merit. Jesus the Son of God represents God to people, and conversely people to God. The believer’s High Priest is the Godman, “…having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek” (Heb. 6:20).

i) Jesus experienced human feelings and sensations; He experienced hunger, thirst, tears and fatigue. He suffered, shed His blood, died and was buried.

j) Even after the resurrection, when Jesus had a glorified body, Jesus invited Thomas to touch His hands and side to feel His wounds. Jesus retained His humanity along with His divinity. According to Revelation 19:11-16, Jesus will return to reign on earth. In Revelation 22, Jesus is described as being with the Father in the New Jerusalem.

2. The divinity of Jesus: Human reasoning alone cannot fully comprehend the dual nature of Jesus. However, when faith is added, it is possible to accept the Scripture-revealed mystery that Jesus was both human and divine. The following is evidence of Jesus’ divinity:

a) Old Testament prophets foretold of a Redeemer and gave Him divine names:

(1) Isaiah called him “Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6) and “Immanuel,” or God with us (Isa. 7:14).

(2) Jeremiah referred to him as “The Lord our Righteousness [Yahweh Tsidkenu]” (Jer. 23:6).

b) He is called God and Lord in the New Testament (John 1:1; 20:28; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 1:8).
c) He is called the unique Son of God (John 1:14; 3:16). The term “only begotten” (Gr., monogenes) means “unique, of the very same kind.” A host of scriptures refer to Jesus as the “Son of God” (John 5:25; Rom. 8:3; 1 John 2:22-23).

d) Jesus declared himself to be one with the Father (John 10:30; 14:9).

e) Scripture teaches Jesus is preexistent (John 1:1; 8:58; 17:5).

f) Divine attributes were ascribed to Jesus:

(1) He is omnipotent (Matt. 28:18, TMB).

(2) He is omniscient (John 2:24-25; 16:30; Col. 2:1-3).

(3) He is omnipresent (Matt. 28:20).

(4) He is eternal (John 1:1-2; Col. 1:17; Heb. 7:24).

(5) He is immutable (Heb. 13:8).

(6) He is creator (John 1:10; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:10).

(7) He is holy (Heb. 7:26; 1 John 3:5).

(8) He is forgiver (Mark 2:5; Luke 7:48).

(9) He is judge (John 5:22; Acts 17:31; 2 Cor. 5:10).

g) Jesus was aware of and declared His unique relationship as the Son of God to the Father and to the Holy Spirit (John 15:26).
h) Worship was directed toward Jesus. Worship belongs only unto God Almighty (Exod. 20:3-5). Yet, Christ received worship without objection or protest (Matt. 14:33). At Jesus’ birth, the wise men paid homage unto Him (Matt. 2:11). Angels were commanded to worship Him (Heb. 1:6). Jesus is God, the second person of the Trinity, coequal and coeternal with the Father. Therefore, Jesus is and forever will be worshiped as God.

Some individuals and movements have denied the deity of Christ. Jesus’ deity was denied by the Ebionites (A.D. 107) and then later by Arias and his followers (325 A.D.). Christ’s deity has also been questioned by liberal theologians as well as Deists, Unitarians, Christian Scientists, Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons. Some who have professed belief in Christ’s deity actually believe in a created Christ who was above men but less than God, or they believe that Jesus was “divine” in the sense that all men may be divine. Regardless, the mainstream of the church has always held to the doctrines of the Trinity and the deity of Christ.

C. His works

Jesus was a worker. He said, “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working” (John 5:17). He stated to the disciples, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work” (John 4:34). Near the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus proclaimed to the Father, “I have finished the work which You have given Me to do” (John 17:4). Any study of the Christian faith must interpret the meaning of Christ’s work on earth. God Himself, in the person of the Son, visited the world to redeem out of the world a people for His own possession. To understand the foundations of salvation and all Christian life, it is crucial to study the saving work of Christ. Many theologians have categorized Jesus’ work into three general areas: (1) His work as a prophet, (2) His work as a priest and (3) His work as a king. There were three types of Old Testament leaders, commissioned by God, who were ushered into their offices by the symbolic act of being anointed with oil. This act signified the fullness of the Holy Spirit. While ministering on earth, Jesus was called both the “Messiah” and the “Christ,” terms meaning “the
anointed one.” Christ, God’s Anointed, fulfilled all three ministries as the ultimate prophet, priest and king.

1. Jesus the prophet: A prophet is commissioned by God with the primary task of making God’s will and character known to His people. Often prophets will proclaim God’s will by foretelling future events. Moses was the greatest Old Testament prophet, having proclaimed to the Israelites the will of God in the form of the Law. Moses also spoke on behalf of God when he foretold the coming of the greatest of all prophets (Deut.18:18). Centuries later, when Jesus addressed the synagogue at Nazareth, He applied to Himself a Messianic prophecy from Isaiah 61 (Luke 4:18-21). After healing a lame man at the Beautiful Gate, Peter addressed the gathered crowd and declared Jesus was the promised prophet who fulfilled Moses’ prophecy (Acts 3:25-26). The author of Hebrews further expressed the prophetic mission of Jesus to speak God’s will to the people (Heb. 1:1-2). Five functions usually characterize the ministry of a prophet: (1) preaching, (2) teaching, (3) discipling, (4) predicting and (5) performing miracles. Not every prophet’s ministry included all five functions, yet the lives of several Old Testament prophets, e.g., Elijah, Isaiah and Jeremiah, included a full range of these functions. Most certainly the prophetic ministry of Jesus manifested all of them.

a) Preaching: Jesus began His prophetic ministry with preaching (Mark 1:14). Approximately 50 of the discourses of Jesus are recorded in the New Testament. The best known of these messages is called the “Sermon on the Mount” (Matt. 5-7). The preaching of Jesus was revolutionary. He called people to change their ways (Mark 1:15). To Nicodemus, Jesus firmly stated that people must be born again (John 3:3). Yet Jesus did not preach as a doomsday prophet; He always held out hopeful assurance for those who would respond and repent (Luke 19:10). Jesus did not merely declare the word of God; He was the Word of God incarnate.

b) Teaching: In ancient times the title of “master” or “teacher” conveyed great honor. The Bible states that people were astonished with Jesus’ teaching (Mark 1:21-22; John 7:40, 46). Jesus’ parables amazed the most astute and learned of the day, yet His teaching even attracted
the children. The parable of “The Good Samaritan” still resounds today as perhaps one of the best known stories in the Western world. Considering the profound impact that Jesus’ life and words have had on people throughout the centuries, we can confidently assert that Jesus is the greatest of all teachers. He did not merely quote authorities; He is the Authority. He did not merely show the way; He is the Way. He did more than teach truth; He is Truth forevermore.

c) Discipling: Closely connected with Jesus’ ministry of teaching was that of making disciples. Some of Jesus’ disciples became the apostles of the church and were the first to preach the message of Jesus as the crucified and risen Savior. The gospel of Mark records Jesus’ discipleship call to Simon, Andrew, James and John (Mark. 1:16-20). Later, Jesus appointed twelve that He would disciple and send out to spread the good news (Mark 3:14-15). These passages describe three purposes for making disciples: (1) that they might be with Jesus, (2) that they might preach and (3) that they might heal the sick and cast out demons. If these are in the order of priority, the first matter of importance was that of Jesus’ followers spending time in His presence. Disciples did not merely learn the content of books and lectures; rather, they matured by being in the presence of their teacher, following His example and emulating His character. Later, when Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission to go and make disciples of all nations, they understood the term “making disciples” because they had experienced discipleship firsthand. Believers are to make disciples for Christ in the same manner Jesus did. Jesus taught His followers how to preach the gospel of the Kingdom, not in words only, but also by the power of His deliverance. Finally, He gave His disciples power to heal the sick and to cast out demons (Mark 16:17-18).

d) Predicting: Another important function of a prophet is foretelling future events. If a prophet’s prediction came to pass and glorified God, then that prophet was authenticated as one sent from God. While Jesus devoted the majority of His ministry to preaching and teaching, He also predicted a number of future events:
(1) His own death and resurrection (Matt. 16:21)

(2) The persecution of the church (Luke 12:11)

(3) The coming of another Helper, the Holy Spirit, to abide in the church (John 14:16-17; 16:7-11)


(5) The signs and conditions of the last days (Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21)

(6) The church’s triumph (Matt. 16:18)

e) Miracles: A frequent mark of Old Testament prophets was that the supernatural attended their ministry. Moses’ miraculous deeds ranged from the plagues of Egypt and the parting of the Red Sea to bringing water from the rock. Elijah called down fire from heaven, multiplied the widow’s meal and oil, raised her son from the dead and was caught up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha brought healing to Naaman the leper, raised up the Shunammite’s son and performed numerous other miracles. Isaiah brought healing to King Hezekiah. Daniel stopped the mouths of lions and interpreted dreams. The miraculous also characterized the ministry of Jesus. Yet He was not simply a worker of miracles; He was the fountainhead of the supernatural. Jesus’ birth was a miracle, and His resurrection from the dead was the miracle of all miracles. During His life on earth, He demonstrated His deity by such wonders as walking on water, calming the storm, turning water into wine and multiplying the bread and fish. However, by far the greater number of Jesus’ signs and wonders were miracles of compassion upon the sick, afflicted and demon-possessed. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil, thus imparting to the church the power to carry on the ministry of deliverance. Jesus gave assurance of the continuance of miracles in the Great Commission (Mark 16:15-18).
2. Jesus the great High Priest: While a prophet represented God to humanity, a priest represented humanity to God. Three things characterized the work of a priest: (1) he was chosen from among those he represented to God (Exod. 28:1), (2) he offered sacrifices to God to atone for sin (Lev. 4:13-21), and (3) as a mediator, he made intercession for the people (Isa. 53:12; 1 Tim. 2:5). Jesus met all of these qualifications (Heb. 5:1-5; 10:11-12) and has assumed the priestly role on behalf of believers (Heb. 7:24-26).

   a) Jesus emptied Himself to become human. He did not hold onto the prerogatives of deity but took upon Himself the form of a servant who was made in the likeness of humanity to identify fully with those for whom He would make atonement (Phil. 2:5-8). Jesus is qualified to stand before God the Father on behalf of believers because He made himself one with humanity: “Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted” (Heb. 2:17-18).

   b) Jesus is both priest and sacrifice. Timothy stated of Jesus’ priestly role that “…there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). John the Baptist introduced Jesus as “the Lamb of God,” speaking of His sacrifice for man’s sin (John 1:29). Peter also spoke of Jesus as “a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1:19). In the final human drama described in the book of Revelation, the One who sits on heaven’s throne—God Almighty—searches for one worthy to receive the title deed to the Kingdom. No one is found but one called “the Lion of the Tribe of Judah” and “the Root of David.”

   When He approaches the throne to take the document, this victorious One is pictured as a slain lamb. All of heaven and the church then sing a new song declaring the worthiness of the Lamb (Rev. 5:9). Jesus Christ is both the “Lion of the Tribe of Judah” and the “Lamb who was slain.” He is the priest who mediates between God and humanity as well as the sacrifice who takes away the sin of the world.
...c) Jesus makes atonement and intercession for believers. Jesus not only died to make atonement for sin, but also perpetually intercedes for believers before the Father (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 10:12). Jesus saves from the guilt of sin all who place their faith in Him. He also intercedes continuously for those who believe in Him, saving them from the power and presence of sin (Heb. 7:24-25). Jesus is the great High Priest. Having fully identified with human frailties, He now represents believers to the Father so they may have access to the throne of grace. He is also the perfect sacrifice for sin. Through the blood and sacrifice of Jesus, believers receive atonement. Finally, He is the interceding advocate for every believer.

d) Jesus’ priesthood is likened to that of Melchizedek. Little is known of Melchizedek; Genesis 14:18-20 contains the historic account of this priest in three short verses. The psalmist referred to Melchizedek in Psalm 110:4, a Messianic psalm. Peter applied this psalm to Jesus (Acts 2:34-35) as did the writer of Hebrews (1:13). Melchizedek was an earthly king of Salem, but he had been appointed to the priesthood of the Most High God by direct revelation. In other words, his office was not dependent upon a priestly dynasty. Even though he was human, his priesthood was divine and endless in nature. Since the priesthood of Levi (and Aaron) was not able to offer sacrifices that could take away sin (Heb. 10:4), a high priest of a perpetual order needed to come who could destroy Satan’s kingdom. The Levitical priesthood was under the old covenant that was destined to come to an end (Heb. 7:18). The priesthood of Jesus is under the new covenant of grace and is eternal (Heb. 7:24-25).

Hebrews 7 compares the priesthood of Jesus to that of Melchizedek. First, Melchizedek was more than a priest; he was also a king. In fact, by both name and title, Melchizedek held a royal distinction. His name means “King of Righteousness,” and his title as King of Salem (Jerusalem) means “King of Peace.” Jesus holds this same royal distinction. As the “King of Righteousness” (Isa. 32:1) and “Prince of Peace” ( Isa. 9:6), Jesus embodies the very essence of the traits represented by Melchizedek’s priesthood. Though Jesus fulfilled a number of aspects of the Levitical priesthood (e.g., entering within the veil), Levi was not a sufficient type for His priesthood. Priests were those from the tribe of
Levi, and Jesus’ earthly lineage was of Judah (Heb. 7:14). Melchizedek, however, represented a priesthood that was superior to the Levitical for the following reasons:

(1) Abraham, the great-grandfather of Levi, paid tithes to Melchizedek, his superior (Heb. 7:4).

(2) Abraham was blessed by Melchizedek; “the lesser is blessed by the greater” (Heb. 7:6-7).

(3) Levitical priests must be able to trace their genealogy; no parentage or genealogy is recorded for Melchizedek although the book of Genesis is full of genealogies (Heb. 7:3).

(4) The deaths of Levi, Aaron and Eleazar are recorded. No mention is made of the birth or death of Melchizedek; his priesthood was by direct divine appointment and not dependent upon tribal status or parentage. Therefore, in type, the priesthood of Melchizedek is perpetual (Heb. 7:15-17).

(5) The priestly work of the Levitical priesthood had virtue only because, in the “fullness of time,” the perfect priest would come and offer the perfect sacrifice (Heb. 10:1-12).

(6) The perfect priest, prophesied by the psalmist in Psalm 110:2, would be a royal priest.

3. Jesus the king: Christ’s work has been presented in this study under the categories of (1) prophet, (2) priest and (3) king. As prophet, He is the message-bearer. As priest, He is the sin-bearer. As king, He is the scepter-bearer. Moses prophesied His coming as a prophet; Isaiah prophesied His coming as the priest, and Daniel prophesied His coming as Messiah and King. The angel announced the birth of Jesus to Mary as a royal proclamation (Luke 1:31-33). Christ’s kingly work will be examined under three headings:
a) Jesus’ kingly mission: Even at His birth, there was awareness that Jesus was a king. Herod asked the Magi to tell him the location of the baby who had been born “King of the Jews” (Matt. 2:2). Jesus Himself was aware of His royal mission as announced by John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1-2). In Mark 11:1-11, Jesus presented Himself to Jerusalem as their king as prophesied in Zechariah 9:9. When Pilate asked Him if He were a king, Jesus answered affirmatively but added that His kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). The cross on which Jesus died bore the title, “Jesus of Nazareth, The King of The Jews” (John 19:19). After the resurrection, during the forty days on earth before the ascension, Jesus’ central focus was His kingdom (Acts 1:3).

b) Jesus’ kingdom: Christ represented His kingdom as both present and future (Mark 1:14-15). Some scholars insist that the kingdom of God is entirely future, an eschatological kingdom. Such a conclusion is not plausible when two key factors are considered. First, the Greek word for “kingdom” (basileia) does not refer to the sphere over which Christ rules but to the rule itself. Wherever Christ Jesus is sovereign, there is His rule (kingdom). Wherever Christ is Lord, there His kingdom is present. Second, when people place their faith in Christ, they are delivered from Satan’s kingdom into Christ’s kingdom (Col. 1:13). During Jesus’ earthly ministry which culminated in the crucifixion and resurrection, He overturned the kingdom of Satan (Luke 11:20). Further, in connection to the founding of the church, Jesus said to the disciples, “And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matt.16:19). George Eldon Ladd had the following to say about the present manifestation of Christ’s kingdom:

Men may now experience the reality of the reign of God...The presence of Christ on earth had for its purpose the defeat of Satan, his binding, so that God’s power may be a vital reality in the experience of those who yield to God’s reign by becoming the disciples of
Jesus. In Christ, the kingdom in the form of its power has come among men.\textsuperscript{14}

c) Jesus’ kingly return: As the culmination of Christ’s work on earth, He will come again to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:16; 20:6). Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the coming Messiah. His kingdom was not a visible realm with a throne and a capitol. Rather, during His earthly ministry, He defeated Satan and initiated a kingdom of righteousness (Col. 1:13). At the culmination of this age, Christ the King will come and establish His kingdom on earth as well as in heaven, and all believers shall reign with Him.

X. God the Holy Spirit

With regard to the Holy Spirit, the Nicene Creed states, “We believe in the Holy Ghost, who is the Lord and giver of life, who, proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and Son, is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets.”\textsuperscript{15} Sound doctrine depends upon a clear and accurate understanding of the nature and work of the third person of the Trinity who dwells in and empowers the church. The last discourse of Jesus recorded in the gospel of John clearly demonstrates that the Holy Spirit has a separate identity from the Father and the Son. Jesus referred several times to the coming of the Holy Spirit, whom He called “another Helper” (John 14:16). He used masculine personal pronouns to express the Spirit’s distinct personhood. Jesus said that He would send the Helper from the Father (John 15:26). These passages demonstrate both the separate identity of the Spirit and the interplay of roles among the Trinity: Jesus prays, the Father sends, and the Holy Spirit proceeds. The Helper’s coming will be the result of the Son’s praying and sending, the Father’s sending in the Son’s name and the Spirit’s proceeding. The Holy Spirit, then, proceeds (as the creeds declare) from the Father and the Son.


An ancient heresy, called Sabellianism, taught that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were only different names and different modalities or manifestations of the same person. If this were true, Jesus’ discourse about the Helper would be meaningless as would His prayer to the Father recorded in John 17. It is difficult to determine whether the portion of John 15:26 referencing the “proceeding” of the Spirit demonstrates an eternal relationship (as stated by the creeds) or a proceeding into the church on the day of Pentecost in answer to Jesus’ prayer, for the “proceeding” is nowhere else mentioned. Whether the proceeding is eternal or on the occasion of Jesus’ prayer, it is clear that the Holy Spirit was sent by both the Father and the Son (compare John 14:26 with John 15:26 and John 16:7).

A. The deity of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is God, the third person of the Trinity, coequal and coeternal with the Father and the Son. That the Spirit executes the will of the Father and glorifies the Son does not denote inferiority; it merely indicates the inner working of the Triune God. Among some people, subordination can denote inferiority, but this is not the case with God. Such is a part of the incomprehensible mystery of the Trinity—there are not three individuals in the Trinity but three personal identities in the one God. The following are scriptural proofs of the deity of the Holy Spirit:

1. The Holy Spirit is called God: The book of Acts contains a sobering account of two members of the early church, Ananias and Sapphira, acting deceitfully and being stricken by God for their duplicity. A portion of the account makes it clear that sin against the Holy Spirit is sin against God (Acts 5:3-4). It is important to note that Ananias and Sapphira’s fatal sin was not an issue of money but an issue of deceit.

2. Divine attributes are ascribed to the Holy Spirit:

a) The Holy Spirit is eternal: He is not a created being. He always existed as a part of the triune God; He is coeternal with the Father and the Son (Heb. 9:14).
b) The Holy Spirit is omniscient: He knows all things (John 14:26).

c) The Holy Spirit is omnipresent: He is everywhere present (Ps. 139:7).

d) The Holy Spirit is omnipotent: He is all-powerful (Acts 1:8; 10:38; Rom. 15:19).

e) The Holy Spirit is holy: As His name indicates, the Holy Spirit is holy. He is the Spirit of Holiness and is Himself holy as are the Father and the Son (Rom. 1:1-4).

f) The Holy Spirit is foreknowing: He knows the future (Acts 1:15-16). A thousand years before the birth of Christ, the Holy Spirit, through the psalmist, foretold the betrayal and fate of Judas Iscariot (Ps. 109:8). See also Acts 11:27-28 concerning the prediction by the Spirit, through Agabus, of the great famine.

g) The Holy Spirit is love: He is loving in nature (Rom. 15:30). In the Trinitarian benediction of 2 Corinthians 13:14, the grace of Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit are actually aspects of God’s love. Since God is love, we expect to find love manifested in the acts of the Trinity.

3. Divine works are attributed to the Holy Spirit:

a) Creation: The Holy Spirit is active in creation (Gen. 1:2; Ps. 104:30). The life-giving work of the Holy Spirit was displayed in the overshadowing of Mary at the conception of Jesus (Luke 1:35) and in the raising of Jesus from the dead (Rom. 8:10-11). Additionally, the internal spiritual regeneration that occurs when a new believer is “born again” is evidence of the Spirit’s power (John 3:5-8).
b) Inspiration of Scripture: The Holy Spirit is credited for inspiring the Word of God (2 Pet. 1:21). Paul affirmed this concept to Timothy (2 Tim. 3:16). “Inspiration of God” is literally “God-breathed.”

c) Prophecy: The Holy Spirit gives prophetic words (2 Sam. 23:2-3). The Holy Spirit is equated with the “God of Israel” and the “Rock of Israel” in this passage. The Spirit is the Spirit of Yahweh who is the same as Eloah (God of creation) and the Rock (Tsur, a metaphorical name for the “Eternal, Immutable One”).

d) Empowerment of believers: The indwelling Holy Spirit provides each believer with the power to “put to death the deeds of the flesh” and thereby overcome and resist sin (Rom. 8:2-4, 11-14; Gal. 5:16-24).

e) Intercession: The Holy Spirit prays on behalf of believers (Rom. 8:26-27). The omniscient Holy Spirit knows the mind of God and the will of God for each person; therefore, He is able to direct us in prayer so that we can pray in accordance with His perfect plan.

f) Divine guidance: The Spirit instructs and guides believers so that they may act in accordance to God’s will (Mark 13:11).

B. The personhood of the Holy Spirit

As early as apostolic times, false teachers doubted or denied the personhood of the Holy Spirit. Some pictured the Spirit as a force or influence exerted by God rather than a person. This tendency may derive in part from the word “spirit” from the Latin spiritus, which means “breath.” The Greek word pneuma and the Hebrew word ruach both have the same meaning of “breath” or “wind” as well as “spirit.” If we think of the Holy Spirit as merely the “breath” of God, then it is possible to perceive Him as an impersonal force rather than a distinct being having a separate identity from the Father. However, divine revelation is specific in its explanation that God is spirit (not material or physical). Like the wind, God exerts power and force while being
invisible by nature. Observe the following proofs from Scripture (of which there are many) of the personhood of the Holy Spirit as well as His separate identity from the Father:

1. Personal pronouns are used in relation to the Holy Spirit: In spite of the fact that the Greek word for “spirit” is in neuter gender, the demonstrative pronoun *ekeinos*, “that One,” was used in John 16:13-14 to refer to the Holy Spirit. Paul used a masculine relative pronoun to refer to the Spirit in Ephesians 1:13-14.

2. Personal characteristics are ascribed to the Holy Spirit:

   a) Intelligence: The Holy Spirit is one who reveals the things of God (1 Cor. 2:10-12). Furthermore, “the word of wisdom” and “the word of knowledge” are gifts given by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:8).

   b) Emotion and feeling: The Holy Spirit loves (Rom. 15:30) and is grieved (Isa. 63:10; Eph. 4:30).

   c) A will: Gifts are distributed to people according to the will of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:11).

3. Personal actions are attributed to the Holy Spirit:


   b) He testifies (John 15:26).

   c) He teaches (John 14:26).

   d) He intercedes (Rom. 8:26-27).
e) He guides (John 16:13; Acts 16:6).

f) He gives commands and ordains (Acts 13:2; 20:28).

g) He works miracles (Acts 8:39; Rom. 15:19).

4. Personal reactions are ascribed to the Holy Spirit: The feelings resulting from certain human actions reveal the personhood of the Holy Spirit:

a) He may be tested (Acts 5:9).

b) He may be resisted (Acts 7:51).

c) He may be lied to (Acts 5:3).

d) He may be insulted and blasphemed (Mark 3:29-30; Heb. 10:29).

5. Personal relationships are maintained by the Holy Spirit:

a) With the Father: In the baptismal formula, the Spirit is associated on an equal plane, in name and personal identity, with the Father and the Son (Matt. 28:19).

b) With Christ: The Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ and declare truths that relate to Him (John 16:13-14).

c) With believers: The apostles sought the will and good pleasure of the Holy Spirit in forming the policies of the local church (Acts 15:28).

C. Additional names of the Holy Spirit

It was observed earlier that God’s names portray His character. The names of God are not mere designations or identifications; they reveal a
facet of God’s nature, attributes or works. This same concept holds true with
the names of the Holy Spirit. There are about 350 passages in the Scripture
that reference the Holy Spirit in which more than 50 names or titles are
discernable. The list below, while not comprehensive, is intended to provide
an overview of the titles that add to the understanding of the Spirit’s nature
or activity:

The Spirit of God (1 Cor. 3:16)
The Spirit (John 3:6)
The Spirit of the LORD, Yahweh (Isa. 11:2, ASV)
The Spirit of the living God (2 Cor. 3:3)
The Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9b)
The Spirit of His Son (Gal. 4:6)
The Spirit of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:19)
The Spirit of holiness (Rom. 1:4)
The Spirit of truth (John 16:13)
The Spirit of glory (1 Pet. 4:14)
The eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14)
The Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1:13)
The Helper (John 16:7)

D. Symbols of the Holy Spirit

Scripture employs a number of symbolic figures of speech to reveal
characteristics of the Spirit. Studying these symbols, one develops a better
understand of the ways and works of the Spirit of God.
## Symbols of the Holy Spirit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Scripture Reference</th>
<th>Explanation/Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wind</td>
<td>“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting” (Acts 2:2).</td>
<td>Wind symbolizes the invisible power and life-sustaining influence of the Spirit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil</td>
<td>“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me [with oil]…” (Isa. 61:1a).</td>
<td>Oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit’s anointing and empowerment of believers for kingdom work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dove</td>
<td>“When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him” (Matt. 3:16).</td>
<td>The dove symbolizes gentleness, purity, love, innocence and beauty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>“…He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit…” (John 7:38-39).</td>
<td>Water symbolizes the Spirit’s ability to refresh and give life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>“John answered, saying to all, ‘I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire’” (Luke 3:16).</td>
<td>Fire speaks of the Spirit’s power and purging.</td>
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</tbody>
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Chapter Three

The Doctrine of Humankind

Anthropology

INTRODUCTION

Some might perceive transitioning from the doctrine of God to the study of humankind as moving from the sublime to the ridiculous. Even the psalmist noted, “What is man that You are mindful of him?” (Ps. 8:4). However, when we realize humans are a creation of God (Gen. 1:27), that redeemed people are God’s handiwork (Eph. 2:10, WNT) and that redeemed humanity is God’s inheritance (Eph. 1:18), we become aware of the importance of studying the doctrine of humankind.

Renowned scholar Carl F. H. Henry wrote: “Who is man? This remarkable creature, whose amazing conquest of space and time has yielded unabridged dictionaries indexing the whole of reality, has fallen into frustration—ironically enough—when defining himself.”16

Only Scripture gives a solid and satisfying answer to the age-long question, “Who is the human being?” Therefore, any serious work on Bible doctrine must

cope with the question of humanity. Anthropology is the study of humankind derived from the Greek words: *anthropos*, meaning human, and *logos*, meaning discourse or reason. Biblical anthropology deals with humans as God's creation alienated from God by their voluntary disobedience, yet reconciled to God through His redeeming grace. According to Merriam-Webster, anthropology in a religious context is the study of "theology dealing with the origin, nature, and destiny of human beings." This text will deal with anthropology and the doctrine of humankind from a scriptural perspective.

The psalmist asked, “What is man that You are mindful of him?” He answered, “For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet…” (Ps. 8:5-6). However, in the course of time, all humans have disobeyed and fallen “short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). The writer of Hebrews quoted Psalm 8:4-6 and added: “But now we do not yet see all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone” (Heb. 2:8b-9). This is the good news of God’s redemptive relationship with humanity.

To better understand the doctrine of humankind, this chapter will address the following major categories: (1) God created people, (2) people are the result of God’s purpose, (3) people are created in God’s image and (4) people are created as living souls. We will also look at (5) the original state of humans, (6) the fall of humankind and (7) humankind’s state of grace.

I. Created by God

A. Humans did not evolve from lower life forms

The Bible attributes the origin of humans to an act of direct creation by God: “So God created man in His own image…” (Gen. 1:27). “And the

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Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being” (Gen. 2:7). Many within the public school system and scientific community teach that humans evolved from lower animals and that life over a vast expanse of time came from a single life form with an unknown origin. Some teachers and scientists acknowledge that evolution is, in fact, only a theory or hypothesis advanced to explain origins without supernatural cause. The theory of evolution is generally attributed to Charles Darwin, who first popularized the hypothesis in the middle of the 19th century. Materialists enthusiastically received the theory because it seemed to contradict Mendel’s law of heredity, i.e. that species are unchangeable and that species do not inherit acquired characteristics. Later, scientists gave the name “genes” to the remarkable factors that control heredity. Kofahl explained:

Research over the past two decades has revealed much about the structure of the gene. A great deal has been learned about the function of the gene at the molecular level. Molecular genetics is a most complicated subject which affords powerful support for the Biblical creation model.1

Paul Brand, once a renowned surgeon and former chief of the rehabilitation branch of the United States Public Health Service, pointed out that the genetic, chemical code DNA controls all forms of life, maintaining the species propagating “each after its own kind” according to Genesis 1 and preventing the evolution of any species into another. Brand wrote:

All living matter is basically alike; a single atom differentiates animal blood from plant chlorophyll. Yet the body senses infinitesimal differences with an unfailing scent; it knows its hundred trillion cells by name ... To complicate the process of identity, the composite of Paul Brand—bone cells, fat cells, blood cells, muscle cells—differs entirely from my components ten years ago. All

cells have been replaced by new cells (except for nerve cells and brain cells, which are never replaced). Thus, my body is more like a fountain than a sculpture: maintaining its shape, but constantly being renewed. Somehow, my body knows the new cells belong, and they are welcomed. What moves the cells to work together? ... The secret to membership lies locked away inside each cell nucleus, chemically coiled in a strand of DNA. Once the egg and sperm share their inheritance, the DNA chemical ladder splits down the center of every gene much as the teeth of a zipper pull apart. DNA reforms itself each time the cell divides: 2, 4, 8, 16, 32 cells, each with the identical DNA. Along the way cells specialize, but each carries the entire instruction book of one hundred thousand genes. DNA is estimated to contain instructions that, if written out, would fill a thousand, six hundred page books ... (The DNA is so narrow and compacted that all the genes in all my body’s cells would fit into an ice cube; yet if DNA were unwound and joined together end to end, the strand could stretch from earth to the sun and back more than four hundred times) ... A nerve cell may operate according to instructions from volume four and a kidney cell from volume twenty-five, but both carry the whole compendium. It provides each cell’s sealed credential of membership in the body. Every cell possesses a genetic code so complete that the entire body could be reassembled from the information in any one of the body’s cells ... The Designer of DNA went on to challenge the human race to a new and higher purpose: membership in His own Body ... In reality, I become genetically like Christ Himself because I belong to His body.²

Mendel’s law seemed to sound a death knell for Darwin’s theory. However, persistent evolutionists found a new basis for evolution in the study of the occasional sudden changes in life forms known as mutations. While nearly all mutations are harmful, some scientists theorize that beneficial mutations could account for the ongoing evolution from lower species to higher species even though no real world evidence for beneficial mutations exists. Some in the scientific community have labeled evolution by mutations “neoDarwinism.”

Nevertheless, the framework of evolutionary theory comes under criticism. Francis Hitchings, writing in Life Magazine stated, “Charles Darwin died 100 years ago…today his explanation of evolution is being challenged as never before, not just by creationists, but by his fellow scientists.”

While many scientists work on the assumption of the evolutionary hypothesis, evolution is not provable using the scientific method. There is overwhelming logic in a supernatural origin for humans, who almost universally seek an object of worship, and who cannot escape from an instinct of responsibility to a higher power. One hundred years beyond Darwin, evolution is still unproven and contributes nothing to the dignity of humanness. It is ultimately a godless faith.

Not all evolutionists are materialists or agnostics. Theistic evolutionists hold that evolution is the method God employed to create life. However, no corroborating evidence exists either in the fossil record or in the science of genetics for the transmutation of species. Since the Bible plainly states that the species propagate, each one after its own kind, it seems truer to Scripture and to reason to accept a direct creation for man and woman as a natural interpretation of the Genesis creation narrative.

Conversely, Bible believers cannot scientifically affirm many aspects of the divine creation (creationism). Instead, they must accept the account of Scripture by faith. Accepting the Lord of the Scripture by faith transforms the

life of individuals and provides a sustaining hope and a powerful meaning to existence. Indeed, courageous faith will inform all believers of their meaningful origin and heavenly destiny.

While the believer’s ultimate acceptance of divine origin is an act of faith, at the same time, divine origin is not without solid scientific evidence:

The most powerful evidence for creation and against evolution is, in our opinion, to be found in specific evidences of intelligent, purposeful design. This evidence is all around us and is something the layman as well as the scientist can appreciate. The authors of *The Creation Explanation* accept the claim of the Bible to be the Word of God. They accept the opening chapters of Genesis, therefore, to be true to scientific fact. This is their fundamental postulate and they make no apology for it.4

B. Humans exist by special creation

Three Hebrew words are used in Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 to describe human creation: (1) *bara*, which means “the production or effectuation of something new, rare and wonderful,” (2) *asah*, which means “to form, to construct, to prepare, to build” and (3) *yatzar*, which means “to form or shape” (as a potter forming vessels). According to Genesis 1:26, the triune God said, “Let us make man” (*asah*); in Genesis 1:27 we read, “So God created man” (*bara*); Genesis 2:7 states, “And the Lord God formed man” (*yatzar*). The idea in 1:26 is that God constructed people in conformity with His own image; in 1:27 He created humans as something new and wonderful in His purpose, and in 2:7 He formed and shaped the human body from the earth as a potter forms a vessel of clay. The “dust of the ground” (2:7) identifies human beings with the scene of both their fall and redemption. The breath of God identifies humans as having a God-given origin and a heavenly destination. Men and women are of the earth but intended for fellowship with God.

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4 Kofahl, xii, xiii.
The declaration of human creation by God is affirmed and assumed throughout Scripture. Genesis 5:1b and Genesis 5:2a continue: “In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female…” Genesis 6:7 states, “So the LORD said, ‘I will destroy man whom I have created bara…” Moses says in Deuteronomy 4:32, concerning the miraculous deliverance from Egypt: “For ask now concerning the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether any great thing like this has happened…” The prophet Isaiah was inspired to write the following statements: “But now, thus says the LORD, who created you…” (Isa. 43:1). “Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him” (Isa. 43:7). “I have made the earth, And created man on it…” (Isa. 45:12). Malachi states: “Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?” (Mal. 2:10a).

The New Testament writers clearly affirmed that God created people. The apostle Paul confirmed that believers “…have put on the new man, who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him…” (Col. 3:10; see also Rom. 9:20; 1 Cor. 15:45; 1 Tim. 2:13; Jas. 3:9).

II. The Result of God’s Purpose

A. The council of the Trinity

God did not create human beings in the same way He created animals. Animals were created as a result of God’s spoken command. God formed the first man (Adam) out of the earth and breathed His divine breath into him. There was something from God Himself breathed into Adam, demonstrating that Adam was unique to God above all other creatures of the world. Isaiah explained God’s purpose: “Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him” (Isa. 43:7). Humanity is the product of God’s planned purpose to create a being to glorify Him.
The deliberate affirmation of Genesis 1:26 hints of the council of the Trinity when God says, “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness, and let them have dominion ... over all the earth.” Some have attributed the plural pronouns “Us” and “Our” to the fact that the name for God (Elohim) is a plural form. However, Elohim, while it is plural, usually takes a singular verb. Commenting on Genesis 1:26, H. C. Leupold stated:

The hortative, “Let us make” [na‘aseh], is particularly striking because it is plural...Behind such speaking lies the truth of the Holy Trinity which, as it grows increasingly clear in revelation, is in the light of later clear revelation discovered as contained in this plural in a kind of obscure adumbration. The truth of the Trinity explains this passage. The common explanation that God is addressing the angels has been shown up in its deficiencies by Koenig. It cannot be denied that on occasion God addressed the angelic host before His throne...but never once does God actually counsel with them.5

B. The work of God’s creative purpose

Paul referred to this council of the triune God in Ephesians 1:4 when he wrote: “…just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love…” In 2 Timothy 1:9, Paul stated that it is God “who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began…” The Word establishes the following facts concerning human creation:

God created people.

1. Of all created beings, only humans received the breath of God.

2. God formed humans in His own image.

3. God created people for His glory.

4. Humanity was planned and designed in the council of the triune God.

5. Jesus Christ, by becoming human, redeemed humankind.

Writing to Titus, Paul declared: “...in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began...” (Tit. 1:2). Since God could not have made a promise to a person before time began, He must have made the promise to His Son, Jesus, regarding the redemption and eternal life of people. Jesus, in His intercessory prayer to the Father clearly implied this truth, “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24).

Some have asked, “If God in His foreknowledge knew Adam would fall, why did He create him?” We cannot discern God’s motives, but we can be certain it was always God’s divine purpose that redeemed humans, made in His image, would bring glory to His name. Although no one can completely fathom the mysteries of God, it is clear that the redeemed in Christ, the object of God’s love, fulfill a high purpose. Humans are more than the “dust of the ground”; they have the potential to become redeemed children of God.

### III. Created in God’s Image

The Scripture tells us God created people in His own image. In Hebrew the term is *telem Elohim*, in Greek it is *eikon tou Theou*, and in Latin it is *imago Dei*. Scripture does not explicitly define what it means to be made in God’s image. Consequently, many explanations have been offered. The following are common interpretations of the *imago Dei*.

A. Not a physical image

God is Spirit. He does not have a physical body (John 4:24). He is invisible (Col. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:17; Heb. 11:27) although He may appear in human
form as in the case of the angel of Yahweh (Gen. 17-18). Some conjecture that the upright stature of people indicates patterning after a prototype image represented by the glorified body of Christ. Romans 5:14 states that Adam was a type of Christ. However, the Pentateuch expressly prohibited Israel from making any graven image of God in human form. It is true that Jesus subsisted in the “form of God”; however, when He came to earth, He took the form of a servant and became like a man in appearance. In fact, Jesus’ earthly form must have been a great condescension from His heavenly form (Phil. 2:7-8). In spite of the Fall, it is still true that humans are made in the image of God (Gen. 9:6; Isa. 6:1; Jas. 3:9; John 5:37).

B. A personal image

God is a personal God: One who designs, plans, communicates, wills and feels (is pleased and displeased). Personality comprises the intellect, emotion and will. Genesis 1:26-31 attributes these personality components to God: intellect in the words “and God said”; will and purpose in the statement “Let Us make”; and feeling or emotion in the sentence “Then God saw every-thing that He had made, and indeed it was very good.” God’s nature is vastly beyond human comprehension, but the infinite God represents Himself throughout the Scripture as possessing personal characteristics.

If God had a purpose in creating people, He must have desired to communicate with His creation to reveal something of His will and purpose. The God who said, “let Us make” also said to His nation Israel, “Come now, and let us reason together…” ( Isa. 1:18). Humans are the only earthly creatures able to reason abstractly, create, innovate and choose with free agency to communicate with and worship God. Animal activity, on the other hand, is mostly instinctive, lacking freedom and volition. Do the personal and rational faculties of humans constitute God’s image? Or does the capacity of people to have dominion and to rule over the earth’s creatures, making animals serve them, constitute the divine image? Is the image of God seen in human-kind’s exploration of space or the harnessing of nuclear energy, electricity and other natural forces? There seems to be some hint of this in Genesis 1:28-31 and Psalm 8:4-9.
C. A moral image

Human beings are moral beings. Individuals are born with a sense of accountability to their Maker. When we do what is right, our hearts give us assurance; when we do what is wrong, our hearts condemn us (Rom. 8:1; 1 John 3:20-21). Because humans are indeed moral creatures, God gave humankind His Law, recorded in Exodus 20. God would not hold guiltless those who violated the Law (Exod. 20:7). Humanity failed the test in the Garden. Humans also failed to keep the Law. Consequently, humans shared Adam's guilt as well as Adam’s acquired sinful nature. Only the last Adam, Jesus Christ, could free humans from the condemnation and guilt of their fallen condition (Rom. 8:1).

As moral beings, humans have a conscience. There are those who think the conscience is not a separate faculty but merely the knowledge of self in relation to a known standard of right and wrong, or the interworking of intellect, emotion and will in the face of a moral standard. However, it seems clear from Scripture and experience that people do, indeed, possess a faculty of conscience. Merriam-Webster’s dictionary defines conscience as “the sense or consciousness of the moral goodness or blameworthiness of one’s own conduct, intentions, or character together with a feeling of obligation to do right or be good; a faculty, power, or principle enjoining good acts.”

While the word conscience is not in the Old Testament, Leviticus 5:3 describes the characteristics and function of the conscience. In the New Testament, the word conscience occurs 31 times. The scriptural record states the conscience can be good, weak, pure, seared, defiled, evil and purged. The conscience can also bear witness and convict. Can we attribute such actions and characteristics to anything other than a distinct faculty? It appears the conscience is an instinct given to humans by God, for as soon as Adam and Eve sinned, they hid themselves. It seems clear that the conscience interacts with intellect, emotion and will.

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D. A social image

God is love. He is loving community in His essential nature, for love is the expression of the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Humans were created in God’s image to exist in loving community. God commanded Adam and Eve to multiply and replenish the earth, to be a family and a family of nations. Likewise, God provided the Law to govern social relationships. Six of the Ten Commandments deal directly with how individuals should treat one another. God made humans to commune with Him and with each other. When humankind broke communion with God, relationships between humans also broke down. Consequently, Adam and Eve’s first son, Cain, murdered their second son, Abel. Jesus taught us that love is to be the controlling motive of the redeemed; for the born again are all members of one body, the Body of Christ (John 13:34-35).

IV. Created as Living Souls

According to Genesis, God gave humans two gifts at creation: (1) A body formed from the dust and (2) the breath of God. “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 being” (Gen. 2:7). Because of the creative combination of an earthly element and a heavenly element, Adam and Eve became living beings created in the image of their Creator. They began life on the earth in vessels of clay, but their intended destiny was everlasting life in a glorified body.

A. Is given a body

The Greeks and many other ancients thought of the body as a prison of the soul and the source of all evil. The Gnostic heresy held this low esteem of the body to the extreme by denying that Jesus had a physical body. To counter this Gnostic teaching, the apostle John warned believers about those who denied Jesus had come in the flesh (1 John 4:13). Scripture teaches us to honor and respect the body as God’s creation: “Whoever sheds man’s blood,
By man shall his blood be shed: For in the image of God He made man” (Gen. 9:6). The following are important facts concerning the body as revealed in Scripture:

1. It is a mortal body that will return to the dust out of which it was fashioned. God made humankind’s origin very clear: “... For dust you are, And to dust you shall return” (Gen. 3:19). This thought should keep us humble in the presence of our God. When Abraham talked with God, he said, “Indeed now, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the LORD” (Gen. 18:27). The psalmist wrote that without the breath of God man is but dust, “…You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust” (Ps. 104:29).

2. Humankind is made of mere dust, but dust in the hands of God became something wonderfully made. Science continues to discover the unimaginably astonishing and complex workings of the human body, but Scripture clearly shows the wonder of creation:

   I will praise You; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed (Ps. 139:14-16a).

3. The natural physical body is a temporary home for the real person who inhabits it. This concept is clearly taught in Scripture: “…knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me” (2 Pet. 1:14). Paul stated, “For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor. 5:1).

4. In the resurrection, the human body will be changed; however, the new spiritual body will have a relationship to the old natural body. In regard
to the resurrected body, Paul stated “It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body...For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Cor. 15:44a, 53). The natural body that goes back to dust will be changed supernaturally and transformed into a glorified body. Jesus said, “…the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live” (John 5:25). Paul assured believers that the dead in Christ will rise first (1 Thess. 4:16b). He further asserted that “…flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 15:50). However, just as Jesus in the resurrection had a touchable body of “flesh and bones” (Luke 24:39; John 20:27), so will the believer’s resurrected body have a relationship to his or her earthly body. As a new plant is related to the seed from which it springs, so is the resurrected body related to the natural body (1 Cor. 15:44).

5. The body of a redeemed person is a temple of the Holy Spirit; therefore, it must not be used as an instrument for sin. The New Testament makes this truth clear: “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

6. The human body when dedicated to Christ is considered a living and holy sacrifice. Old Testament worshipers offered dead animal sacrifices to God; New Testament worshipers present their lives as living offerings of consecrated service by employing their bodies in surrendered Christian living and ministry: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1).

7. Redeemed believers may employ their bodies as weapons against Satan. Although Satan strives to motivate believers to use their bodies to advance his cause, Paul urged believers to use their bodies as weapons against Satan and for God:
You must not let any part of your body turn into an unholy weapon fighting on the side of sin; you should instead, offer yourselves to God, and consider yourselves dead men brought back to life; you should make every part of your body into a weapon fighting on the side of God (Rom. 6:13, JB).

8. Redeemed people enjoy many benefits of Christ’s redeeming work in their present bodies. Writing about Jesus’ ministry of healing, Matthew stated, “When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: ‘He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses’” (Matt. 8:16-17).

Clearly, the work of the cross loosed the hold of sickness upon the physical body. Jesus said those who preach the gospel “…will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover” (Mark 16:18). The early church believed Christ had ordained and empowered Christians to pray for physical healing. Consequently, James wrote, “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the LORD will raise him up” (Jas. 5:14-15a). Paul also wrote to the Romans concerning how the redeeming work of Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit bring present benefits to the body: “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you” (Rom. 8:11). Some claim this “quickening” refers to the final resurrection of the body; however, the following facts seem to show that Paul was writing about the believer’s current experience:

a) Paul was speaking of the believer’s present victory over the flesh.

b) He referred to our “mortal” bodies, not dead bodies; mortal means “subject to death.”
c) Before the quickening of the resurrection, the bodies will be “dead” in the grave, not “mortal.”

d) Romans 8:12 states: “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.” The argument pertains clearly to the present walk in the Spirit.

e) If the Spirit delivers from carnal domination through faith, so also can the Spirit deliver from bodily infirmity through faith.

9. Each believer will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ on the basis of things done in the body. The Bible clearly states that the works of the body will be judged: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). The judgment (bema) is a judgment of works, not of condemnation (1 Cor. 3:11-15), with the degree of reward based upon things done “in the body.” It is the soul that sins but the body and its members execute the sin. Paul stated: “But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” (1 Cor. 9:27).

10. People possess an inherited body of dust, bearing both the image of Adam and the image of God. Through Christ, we will inherit a glorified body in the image of Christ, the last Adam. This is made clear in Paul’s writings to the Corinthians:

The first man Adam became a living being, the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have born the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man (1 Cor. 15:45-49).
B. Is given an immaterial life

Scripture teaches that the immaterial life and personality of every human are derived from God’s creative breath. The life breath of every human depends upon the sustaining grace of the Creator (Job 12:10; Ps. 33:6; Isa. 42:5; Acts 17:25).

Contemporary psychology and neuroscience generally attribute human personality and intellect to the physical, chemical and electrical function of the brain. Some even avoid the term “mind,” preferring to explain human behavior solely as the functioning of the brain and nervous system. This limited “scientific” perspective does not adequately explain the origin of life, nor does it make room for a supernatural basis for human rationality.

Humans are free, creative, rational and worshiping beings who are far too complex to explain by the mere chance action of physical forces. Genesis reveals the divine origin of the inner self: “And the Lord God…breathed into his nostrils the breath of life…” (Gen. 2:7). Unlike animals, humans possess rational faculties that are able to grow and progress both individually and historically. Additionally, the emotional characteristics of a person are highly multifaceted. In fact, unlike the minds of animals, the human mind is uniquely capable of processing many emotions in a single moment. The most complex animal behavior pales in comparison to the expressions of the simplest human societies.

Scripture uses at least nine different terms to refer to the immaterial element in humans:

- Life (Mark 8:35)  Strength (Luke 10:27)
- Soul (Mark 8:36)  Self (1 Cor. 4:3-4)
- Spirit (Ps. 31:5)  Will (1 Cor. 7:37)
- Mind (Rom. 7:25)  Affections (Col. 3:2)
- Heart (Eph. 6:6)
This is not to say these terms are all synonyms. Each refers to the immaterial self from a discernibly different point of view or describes a different function of the immaterial self. Even so, several of the terms could be interchangeable. For instance, the Greek word *psuche* translates to the English words “life” (42 times), “soul” (53 times) and “heart” (2 times).

The words most frequently used to identify the immaterial self are “soul” and “spirit.” Soul translates the Hebrew word *nephesh*, and the Greek word *psuche*. Spirit is a translation of the Hebrew *ruach*, and the Greek *pneuma*. All four of these words from the Hebrew and Greek also mean “breath” or “wind.” These terms aptly express that the immaterial part of every human derives from the “breath” of God. When Jesus described to Nicodemus the work of the Spirit of God, He said, “The wind [*pneuma*] blows [*pnei*] where it wishes…” (John 3:8). Some scholars think the clause should be translated, “The Spirit breathes where He wills.” The Greek words are capable of either translation.7 The book of Job attributes the creation of humans to the breath of God: “But there is a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives me understanding” (Job 32:8). A later portion of Job states, “The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life” (Job 33:4).

One erroneous belief is that unregenerated people have only a body and soul until God imparts the spirit at the new birth. This view confuses the human spirit with the Holy Spirit who indwells believers. However, even ungodly men are said to each have their own spirit (1 Chron. 5:26). The assertion that the “soul” is the human element, and the “spirit” is the divine element again fails to differentiate the human spirit from the Holy Spirit. The souls and spirits of humans are depicted in heaven (Heb. 12:23; Rev. 6:9), while “soul” and “spirit” are both attributed to God the Father and Son (Isa. 42:1; 53:11-12; Matt. 12:18; 26:38; Luke 23:46).

Concerning the composition of each person, there are three classical schools of thought: (1) Trichotomy (three parts): body, soul and spirit, (2)

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7 See Rotherham’s Emphasized Bible (Kregel); Worrel’s New Testament (Gospel Publishing House); and the Interlinear Greek English Bible by Jay P. Green, Sr. (Associated Publishers and Authors, Wilmington, Delaware).
Dichotomy (two parts): body and soul (or spirit) and Monism (one part): body, soul or spirit. Evangelical scholars have generally affirmed the view that humans are either trichotomous or dichotomous. Monism does not appear supportable from the biblical evidence.  

1. Trichotomy

   a) In Genesis 2:7, the combination of a body of dust and the breath of God resulted in a third part, the soul.

   b) First Thessalonians 5:23 definitely specifies three parts of a person: “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

   c) Hebrews 4:12 affirms that “…the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joint and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

   d) When Paul spoke of men as carnal, natural (soulish) and spiritual, he seemed to indicate conditions related respectively to body, soul and spirit (1 Cor. 2:14-3:1).

2. Dichotomy

   a) Genesis 2:7 mentions only two distinct elements: the body of earth and the breath of God. The living “soul” is not a third part but the result of body and spirit. It does not say man had a soul, but man became a living soul [being].

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b) Biblical writers seem to use the terms “soul” and “spirit” interchangeably. For instance, in John 12:27 Jesus stated, “Now is my soul troubled…” However, later in John we read, “When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit…” (John 13:21; see also Gen. 41:8; Ps. 42:6; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 6:9; 20:4).

c) Scripture attributes “soul” and “spirit” to animals as well as people (Eccles. 3:21; Rev. 16:3).

d) Some scriptures attribute the term “soul” to Yahweh ( Isa. 42:1; 53:10-12; Jer. 9:9, KJV; Heb. 10:38).

e) Scripture seems to attribute even the highest spiritual exercises to both the soul and the spirit: “And you shall love the LORD your God… with all your soul…” (Mark 12:30; see also Luke 1:46; Heb. 6:18-19; Jas. 1:21).

f) According to Jesus, to lose the soul is to lose everything: “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” (Mark 8:36-37; Matt. 16:26; see also Matt. 10:28).

g) In response to the seemingly trichotomous elements of the benediction in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, dichotomists will likely argue that Paul did not view body, soul and spirit as three distinct and separable parts. Rather, he used soul and spirit in the same manner Jesus used “heart,” “soul,” “mind” and “strength” in Mark 12:30. When referring to the rational part of personhood, Paul used “mind” (translated from nine different Greek words) more frequently than he used “soul.”

h) Some reference “the division of soul and spirit” in Hebrews 4:12 as an argument for trichotomy. Dichotomists respond that the “word” does not divide the “soul” from the “spirit” but rather penetrates into the deepest recesses of a person’s being, even to “the thoughts and intents of the heart.” W. E. Vine commented:
The Word of God pierces through all that lies deepest in human nature, not actually separating soul from spirit and joints from marrow, but piercing and laying bare the inmost being, cutting through the most secret recesses of the spirit’s life, penetrating the soul and, deeper still, the spirit, as through joints to their very marrow.9

i) Dichotomists believe there is a difference between “soul” and “spirit.” Although frequently used to designate the same immaterial part of a person, these words also refer to a person’s inner self in different relationships. When distinguishing the meaning of the words, the soul faces earthward, the spirit faces heavenward. In other words, the soul involves earthly relationships while the spirit involves spiritual and immortal relationships. Even so, dichotomists believe both “soul” and “spirit” constitute the immaterial self.

3. Monism

Monism is a general philosophical term that attempts to explain phenomena by a single or unifying principle.10 When applied to a theological discussion of personhood, monism views the immaterial and material (corporeal) self as inseparable. Outside the realm of biblical Christianity, philosophers have argued for centuries against a duality or plurality of elements in the human person.

The notion that immaterial personality and the material body are inexorably and permanently attached naturally leads to the belief that either (1) death ends existence or (2) only a connected and simultaneous resurrection of the body and spirit (or soul) allows for continued existence. Both of these possibilities find no support in the Scripture. The Bible consistently represents humans with both material and immaterial elements separable either by death of the body or miraculous intervention (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5).

It is important to note that while monism is scripturally unsupportable, the difference between the trichotomous and dichotomous views of personhood does not significantly affect major doctrine.

C. Became a living soul (being) Genesis 2:7

1. Personhood as a unity: The Bible speaks of the unity of personhood. The soul (spirit) separates from the body at physical death, but only for an interim period, awaiting the resurrection. Paul spoke of the soul as naked without the body:

   “Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life” (2 Cor. 5:1-4, NIV).

   The ancient Greeks considered the soul in the afterlife to be a disembodied spirit. In contrast, Christian believers anticipate a union of the spirit with the glorified body, a body like that of Jesus, risen from the grave and transformed. The apostle Paul spoke of this redeemed body when he wrote, “Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of the body” (Rom. 8:23).

   Christ’s vicarious atoning work redeems the whole person, not just the soul or spirit. This holistic redemption gives powerful meaning to Paul’s benediction: “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:23).
It appears Jesus had human wholeness in mind when He said, “And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all you mind, and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30). Speaking of personhood as a unity, Swiss physician and psychiatrist Paul Tournier wrote:

Science, in fact, works only by analysis, by dividing ad infinitum the object of study...What happens then is like what happens when we separate a jigsaw puzzle into its five hundred pieces: the overall picture disappears. This is the state of modern medicine; it has lost the sense of the unity of man. Such is the price it has paid for its scientific progress. It has sacrificed art to science. Its discoveries are true; that is to say, they reveal valid and important facts. But they do not lead to a true understanding of man, because he is a synthesis. We shall not come to understand man by adding up all the items of analytical knowledge that we possess of him, but by comprehending him as a unified whole. Man is not just a body and a mind. He is a spiritual being. It is impossible to know him if one disregards his deepest reality.”

2. The origin of the soul or spirit: There are three leading theories concerning the source of each newly born person’s soul: preexistence, creationism, and traducianism.

a) Preexistence is the belief that the human soul exists before conception and is placed by God into each person sometime before birth. Along with believing in the preexistence of the soul, some believe in the transmigration of the soul, which means the soul transfers from one body to another human, animal or spiritual body. Hinduism, Theosophy, Rosicrucianism, as well as many indigenous and occult religions, hold the theory of the transmigration of the soul. Regardless,

this theory does not have scriptural support and is contradicted by verses such as Hebrews 9:27.

b) Creationism (not to be confused with the question of the creation of the world) is asserted by many Roman Catholic and Reformed theologians. According to the creationist view of the origin of the soul, God generates the soul directly in each newly conceived person sometime between conception and birth, while the parents propagate only the body (see Isa. 42:5; 57:16; Eccles. 12:7; Zech. 12:1; Heb. 12:9).

One problem with the creationism position is it appears to make God the creator of sinful souls, or at least represents God as situating a pure soul in a depraved Adamic body. Further, it appears that the same scripture given to support direct creation can also be interpreted to validate the indirect agency of God in procreation.

c) Traducianism is a preferred theory among many non-Reformed conservative scholars. According to traducianism, God created the human race in Adam, and from Adam both body and soul were procreated by natural generation (see Job 14:4; 15:14; Ps. 51:5; 58:3; John 3:6; Eph. 2:3). Strong stated, “Traducianism holds that man, as a species, was created in Adam. In Adam, the substance of humanity was yet undisturbed. We derive our immaterial as well as our material being, by natural laws of propagation, from Adam; each individual human after Adam possessing a part of the substance that was originated in him.”

The arguments for the traducian theory include the following:

(1) The Bible does not record that God directly created any person but Adam and Eve. After creating Adam and Eve, God rested from His work (Gen. 2:2).

(2) It best explains the inherited sinful nature of the human as expressed by David: “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me” (Ps. 51:5).

(3) It is supported by a vital statistic about the family of Jacob: “All the persons [souls] who went with Jacob to Egypt, who came from his body, besides Jacob’s sons’ wives, were sixty-six persons [souls] in all” (Gen. 46:26).

(4) It is consistent with the Bible record of procreation: “And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth” (Gen. 5:3).

(5) It helps explain personality likenesses between children and parents.

(6) The soul does not have purely natural origins. God has indirectly created all souls since Adam and is, therefore, the sustainer of the process of procreation (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3).

V. The Original State of Humans

To understand the human condition, it is important to examine the original state of humans before the Fall. Consequently, this section will look at the psychological, moral, social, occupational and spiritual condition of Adam and Eve as occupants of their God-given Edenic home.

A. The state of knowledge

God gave Adam the task of naming all the animals, birds and, perhaps, all other forms of life, as God had given Adam dominion over every living thing (Gen. 1:28; 2:19-20). This assignment required a vast knowledge. Apparently, Adam’s knowledge included insight into the nature and relative purpose of each species. In primitive times names did more than identify the
holder; they revealed character and destiny. The father of the human race was not a full-grown adolescent; he was the resident “scientist” of Eden.

B. The moral state

Since holiness and righteousness are among the fundamental attributes of God, Adam and Eve, created in God’s image, must have shared God’s holy and righteous character. When God had completed the creation, it was perfect: “Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good” (Gen. 1:31a). A comparison of Ephesians 4:24 with Colossians 3:9-10 strongly implies the original righteousness of Adam and Eve. Although their will was soon tested, God created Adam and Eve in a state of holiness, devoid of evil.

C. The psychological state

God created Adam and Eve with several basic instincts (needs, drives or impulses). The following seem to be some of Adam’s instincts or needs:

1. Self-preservation: God warned Adam of impending death if he ate of the forbidden tree (Gen. 2:16-17).

2. The desire for food: God provided every kind of plant and tree good for food (Gen. 1:29).

3. The urge for procreation or sex: Adam and Eve were commanded to multiply and replenish the earth (Gen. 1:28). Genesis says about man and woman: “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife…” (Gen. 2:24).

4. The need for acquisition: God placed Adam and Eve in their own garden, which they lost with the Fall (Gen. 2:15).
5. The drive for domination: Adam was commanded to have dominion over the earth and over every created thing (Gen. 1:28). These instincts were for Adam and Eve’s good; they continue to exist for the good of humans. However, they must not be abused. These natural urges are desires of the “flesh,” and they must be yielded to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

D. The social state

Humans are social creatures made for companionship and community: “And the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him’” (Gen. 2:18; see also Gen. 2:23-24). With the creation of Eve, Adam had constant companionship with a being of his own kind. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had daily communion with God and with each other. When Adam and Eve sinned, they became alienated from God and suspicious of each other. Before their rebellion, Adam saw Eve as “bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh…” (Gen. 2:23). After their rebellion, Adam spoke of Eve as “The woman whom You gave to be with me…” (Gen. 3:12).

E. The occupational state

The Garden of Eden was an active and dynamic place: “Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it” (Gen. 2:15). Adam was both a zoologist and a horticulturist. The beauty and productivity of Eden were entrusted to Adam as he kept and tended the garden. The word “keep” seems to suggest the necessity to “protect” the garden, while the word “tend” suggests giving it touches of human handiwork. Creative occupation is essential for human fulfillment. Work became “toil” only after sin entered the scene (Gen. 3:17-19).

F. The state of life expectancy

Adam and Eve were created with the potential for immortality. Adam was told by God that death would occur only if he disobeyed God by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:16-17). When Adam and Eve sinned, death began its reign. Subsequently, angels with flaming swords
guarded the tree of life (Gen. 3:24). However, Jesus Christ (the last Adam) removed the sting of death. The Seed of woman has now bruised the serpent’s head, and through God’s Son, paradise has been restored (Gen. 3:15).

Adam and Eve were created in God’s image, in holiness and righteousness. They were placed in an ideal environment with a fulfilling occupation and purpose. God gave them the gift of His presence as well as the gift of marital love and companionship. Even with the potential for immortality, Adam and Eve disobeyed and fell. How could they have forfeited so much, not only for themselves, but for the entire human race? The answer to this question is rooted in the Fall.

**VI. The Fall**

At the heart of the Christian gospel is the famed statement, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). God sent His Son to rescue us from our perishing condition. If God loved humans so much, how did humans fall into a state of perishing? *The Declaration of Faith* of The International Church of the Foursquare Gospel (ICFG) provides this brief explanation:

We believe that man was created in the image of God, before Whom he walked in holiness and purity, but that by voluntary disobedience and transgression, he fell from the Eden of purity and innocence to the depths of sin and iniquity, and that in consequence of this, all mankind are sinners sold unto Satan, sinners not by constraint but by choice, shapen in iniquity and utterly void by nature of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil, guilty and without excuse, justly deserving the condemnation of a just and holy God.13

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Although they were created in God’s image, placed in an ideal environment and given everything they needed, Adam and Eve rebelled against God and disobeyed His commandment. The result of their sin was shame, guilt, alienation and death, not only for themselves but also for the entire human race. In light of the devastating consequences of sin, why would God subject Adam and Eve to temptation? (see Ps. 14:1-3; Rom. 3:10-23; 5:12-21).

A. The probation of humankind

1. Its purpose: Created in God’s image and endowed with intelligence, emotion and will, men and women are free, moral agents capable of making choices. Since humans are created for God’s glory (Isa. 43:7) and can best glorify God by freely choosing to worship and serve Him, it was necessary humans be given an opportunity to choose. For Adam and Eve, the Garden of Eden was not only a home in paradise, it was also a place of probation, a place to test their obedience and loyalty to Yahweh. The probation of Adam and Eve was based on a clear, direct commandment, a simple law of works. The law had two parts: a positive part, consisting of a glorious provision; and a negative part, consisting of a clear prohibition: “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die’” (Gen. 2:16-17).

It is important to explain how beings created with holy natures could sin. Adam and Eve were each created with a holy nature, but they were not born with holy character. A holy nature is the result of creation, while holy character is the result of choosing good when the choice for evil is possible. Evil choices produce evil character. God desired humans to worship and serve Him with holy, moral character. Consequently, free choice was necessary for the development of mature holiness and blessedness. With free choice there is, of necessity, the possibility of wrong choice. Adam and Eve made the wrong choice with disastrous consequences for themselves and the human race.

2. Its character: The probationary commandment given to Adam and Eve was personal, not moral. There was no obvious wrong in eating from the forbidden tree; the fall of Adam and Eve was the result of disobedience,
not the result of a clearly immoral act. This test was similar to the later test of Abraham and the offering of his only son, Isaac. The test of Abraham was purely personal, not moral. There would have been no intrinsic wrongdoing by Abraham in sparing his son. He moved toward the sacrifice of Isaac as an act of pure obedience to God (Gen. 22:1-13).

People obey a moral law because it is inherently right to do so. For example, the Ten Commandments are right not simply because they came from God but because they also represent inherently right conduct. Conversely, some ceremonial law simply required obedience because that law came from God; its rightness was not self-evident. The prohibition of eating from the tree of good and evil was a testing law because the evil was not self-evident; the evil was in the disobedience of the commandment. The fall of Adam and Eve resulted from a pure act of willful disobedience.

3. Its reasonableness: The reasonableness of the probation of Adam and Eve is apparent in several ways. First, an all-wise God knew what was necessary to bring people to their highest potential development and greatest blessedness. If Adam and Eve had obeyed, resisting Satan’s temptation, they would have possessed holy, moral character and would have risen to a new level of blessing and fellowship with God. There is a hint of this in the character and in the consequent translation of Enoch to heaven. Enoch developed holy character even after inheriting an Adamic nature. If Adam had obeyed, he would have had heaven on earth. A loving God would not have subjected Adam to probation had it not been necessary for Adam’s highest possible good.

Second, God, having foreseen Adam’s failure, provided a plan for his redemption. God is not the author of sin. He did not cause Adam to fall, for Adam had every reason to obey. However, God purposed to bring out of human failure a glorious redemption; a redemption wrought through the incarnation and vicarious death of His own Son; a redemption that would include the final defeat of Satan who was, after all, the first sinner.
Within the very curse pronounced upon the serpent, God gave a promise of a Redeemer, “her Seed,” and of Satan’s defeat, “He shall bruise your head” (Gen. 3:15). The animals slain to cover Adam and Eve’s nakedness and Abel’s offering of an acceptable lamb to God are both representative of the redemption that would be provided through the blood of Jesus (Gen. 3:21; 4:4). The apostle Peter declared that Christ, as a lamb, was purposed “before the foundation of the world” (1 Pet. 1:18-20). Therefore, God in His foreknowledge saw that Adam and Eve would fail and determined to bring out of their failure a people gloriously redeemed by the blood of Christ. It appears that Adam and Eve’s testing was necessary and reasonable because all potential results of Adam and Eve’s response would have ultimately led to a final state superior to their original Edenic state.

B. The temptation

1. The agent of temptation: Genesis attributes the temptation of Adam and Eve to a serpent, “more crafty than any beast of the field” (Gen. 3:1, NASB). The real tempter, however, was Satan. Revelation alludes to the serpent as Satan: “So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world…” (Rev. 12:9). The apostle Paul strengthened the connection of Satan as the serpent, suggesting the same tempter who deceived Eve is still present and seeking to corrupt the minds of believers. “But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Cor. 11:3).

Furthermore, Genesis 3:1 does not state that the serpent was more crafty than any “other” beast, but more crafty than “any” beast of the field. The serpent was the vehicle Satan used to effect the temptation. Apparently, Satan has the power to disguise himself by assuming the appearance of another being or form. Even Paul writes, “For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14).

Some scholars believe the serpent was originally an upright animal and the most beautiful of all the creatures. This seems likely because the curse upon the serpent reduced him to a crawling creature. That the real tempter
was Satan (who had previously rebelled against God) is clear by the prophecy that the “Seed of woman” (Christ) would bruise the serpent’s head. Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:12-15 describe Satan’s rebellious posture and fall. Satan seldom reveals himself as God’s direct adversary. Instead, he frequently disguises himself in the form of a benefactor or fulfillment of selfish ambitions.

2. The motives of temptation: What kind of motivation did Satan use to tempt holy, innocent beings into disobeying their God? As previously mentioned, God endowed Adam and Eve with certain basic instincts needed for their own well-being. These instincts or drives included self-preservation, acquisition, desire for food, desire for love and procreation, and the urge for dominion. These drives constituted a motivational base to which Satan could direct temptation. Satan aimed his temptation at three of Eve’s basic desires: “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate” (Gen. 3:6). Unquestionably, these were not inherently evil desires. They became evil because they were used for Satan’s purposes in direct disobedience to God’s specific commandment. Desire becomes lust when it is contrary to the will of the Spirit. Many scholars believe John was referring to the pattern of Eve’s temptation when he wrote: “For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:16-17). The term “world” in this verse does not refer to the earth but to the societal realm ruled by Satan; the term “flesh” has reference not to the body as such but to the total person dedicated to selfishness and disobedience to God.

It is important to notice that Satan did not appeal to Eve’s desires until he first tempted her to doubt the Lord. He began his temptation with the insinuating question, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” (Gen. 3:1). This question is contrived to tempt Eve to doubt God’s goodness. Next Satan states, “You will not surely die” to raise doubts about God’s veracity (Gen. 3:4).
With the seeds of doubt planted, Satan unveiled himself as God’s enemy by asserting that God was trying to deprive Adam and Eve of their supposed right to achieve divine status: “For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:5). Once this seed of doubt was planted and had germinated, Satan appealed to Eve’s desires. Perhaps Eve thought if God’s truth and goodness were suspect, she must then pursue her own interests. Scholars disagree on whether Eve’s rebellion may have been one or all of the deadly sins of self, doubt or pride (see 1 Tim. 3:6; 2 Pet. 2:10; Jas. 1:5-8, NIV). It seems all three sins contributed to the ultimate fall of the first humans, Adam and Eve.

C. The fallen state

The Scripture clearly teaches that humans were created in the image of God. Genesis 3 describes Adam and Eve’s disobedience and fall. Genesis 4 - Genesis 11 portrays the calamities and strife of Adam and Eve’s descendants. Although humans still bear enough of God’s image to demonstrate divine origin, the history of war, crime, terrorism and perversion provide incontrovertible evidence of the Fall. The noblest ideals of humanity provide evidence that humans are created by God. However, the greed and brutality of humanity offers proof of the corruption of humans by sin. Without an inspired record of the Fall, we would still have to assume an evil occurrence at the dawn of history to account for such tragic human drama, drama that could only be redeemed by the divine intervention of Christ’s incarnation, resurrection and promised return (see Job. 31:33; Rom. 5:12-14; 1 Cor. 15:22-45; 1 Tim. 2:13-14).

1. The interpretation of the Fall: Is the account of the fall of Adam and Eve figurative or literal? Is it myth and allegory with symbolic meaning, or is it literal, factual history? While some theologians interpret Genesis 1 - Genesis 11 as myth, the following facts argue for a literal interpretation:

   a) Nowhere in the Bible is the story of Adam interpreted symbolically. If the Creation and Fall stories were merely allegorical, the spiritualized interpretations would have been numerous.
b) There is no indication in Genesis 11 and Genesis 12 suggesting a change from allegory to history. Noah is as much a real character as is Abraham.

c) The apostle Paul paralleled Adam and Christ in his writings. Since Christ is a historical person, it is unlikely He would be an antitype of a non-historical character (see Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 15:22-45).

d) Adam’s name appears with other historical characters such as David, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in two different genealogy scriptures (see 1 Chron. 1-2; Luke 3:23-38).

e) Real geographical locations are included in the story of Adam such as Assyria and the river Euphrates.

f) The fallen condition of people is literal and true. The truly fallen state of humans can hardly be attributed to a mythical event. Moreover, the fact that humankind has made extraordinary scientific and technological progress, while making little or no moral, ethical or social progress, demonstrates the sinful human nature. The persistence of war, crime, terrorism, greed, political corruption and perversion exhibits the existence of human sinfulness as well as the existence of a supernatural evil force motivating human wickedness.

2. The results of the Fall: In response to the Fall, God rendered judicial verdicts on the serpent, the woman, the man and the ground.

a) The judgment upon the serpent was the apparently upright and beautiful creature was doomed to a crawling posture (Gen. 3:14-15). The eating of “dust” denoted utter humiliation. According to Isaiah, the serpent will eat dust during the Millennium, but he will be harmless (Isa. 65:25).

b) The judgment upon the woman was the increase of pain and sorrow in childbearing, and submission to her husband (Gen. 3:16).
c) The judgment upon the man was not that of labor, but of wearisome toil (Gen. 3:17). Work is a boon to humankind, but seldom is it free from strife and criticism. This curse is evident the world over in the fear of crop failure, the fear of unemployment, labor strife, bankruptcies and relentless competition.

d) The judgment upon the ground was lowered productivity and the introduction of thorns and thistles (Gen. 3:17-18). Jesus used the illustration of thorns and thistles as the opposite of good fruit (Matt. 7:16-17). Thorns became a symbol of evil and were associated with Satan (2 Cor. 12:7). The fact that malevolent men, motivated by Satan, placed a crown of thorns upon the brow of Jesus evidences the evil symbolism of the thorn (John 19:2). The prophet Isaiah predicted the lifting of the curse and the removal of the thorn during the Millennium ( Isa. 55:12-13).

3. The consequences of the Fall

a) Adam and Eve immediately experienced shame as a consequence of their sin. They hid themselves from God because they were suddenly aware of their nakedness. Shame led to fear and alienation. They wanted the experiential knowledge of good and evil, which they were tempted to believe would make them divine. Instead of experiencing a greater awareness of the divine, they experienced a new awareness of shame (Gen. 3:7-13).

b) One of the most disastrous consequences of the Fall was death. God had warned Adam and Eve that they would certainly die if they ate from the forbidden tree (Gen. 2:17b). There were two trees in the garden: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life. Adam and Eve willfully ate from the tree of “knowledge,” which led them to the knowledge of good and evil and to the experience of death. As they had been warned, God expelled them from the garden, from the tree of life and from His own presence. While Adam and Eve did not immediately die physically (he lived 930 years), the process of disease and mortality commenced the moment they sinned: “And as it is appointed for men to
die once, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). Perhaps the psalmist best described mortality:

You have set our iniquities before You, Our secret sins in the light of Your countenance. For all our days have passed away in Your wrath; We finish our years like a sigh. The days of our lives are seventy years; And if by reason of strength they are eighty years, Yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; For it is soon cut off, and we fly away...So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom (Ps. 90:8-12).

The Bible identifies and describes three categories of death:

(1) Physical death: Physical death occurs when the spirit is separated from the body and the body returns to dust (Gen. 3:19). In the old dispensation, only Enoch and Elijah escaped physical death (Gen. 5:24; 2 Kings 2:11). In the new dispensation, only those who are taken up in the Rapture escape physical death (1 Thess. 4:16-17). Jesus raised several persons from the dead, and several others were raised from the dead under the ministry of the first apostles. However, those individuals eventually died natural deaths (John 11:43-44; Acts 9:40).

(2) Spiritual death: Spiritual death is separation from God. All unregenerate people are alienated from God by sin (Eph. 2:13). However, they may pass from death to spiritual life by exercising saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:54-57; Eph. 2:4-6; Col. 1:13-14, 18-23; 1 John. 5:11-12). “For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:21-22; see also Rom. 5:12-14).

(3) Eternal death: Eternal death is the condition of those who are spiritually dead, who depart this earthly life without repentance of sin and without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Eternal death is the punishment of those who are terminally unbelieving, unrepentant and disobedient (2 Thess. 1:7-10). The judgment unto eternal death (also called the
second death) will take place at the end of the Millennium, before the Great White Throne of God. It will be a judgment for sinners only; the believer’s judgment of works will take place at the Rapture (2 Cor. 5:6-11; Rev. 20:11-15).

VII. The State of Grace

Because the doctrine of humankind is more than just the study of the Fall, sinful nature and the consequent judgments, this final section will deal with believers in the state of grace.

A. Believers are made new in Christ Jesus

But you have not so learned of Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness (Eph. 4:20-24; see also John 1:11-13; 2 Cor. 5:17).

B. Believers have new potential through Christ

As the result of Christ’s incarnation and identification with human nature, human beings have received new potential in Christ:

And so it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who
are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man (1 Cor. 15:45-49; see also 1 Cor. 15:21-22; Col. 3:9-10).

Adam corrupted human nature by sin, disobedience and rebellion. Christ, by taking human nature into union with His divine nature, and by living sinlessly in perfect obedience to His Father, redeemed and gave human nature a new potential. In Adam, we have paradise lost; in Christ Jesus, we have paradise regained. In Adam, our fate is death; in Christ Jesus, our potential is for life and eternal fellowship with God. As Paul stated in his greetings to the Philippian church, “in Christ” is the position of every believer (Phil. 1:1). All Christians are members of the Body of Christ and of the new humanity.

C. Believers have new natures in Christ

Peter wrote to the church that Christ has given us “…exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:4). The word “promises” in this passage refers not to the promise itself, but to the thing or things promised by God (the fulfillment of the promises). The Word is filled with promises of great blessing to the believer who has been redeemed from corruption and given a new nature by the fulfillment of God’s promises in Christ.

D. Believers have new life in Christ

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life” (John 5:24; see also Rom. 6:11; Eph. 2:16).

E. Believers can experience constant renewal in Christ

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day” (2 Cor. 4:16). “And do
not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:2; see also Rom. 12:1).

F. In Christ, believers have the hope of an eternal heavenly home

“And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom” (2 Tim. 4:18). “…to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you…” (1 Pet. 1:4; see also John. 14:2-3).

G. In Christ, believers have victory over the old nature

“Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him… Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts…For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:8, 12, 14).

H. Believers in Christ are given kingdom authority

Freed from the dominion of sin and death, believers in Christ also receive kingdom authority to minister in the name of Jesus and in the power of the Spirit. “So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs” (Mark 16:19-20; see also Matt. 16:19; 18:18; Luke 9:1-2).

Individuals redeemed and surrendered to Christ become vehicles of witness by which God extends his message of salvation to all humanity. The atoning work of Christ has made a state of grace the potential for all humans: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Ultimately, the story of humanity’s fall and redemption is the story of God’s powerful, pursuing love.
Chapter Four

The Doctrine of Sin

Hamartiology

INTRODUCTION

Hamartiology comes from the Greek words *hamartia* meaning “sin” and *logos* meaning “idea, word, speech, discussion, reason, study.” Thus, Hamartiology is the study or doctrine of sin. Sin is an obvious reality in the world. The wars and tumults of history exhibit the dire effects of sin. The perpetually conflicted human conscience testifies to sin’s existence (Rom. 2:15). Sin is addressed repeatedly in Scripture. Romans states, “…for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God…” (Rom. 3:23). First John adds, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8). To understand the human condition and the righteous plan of God, it is necessary to study the doctrine of sin.

I. The Problem of Sin

The presence and origin of sin is a perplexing issue. The fact that all humans are sinners cannot be denied. It is not necessary for humans to learn how to sin. Rather, the principle of sin is in the nature of humans from their
earliest days of life. No child needs to be taught how to do wrong, but every child must be constantly instructed to do what is right.

A. The source of sin

The Bible did not create the problem of sin. Sin was in the world long before the Bible was written. If the Bible had never been written, or even if the Bible were not true, we would still have the problem of sin.

Although God is the creator of all things, He is not the author of sin. Scripture clearly states, “…Far be it from God to do wickedness, And from the Almighty to commit iniquity” (Job 34:10). God does not sin, for He is holy. The seraphim in Isaiah cried out “…Holy, holy, holy is the LORD…” (Isa. 6:3). There is no unrighteousness in God. “He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He” (Deut. 32:4). God cannot be tempted with evil, nor does He tempt anyone. “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone” (Jas 1:13). God hates sin. As Zechariah states, “‘Let none of you think evil in your heart against your neighbor; And do not love a false oath. For all these are things that I hate,’ Says the Lord” (Zech. 8:17). In light of these and other scriptures, it would be blasphemous to make God the author of sin.

For sin to be sin, in the sense that there is guilt attached to it, it must be the free act of a responsible being who understands the difference between right and wrong. Such a being is called a free moral agent.

B. The permitting of sin

One of the great unanswered questions of all time is why God, in His infinite wisdom and power, allowed sin to come into the universe. Philosophers, theologians and scientists have struggled with this question that is beyond the ability of humans to fully answer or even understand. Regardless, God was not surprised by the manifestation of sin in the world.
His holy purposes were not thwarted, nor did God seek to salvage something out of unforeseen wreckage. This is not to say that God planned for sin, with all its evil and suffering, to come into the world. Rather, for good purposes known only to Him, in spite of the suffering it would cause and the awful price He would pay in the death of His Son, God permitted sin to come first to heaven and then to earth.

Lewis Sperry Chafer listed seven reasons for the divine permission of sin:\(^1^4\):

1. The divine recognition of the creature’s free choice: It is evidently God’s purpose to secure a company of beings, for His own glory, who possess virtue resulting from a free choice victory over evil. However, humans are unable to make a choice between good and evil unless evil exists.

2. The specific value of redeemed beings: According to Scripture, God did not seek to avoid the issues that arise because of the presence of sin in the universe. God could have created innocent beings with no capacity to err. However, He desired redeemed souls purified by sacrificial blood and purchased at an infinite cost. The expression of such love and the exercise of such sacrifice are possible only when sin is present in the world.

3. The acquisition of divine knowledge: Individuals made by God must, through a process of learning, attain the knowledge God has possessed eternally. Humans learn through experience and revelation. They must learn concerning both good and evil. They must realize the sinfulness of sin if they are to comprehend, to any degree, God’s knowledge. However, humans cannot attain such knowledge unless sin exists as a living reality, ever demonstrating its sinful character.

4. The instruction of angels: Scripture suggests angels are learning important facts through observing the experiences of humans. The apostle Paul wrote that “the manifold wisdom of God” has been “…made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places…” (Eph. 3:10). First Peter states, “To them [the prophets] it was revealed that, not

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to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into” (1 Pet. 1:12). If it is necessary for angels to learn the truth of evil and good, they must acquire that knowledge through observing human experience in a universe where evil is permitted.

5. The demonstration of God’s hatred of evil: It is evidently of immeasurable importance that God demonstrate His hatred of evil. The apostle Paul declared that God was “…wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known ...” (Rom. 9:22). God’s judgment, wrath or power, in relation to sin, could not be disclosed apart from the permitted presence of sin in the world.

6. The righteous judgment of evil: For evil to be judged by God, it must evidently be brought out into an open demonstration of its actual character. Such a demonstration cannot be secured with sin existing as a hypothetical issue. Consequently, sin had to become concrete and prove its actual character.

7. The manifestation and exercise of God’s grace: Sin was permitted in the world to demonstrate God’s grace. Before the creation of humans and the permission of sin’s existence in the world, the angelic hosts had seen God’s wisdom, power and glory; but they had never seen His grace. They had no conception of God demonstrating His goodness to the undeserving. Yet through one marvelous act of mercy, in the gift of His Son as a sacrifice for sinners, God extended grace to those who deserved wrath. God demonstrated His grace towards the sinful and undeserving by allowing sinful and undeserving beings to exist in the world.
II. The Origin of Sin

Sin did not begin on earth. The first sin was committed in heaven. Therefore, to fully understand sin's reality and nature, we must first study its beginning in the universe and then its beginning on earth.

A. The origin of sin in the universe

First, let us consider the person who was responsible for the first sin in the universe:

Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “You were the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes Was prepared for you on the day you were created. “You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you. “By the abundance of your trading You became filled with violence within, And you sinned; Therefore I cast you as a profane thing Out of the mountain of God; And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the fiery stones. “Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, That they might gaze at you (Ezek. 28:11-17).
It is clear that the prophet was describing a supernatural being in this passage. The words might apply to a king of Tyre, but they seem to go beyond this application by describing the highest of all created beings. It seems clear that these words apply to Satan before his fall. Isaiah described Satan’s original sin:

How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: “I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High” (Isa. 14:12-14).

Five times Lucifer lifted up his will against the will of God. Thus, Satan’s sin was rebellion against God and the pursuit of total independence from God.

1. “I will ascend into heaven”: There are three heavens. There is the atmospheric heaven, the stellar or astronomic heaven and the third or highest heaven where God and the saints abide. Paul wrote about having been caught up into the “third heaven” (2 Cor. 12:1-4).

2. “I will exalt my throne above the stars of God”: This expressed a desire to secure rulership over angelic beings, which were sometimes referred to as stars or “morning stars” (see Job 38:7; Rev. 12:3-4).

3. “I will also sit upon the mount of the congregation”: These words seem to express a desire for an earthly kingdom. In scriptural symbolism a mountain means a kingdom (see Isa. 2:2; Dan. 2:35).

4. “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds”: Lucifer wanted to possess divine glory, which in Scripture is often symbolized by or associated with clouds (see Exod. 13:21; Isa. 19:1; Mark 13:26).
5. “I will be like the Most High”: This is the climax of the other four desires. All of these statements express Satan’s desire to be independent from and in opposition to God’s will. Satan’s willful ambition against God brought sin into a perfect environment. The fall of Lucifer and the angels who rebelled with him was the result of their deliberate, self-determined revolt against God.

B. The origin of sin in the human race

Genesis 3 describes how sin first entered the human race. The story of Adam and Eve directly contradicts any theory that argues for the moral or spiritual evolution of humankind. Humans did not start on the bottom rung of the moral ladder and slowly work their way up through the course of time and discovery. Instead, God created Adam and Eve in His image, at the top of the created order. Their rebellion led to their moral collapse and fall.

The story of Adam and Eve’s rebellion also contradicts theories that blame sin solely on heredity or environment. Some believe humans sin because of their polluted heredity. They theorize that if Adam and Eve had not sinned and polluted human heredity, then humans would not sin today. However, Scripture demonstrates that Adam and Eve had no polluted ancestry behind them, yet they still sinned. Some believe humans sin because they abide in a sinful environment. They assume that if we morally clean up society, humans will no longer be subject or prone to sin. Once again, Adam and Eve’s rebellion contradicts this assumption. The first parents lived in a perfect environment, yet they sinned. Ultimately, a better heredity or a better environment will not prevent humans from sinning.

Humans were created to both receive and reciprocate the love of God. Real love is bestowed freely, not from compulsion. God gave Adam and Eve the opportunity to love or reject Him. He gave them the opportunity to prove their love by a simple act of obedience. They were asked to refrain from partaking of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. God was not depriving them of anything. He was simply giving them the opportunity to prove their love by an act of obedience. Adam and Eve did not need the fruit of this forbidden tree. It was not necessary for their happiness or their wellbeing. This is true of sin as well. Sin has added nothing to the
ultimate wellbeing and happiness of humanity. The temporary gain of any sin is always offset by the death, destruction and brokenness it produces.

There was no poison or evil in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The wrong was not in the tree but in the rebellion of Adam and Eve. In the moral economy God established on earth, sin was a possibility but not a necessity. Adam and Eve turned that possibility into an actuality. Surrounded with everything they needed and duly warned by God regarding the consequences of disobedience, Adam and Eve were completely responsible for their sinful behavior. James wrote concerning sin and temptation, “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed” (Jas. 1:13-14).

God did not permit Satan to coerce or overpower Adam and Eve. The serpent tempted them, but he did not force them to eat of the forbidden fruit. The temptation of the serpent did not control or overwhelm the original pair. This is true of all temptation. For temptation to lead to sin requires the cooperation of the individuals tempted. Although Adam and Eve could blame Satan for tempting them, they were fully to blame for yielding to the temptation. Their choice to sin was their responsibility. Therefore, they bore the penalty. The difference between Satan’s fall and humankind’s fall is that Satan fell without any external tempter. The sin of Satan originated in his own being, while the sin of humans originated in response to a tempter and temptation from without. Thiessen concluded, “Had man fallen without a tempter, he would have originated his own sin, and would have himself become a Satan.”

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III. The First Human Sin

A. The necessity of testing or probation

God made Adam and Eve perfect, in His own image. He placed them in a perfect environment, supplying their every need. In this perfect environment, God gave Adam and Eve free will. It was necessary that their free will be tested in order for them to be confirmed and grow in goodness. Character is the sum total of human choices. It can be attained only through choices. Thus, the first human beings were on probation until they could show how they would use the power of their freedom of choice. Although Adam and Eve could have chosen to resist temptation, they did the opposite.

B. The process of temptation

First John 2:16 deals with three areas of human temptation: “For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.” All sin stems from at least one of these three temptations. Eve fell for all three: the lust of the eye, “it was pleasant to the eyes”; the lust of the flesh, “the tree was good for food”; and the pride of life, “[it was] a tree desirable to make one wise” (Gen. 3). The seed of every human sin was visible in Eve’s first sin.

1. Satan cast doubt on God’s word and love (Gen. 3:1): “Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Has God indeed said, “You shall not eat of every tree in the garden”?’” The tempter may have gone to Eve rather than to Adam because God had directly given Adam the command forbidding them to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eve received the command from her husband. So Satan did not go directly to Adam, but through the serpent, he approached Eve while she was alone. Satan tempted Eve by questioning God’s word, “Has God indeed said?” Calling into question the veracity of God’s word is one of Satan’s favorite tactics. He also seemed to suggest that God was keeping something back from Adam and Eve, thereby calling God’s love for them into question.
2. Eve tampered with God's word (Gen. 3:2-3): “And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat the fruit of the trees in the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, “You must not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.”’” Eve responded to the serpent by altering God’s word. She both added and omitted words from God’s original commandment (Gen. 2:16-17). She added that God had said of the fruit, “nor shall you touch it.” By adding these false words, Eve made God’s demands appear unreasonable. Eve also omitted the most severe word of God’s warning that “…you shall surely die” if you consume the forbidden fruit. By changing the severity of God’s words, Eve made the punishment of death seem more like a possible outcome than a certain consequence of rebellion. Whenever humans alter God’s word, there will be tragic consequences.

3. Satan contradicted God’s word: Having sown the seed of doubt in Eve’s mind concerning what God had said, Satan challenged the truth of God’s words and the reasons behind His command. “Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil’” (Gen. 3:4-5). Satan tried to convince Eve that God was lying to her and trying to prevent her from obtaining the more exulted position of being “like God.”

4. Eve succumbed to the temptation: Eventually, Eve began to entertain the concepts Satan had introduced. She thought about the attractiveness of the fruit, its satisfying taste and the intriguing possibility of a whole new experience. Eve had already known good. However, the possibility of venturing into a greater knowledge of good and a new understanding of evil must have piqued her curiosity. “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate” (Gen. 3:6). Through the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life, Adam and Eve rebelled against God.
C. The results of Adam and Eve’s first sin

1. As seen in their attitude toward themselves

   a) Adam and Eve immediately became conscious of their own sin because their consciences were awakened. Even before God spoke with them, they knew they were sinners. “Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked…” (Gen. 3:7a). God later asked them, “Who told you that you were naked?” (Gen. 3:11). They did not need another to tell them; they knew it themselves. Adam and Eve became conscious of two realities in relation to their sin: pollution and guilt. Being conscious of their pollution, they tried to cover themselves. Realizing their guilt they tried to flee when God approached. The pollution of sin is a fact. Every human bears the stain of sin upon his or her soul. God does not put it there; rather, it is the inevitable result of sin and the guilt that comes from breaking relationship with God.

   b) Adam and Eve vainly sought to cover their sin: “…and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings” (Gen. 3:7b). Prior to their sin, Adam and Eve did not need a covering for their bodies. Some have speculated that they were covered with the light or glory of God. Whatever Adam and Eve’s condition before their sin, once they disobeyed God, they were instantly aware that they had lost something. Humans have the tendency to try to cover up the results of their sin. Many attempt to sew for themselves “fig leaves” of self-sufficiency or self-righteousness. Adam and Eve quickly discovered that their attempted coverings did not satisfy themselves or their holy God.

2. As seen in their attitude toward God

   a) Adam and Eve fled from the presence of God: “And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden” (Gen. 3:8). Sin made a tremendous difference in a very short time. Adam and Eve enjoyed God’s presence
prior to their sin, but after they sinned, they fled from Him. In rebellion, sinners will try to hide or flee from the presence of God.

b) Adam and Eve falsely thought they could hide from God. In trying to hide themselves from God, they did not fully understand their all-powerful God who sees and knows all the secrets of the human heart (Ps. 139:7-13). However, God’s abundant grace was immediately displayed when He sought the fallen pair: “Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, ‘Where are you?’” (Gen. 3:9). Ever since He pursued Adam and Eve, God has taken the initiative in seeking the lost. We see the culmination of this pursuit in the work of Jesus, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

3. As seen in their attitude toward other people: One of the saddest results of sin is its effect upon others. Eve was not content to disobey God alone. Instead, she also involved her husband. Humans often try to bring others into their immoral behavior and often try to blame others for their sinful choices. When God confronted the first sinners and asked them about their behavior, Adam immediately tried to shift the blame to Eve: “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate” (Gen. 3:12). Instead of taking responsibility for his sin, Adam not only blamed his wife but also blamed God for giving him his wife. Sin creates a climate where individuals blame others and refuse to take responsibility for their own actions. In contrast, true repentance begins with the prayer, “God, be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13).

D. The curse caused by the first sin

It was one sin, one act of rebellious disobedience that broke humankind’s fellowship with God. In response to this original sin, God pronounced curses under which all creation has suffered.

1. The curse upon the serpent: “So the LORD God said to the serpent: ‘Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat
dust All the days of your life’’ (Gen. 3:14). This verse indicates that the curse is upon the entire animal kingdom.

2. The curse upon the woman: “To the woman He said: ‘I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you’” (Gen. 3:16).

3. The curse upon the man: “Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life…In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return (Gen. 3:17-19). This curse plainly includes both physical and spiritual death. With this curse, Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:22-24). Though this seems to be a severe judgment, God did not want fallen humans to eat of the tree of life and live forever in their sin, thus making redemption impossible.

4. The curse upon the ground: “Cursed is the ground for your sake ... Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you” (Gen. 3:17-18). This verse indicates that the soil and all that grows in the soil are under a curse.

IV. The Nature of Sin

A. Sin defined

Perhaps the best definition for sin is found in the Larger Catechism (Westminster): “Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, any law of God given as a rule to the reasonable creature.” 2 Chafer and other theologians believe it would be better to substitute “character” for “law” in this definition, as the law of God may not include all that God’s character requires.3 Anything that contradicts God’s holiness is sin. Therefore, the definition might be more comprehensive if both thoughts were included: “Sin is

3 Chafer, 227.
any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the character or law of God given as a rule to the reasonable creature.” Sin directed against God’s person-
hood is godlessness, defilement or selfhood. Sin directed against God’s laws or moral government is transgression, rebellion or lawlessness. The former
was illustrated when the prophet Isaiah encountered God’s presence: “Woe is
me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the
midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD
of hosts” (Isa. 6:5). The latter was illustrated by Paul who made it clear that
transgression of the law is also sin: “For as many as are of the works of the
law are under the curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not
continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them’”
(Gal. 3:10).

B. Sin and God’s law

1. The nature of God’s law: Since sin is any want of conformity unto or
transgression of God’s law, it is important to understand a few things about
God’s law.

   a) There is nothing wrong with the law itself. Some have so empha-
sized the fact that we are under grace and not under law that it would be
easy for some to think the law was evil. However, Paul made it clear that
the law is holy and good (Rom. 7:12). It is a revelation of God’s nature
and will; therefore, the law can only be good.

   b) God’s law is not arbitrary because it springs from His own nature.
God’s laws are not right because He says they are right. Rather, God’s
laws are right because He is right in all He says and does. If God’s laws
were not right and just, He would be a despot.

   c) When God gave humans His law, He was fully aware they would
not—indeed, could not—keep His law. Why then did an all-wise God
give a set of laws to a people He knew could not keep them? As in all His
ways, God had a wise and good purpose in giving humans the law.
2. The purpose of God’s law

a) The law was given to intensify people’s knowledge of sin. A person’s conscience will bear inner witness to the fact that he or she is a sinner, but God’s published law provides a clearer understanding of what sin is: “…for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom. 3:20; see also Rom. 7:7).

b) The law was given to reveal the holiness of God. The detailed ceremonial laws, offerings and priestly requirements clearly communicate that God is holy, set apart and perfect in all His ways. Roman’s states, “Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good” (Rom. 7:12).

c) The law was given to lead people to Christ. The law is called a tutor: “Therefore the law was our tutor [paidagogos] to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24). A paidagogos was usually a trusted servant responsible for overseeing the general care of their master’s sons from about age six to sixteen. As part of the son’s care, the paidagogos would take him to and from his teachers’ houses or schools of physical training. By comparing the law to a paidagogos, Paul implied that the law had a temporary and provisional nature until the child became of age and could participate fully in his father’s inheritance.

Although the law could not save, it did serve to help humans realize their need of Christ. The law, through its offerings, priesthood and tabernacle pointed to the cross of Christ as the only way of salvation and access to God. The law was no longer needed once Christ became humankind’s Savior. The Bible teaches that through the death of Christ, believers are delivered not only from the curse or penalty of the law but also from the law itself: “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’)” (Gal. 3:13). Therefore, believers “are not under law but under grace” (Rom. 6:14). In Christ, life is “not under the law” but “led by the Spirit” (Gal 5:18).
C. Scriptural expressions for sin

The following are some ways the Bible describes sin:

1. Missing the mark or aim (Rom. 3:23; 5:12); most frequently used term in both the Old and New Testament

2. Transgressing or trespassing (Gal. 6:1; 1 Tim. 2:14)

3. Disobeying God’s voice (Heb. 2:2-3)

4. Committing sin in ignorance of what ought to be known (Heb. 9:7)

5. Diminishing that which should have been rendered in full (1 Cor. 6:7; i.e., Annanias and Saphira, Acts 5:2)

6. Sinning through omission or through not doing what ought to be done (Jas. 4:17)

7. Committing lawlessness or anarchy (1 John 3:4)

8. Owing a debt or failing to fulfill a God-given duty or obligation (Matt. 6:12)

9. Other words associated with sin: iniquity (Lev. 26:40); ungodly (Prov. 11:31); unbelief (Rom. 11:20); unrighteousness (1 John 1:9); unholy (1 Tim. 1:9)

D. Sin and evil

1. Sin is a specific type of evil. Physical evils and moral evils exist in the world. Physical evils such as floods, earthquakes and hurricanes are not sins. They are not moral evils but have been used by God to punish or chastise those who have broken His law. It is in this sense that God is said to “create calamity” (Isa. 45:7). Calamity or רָעָה in Hebrew is never rendered “sin.” Instead, it is usually translated as “evil, calamity or adversity.” God made the law and its penalties for breaking it. If people sin, they will reap the results.

2. Sin is an active evil. Sin is more than just failing to keep the law. Instead, sin is the purposeful, active choice to do evil.
E. The nature of sin

Sin does not merely consist of outward acts. While it is true that people are sinners because they sin, it is a fundamental principle that as a result of Adam and Eve’s rebellion, people sin because they are sinners. In other words, the descendants of Adam and Eve are sinners by nature before they become sinners by practice. Adam and Eve’s rebellion corrupted their natures. Consequently, all the descendants of Adam and Eve are born with sinful natures; because of this nature they sin.

Jesus said that a tree brings forth fruit according to its nature (Matt. 7:17-18). To announce the coming of Jesus, John the Baptist said, “...the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire” (Matt. 3:10). The problem of the fruit was due to the basic condition of the tree, just as the problem of sin is rooted in the sinful nature of humanity.

The outward expression of sin is motivated by the inward condition of the human heart. Consequently, Jesus condemned both the adulterous look as well as the act of adultery (Matt. 5:27-28). He condemned and equated anger with murder since anger can lead to the outward expression of violence and killing (Matt. 5:21-22). The sinful nature and wicked motivations of humans lead to sinful and wicked expressions. Sin is not being confronted with the possibility to lust or murder; rather, temptation leads to sin when a person “...is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death” (Jas. 1:14-15).

The New Testament differentiates between the sin nature and the results or expressions of that nature. Paul understood that the sin nature was present before the law. In Romans he wrote, “I would not have known sin except through the law...But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead...but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died” (Rom. 7:7-9). Ultimately, when humans commit sinful acts, they are expressing their sinful
condition. Jesus stated, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin…” (John 8:34).

Humans express sinful behavior because “they are all under sin” (Rom. 3:9). Paul wrote “…through one man [Adam] sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned…” (Rom. 5:12). The Scripture states that sin’s pollution permeates the human condition: “The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked…” (Jer. 17:9). Jesus proclaimed, “…an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks” (Luke 6:45). In light of their wicked condition, humans require a salvation that transforms human nature. To receive this new nature, each human “must be born again” (John 3:7). Thiessen quoted Charles Hodge as saying: “Sin includes guilt and pollution; the one expresses its relation to the justice, the other to the holiness of God.” The good news of the gospel is that this guilt and pollution are removed because “…the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

F. Important considerations regarding sin

1. Sins of omission: Not doing what God’s law requires (omission) is as sinful as breaking the law (commission). James states, “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin” (Jas. 4:17).

2. Sins of unbelief: Failing to believe God’s word or failing to believe in the Son of God is sin. Jesus told his disciples that the Holy Spirit would come, “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me…” (John 16:8-9).

3. Sins of ignorance: The Scripture makes it clear that ignorance of the law is not an appropriate excuse for breaking the law. Leviticus states, “If a person sins, and commits any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD, though he does not know it, yet he is

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4 Charles Hodge, as quoted by Thiessen, 245.
guilty and shall bear his iniquity” (Lev. 5:17). This concept is also expressed in the New Testament: “And that servant who knew his master’s will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few…” (Luke 12:47-48).

4. The sin of breaking one law is the sin of breaking all laws: James states, “For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all” (Jas. 2:10). Consequently, it only takes one sin to make a person a sinner.

V. The Universality of Sin

Scripture bears testimony to the sinfulness of all humankind. First Kings 8:46 states, “…for there is no one who does not sin…” Ecclesiastes proclaims, “For there is not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin” (Eccles. 7:20). In the New Testament we read, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Scripture teaches that through the sin of Adam and Eve, all people are counted as sinners. However, Christ died for all and provided the means by which all can be saved: “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous” (Rom. 5:19).

VI. The Imputation of Sin

Imputation means attributing or reckoning something to a person. A good illustration of this principle is when Paul stated that he would pay the debt or make amends for any wrongdoing associated with Onesimus (Philem. 1:17-18). The Bible describes three separate instances of imputation: (1) Adam’s sin imputed to the human race, (2) humanity’s sin imputed to Christ as He died for all humanity and (3) Christ’s righteousness imputed to believers through faith in Christ. These examples of imputation are addressed in Romans 5:12-21, one of the greatest passages in
the Bible. Romans 5:12 is the key verse in this passage: “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.” Sin did not begin with Adam; it merely entered into the human race through him. Sin had its beginning with Lucifer (Ezek. 28:12-17).

The important expression is “because all sinned.” The Greek aorist tense is used, indicating a single, historical act that was completed in the past. Adam was the natural head of the human race. All humankind was in Adam when he sinned. Consequently, we are all sinners because we sinned in Adam. This principle is illustrated by the author of Hebrews who wrote, “Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him” (Heb. 7:9-10). In other words, Abraham’s actions were attributed to Levi, even though Levi was not yet born when Abraham honored Melchizedek. In like manner, the whole human race was in Adam, their natural head, when he sinned. Therefore, God imputed the sin of Adam to each member of the human race.

Romans 5:12 is not a reference to personal sin. Paul made that concept clear in Romans 5:14, “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.” In this passage, Paul pointed out that death reigned before the law was given to Moses. If humans were not responsible for breaking laws that had not yet been given by Moses and if they suffered the penalty of sin, which is death, then the sin that caused them to die could not have been personal sin. Instead, they must have been considered sinners and faced death because of the sin of Adam.

Adam was the figure or type of Christ Jesus “who was to come.” Paul made several comparisons and contrasts between the first Adam and the Last Adam, Christ: “Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s
obedience many will be made righteous” (Rom. 5:18-19). Some argue it is unjust that Adam’s sin is imputed to all humanity. However, by this same logic, it would also be unjust to impute the righteousness of Jesus Christ to those who believe in the saving work of Jesus. The fall of humanity through Adam and the restoration of humanity through Christ are the basis for justification and salvation by faith.

It might seem that certain Old Testament scriptures contradict each other concerning how God deals with sin. Exodus states that God will visit “…the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations…” (Exod. 20:5). However, Ezekiel states, “The son shall not bear the guilt of the father…The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself” (Ezek. 18:20). Further study of these texts demonstrates very different contexts. Some passages seem to deal with the natural consequences of the parents’ sin, while the Ezekiel passage seems to refer to the guilt and penalty of the parents’ sin. Children often bear the consequences of their parents’ wrong choices and wrongdoing. However, nowhere in the Bible does it teach that children are guilty of or should be punished for the individual sin or sins of their parents.

VII. Original Sin and Depravity

A. The meaning of depravity

Original sin refers to the first sin of Adam as well as the sinful nature possessed by every person since Adam due to Adam’s initial transgression. This sinful nature is called “depravity.” The following are characteristics of depraved individuals:

1. They are void of original righteousness: “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me” (Ps. 51:5).
2. They do not possess holy affection toward God: “For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God” (2 Tim. 3:2-4).

3. Their defilement comes from within, not from without: “There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man” (Mark 7:15).

4. They have a continual bias toward evil: “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5).

B. The result of man’s depravity

It is exceedingly easy to see the result of sinful depravity in the human race. Every aspect of human existence has been marred and harmed by the sinful rebellion of humanity. Romans best summarizes the results of man’s depravity:

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them (Rom. 1:28-32).
VIII. The Guilt from Sin

A. Sin in relation to God

Guilt is one of God’s just punishments for an individual’s self-determined violation of the law or failure to conform to the law. Guilt is the result of sin in relation to God’s wrath. There are natural results of sin in the sinner’s life, but wrath brings God into the picture. Every sin is an offense against God and is therefore subject to His wrath (see Ps. 7:11; John 3:18, 36). David’s repentance reached its height when he realized he had sinned not only against Bathsheba and her husband, Uriah, but also against God. “Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight—That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge” (Ps. 51:4). All sin is ultimately against God. Romans 3:19 states the case well: “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” Sin is an affront to God’s holiness. God’s response to sin is wrath: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men…” (Rom. 1:18). One aspect of God’s wrath is the subjection of unrepentant sinners to the devastating consequences that accompany their own sinful rebellion (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28). Consequently, wrath can be both the hand of God extended and the hand of God removed.

B. Degrees of guilt

Scripture makes it clear that there are degrees of guilt and degrees of punishment. This principle is recognized by the variety of sacrifices required for different kinds of sins (Lev. 4-7). The New Testament also suggests degrees of guilt (Luke 12:47-48; John 19:11; Rom. 2:6; Heb. 2:2-3; 10:28-29). The following are some ways sin and guilt are differentiated:

1. Sins of nature versus sins of personal transgression: Humans are sinners because of the principle of inborn sin or sins of nature. However, there is greater guilt when people commit acts of personal transgression.
2. Sins committed in ignorance versus sins committed with knowledge: Although there are sins of ignorance, sins committed with knowledge are accompanied by greater guilt; the greater the knowledge, the greater the guilt. Jesus demonstrated this truth in His rebuke of Chorazin and Bethsaida, “…if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you” (Luke 10:13-14). Paul wrote, “For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law” (Rom. 2:12).

3. Sins of weakness versus sins of presumption: The psalmist prayed, “Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me” (Ps. 19:13). In contrast, Peter demonstrated a sin of weakness. He promised he would die with Jesus even if everyone else stumbled and turned away (Matt. 26:33-35). Later, Peter found he did not have the strength to live up to his promises (Matt. 26:69-75). The Bible also seems to contrast the difference between sins of impulse and sins of deliberation. David’s sin against Bathsheba was one of impulse; his sin against Uriah was one of deliberation because he carefully planned Uriah’s death.

IX. The Penalty of Sin

A. The significance of penalty

Penalty is the pain or loss that is directly inflicted by the Lawgiver in vindication of His justice, which has been outraged by the violation of law. There are natural consequences of sin. Paul wrote, “For the wages of sin is death…” (Rom. 6:23). Hebrews adds, “…it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). Physical death is one of the natural results of sin, but there is an “after this” that represents the penalty to follow. Ungodliness results in physical, mental, and spiritual deterioration. But this is only part of the penalty. In all penalty there is the holy wrath of the Lawgiver. The one may be suffered now, but the other is to be experienced in the future. “Depravity and guilt, as consequences of sin,
rest upon mankind now, but penalty in its fullness awaits a future day.”

Although all have sinned, and all deserve punishment, Christ took that punishment upon Himself through the work of the cross. By taking every sinner’s punishment upon Himself, Jesus freed all who have faith in Him from final punishment. Even so, until death, every person will still experience the results of living in a sin-cursed world.

It is important to note the difference between chastisement (discipline) and punishment. Punishment proceeds from justice, while chastisement is corrective and not punitive. Ultimately, God’s discipline is an expression of God’s transformational love. Hebrews states, “For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives” (Heb. 12:6).

B. The nature of penalty

The one word in Scripture that designates the total penalty of sin is “death.” Death can be physical, spiritual and eternal.

1. Physical death: Humans were created with a capacity for immortality; Adam and Eve would not have died if they had obeyed God’s law. God made sure Adam knew he would die when he ate of the forbidden tree (Gen. 2:17). Once Adam and Eve sinned, they did not immediately die, but from that time on, death was working in their physical frames. After hundreds of years, Adam and Eve both eventually died. Death is not the cessation of the personality, but the separation of the soul from the body, “including all those temporal evils and sufferings which result from disturbance of the original harmony between body and soul, and which are the working of death in us.” Only through an act of redemption could humans again have access to the tree of life. At the time of their resurrection, eternal, physical life will be restored to those who have received Christ Jesus as their Savior. In the resurrection, their souls and spirits will be reunited with their bodies. For Christians, the penalty of death has been satisfied and removed since Christ bore that penalty for them. Consequently, physical death for believers becomes a gateway through

5 Thiessen, 270.
6 Strong, 656.
which the soul enters into the fullest enjoyment of all the benefits secured in Christ (Eph. 2:7).

2. Spiritual death: Ultimately, spiritual death is the separation of the soul from God, “including all that pain of conscience, loss of peace, and sorrow of spirit, which result from disturbance of the normal relation between the soul and God.” While Adam did not die physically the moment he disobeyed God, he did die spiritually. He lost that communion with God, which is the source of all life. He became “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). When Jesus said, “And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die” (John 11:26), He was speaking of the restoration of spiritual life through His redeeming grace.

3. Eternal death: Eternal death is the culmination and completion of spiritual death, and speaks of eternal separation of the soul from God. This is also called “the second death” (Rev. 21:8). John states, “…the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:28-29). Chafer discussed the second death:

It is true that the “second death,” which is eternal, is a separation from God and that eternal estate is an immeasurable penalty in the light of the fact that the lost soul must know what grace might have wrought. The penalty is a definite imposition over and above the natural course of events—a retribution which corresponds to the punishment required. It is as certain as the character of God that whatever is imposed will be just and right, and it will be so recognized by all. God will not in this, any more than in any other undertaking, be the author of that which is evil.

7 Strong, 659.
8 Thiessen, 270.
X. Conclusion

In the beginning, Adam and Eve were given all they needed for abundant life and fellowship with God. Instead of loving God and honoring God, they chose to disobey His commands. By choosing to follow their own will instead of God’s will, Adam and Eve brought sin and rebellion into the world. The fruit of this rebellion is death and destruction along with the loss of intimate, loving fellowship between God and His creation. The testimony of Scripture and the observable reality of existence points to the presence of sin and the need for a Savior. Through examining the reality of sin, humans gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the rescuing work of Jesus Christ.
Chapter Five

The Doctrine of Salvation

Soteriology

INTRODUCTION

Soteriology is the study of God’s salvation plan for humanity. The word soteriology is derived from the Greek *soteria*, meaning “salvation,” and *logos*, meaning “idea, word, speech, discussion, reason, study.” The study of theology reveals the holiness of God, while anthropology and hamartiology reveal the sin and failure of humanity. Soteriology is the study of how God has bridged the gap between His holiness and humankind’s sinfulness. God foreknew the rebellion and fall of humanity. Therefore, He developed a plan of salvation before the foundation of the earth was laid. Before sin and its blight entered the universe, God planned a way of escape. Before humans, made in God’s image, rebelled against their created purpose, God provided a way of rescue from the snares and condemnation of sin. The rebellion of humanity did not catch God unaware. God foreknew the fall of humanity, and He foreordained the plan of rescue.

God’s plan of salvation is so simple that all people can grasp and experience its transforming power. While simple, it is profoundly powerful in adequately addressing the spiritual condition of every human being. In fact,
God’s plan of salvation is the one and only answer to the vast array of spiritual needs represented in every race, culture, community and nation.

The heart of God’s plan of salvation centers on the office and function of a mediator who could bridge the gap between an offended God and helpless, sinful humanity. Job expressed this longing for a mediator while lamenting his perceived distance from God. “For He is not a man, as I am, That I may answer Him, And that we should go to court together. Nor is there any mediator between us, Who may lay his hand on us both” (Job 9:32-33). Ultimately, Christ has become the perfect mediator as the substitutionary sacrifice for all humankind. Scripture states, “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all…” (1 Tim. 2:5-6).

Through the incarnation Jesus became the perfect mediator for sin by representing both God and humanity. The penalty for the sins of humanity was death. This penalty had to be dealt with for humans to have fellowship with God. Since God could not die, He became flesh to satisfy the penalty of death: “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). The author of Hebrews provided the following explanation:

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people (Heb. 2:14-17).

Salvation has been made possible through the mediating death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The following study of the doctrine of salvation is divided into two sections: (1) the provisions of God: including the
death, burial, resurrection, ascension and exaltation of Jesus Christ and (2) the application of God’s provisions: including repentance, faith, justification, regeneration, adoption, sanctification, assurance and security.

I. Salvation and the Death of Christ

Through His mighty works and miracles, Christ gave ample evidence that He was the Son of God. However, His work on earth was not completed or finished by the mighty deeds He performed, the great truths He preached or the powerful blessings He imparted. This is because His primary purpose in coming to earth was to save people. When the angel of God spoke to Joseph about the child to be born of Mary, he said, “And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). Saving people from their sins would require Christ’s death.

A. The importance of the death of Christ

Christianity is unlike all other religions in the place it assigns to the death of its founder. All other religions base their claim to greatness on the life and teaching of those who founded them; the gospel centers on the person of Jesus Christ and His death at Calvary. It is true that there is some ethical value in other non-Christian religious or philosophical teachings, but only Christianity provides redemption from sin that is accomplished through the substitutionary death of the Son of God.

1. Foretold in the Old Testament: The death of Christ is foreseen throughout the Old Testament in many types and prophesies. The following are some of the most outstanding occurrences:

   a) Types

      (1) The coverings of skins for Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:21): God sacrificed the life of an animal for the purpose of covering the consequences of
Adam and Eve’s sin. Jesus became the perfect sacrifice for all sin, covering the redeemed with robes of righteousness.

(2) Abel’s offering of the firstfruits of his flock (Gen. 4:4): Abel offered God the best portion of the firstborn of his flock. Jesus became the perfect offering, God’s only begotten Son offered for the sins of the world (John 3:16).

(3) The Passover lamb (Exod. 12): As the blood of an unblemished male lamb rescued Israel’s firstborn males from God’s judgment, the blood of Jesus Christ became the way of deliverance for all of humanity.

(4) The Levitical sacrificial system (Lev. 17): Jesus became the ultimate sacrifice to fulfill the righteous requirements of God.

(5) The bronze serpent (Num. 21): “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up…” (John 3:14).

(6) The slain lamb: “All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearsers is silent, So He opened not His mouth” (Isa. 53:6-7).

b) Prophecies

(1) The Seed of the woman to bruise the serpent’s head: “And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel” (Gen. 3:15).

(2) The crucifixion scene (Ps. 22)
(3) The vicarious suffering (Isa. 53)

(4) The cutoff Messiah (Dan. 9:26)

(5) The smitten Shepherd (Zech. 13:6-7)

2. Emphasized in the New Testament: In His conversation with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus following His resurrection, Jesus stated that Moses, all the prophets and all Scripture spoke of His death: “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:27). Peter made it clear that the suffering of Christ was the one great subject into which the Old Testament prophets inquired and searched diligently: “Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow” (1 Pet. 1:10-11). The death of Jesus Christ is a major focus of all four Gospels. Thiessen stated: “The last three days of our Lord’s earthly life occupy about one-fifth of the narratives in the four Gospels.”

3. Its relation to the incarnation: Jesus Christ’s incarnation was essential for sin to die and be defeated in the flesh. Christ came into the world for the express purpose of giving Himself as a ransom for all sin. “He was manifested to take away our sins” (1 John 3:5). To defeat sin in the flesh, Jesus had to die a bodily death. Theissen clearly connected Christ’s incarnation and death: “His death was not an afterthought or an accident, but the accomplishment of a divine purpose in connection with the incarnation. The incarnation is not an end in itself; it is but a means to an end, and that end is the redemption of the lost through the Lord’s death on the cross.” Jesus partook of flesh and blood in order that He might die. Hebrews states it best, “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared

2 Thiessen, 314.
in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil…” (Heb. 2:14).

4. A fundamental truth of the gospel: Paul emphasized that the death, burial and resurrection of Christ constituted the gospel. “Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel…that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures…” (1 Cor. 15:1-4). The gospel is the “good news” of salvation, the forgiveness of sins through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

5. A necessity for humankind’s salvation: Christ’s death was absolutely necessary for God to pardon sin and provide salvation. Note how “must” and “had to” occur in the following passages (emphasis added):

   a) “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up…” (John 3:14).

   b) “From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day” (Matt. 16:21).

   c) “But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation” (Luke 17:25).

   d) “The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again” (Luke 24:7).

   e) “Then Paul…for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead” (Acts 17:2-3).

The only basis on which a holy God could forgive sin was through His Son bearing the penalty for sin. God could not forgive sinners merely
on the grounds of their repentance. Rather, forgiveness required that the penalty must be fully paid. God does not forgive sinners simply because He is love. Rather, sinners are forgiven because God’s love caused Him to give His only begotten Son as a ransom for sin. It is the loving sacrifice of Jesus Christ that atoned for the sin and provided forgiveness. George Herbert Morrison expressed the concept beautifully:

“Let me say that the cross is not needed and included because of God’s unwillingness to pardon. Nowhere in the New Testament is the cross conceived as turning an unwilling God into a willing one, as a compulsion on a reluctant God. It is not the cause of love, it is its consequence; it is the spring of love, it is its outflow, and that is what is so often forgotten. We read in the New Testament of Christ being offered as a propitiation for our sins, and our thoughts go back to pagan faiths, where men tried to appease their angry gods; but the tremendous difference is that in all these faiths man had to provide the propitiation; in the Christian faith God provides it. He does not ask men for an atoning sacrifice; He gives the atoning sacrifice, and He gives it because He loves the world and willeth not that any man should perish ... It is because He is so passionately eager to forgive that God sent His Son to die.”

B. The true meaning of the death of Christ

God performed an amazing work to span the gulf between the depths of human sin and the purity of His own holiness. Through His death, Jesus Christ fully met every human need relative to sin, enabling every human the ability to enjoy eternal fellowship with God. At the same time, Christ fully met every requirement necessary for a righteous and just God to freely forgive sin and receive humankind back into fellowship. In Christ, God has both judged sin and justified sinners (Rom. 3:26). At no time throughout eternity

will anyone be able to challenge the perfect and full provision of God’s great salvation. To grasp the full extent of what was accomplished through the death of Jesus Christ, it is necessary to understand the meaning and implication of certain foundational terms.

1. The death of Christ is vicarious: The word vicarious comes from “vicar,” meaning “a substitute who takes the place of another and acts in his stead.” Since Jesus Christ “committed no sin,” it is clear that He did not bear His own sins on the cross (1 Pet. 2:22). When He died, He died as a substitute for the sins of others. Some have objected that it is immoral for God to punish an innocent person for the guilt of another. For these individuals, the idea of substitution is unbearable. First, it is not unlawful for a creator and judge of a law to pay the penalty he has imposed. Christ is God and thus had the right to pay the penalty for our sins. Second, substitution could only be considered immoral if Jesus had been forced to be our sacrifice. To the contrary, Jesus voluntarily laid down His life. Jesus told His disciples, “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (John 10:17-18). Believers in Christ are not saved by the murder of Christ but by His willingness to substitute His life for the life of all sinners. The following scriptures clearly demonstrate that Christ was our substitute and bore our sins on the cross:

   a) “All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6).

   b) “…just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28).

   c) “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

   d) “…who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed” (1 Pet. 2:24).
e) “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit…” (1 Pet. 3:18).

f) See also John 10:11; Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3; Galatians 2:20.

2. The death of Christ is an atonement: The word atonement is used in a general and a particular manner. As it is popularly used, it refers to the entire provision of salvation that God made for sinners through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, atonement also has a very specific meaning in Scripture. It is an Old Testament word that literally means “a covering.” For example, Leviticus states that a person who trespasses against God should bring a “trespass offering” and “…the priest shall make atonement for him before the Lord, and he shall be forgiven for any one of these things that he may have done in which he trespasses” (Lev. 6:2-7). Along with individual sins, it was also possible to make national atonement for national sins through animal sacrifice (Lev. 4:13-20).

The Old Testament concept of atonement is incomplete in describing the work of Christ. In Christ, sins are more than just covered; they are forgiven and completely removed. Hebrews states, “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins” (Heb. 10:4). Rather, sanctifying atonement could only come “…through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10:10).

3. The death of Christ is a propitiation: The word propitiation signifies the appeasement or turning away of wrath by a sacrifice. Christ’s death was the means of satisfying and removing God’s wrath (Rom. 5:9). God, in His great love, took the punishment of all sinners upon Himself, thus satisfying His own wrath through the laying down of His own life. “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10). The following scriptures clearly explain the concept that Jesus is the propitiation for all sin:
a) “…being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood…that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Rom. 3:24-26).

b) “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world” (1 John 2:2).

c) “Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2:17).

4. The death of Christ is a reconciliation: The word reconciliation means to be brought together or restored to a former state of relationship. The immediate result of sin entering the world was distance between God and humanity. After eating the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve “hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God” (Gen. 3:8). In choosing their own way, Adam and Eve broke relationship with God. Their rebellion and the sinful rebellion of all people led to enmity between God and humans. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ has transformed that enmity into peace and fellowship for all who believe by faith. Restored relationship with God is one of the greatest blessings of personal salvation. This new relationship magnifies the grace of God, for no man can reconcile himself to God. God Himself has reconciled humanity through the grace gift of Jesus Christ. The following verses clearly demonstrate that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has provided a way for reconciliation between God and humanity:

a) “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Rom. 5:10).

b) “…and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of
His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight” (Col. 1:20-22).

c) “Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:18-20).

5. The death of Christ is a redemption: The word redemption signifies a releasing or liberation from captivity, slavery or death by the payment of a price or ransom. Thus, the word has a double significance: it means the payment of a price as well as the deliverance of the captive. The death of Christ on the cross is the price Jesus paid for the redemption and deliverance of the sinner. Jesus proclaimed, “…the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28). Jesus obtained this deliverance “Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption” (Heb. 9:12). According to the New Testament, believers have redemption from the following:

a) The penalty of the law: Paul made this clear when he wrote, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’)…” (Gal. 3:13).

b) The law itself: In Romans Paul stated: “For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace” (Rom. 6:14).

c) The power of sin in their lives: Romans states, “…Our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin” (Rom. 6:6; see also Rom. 6:12-14).
d) All evil in the world: In his letter to the Galatians Paul wrote: “Christ obeyed God our Father and gave himself as a sacrifice for our sins to rescue us from this evil world” (Gal. 1:4, CEV; see also Rom. 8:23). This final consummation of our redemption will be realized at the second coming of Jesus (Luke 21:28).

C. The community for whom Christ died

Christ died for all sinners. Some erroneously believe in a limited atonement where Christ died only for the elect He had previously chosen to save. A closer look at the scriptural record reveals that the death of Christ was and is for all humans.

1. Christ died for the church. There is no doubt that Christ died for those who are members of His body, the church. Paul wrote “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word…” (Eph. 5:25-26).

2. Christ died for the entire world. Scripture teaches that Christ died for the whole world, each and every individual:

   a) “All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6).

   b) “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’” (John 1:29).

   c) “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all…” (1 Tim. 2:5-6).
d) “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world” (1 John 2:2).

Perhaps the strongest verse against the doctrine of a limited atonement is 2 Peter 2:1: “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.” This verse positively states that Christ bought these false prophets who are pursuing a path that will lead to their destruction. In other words, Christ died for these false prophets even though they have rejected Christ’s message. In other passages, the Scripture makes it clear that Christ died for all even though some will reject that offering. Paul wrote, “Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died” (Rom. 14:15). Elsewhere, Paul warned, “…because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?” (1 Cor. 8:11). In both scriptures, Paul instructed believers to serve others on the basis that Jesus Christ died for everyone. This is because not a single individual man, woman or child is excluded from the blessings offered in the atonement. As the author of Hebrews stated emphatically, “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone” (Heb. 2:9).

Some have asked, “If Christ died for all, then why are not all saved?” The answer is in the simple but plain truth that each person must experience a believing faith in Christ’s death before he or she can participate in the benefits of Christ’s death. Jesus said, “…if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins” (John 8:24). This principle of personal application by faith is illustrated in the details of the Passover night. Each Israelite family was to kill a lamb and sprinkle the lamb’s blood upon the doorposts and the lintel of their house (Exod. 12). When the death angel saw the blood applied to a house, he “passed over” that house and did not kill the firstborn inside. In other words, each family had to apply the blood to be saved from the punishment of death. Likewise, to
be saved, every individual must personally apply the precious blood of Christ through faith.

The question arises, does the saving grace of God cover infants and children who die before they come to the age of accountability or moral responsibility? Since Christ died for all humanity, children are certainly included in His atonement. Ultimately, all adults are judged based on their acceptance or rejection of God’s salvation. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would come to “convict the world of sin...because they do not believe in Me...” (John 16:8-9). Infants and many children are not able to fully accept, reject or even understand the plan of God. Consequently, they are not held responsible for their sin until the age of accountability. Only God knows when children are responsible for their acceptance or rejection of Christ. Even so, the Scripture gives a clear example of what happens when children die. The baby David had with Bathsheba died soon after birth. When asked about his response to the baby’s death, David said, “Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me” (2 Sam. 12:23). David’s response was a confession that someday he would go to be with his child “in the house of the Lord” (Ps. 23:6).

D. Misunderstandings about the death of Christ

In contrast to the true teachings of Scripture, there are also false theories concerning the death and resurrection of Christ.

1. The Accident Theory views Christ as simply a man subject to death as any other man. According to this theory, Christ died at the hands of a mob that did not agree with His teachings. His death was completely unforeseen and had no spiritual significance for anyone. This idea is easily refuted by the fact that Christ’s death was foretold throughout the Old Testament (Ps. 22; Isa. 53; Zech. 13). Furthermore, Jesus repeatedly spoke of the importance and manner of His future death: “No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (John 10:18; see also Matt. 16:21; 20:17-19; Mark 9:30-32; Luke 22:19-20).
2. The Martyr Theory or Example Theory holds that the death of Christ involved no more than the death of a noble martyr, such as Huss or Polycarp. According to this theory, Christ’s death only has value for humankind as an example to follow. As Christ lived out his life with integrity, so must every human follow his example. This theory completely ignores the scriptural teaching that Christ’s death was a propitiation of God’s wrath and an atonement for humankind’s sin:

[All who believe are] being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (Rom. 3:24-26).

3. The Moral Influence or Love of God Theory argues that Christ’s suffering and death were merely the natural results of Christ becoming flesh and suffering with, not for, His creatures. Concerning this theory Thiessen wrote: “[It teaches that] the love of God manifested in the incarnation, the sufferings and death of Christ, are to soften human hearts and lead them to repentance.”

According to this theory, there is no thought of the wrath of God to be propitiated or of Christ dying as the substitute for humankind’s sins. Although scriptures such as John 3:16 and Romans 5:8 emphasize the love of God, they also clearly reveal how God demonstrated His love. As an expression of His love, God willingly gave His Son to die for the sins of all humanity, satisfying the just demands of His own holiness.

4. The Governmental Theory states that God made an example of Christ in His sufferings to exhibit to humanity His displeasure with sin. In other words, to govern the world, it was necessary for God to show His wrath against sin so that His law would be respected. This theory argues that people realize God’s attitude toward sin, shown in the sufferings of Christ, and are

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4 Thiessen, 316.
moved to repentance, which is necessary for salvation. The main objection to this theory is that it does not explain why the incarnation was necessary. It also does not explain why the sufferer had to be an innocent person or why God’s wrath could not have been manifested against any sinner rather than His only begotten Son.

II. Salvation and the Resurrection of Christ

The resurrection of Christ is an essential and glorious component in God’s plan of salvation. Consequently, it is crucial for every believer to have a clear understanding of the significance of the resurrection.

A. The importance of the resurrection of Christ

1. The resurrection is one of the two primary doctrines of the gospel. Paul wrote, “…I declare to you the gospel…that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures…” (1 Cor. 15:1-4). The death and resurrection of Jesus are both required for the salvation of humankind. If Christ had remained in the grave, His death would have only been the death of a martyred teacher. Without the vicarious sacrifice of His death, His resurrection would have presented no saving power. The resurrection of Christ demonstrated that Christ was indeed the Son of God. Paul wrote Jesus was “declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:4). Christ’s resurrection proved that His death was sufficient to cover all the sins of humanity. In the resurrection, God demonstrated that Jesus Christ was and is the perfect Son of God “who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

2. The resurrection is the foundation stone on which the church is built. The resurrection was a central theme in the preaching of the early church. “And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 4:33). The very first sermon preached on the Day of Pentecost is almost entirely on the theme of the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2:22-36). Peter frequently mentioned the resurrection in his proclamations
(Acts 3:15; 4:10). In 1 Corinthians 15:12-19, Paul argued for the central importance of the resurrection by listing what would be true if the resurrection were false. Paul argued that if Christ is not risen, the following things are true:

a) The believer’s “preaching is empty” (v.14). The gospel would be emptied of its power if Jesus had not gained a victory at Calvary, as evidenced by His resurrection, over death, hell and the grave. It took the victory of the open tomb and the power of the risen Lord to give effectuality to the gospel.

b) The believer’s “faith is also empty” (v.14). If Christ had not risen from the dead, divine sonship, eternal life, justification, sanctification, glorification and a home in heaven would not be available to believers. Faith is always impotent unless the object of that faith gives it power. Paul confirmed this when he wrote, “And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!” (v.17).

c) The apostles were “false witnesses of God” (v.15). An essential qualification of apostleship was having witnessed Christ’s resurrection (Acts 1:21-22). If Christ had not risen from the dead, these men were liars and false witnesses. If Christ was not resurrected, the whole fabric of scriptural authenticity is completely torn and invalidated.

d) Believers are still in their sins (v.17). If Christ did not rise from the grave, He has no more saving efficacy than that of any other great character from history. The resurrection of Jesus Christ confirmed the justifying value of His death.

e) Believers “who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished” (v.18). If the resurrection is a lie, there is no hope for the martyrs or for anyone who dies with faith in Jesus Christ. Paul wrote, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable” (v.19). With this in
mind, Paul emphatically stated, “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (v. 20).\(^5\)

B. The nature and manner of Christ’s resurrection

1. His resurrection was the work of the Trinity.

   a) God the Father: Paul unequivocally stated to the people of Antioch that this was true: “But God raised Him from the dead” (Acts 13:30; see also Acts 2:24; 10:40; Rom. 10:9; Eph. 1:19-20; Col. 2:12).

   b) Jesus Christ: Jesus told “…His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day” (Matt. 16:21). In speaking of laying down His life, Jesus made it clear that “No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (John 10:18). When speaking of the temple of His body, Jesus said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19-22). Jesus clearly taught that the resurrection was the will of the Father, the Holy Spirit and the Son.

   c) The Holy Spirit: Paul clearly highlighted the work of the Holy Spirit in Jesus’ resurrection: “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you” (Rom. 8:11).

2. His resurrection was an actual bodily resurrection. Jesus physically died on the cross and was resurrected. The following are proofs of His actual death:

\(^5\) Bancroft, 84-87.
a) The soldiers saw that He was dead. “But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs” (John 19:33).

b) Blood and water flowed from His side (John 19:34). To ensure that Jesus was dead, one of the soldiers pierced the side of Jesus with his lance or spear. The flowing forth of the blood and water is most likely physiological evidence that His heart was ruptured or had burst.⁶

c) The centurion attested to His death (Mark 15:44-45). The centurion in charge of the crucifixion gave his personal report to Pilate. He assured the Roman governor that Jesus was indeed dead.

d) Joseph of Arimathea placed Him in a tomb (Mark 15:43-46). After receiving Jesus’ dead body from Pilate, Joseph “laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb” (Mark 15:46).

e) The women who had stood by His cross believed He had died (Mark 16:1). On the day of Christ’s resurrection they were heading to the tomb with spices to anoint His dead body.

f) Jesus said that He died. “I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore” (Rev. 1:18).

3. His resurrection was a bodily resurrection. The word resurrection, as used in the New Testament of the Lord Jesus Christ, can only signify the resurrection of the body. It is never connected with the spirit, for the spirit never dies. There is abundant proof that the body of Jesus Christ was literally raised to life again.

a) His resurrected body was composed of “flesh and bones” (Luke 24:36-39). Jesus was not an apparition. After the resurrection, He

appeared in a body and invited His disciples to touch Him. “Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have” (Luke 24:39).

b) His resurrected body could be touched and felt. After His resurrection, the disciples “came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him” (Matt. 28:9). Jesus “said to Thomas, ‘Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing’” (John 20:27).

c) He ate food after the resurrection. “But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, ‘Have you any food here?’ So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence” (Luke 24:41-43). In eating food, Jesus showed His disciples that he was bodily resurrected.

d) The disciples and His followers recognized Him (John 20:18-20). It is natural to suppose that the disciples recognized Jesus by His physical features.

e) He appeared in the same body into which the nails had been driven and the spear had been thrust (Luke 24:40; John 20:20). Scripture indicates that these same wounds will be visible in His body when He comes again (Zech. 12:10; 13:6; Rev. 1:7).

f) Jesus had foretold His bodily resurrection. Before His death, Jesus proclaimed, “‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up’… He was speaking of the temple of His body. Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said” (John 2:19-22).

4. His resurrection was a unique resurrection. Scripture records eight incidents of people being raised from the dead: the son of the widow at Zarephath (1 Kings 17:17-24); the Shunamite woman’s son (2 Kings 4:17-37); the man
who was laid on the bones of Elisha (2 Kings 13:21); Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:22-43); the young man of Nain (Luke 7:11-17); Lazarus (John 11); Tabitha (Acts 9:36-43); and Eutychus (Acts 20:7-12). There is every reason to believe that these individuals were not raised in an immortal body, but rather they died again. Jesus’ resurrection was more than a reversal of His death. Paul stated, “Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God” (Rom. 6:8-10). In other words, Christ Jesus rose from the grave “alive forevermore” (Rev. 1:18). It is also important to note that Jesus’ resurrected body is somewhat different from His pre-resurrected body. The resurrected body of Jesus appeared to not be bound by some physical limitations. For example, Jesus could enter a room though the doors were shut (John 20:19, 26).

C. Proofs of Christ’s resurrection

1. The empty tomb: The angel bore witness that the tomb was empty. “He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead” (Matt. 28:6-7). The women found the tomb empty (Luke 24:3), and Mary Magdalene testified of the same (John 20:2). The soldiers told the story that Jesus’ body had been stolen but only after they had been bribed to do so (Matt. 28:12-15). The disciples were so discouraged and timid it is unlikely they would have stolen the body, which was illegal under Roman law. Nor would they have devoted their lives to propagating such a colossal falsehood. Further, because the chief priest and Pharisees remembered that Jesus had said, “After three days I will rise,” they demanded that the tomb be secured and guarded until the third day. The tomb was sealed and watched over by guards who were in danger of losing their lives if they had allowed the body to be stolen (Matt. 27:62-66).

2. The grave clothes: The linen burial clothes were lying in the tomb with the handkerchief from His head folded separately (John 20:5-7). Customarily, when preparing a body for burial, Jews wound long strips of cloth around the body from the neck to the feet. Those strips became saturated with the
weight of the embalming spices (John 19:39-40) and would form a sort of cocoon. Jesus’ resurrected body escaped His burial clothes, leaving the clothes undisturbed. Only the napkin about the face was removed, possibly to let it be seen that His body was not within. Someone removing the body would not have taken the time to unroll the grave clothes and then restore them to their previous condition.

3. The disciples unwavering proclamation: If the resurrection was a lie, history would most likely have some instance when one or more of the disciples confessed to lying about the resurrection. Even though many of the disciples and followers of Christ were reputed to have suffered a martyr’s death for the message they proclaimed, they maintained their conviction that they served and proclaimed a resurrected Savior. No one was able to dissuade them or successfully challenge the validity of their convictions. These convictions were eventually written down to become sacred Scripture. The New Testament is also a clear sign that the disciples experienced the reality of the resurrected presence of Jesus Christ.

D. The results of Christ’s resurrection

1. Christ’s resurrection provides a firm foundation for faith. It reinforces our faith in God, who raised Christ from the dead (1 Pet. 1:21). It reinforces our faith that Jesus is all He claimed to be, that He is the very Son of God (Rom. 1:4). The resurrection did not turn Jesus into the Son of God but declared that He was and is the Son of God. When the Jews requested a sign by which they might believe, Jesus gave them signs that pointed to His death and His resurrection: Jonah being three days and three nights in the fish’s belly (Matt. 12:38-40) and the destruction and rebuilding of the temple of His body (John 2:18-21).

2. Christ’s resurrection provides an assurance of the forgiveness of sins and of justification. Paul wrote, “…that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom. 10:9). Along with salvation, justification is confirmed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, “…who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification” (Rom. 4:25). The
resurrection gives believers confidence that God was satisfied with the sacrifice Christ made on behalf of all sinners. Indeed, Peter wrote that the new birth is accomplished because of Christ’s resurrection: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead…” (1 Pet. 1:3).

3. Christ’s resurrection provides individuals with a merciful and faithful high priest in heaven (Heb. 2:17). Paul clearly referred to the ministry of a high priest when he wrote, “Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us” (Rom. 8:34).

4. Christ’s resurrection assures believers of necessary power for life and service. Paul wrote that his genuine desire was “…that I may know Him [Christ] and the power of His resurrection…” (Phil. 3:10). God’s deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt was a great miracle that stirred the faith of His chosen people. In the New Testament, the greatest demonstration of God’s power is the raising of Jesus Christ from the dead. Indeed, the resurrection of Jesus seems to be the yardstick by which God’s power is measured. Paul prayed that the saints at Ephesus might know God’s amazing power “…which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph. 1:20). This was the power that defeated death and is sufficient for every day and every emergency.

5. Christ’s resurrection ensures the resurrection and immortality of believers. “…We also believe and therefore speak, knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you” (2 Cor. 4:13-14). Christ defeated death not by avoiding it but by enduring and conquering it and swallowing it up in victory (1 Cor. 15:54-57). His death enabled him to destroy “…him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. 2:14-15).

6. Christ’s resurrection provides the certainty of a day of judgment: There will come a day of judgment for both the godly and the ungodly. “Truly, these
times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17:31; see also John 5:22, 25-29; Acts 10:42).

III. Salvation and Christ’s Ascension and Glorification

A. His ascension

The ascension refers to when the resurrected Christ was visibly taken into heaven. Jesus predicted His ascension when He told Mary, “Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and Your Father, and to My God and your God’” (John 20:17; see also John 13:1; 16:10, 16, 28). Mark testified to the ascension when he wrote, “…after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God” (Mark 16:9). Luke described the ascension in both the gospel of Luke and Acts: “And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven” (Luke 24:50-51; see also Acts 1:9). Paul and the author of Hebrews also taught the ascension of Christ (Eph. 4:8-10; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 4:14; 7:26).

Myer Pearlman made the following observation regarding the ascension:

Thus the ascension becomes the dividing line of two periods of Christ’s life: From birth to the resurrection He is the Christ of human history, the One Who lived a perfect human life under earthly conditions. Since the ascension He is the Christ of spiritual experience, who lives in heaven and touches men through the Holy Spirit.7

7 Pearlman, 176.
B. His exaltation

1. The meaning of the exaltation of Christ: The exaltation of Christ refers to when the Father gave the risen and ascended Son the place of honor, power and authority at His right hand. This concept is found in various places throughout the New Testament:

a) “Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God…” (Acts 2:33).

b) “Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior…” (Acts 5:31).

c) “…Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him” (1 Pet. 3:21-22).

d) “It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us” (Rom. 8:34).

e) “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11).

2. The results of Christ’s exaltation: The exaltation of Christ has significant implications for believers.

a) Christ is now humanity’s high priest who appears in the Father’s presence on behalf of all humans. “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession” (Heb. 4:14).
b) Believers are assured access to God. “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest…Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:14-16).

c) Christ is the head of the church. “And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church…” (Eph. 1:22). “And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18).

d) The Holy Spirit has been outpoured. “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you” (John 16:7). “Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear” (Acts 2:33).

e) He now gives gifts to believers (Eph. 4:7-12; see also 1 Cor. 12:8-11).

f) He is preparing a place for believers before He returns. “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:2-3).

C. Practical effects of the doctrines of ascension and glorification

Meyer Pearlman identified five, very practical and inspiring values rooted in the truth that Christ has ascended and is seated in the place of honor at the Father’s right hand.  

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8 Pearlman, 181.
1. Consciousness of the ascended Christ is an incentive to holiness (Col. 3:1-4). As believers look upward in expectation of His return, the downward pull of this world is counteracted.

2. Knowledge of Christ’s ascension makes for a right conception of the church. A proper understanding of Christ’s ascension leads to the recognition of the church as a supernatural organism that derives divine life from its risen head.

3. Awareness of the ascended Christ gives proper perspective of the world and worldly things. “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ…” (Phil. 3:20).

4. Faith in the ascended Christ inspires a deep sense of personal responsibility. The awareness that every person will stand before Christ someday serves as a deterrent to sin and an incentive to righteousness (Rom. 14:79; 2 Cor. 5:9-10; Eph. 6:9).

5. Confidence in Christ’s ascension leads to a joyous hope of His return: “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:3).

**IV. Salvation and the Sovereignty of God**

The work of salvation begins and ends with God. Paul wrote, “…even when we were dead in trespasses, [God] made us alive together with Christ… For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Eph. 2:4-9; see also Col. 2:13). In his letter to the Romans, Paul wrote, “…while we were still sinners, Christ died for us…[while] we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son…” (Rom. 5:8, 10). God in His sovereign love gave His Son as a sacrifice for all sin even when all had turned away from God (Rom. 3:11-12). Consequently, salvation is a gift from God that is established and sustained by God.
In contemplating the doctrine of salvation, there has been great confusion concerning the relationship between God’s sovereignty and human-kind’s free will. Although Scripture clearly states that God is sovereign, it also teaches that humans are responsible for their acceptance or rejection of God’s salvation (John 3:16). In other words, God in His sovereignty will not violate His creation’s essential freedom. Even so, various theological convictions and camps have formed around the interplay between the limited perspective of finite humans and the infinite perspective of an eternal God. One such area of strong confusion and disagreement surrounds the idea or doctrine of election.

The doctrine of election ultimately revolves around passages that use the words “called,” “chosen,” “predestined” or “the elect” to refer to believers and the saving work of Christ (see Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:3-11; 1 Pet. 1:1-2). One of the key issues of contention in these passages is whether or not believers have a choice within the plan of God’s election. Is election an issue of God predetermining who will and won’t be saved, or is election rooted in God’s foreknowledge of who will receive or reject His gift of salvation?

An extreme view of election can lead to the conclusion that the elect will be saved regardless of their response to the gospel, while those who are not chosen by God will be lost eternally, regardless of their endeavor to come to God through faith in Christ. This extreme, errant view of election is based on the doctrines of “unconditional election”—that the elect are chosen completely apart from any repentance or faith on their part, and “limited atonement”—that Christ did not die for all humankind but only for those He has chosen. This view ultimately believes that Christ did not “sincerely call” all humans to follow Him, but rather He “efficiently called” only those He had previously elected for salvation. This view ultimately contradicts many scriptures that point to Jesus as the offering for all sin and all sinners. The words of John the Baptist contradict the very heart of this so call limited atonement, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). For the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world, the opportunity for the new birth must be for all people, not just for a limited few chosen in advance by God.
Within this debate it is important to distinguish between God’s foreknowledge and His foreordaining. Romans states, “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son…” (Rom. 8:29). To believe that God foreknew all things is not the same as believing He arbitrarily determined the outcome of all things. God in His foreknowledge looks ahead to events much as we look back upon them. His foreknowledge is not causative; it does not change the nature of an event any more than hindsight changes an historical fact. There is a difference between what God determines to bring to pass and what He merely permits to happen. Thiessen explained this concept:

Certainly only few who hold the view of “unconditional election” would teach that God is the efficient cause of sin: practically all would agree that God merely permitted sin to enter the universe, and all would admit that He foresaw that it would enter, before He created anything. If, then, God could foresee that sin would enter the universe without efficiently decreeing that it should enter, then He can also foresee how men will act without efficiently decreeing how they shall act.9

Scripture states that believers were chosen “in Christ”:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will (Eph. 1:3-5).

Having chosen His own “in Christ,” God does not look at people in themselves but as they are in Christ. Christ is the Chosen One; He is both

9 Thiessen, 346.
the subject and the object of election. Those who were chosen are those who were in Christ. Those who are in Christ have believed in the redeeming blood of Christ through which they have been united with Him as members of His body. Believers were foreseen by God in Christ when He chose them. God did not determine who should be there. He simply saw them there in Christ when He chose them. The Bible does not teach selection but election. Nowhere does the Bible teach that some are predestined to be damned. It is not a person’s nonelection that leads to eternal ruin; it is sin and failure to accept Jesus Christ. All people are free to accept Christ as Savior. In fact, they are urged to do so (Acts 17:30; Heb. 2:9).

V. Salvation and the Necessity of Repentance and Faith

A. Repentance

Repentance is necessary for salvation. Repentance is a sincere and thorough changing of the mind and purpose in regard to God, self and sin. Repentance is the will of God for every person: “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). Furthermore, repentance is commanded by the Lord: “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30). True repentance includes an intellectual, emotional and volitional aspect.

1. Aspects of repentance

a) The intellectual aspect of repentance: In repenting, the individual has a change of view in regard to sin, God and self. The individual comes to recognize sin not merely as a weakness, a mistake or an unfortunate happening, but as a personal guilt (Ps. 51:3). The sinner recognizes that his or her sin is a transgression against God. David testified to this truth when he realized his sin against Bathsheba and her husband, Uriah, was also sin against God’s law. David lamented, “Against You, You only, have
I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight…” (Ps. 51:4). Another intellectual aspect of repentance is found in the sinner recognizing that sin defiles and pollutes his or her own being. Recognizing this truth, David prayed for God’s cleansing (Ps. 51:7).

b) The emotional aspect of repentance: In repenting, the individual has a deep, profound, godly sorrow for sin. Paul told the believers at Corinth that “godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation” (2 Cor. 7:10). Jesus spoke of the tax collector who “…would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’” (Luke 18:13). There is a real stirring of the heart when a person is brought face to face with his or her own sin. However, there is a difference between experiencing true sorrow for sin versus having the mere feeling of shame. There is a vast difference between remorse and repentance. A person may merely be sorry to have been caught in the act of sin and not truly repentant because of sin. Godly sorrow will lead to genuine repentance.

c) The volitional aspect of repentance: In repenting, the individual exercises his or her will by turning from sin and wholeheartedly turning to Christ for forgiveness. One of the words used for “repentance” means to turn. This is illustrated in the story of the prodigal son who exercised his will and returned to his father (Luke 15:18-21). As repentance touches the will, it will result in the following:

(1) Confessing sin: “For I will declare my iniquity; I will be in anguish over my sin” (Ps. 38:18).

(2) Forsaking sin: “He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy” (Prov. 28:13).

(3) Turning to God: “Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unh righteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD…” (Isa. 55:7).
(4) Surrendering to God: “Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it” (Matt. 16:24-25).

2. Importance of repentance

   a) Repentance is central to the Great Commission: “Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:46-47).

   b) Repentance is a central teaching of the New Testament church: “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins…”’ (Acts 2:38). “I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:20-21; see also Acts 3:19; 5:31; 8:22; 11:18; 26:20; 2 Cor. 12:21; 2 Tim. 2:25).

   c) Repentance is the will of God for every person: “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

   d) Repentance is the command of God for every person: “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent…” (Acts 17:30).

   e) Failure to repent will result in eternal death: “I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).
f) Repentance brings joy in Heaven: “I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance…I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:7, 10).

3. The source of repentance: Miracles in and of themselves do not produce repentance. Matthew records Jesus lamenting this truth: “Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: ‘Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes’” (Matt. 11:20-21). In the story of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus taught that unrepentant people will not turn to God even if a loved one came back from the dead to warn them: “…If they [the unrepentant] do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead” (Luke 16:30-31). Powerful teaching and mighty miracles are not the source of repentance.

a) Repentance is a gift from God. After Peter explained why the Gentiles had been included in God’s plan of salvation, “…they glorified God, saying, ‘Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life’” (Acts 11:18). Paul encouraged Timothy to instruct people in the knowledge of God so that “God perhaps will grant them repentance” (2 Tim 2:25). Repentance is not something individuals can bring about themselves. Individuals who believe they can live for themselves and repent when they are ready are sadly mistaken. Since repentance is a gift from God, individuals should turn to God the moment they have an urge to repent of their sins.

b) Repentance accompanies the Spirit-led preaching of the gospel. On the day of Pentecost, Peter and the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. In response to Peter’s Spirit-empowered gospel message “…they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and
let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins…” (Acts 2:37-38).

c) Repentance is the fruit of God’s goodness and patience. Paul reminded the Romans “…that the goodness of God leads you to repentance” (Rom 2:4). Peter proclaimed that God “…is longsuffering towards us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

Repentance is not based upon the wisdom of humans but the patience and goodness of God. Repentance is a gift from God that is frequently accompanied by Spirit-empowered proclamation and living. As a gift from God, repentance can be received or rejected. In the work of salvation, repentance must also be accompanied by faith.

B. Faith

Along with repentance, faith is necessary for an individual to receive salvation. Faith and repentance are so intertwined it is difficult to determine which comes first in the work of salvation. It is doubtful that individuals can repent unless they believe or can believe unless they sincerely repent. Regardless, it is not possible to overstate the importance of faith in the Christian life and the work of salvation. Faith is how individuals approach God. “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and the He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6). Ultimately, everything believers receive from God they receive through faith. The role of faith and belief in salvation is a central theme throughout Scripture.

(1) “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Eph. 2:8-9).

(2) “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:16).
(3) “So they said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household’” (Acts 16:31).

(4) “But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness…” (Rom. 4:5).

(5) “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ…” (Rom. 5:1).

(6) “But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul” (Heb. 10:39).

(7) “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life” (John 5:24).

1. Meaning of faith

The author of Hebrews gave what is possibly the best definition of faith: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). In this scripture, faith is said to be the “substance.” The word “substance” comes from a word that literally means “foundation” or that which underlies our hope. “Foundation” speaks of that covenant relationship of mutual love between the Lord and the believer. Faith is not blind groping in the dark but the certain conviction, born of love and relationship, that God’s revealed word is true. Faith is more than mere hope; it is “substance,” which in legal affairs was translated “title deed.” He who has the substance of faith has a “title deed” to God’s full provision.

The realities of God’s kingdom are invisible realities to the natural eye. Faith is the faculty by which the spiritual realities are perceived as being real and capable of being realized. For Christians, faith is real “evidence.” Believers do not need other evidence to proceed in accord with the revealed will of God. In relationship to salvation, faith is based upon what God has done and promised through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is based
entirely on the finished work of Christ as revealed in Scripture and confirmed by the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:14-39). As with repentance, true faith includes an intellectual, emotional and volitional aspect.

2. Aspects of faith

   a) The intellectual aspect: Faith is not a blind leap into the dark. Instead, faith is walking in the light—the light of God’s word. Faith must be based on knowledge. No one can believe in something or someone of which they have no knowledge. Faith for salvation is based on the very best evidence: the word of God revealed in Scripture and enlivened by the power of the Holy Spirit. “Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ” (Rom. 10:17, NIV).

   b) The emotional aspect: This element is seen in the joy believers experience when they first realize the goodness of God. This joy can wane when believers fail to grow in their relationship with God. Jesus gave this example in the parable of the sower scattering seeds: “Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away” (Mark 4:16-17, NIV). Jesus’ warning demonstrates that emotions must always be balanced by the truth or fact of faith. Dr. A.T. Pierson stated: “Here is the order: Fact leads. Faith with its eye on Fact following. Feeling with its eye on Faith brings up the rear. All goes well as long as this order is observed. But the moment that Faith turns its back on Fact and looks at Feeling the procession wobbles.”10 Thiessen summarized the emotional and intellectual reality of faith well: “We may define the emotional element of faith as the awakening of the soul to its personal needs and to the personal applicability of the redemption provided in Christ, together with an immediate assent to these truths.”11

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11 Thiessen, 358.
c) The volitional aspect: After knowing what God has promised, after assenting to the truth of that promise, faith reaches out and appropriates what is provided. Knowledge itself is not enough. Individuals may have the knowledge that Christ is divine yet still reject Christ as their Savior. Knowledge can affirm a reality, but it does not accept or reject that reality. This is also true of assent or agreement. It is possible for individuals to assent with their minds yet not surrender with their hearts. Real faith is demonstrated in the realm of the will. Real faith appropriates and acts upon the promises of God. Consequently, faith must always be put into action (Jas. 2:14). It is the soul leaping up to embrace the promise, “…being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised” (Rom. 4:21, NIV).

The volitional aspects of saving faith require that sinners surrender their hearts to God and appropriate Christ as their Savior. Paul wrote, “…that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom. 10:9). This passage teaches that saving faith is found in surrendering to the Lordship of Jesus. To appropriate Christ as their Savior, individuals must fully receive all that Christ has done for the redemption of their souls: “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name…” (John 1:12).

Ultimately, salvation requires that each person make a personal decision to receive Jesus Christ. This personal appropriation is a vital necessity. Although Jesus died for all, each person must individually accept Christ as his or her own Savior. Water is provided for all, but if individuals do not personally drink from the life-giving flow, they will die. Air is provided for all, but everyone must breathe to survive. The Bible teaches that for salvation to occur there must be an individual commitment of the soul to Christ and a personal acceptance of Christ as both Savior and Lord. “For ‘whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved’” (Rom. 10:13).
3. Receiving saving faith

When individuals receive salvation by faith, their decision is based on what God has promised and done. Faith that leads to salvation is not the work of the individual but rather a gift from God (Eph. 2:8). Saving faith is based entirely on the finished work of Christ as revealed in the Scripture. Consequently, saving faith is experienced when individuals simply believe in what God has said and take Him at His word. To sinful humans the gospel of grace often sounds too good to be true. There is an assumption that one needs more than repentance and faith to be truly saved. Even so, Scripture clearly states that the good news of the gospel has been promised, planned and brought about by God. Therefore, every person can take God at His word and receive His gift of salvation by faith.

VI. Salvation and the Process of Justification

Justification is the foundational truth of God’s provision of salvation for guilty sinners. Justification by faith is a great truth that the Protestant Reformation restored to the Christian church. Although frequently referred to in Scripture, justification is an often neglected and misunderstood doctrine. Justification and regeneration are closely related doctrines. Regeneration is what takes place in the believer’s heart; justification concerns the believer’s standing before God. Regeneration refers to the impartation of life, while justification refers to being declared righteous in the eyes of God. Regeneration is the divine answer to the problem of spiritual death; justification is the divine answer to the problem of guilt.

Justification is the act whereby God declares individuals righteous. It is a legal term that evokes the concept of a lawbreaker waiting to receive the deserved judgment. Instead of being condemned by the judge, the person is judicially pronounced not guilty, being declared righteous. It is not that the sinner is righteous, but that the sinner is declared righteous on the basis of faith in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Justification is more than the forgiving or pardoning of sins; it is more than the removal of guilt and condemnation. Justification is also God reckoning an individual’s account
with the perfect righteousness of Christ. Scripture states, Christ “…became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—” (1 Cor. 1:30). “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

Justification includes deliverance from God’s wrath as well as righteousness and acceptance in His sight. When God justifies a person, He wipes out the record of sin and guilt in that individual’s life. In the eyes of God, it is as though that individual has never sinned.

A. The method of justification

It is very important for individuals to understand the method by which God justifies sinners. Justification makes it possible for Christians to stand before God. God cannot merely overlook sin because of His compassion. Otherwise, He would violate His own holiness and justice. He must “…be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26). There is a definite and divine way by which sinners are declared righteous. Apart from this way there is no possibility for justification.

1. Not by works: Humans are not justified on the basis of their own righteousness or good deeds. This is made abundantly clear throughout the Scripture. In Romans, Paul wrote that Abraham was not justified by works but by faith: “For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness…” (Rom. 4:3-5).

2. Not by keeping the law: Humans are not justified on the basis of their ability to follow and obey God’s law. Paul made this clear in his letter to the Romans: “Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin…for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God…” (Rom. 3:20, 23). In Galatians this truth is repeated, “…for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified” (Gal. 2:16). Theoretically, to be justified by God’s law, an individual would need to follow God’s law perfectly. Since no human has followed or can follow
God’s law completely, all humans under the law are under a curse outside of the redemptive work of Jesus. “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them’” (Gal. 3:10).

It is important to realize that there is nothing wrong with the law itself. Paul wrote, “…the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good” (Rom. 7:12). The law serves to make humans realize they are sinners, “…for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom. 3:20). Ultimately, the law reveals to individuals their need for justification apart from keeping the law.

3. By the gift of God’s grace: Justification is only received through God’s grace. It cannot be worked for or merited. Paul wrote that every believer is “…justified freely by His grace though the redemption that is in Christ Jesus…” (Rom. 3:24; see also Tit. 3:7). Grace comes from the Greek charis and originally meant “beauty” or “beautiful conduct.” Later it was used to mean any favor granted to another, especially when the recipient had not merited such a favor. In the New Testament, charis or grace, is usually associated with God granting forgiveness to sinners who have done nothing to deserve the forgiveness of their sins. Grace blesses more than just undeserving sinners; it saves the enemies of God. Grace is more than an action God expresses. Grace is an essential part of God’s very nature. Justification is the grace gift of God.

4. Through the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ: God does not forgive the sins of humans just because He is gracious. He does not and cannot merely overlook sin. God is just, and His pardon is based upon the strict terms of justice. Jesus Christ has paid the penalty for every individual’s sin. Rather than punishing individuals for their sins, Jesus Christ took their punishment upon Himself. In other words, He brought justice to sinners by taking their place. In taking the place of sinners, Jesus fulfilled the righteous requirements of God. Scripture says, “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21). Because of Christ’s sacrifice, God can forgive sin because the law has been fulfilled and the penalty has been paid. Not only did Christ pay the
penalty for every person’s rebellion, He also perfectly obeyed the law providing a righteousness that God could credit to every individual’s account. “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous” (Rom. 5:19). Christ not only took the sins of all humanity upon Himself but also bestowed His righteousness upon all who believe. This seemingly unbelievable exchange is what God offers to all who believe in the work of the cross.

5. Through faith: Justification is a grace gift received through faith. Scripture repeatedly points to the role of faith in justification:

   a) “…Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith…to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Rom. 3:24, 26).

   b) “But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness…” (Rom. 4:5).

   c) “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ…” (Rom. 5:1).

   d) “…knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified” (Gal. 2:16).

When individuals declare that they are justified through faith, they must realize that faith is not a meritorious offer they make to God for salvation. Faith is only the means through which individuals receive God’s gracious provision (Rom. 5:1). Thiessen wrote, “We are not saved for our faith, but through our faith.”12

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12 Thiessen, 382.
B. Elements involved in justification

1. Forgiveness or remission of sins: Because all the sins of the believer are forgiven, the guilt and punishment of those sins are also removed.

   a) “Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:38-39).

   b) “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace…” (Eph. 1:7).

   c) “And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses…” (Col. 2:13).

2. Restoration of God’s favor: Sinners are subject to God’s wrath. “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (John 3:36). Those who have been justified have been released from wrath: “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him” (Rom. 5:9). Justification means that believers are not only saved from God’s wrath but also blessed with the favor of God.

   a) “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:1-2).

   b) “But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us…that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Tit. 3:4, 7).
The grace of God is so abundant that believers are received into His favor as though they had never broken His laws. The favor of God is more than the pardoning or overlooking of sins; it is the complete restoration of a lost sinner. The parable of the prodigal son illustrates this kind of favor and restoration. In complete love and acceptance, the father welcomes back his wayward son, “…for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found” (Luke 15:24). P.B. Fitzwater wrote, “…Justification is much more than remission of sins or acquittal. The justified man is more than a discharged criminal. He is restored to the position of one who is righteous. God treats him as though he had never sinned.”  

The fruit of justification is the abiding favor of God.

3. Imputation of Christ’s righteousness: God justifies individuals by supplying believers with the positive or imputed righteousness of Christ. All fellowship with a holy God must be on the basis of righteousness. Scripture declares that outside the work of Christ “There is none righteous, no, not one…” (Rom. 3:10). However, through Christ, “…now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed…” (Rom. 3:21). In Christ, believers are made righteous, “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21). These verses suggest that in justification there is a double imputation: the sins of sinners are imputed to the sinless Christ, while the righteousness of Christ is imputed to unrighteous sinners. It is important to note that justification does not necessarily change the behavior of the individual. Rather, justification reckons to sinners the righteousness of Christ so that God sees believers through the perfect righteousness of His son Jesus.

The ultimate guarantee of the believer’s justification is the resurrection of Christ, “…who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification” (Rom. 4:25). The fact that God raised Jesus from the dead testifies to the truth that Jesus’ sacrifice paid the price for all sin. The resurrection of Jesus declares that all our sins, which He took upon Himself, are forgiven. The resurrection is the Father’s seal of approval upon Christ’s atoning death. Those who believe in Christ receive the fullness of God’s justification. In Christ, every believer is justified equally and completely.

13 Fitzwater, 47.
VII. Salvation and the Process of Regeneration

Regeneration is the spiritual rebirth of an individual that occurs at conversion through the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus told Nicodemus that new birth is necessary for anyone to enter the kingdom of God: “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Through the saving work of Jesus Christ, people are born again into new life.

A. Characteristics of the new birth

1. The new birth is a real birth: John stated, “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God…” (1 John 5:1). The new birth is not the changing of one’s convictions or a commitment to better living. Rather, the new birth is literally the impartation of Christ’s divine nature where sinners, dead in their sins, are made new and alive in Christ. Therefore, “He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life” (1 John 5:12; see also 2 Cor. 5:17; 2 Pet. 1:4). In the new birth, people receive from God His nature and His righteousness.

2. The new birth is a cleansing: Titus states, “…according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit…” (Tit. 3:5). This suggests that in the new birth there is a cleansing of the soul from the previous defilements of life.

3. The new birth is a creation: Paul wrote, “…if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5:17; see also Gal. 6:15; Eph. 2:10; 4:24). In Christ, humans become new creations. Salvation is more than a change or reformation in behavior. Reformation is only an outward expression that cannot change the nature of the human heart. Jeremiah wrote that “The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9). In the new birth, every individual becomes a new creation with a new nature and a new heart.
4. The new birth is a resurrection: All believers have been crucified with Christ and raised together with Him. In salvation, believers identify with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. Concerning this reality Paul wrote the following:

Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin (Rom. 6:3-7).

The believer’s death and resurrection in Christ is symbolized in the ordinance of water baptism. Paul further pointed to this resurrected life in Christ when he wrote, “But God…even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus…” (Eph. 2:4-6). In the new birth, believers share in the resurrected life of Jesus.

B. The necessity of the new birth

1. People cannot see the kingdom of God without a new birth. The new birth is an absolute necessity (John 3:3). God does not prevent the unregenerated from seeing His kingdom. Rather, it is impossible for the unregenerated to see God’s kingdom without the new birth. Scripture states, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14). Spiritual discernment of God’s kingdom can only come through new birth.
2. The nature of humankind’s first birth requires a second birth. All humans were born from parents with corrupted natures; therefore, every human is born with a corrupted nature. The psalmist wrote, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me” (Ps. 51:5). Human effort cannot change the nature of humankind. Rather, every human born of the flesh must also be born of the Spirit. Jesus made this clear to Nicodemus: “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:5-6). In Christ, believers are given a new nature because they are born again into the family of God through the power of the Holy Spirit.

3. People are dead without the new birth. All who have not been born again are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). They are devoid of spiritual life and in need of a new birth. Arthur W. Pink summarized this clearly: “Let us realize that the sinner is not ignorant, needing instruction; he is not weak and in need of invigoration; he is not sick and in need of doctoring. He is dead and needs to be made alive.”14 When Jesus said, “…unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3), He was not stating a theological dogma or issuing a divine edict. Instead, Jesus was stating the simple fact that all humans are dead and unable to experience the life of Christ outside of being born again.

C. How the new birth occurs

Eternal life is the gift of God (John 1:13). Humans cannot save themselves, nor earn the position of divine sonship. No human work or effort can bring a person to life in Christ. Paul wrote, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Eph. 2:8-9; see also Tit. 3:5). While the new birth is the gift of God, there are certain divine and human aspects involved in the experience.

1. The divine side: The Holy Spirit and the word of God are the agents by which all creation came into existence (Gen. 1). Likewise, the new birth is brought about through the word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

   a) The Holy Spirit is the agent of the new birth. Jesus said that humans must be “born of the Spirit” to “enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). The Holy Spirit brings the life of God into the heart of every believer. The Holy Spirit enables believers to partake of the divine nature. Life comes through the agency of the Spirit. Paul wrote, “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you” (Rom. 8:11).

   b) The word of God is vital to the new birth. Indeed, the Holy Spirit bears witness to the word in bringing the new birth to pass. James articulated the role of the word of God in new birth: “Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures” (Jas. 1:18). Peter wrote that believers are “…born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever…” (1 Pet. 1:23).

2. The human side: While humans cannot regenerate themselves, to receive the new birth, they still must believe the message of the gospel and accept Jesus Christ as their Savior.

   a) Humans receive the new birth through believing the message of the gospel, that the work of Christ on the cross is sufficient for salvation. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

   b) Humans enter into the new birth through accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior. Salvation is an intensely personal experience that occurs when individuals place their complete faith and trust in Jesus. Individuals
come alive in Christ when they receive Jesus as their Savior. Through faith in Jesus, believers become children of God. “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12; see also Gal. 3:26).

D. The results of the new birth

1. In the new birth individuals become children of God. As children of God, believers immediately become heirs of God with access to the resources of the heavenly Father. “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together” (Rom. 8:16-17).

2. In the new birth individuals become new creations and partakers of the divine nature (2 Cor. 5:17; 2 Pet. 1:4). Consequently, the nature and attitude of the believer are transformed. In Christ, believers have a deep love for each other: “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death” (1 John 3:14). As new creations, believers develop a new and deeper love of God and God’s word: “We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19; see also 1 Pet. 2:2). As partakers of God’s divine nature, believers also display a profound love for their enemies: “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven…” (Matt. 5:44-45).

3. The new birth enables believers to live a life of victory over sin and the corruption of the world. John stated that individuals in Christ will not continue to live a lifestyle of sin: “Those who are God’s children do not continue sinning, because the new life from God remains in them. They are not able to go on sinning, because they have become children of God” (1 John 3:9, NCV).
VIII. Salvation and Adoption

The Scripture speaks of salvation as an adoption. The word “adoption” appears exclusively in Paul’s epistles and is used five different times. The term is applied once to Israel as a nation: “…who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises…” (Rom. 9:4). It is also used to refer to the full redemption of the believer’s body at the second coming of the Lord: “…even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:23). The other three references speak of adoption as a present fact in the life of Christians: “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Gal. 4:4-5; see also Rom. 8:15; Eph. 1:5). Paul used the word adoption to describe not only the condition of believers but also their positional authority.

1. Biblical usage of adoption: Applied to believers, adoption literally means “placing as a son.” After becoming a child of God through the new birth, a believer is immediately considered an adult son through adoption. There is no childhood period in the sphere of Christian standing and responsibility. Consequently, adoption does not just mean son-making, but son-placing. Adoption takes place the moment a person is born into the family of God and is simultaneous with regeneration and justification. In the eternal counsel of God, adoption took place when “He [God] chose us in Him [Christ] before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4-5). However, the full realization and enjoyment of adoption will be when the Lord returns for His own (Rom. 8:23).

2. The results of adoption

a) The witness of the Holy Spirit: Paul wrote that God redeemed “…those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’” (Gal. 4:5-6). The Holy Spirit
testifies to the sonship of all believers: “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Rom. 8:16). The Holy Spirit assures us that believers are not only adopted, but that they can have personal fellowship with their heavenly Father: “…but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father’” (Rom. 8:15).

b) Divine acceptance: “For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption…” (Rom. 8:15). Through the indwelling Holy Spirit, believers are assured of a relationship with God based on love rather than fear.

c) Made joint heirs with Christ: “And if [we are] children, then [we are] heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together” (Rom. 8:17). Through adoption in Christ, a believer receives the full inheritance of an adult son:

Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons… Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ (Gal. 4:1-7).

d) Men and women receive sonship: “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26-28). The Foursquare church’s Women in Leadership Ministry explains this role of adoption well:
Faith in Christ brings us into an entirely new relationship with God. He becomes our Father, not in a metaphorical sense, but in a literal sense. By being joined spiritually to His only begotten Son, we become adopted sons; this position of “sonship” applies to both men and women. “In Christ” women stand before God (along with men) as “sons” (Gal. 3:26; 4:6-7). This term is not intended to disparage the position of a daughter but to emphasize the point that women are not ascribed a lesser status than men. Women are “sons” in this case because they are joined to the Son. They stand on exactly the same level as men, they inherit exactly the same promises, and they can have exactly the same types of ministry.¹⁵

Many redeemed children of the Lord do not realize their inheritance. Many approach God only as servants and fail to approach God also as dearly loved sons. As in the story of the prodigal son, many believers live like the son who stayed home with his father yet resented the love and attention his wayward brother received. In serving his father, the son had failed to realize the truth of his father’s words, “Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours” (Luke 15:31). Through adoption, believers are able to draw upon their full inheritance as heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

IX. Salvation and the Process of Sanctification

The doctrine of sanctification is closely related to Christian daily living. Therefore, it is extremely important for believers to understand the practical implications of sanctification from a biblical perspective. A clear understanding of sanctification will empower the believer to enter into the full benefits of salvation.

¹⁵ Women in Ministry Leadership: A Summary of the Biblical Position of the Foursquare Church Concerning God’s Grace and a Woman’s Potential Under His Sovereignty and Call (Foursquare Media, 2021) 32.
A. The meaning of sanctification

In Scripture, sanctification has a primary and secondary meaning. It is important that individuals understand these meanings in their proper order. For many, “cleansing” is the first word that comes to mind when dealing with the definition of sanctification; even so, that is not its primary meaning.

1. The primary meaning of sanctification is the process of dedicating, consecrating or setting apart someone or something for a specific and holy purpose. In the Old Testament, many inanimate things were sanctified, such as a house (Lev. 27:14), a field (Lev. 27:16) or the vessels of the temple (2 Chron. 29:19). In addition to inanimate objects, the firstborn of Israel were sanctified or set apart for the Lord. “Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine” (Exod. 13:2). This concept of sanctification is not a moral cleansing but a setting apart for the Lord. In the same manner, Christians are sanctified or set apart for the glory of God. Even the Greek word for “church,” ekklesia, means “the called out ones.” Consequently, each member of the church is set apart or sanctified to bring glory to God.

2. The secondary meaning of sanctification is the progressive process of cleansing and purging someone from moral defilement. Unlike justification, which is a onetime experience, sanctification is both an event and a process. The cleansing process of sanctification has three distinct phases or aspects.

B. Aspects of sanctification

1. Positional sanctification: The moment people are born again they are sanctified. Paul wrote, “But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11; see also 2 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 10:10; 13:12). This is a positional sanctification where the holiness of Jesus is imputed to all believers. They might not be perfect in their daily living, but the holiness of Jesus is put to their account. Paul wrote that Christ Jesus, “… became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption …”
(1 Cor. 1:30). In other words, Christ’s sanctification becomes the sanctification for all who believe in Him.

The Bible’s use of words such as saint, holy and blameless demonstrates the concept of positional sanctification. Believers are referred to as “saints” throughout the epistles (1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:1; Jude 3). When writing to the Corinthian church, Paul not only called believers saints, but he also declared that they were blameless and holy in the eyes of God. Even so, Paul’s instructions to the Corinthian church reveal that the believers were far from perfect in their daily living. In fact, they were accused of being carnal and guilty of numerous sins. Although the Corinthian believers were positionally holy, having the holiness of Christ imputed to them, they still frequently failed to manifest Christ’s holiness in their practical living.

2. Practical sanctification: Paul spoke of the Christians at Thessalonica as being “sanctified” (2 Thess. 2:13), but he also prayed for their sanctification (1 Thess. 5:23). He recognized that they were sanctified positionally but needed holiness to become progressively part of their daily Christian living. In this manner, sanctification is a continuing process throughout a Christian’s entire lifetime. Sanctification is not the absence of bad behavior. People are not considered holy because of the things they do not do. Rather, sanctification is the positive activity of being conformed to the image of Christ. This gradual growth occurs as believers daily surrender their lives to be conformed to the image of God through the power of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God (Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Pet. 3:18).

Progressive sanctification occurs as believers identify with Christ and consider themselves dead to sin. “Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:11). All believers have died to sin because of Christ’s sacrifice, but all have not yet fully claimed the riches provided for them through Christ’s death. Believers are not asked to die experientially; they are urged only to “reckon” themselves to be dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. As new creations, alive in Christ, believers are conformed to the image of Christ as they walk “according to the Spirit” that abides within them (Rom. 8:1-11). As believers live according to the Spirit, they “put to death the deeds of the body” (Rom. 8:13). As
believers die to themselves and yield their will to the transformational work of the Holy Spirit, they experience progressive sanctification.

It is important to note that the Bible does not say that in this life Christians will reach a place where they no longer sin. In fact, John wrote, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8). Although Paul admonished the church to advance in “perfecting holiness” and Jesus commanded us to “be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect,” these scriptures seem to refer to moving toward completeness or maturity, not sinless perfection (Matt. 5:48; 2 Cor. 7:1). Some have been confused in this regard because of 1 John 3:9: “Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.” However, it is important to note that all of the verbs in this passage are in the present tense. Therefore, John is literally saying that God’s children do not “practice” sin; it is not the pattern of their lives.

Paul seemingly referred to the process of progressive sanctification in his explanation that spiritual leadership is “for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ…” (Eph. 4:12-13). In sanctification, Christians acknowledge and surrender to the truth that they have died in Christ and are now “hidden with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3). From this perspective, believers grow in holy living as they allow the work of the cross to transform their daily living through the power of the Holy Spirit. “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). Christians who surrender to the transformational work of the Holy Spirit will perpetually grow in expressing the holiness and character of God.

3. Complete and final sanctification: The complete expressed sanctification of all believers awaits the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus and the
resurrection of all who believe. “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself” (Phil. 3:20-21). Resurrected believers will experience sinless perfection: “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Rev. 21:4). Through faith in Jesus Christ, individuals are saved from the penalty of sin; through yielding to the work of the Holy Spirit, believers are set free from the power of sin; through their bodily resurrection, believers are set free from the presence of sin. Until that final consummation, “…we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18).

C. Means of sanctification

As with many other aspects of the Christian experience, there is both a divine and human side to the means of sanctification.

1. Divine side

a) The Father: Jesus prayed to the Father concerning His disciples: “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth” (John 17:17). Paul acknowledged the sanctifying work of the Father when he prayed, “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it” (1 Thess. 5:23-24). The perfection of the believer is the work of the Father: “Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen” (Heb. 13:20-21).
b) The Son: Jesus has sanctified believers through the sacrifice of His own body and by the shedding of His own precious blood (Heb. 10:10; 13:12). “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:25-27).

c) The Holy Spirit: The indwelling power and anointing of the Holy Spirit provides believers victory over the sins of the flesh. “For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (Rom. 8:13). In Galatians 5, Paul contrasted the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit. The works of the flesh are evident, such as “adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like…” (Gal. 5:19-21). In contrast, “…the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal. 5:22-23). Those who live according to the Spirit produce good fruit. When believers receive and walk in the fullness of the Holy Spirit, they receive the ability to overcome “the lust of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16). Through yielding to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, believers “are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory…” (2 Cor. 3:18).

2. Human side: It is God who sanctifies believers. Humans cannot sanctify themselves, “…for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). Even so, humans have the ability to partner with or reject the sanctifying work of the gospel: “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1). Although it is God who cleanses, it is the responsibility of every believer to flee “youthful lusts” and to “pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Tim. 2:22). In yielding to the will of the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit, the believer becomes a “…vessel for
honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work”
(2 Tim. 2:21). The following are some of the ways believers can yield to the
sanctifying work of God.

a) By walking in faith: By faith in Jesus Christ believers are sanctified
by His blood (Heb. 10:10; 13:12).

b) By obeying God’s Word: The Word of God is powerful and cleans-
ing when it is received, believed and obeyed by believers (John 15:3;
17:17; Eph. 5:26; 1 John 1:7).

c) By yielding to the Holy Spirit: As believers submit to the work of
the Holy Spirit, they are given the desire and power to obey God’s word
(John 16:13).

d) By intentional personal commitment: Believers experience the
sanctifying work of God when they separate themselves from worldly
pursuits and commit to pursuing God’s perfect will for their lives. In this
deep, personal commitment, believers acknowledge that Jesus is not only
their Savior but also their Lord. When believers surrender to the rule of
God and daily seek His holiness, they grow in the fruit of practical sanc-
tification (Rom. 6:13, 19; 12:1-2).

X. Salvation and Assurance

It is imperative that people have assurance of their salvation. Everything
else in the Christian life depends on this assurance. God’s plan of salvation
has reestablished fellowship between Himself and humans. Part of the foun-
dation of that fellowship is assurance. God wants believers to know they are
saved. If it is impossible for individuals to receive salvation after they die,
then it seems crucial that individuals should clearly know if and when they
are saved.
A. Elements of assurance

1. The witness of the Spirit: When a person is born again, the Holy Spirit testifies within that person that a work of grace has occurred. “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God…” (Rom. 8:16; see also Gal. 4:6; 1 John 3:24). It is not easy to put into words how this “witness” is manifested, for it is a spiritual phenomenon. Regardless, at salvation, believers receive a Spirit-inspired assurance that they have been brought into the family of God. The Holy Spirit witnesses to believers that their salvation is assured.

2. The testimony of the Bible: Many portions of Scripture provide reassurance that salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe (John 3:36; 5:24; Rom. 10:9-10). John wrote, “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God” (1 John 5:13).

3. Love for God’s family: When believers love God’s children, it is evidence that God has created a work of grace in their hearts. John wrote, “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him” (1 John 3:14-15). Just as Cain revealed his wickedness in the murder of his brother Abel, believers reveal their righteousness in loving one another. “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God” (1 John 4:7).

4. Desire to obey God’s commands: A person can obey God only through being born again and by experiencing God’s transforming grace (Rom. 8:7; 1 John 2:3-5). Obedience requires the transformation of a person’s nature. When individuals sincerely try to obey God’s commandments, they demonstrate that they love the Lord and have experienced God’s transforming grace (John 14:21, 23; 1 John 2:5; 3:24).
5. Transformation of the believer’s life and desires: Paul wrote that “…if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). This wondrous work of regeneration is expressed in the glorious transformation of the believer’s life and desires. The following are some results of transformation.

a) A desire to repent: Saved people have an increased desire to turn from sin. When individuals experience the saving grace of Jesus, they gain an increased desire for the righteousness of God to reign in their lives. Consequently, saved people will eagerly repent of their sins.

b) An abiding peace: Redeemed people experience a deep settled peace. This peace is rooted in the removal of sin and the establishment of communion with God. “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1).

c) The fear of death removed: In salvation, the question of sin has been settled. Judgment and condemnation have passed. Those “…who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” are now free to eagerly anticipate seeing their Savior (Heb. 2:15).

B. Results of assurance

1. Stability in life: Believers who have an assurance of their salvation will remain stable during difficult times. They will live with the assurance that God does not change, and therefore His grace is sufficient in all circumstances and situations.

2. An effective prayer life: Believers with an assurance of their salvation will have an effective prayer life, knowing that they have communion with God and can approach God with their concerns and requests.

3. Authority over Satan: When believers are confident that they are “hidden with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3), they have power to resist Satan and to
stand firm under satanic attacks. Assurance of a secure relationship with God will enable believers to endure the struggles of living in a fallen world.

XI. Salvation and the Security of the Believer

Do believers have the ability to lose or abandon their salvation? To answer this question we must look at the interplay between the sovereignty of God and the free will of humans. Scripture teaches that God is sovereign, yet humans are responsible for their free moral choices. Consequently, a healthy view of the security of the believer must hold these truths in tension. On one hand, it is crucial that believers have an assurance and security in their salvation. On the other hand, believers must be aware of their ability to abandon or reject their salvation. Every theological question ultimately has two sides because every doctrine deals with both God and people. When looking at the issue of the security of the believer, it is important to examine scriptures that deal both with God’s side and humanity’s side. Some scriptures deal with the promises of God to sustain and protect the faith of each believer, while others highlight the responsibility of humans to not depart from their faith. When viewed in their entirety, these scriptures demonstrate that believers can reject, abandon or walk away from their salvation.

A. The promises of God

Note these blessed promises of the keeping power of God for all who are saved:

1. “And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand. I and My Father are one” (John 10:28-30).

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

B. The responsibility of humans

Although Scripture speaks of the keeping power of God, it also points to the responsibility of the believer to accept and walk in the keeping power of God:

1. “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame” (Heb. 6:4-6). It seems clear that this passage describes a born again person. However, while the passage warns of the danger of turning away from Christ, it must not be used to teach emphatically that there is no hope for someone who falls away. Scripture teaches that God is “…long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). Therefore, we must at least allow for the possibility of forgiveness for individuals who humble themselves and return to Christ.

2. “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion’” (Heb. 3:12-15). The warning against “departing from the living God” and the admonition to hold “steadfast to the end” both seem to argue for the possibility that Christians can choose to abandon or depart from their faith.

3. “For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries” (Heb. 10:26-27).
4. “Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins” (Jas. 5:19-20). This passage was written to Christians (see Jas. 1:2) and speaks of rescuing Christians whose sins are leading them to spiritual death.

C. The relationship between God’s sovereignty and human responsibility

Christians are distinctly told to work out their salvation with “fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12). Even so, Scripture hastens to add, “…it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). It certainly is not God’s will that any of His children should be lost. It is also true that God is able to keep His children from falling. However, God does not save people against their will, nor does He keep them against their will. Just as faith and repentance are necessary for salvation, so they are necessary for the continuance of that salvation.

The scriptural condition for salvation is belief. John proclaimed, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life…” (John 3:36). Jesus said, “He who believes in Him [Jesus] is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18; see also John 6:47). The word “believe” in these passages is in the present progressive tense, which implies continuous faith. In other words, Christians are commanded to believe and to continue to believe. The Bible does not promise that God will keep people from willfully turning away from their salvation. In fact, the Scripture warns, “…if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries” (Heb. 10:26-27). These verses clearly leave room for the possibility of Christians willfully turning away from Christ and rejecting their salvation.

Although Scripture does recognize that believers can reject and break their union with Christ, this does not mean that Christians are kept secure in Christ purely by their own efforts. Christians are “…kept by the power of God through faith for salvation…” (1 Pet. 1:5). It is the part of the believer
to believe in Him; it is the part of Him to keep the believer. The believer's responsibility is to continually take advantage of the means of grace that God has provided for His children. Christians cannot keep themselves, but they can submit to the mighty keeping power of God within them. Christians work out their salvation as God works within them (Phil. 2:12-13). The believer's part is to constantly feed on God's word, to yield to the ministering power of the Holy Spirit and to maintain unbroken fellowship with God through prayer. God is faithful to keep those who commit themselves to His care. “...For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day” (2 Tim. 1:12).

Nowhere in Scripture are we given license to presume against the power of God's grace. We have a high priest who can “sympathize with our weaknesses” (Heb. 4:15), and who “always lives to make intercession for them [us]” (Heb. 7:25). However, believers are also taught to “hold fast the profession of our faith without waivering” (Heb. 10:23). God does not take away human choice. Consequently, believers can turn away from the salvation that set them free. Even so, it is important to remember that God is able to help all who trust in Him. In Christ, believers have “…a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted” (Heb. 2:17-18). Those who continually trust and follow Jesus will never lose their salvation, for Christ will give them the strength to overcome every trial and temptation. In salvation, believers can have confidence “...that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ...” (Phil. 1:6). Salvation is a grace gift, received by faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ, sustained by loving communion with God. Salvation is good news for all who believe.
Chapter Six
The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

Pneumatology

INTRODUCTION

Pneumatology is the study of the Holy Spirit. The term pneumatology comes from the Greek words *pneuma* meaning “Spirit” and *logos* meaning “idea, word, speech, discussion, reason, study.” The following chapter will first address the overarching role of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christians. After focusing on these general principles, specific attention will be given to the baptism with the Holy Spirit and Spirit-filled ministry. Central to Pentecostal theology is the conviction that the baptism with the Holy Spirit uniquely empowers believers for spiritual service, holy living and deeper intimacy with God. Therefore, specific focus will be given to examining the role of the baptism with the Holy Spirit in the life of believers and the church. The personality, deity, names, symbols and trinitarian implications of the Holy Spirit have already been addressed in “Chapter Two: The Doctrine of God/Theology.” Consequently, this chapter will expand upon previously discussed aspects of the Holy Spirit, giving attention to the work of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit as the Helper, the fruit of the Spirit, the baptism with the Holy Spirit, offenses against the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit.
I. The Work of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is God and therefore present wherever God has been revealed. Although the Holy Spirit radically transformed the New Testament church on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit has always been active in every dispensation of God (Acts 2). God is one; consequently, it is often not possible or even necessary for individuals to distinguish the work of the Spirit from the work of the Father and the Son. As a general principle, the Bible seems to teach that all divine workings originate with the Father, are carried out by the Son and brought to fruition by the Holy Spirit. The following will address the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the physical universe, the unsaved, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian believer.

A. The Spirit in relation to the world in general

1. With regard to the material universe

   a) The Holy Spirit as an agent in creation: The Bible attributes the creation of all things to each person in the Godhead (Job 33:4; Ps. 104:30; John 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:1-2). These various passages are not contradictory, but rather they demonstrate that all three persons of the Trinity work together for the accomplishing of the divine will. In fact, the Bible opens with “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1), which suggests that the entire Trinity was active in creation, for the word used for God is the Hebrew Elohim, a uni-plural word indicating more than one personality.

   b) Three specific acts of creation: In the account of creation, as given in Genesis 1:1-27, the Hebrew word bara, which means “to create” or “make out of nothing,” is used three specific times. These three occasions represent the three great distinctive kingdoms: the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1), animal life (Gen. 1:21) and human life (Gen. 1:26-27). Evolutionists argue that each kingdom is the result of the gradual development of a lower kingdom. In contrast, the Bible emphasizes that each
new kingdom was made possible only by a special act of creation. The Holy Spirit was active in the creation of these three kingdoms:

(1) The heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13; Ps. 33:6)

(2) Animal life (Ps. 104:11-30)

(3) Human life (Job 33:4)

2. With regard to humanity as a whole

a) The Holy Spirit witnesses to the redeeming work of Christ. The Holy Spirit bears witness to God’s plan and method of salvation. “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him” (Acts 5:30-32).

b) The Holy Spirit convicts “the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8).

(1) “Of sin, because they do not believe in Me” (John 16:9): Only the Holy Spirit can overcome the blindness and deceitfulness of the sinful human heart to make individuals aware of their personal iniquities. Notice that in this passage the Holy Spirit’s conviction is not focused on such sins as stealing, drunkenness or adultery, but on the sin of unbelief. Failure to believe in Jesus Christ is the greatest of all sins, for it is the rejection of the means by which all sins are forgiven and all condemnation is removed.

(2) “Of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more” (John 16:10): The righteousness of which the Spirit convicts is Christ’s righteousness. The righteousness of Christ was validated when
He was raised from the dead and ascended to the Father. When the Father exalted Christ to His own right hand, He demonstrated that Christ’s sacrifice had paid the full price for all sin. When Christ returned to the Father, it was evidence that He had fully completed the task for which He had been sent into the world—the task of providing righteousness for those who believe on Him.

(3) “Of judgment, because the ruler of this world, Satan, is judged” (John 16:11): The greatest demonstration of judgment is that the ruler of this world is judged. “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out” (John 12:31). If Christ judged the ruler of this world, then all who follow him will likewise be judged.

It is important for every Christian to realize how this convicting ministry of the Spirit is accomplished. The Holy Spirit ministers through Spirit-filled believers. Jesus told his disciples, “It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin…” (John 16:7-8). The Holy Spirit’s role in conviction emphasizes the importance of each believer living a Spirit-filled life. There are also other ways individuals experience the conviction of the Holy Spirit, such as through nature (Rom. 1:20), conscience (Rom. 1:18-19), Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17) and through abiding in a community of Spirit-filled believers (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

B. The Spirit in relation to Jesus Christ

One of the most profound statements of all time is found in the first four words of the Bible: “In the beginning God” (Gen. 1:1). No explanation for God’s existence is given; no attempt is made to account for His being. Humans only understand God as He has chosen to reveal Himself. Jesus came as a further revelation of the Father’s will. Scripture states that “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son…” (Heb. 1:1). Jesus proclaimed, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father…” (John 14:9). As the Son reveals the Father, so the Holy Spirit reveals the Son. Jesus told
his disciples that “He [the Holy Spirit] will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you” (John 16:14-15). In these passages, we see progressive revelation: the Father is revealed by the Son, and the Son is revealed by the Spirit. In the following pages we will look at the role of the Spirit in the ministry of Jesus by examining the work of the Holy Spirit in Christ’s person, Christ’s earthly ministry, Christ’s death and resurrection, and Christ’s ministry to the church today.

1. The Spirit and Christ’s person

   a) Christ was sent into the world by the Holy Spirit and the Father. Isaiah states of Messiah that “I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; From the time that it was, I was there. And now the Lord GOD and His Spirit Have sent Me” (Isa. 48:16).

   b) Christ was conceived in Mary by the Holy Spirit. The angel Gabriel told Mary, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35; see also Matt. 1:18, 20). The conception of Christ in Mary was different from all other human conceptions. In His earthly conception, the eternal Son did not lose His divinity. Rather, through His conception, the Son who had existed eternally became a human being. In His conception, the preexistent Son took on human form, becoming a man. When He took on human form, He did not diminish His divine nature (Phil 2:6-8). In His incarnation Christ was fully God and fully man.

   c) Christ’s reception in the temple was arranged by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit revealed to Simeon “…that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ” (Luke 2:26). Led by the Spirit, Simeon blessed Jesus as well as Mary and Joseph (Luke 2:27-35). Through this encounter, the Holy Spirit fulfilled His promise to Simeon and also welcomed and blessed the arrival of Jesus in the temple.
d) Christ grew as a human through the working of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit played a crucial role in the physical, intellectual and spiritual growth of Jesus. Luke states that Jesus “…grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him” (Luke 2:40). Later, Luke mentions, “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52). Jesus was not created an adult as Adam was. Instead, He grew and developed as any other child grows except that He did not possess any of the detriments of a sinful nature. His development was so rapid and beautiful that at the age of twelve He amazed the teachers in the temple and all others who heard Him (Luke 2:47). Jesus’ earthly development in wisdom and understanding was an operation of the Holy Spirit resting upon Him. Isaiah prophesied concerning Jesus’ development: “There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD” (Isa. 11:1-2). The perfect and complete Godhood of Christ did not diminish or grow in His incarnation. Even so, as a human, Christ was not omniscient. Rather, His human abilities developed and increased through the Holy Spirit’s power and guidance.

e) Christ was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil: “Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted for forty days by the devil” (Luke 4:1-2; see also Matt. 4:1; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13). It is important to note that Jesus was not trapped by the devil. Rather, full of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was led by the Spirit to meet the devil and face real temptation. Since He faced temptation as a human, Jesus is able to identify with the temptations humans encounter: “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15).

2. The Spirit and Christ’s earthly ministry

Jesus is forever God. Yet in His incarnation He yielded His authority to the Father by only ministering through the direction and power of the
Holy Spirit. Jesus began His ministry on earth through being baptized by John. In His baptism, Jesus visibly demonstrated that His ministry would be done in the power of the Holy Spirit, not in the strength of His own flesh. At His baptism, the Holy Spirit visibly descended upon Jesus (Matt. 3:16-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22). This bestowal of the Holy Spirit officially equipped Jesus for public ministry. This is observable in the following aspects of Jesus’ ministry:

a) Preaching: Jesus attributed His preaching and teaching to the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Quoting the prophet Isaiah, Jesus told the synagogue, “The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor” (Luke 4:18).

b) Healing: Jesus performed mighty healing miracles through the power of the Holy Spirit. Peter preached that “…God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power…healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38).

c) Casting out demons: Jesus cast out demons and confronted the devil through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of demons (Matt. 12:22-30). Jesus showed them the foolishness of Satan casting out himself. Christ stated that He “cast out demons by the Spirit of God” as a sign that “the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matt. 12:28).

3. The Spirit and Christ’s death and resurrection

a) Christ was enabled by the Holy Spirit to offer the necessary sacrifice for sins. Hebrews states that if the blood of sacrificed animals “sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb. 9:13-14). The Holy Spirit enabled Jesus to offer a perfect sacrifice in the proper, obedient, loving attitude that was acceptable to God. Edwin Palmer wrote:
God always demands a proper relationship between the heart and the overt act…If Jesus had gone to the cross unwillingly, sullenly, grudgingly, stoically; and not willingly, with a perfect, ardent zeal, and with faith toward the Father, no atonement could have been made.¹

b) Jesus was raised from the dead by the Holy Spirit. “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you” (Rom. 8:11). Sometimes the resurrection of Jesus is attributed to the Father while other times it is attributed to the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:22-24). Regardless, it is clear that resurrection is a work of the Holy Spirit in response to the Father’s will.

4. The Spirit and Christ’s ministry to the church

a) Christ gave commandments to His apostles through the Holy Spirit. Jesus “…through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen…” (Acts 1:2). Jesus spoke to his apostles and still speaks to the church today through the power of the Holy Spirit. The church is not dependent upon the bodily presence of the Lord to be led by Him. Rather, Jesus leads the church through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

b) Christ is the giver of the Holy Spirit. On the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the church, Peter said of Jesus, “Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear” (Acts 2:33). This fulfilled what Jesus promised His disciples before His ascension: “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me” (John 15:26).

Along with purchasing the redemption of all believers through His death and resurrection, Jesus also baptizes believers with the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist testified to the importance of Jesus’ role in the baptism with the Holy Spirit when he proclaimed, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matt. 3:11). So vital was the Spirit’s presence in the ministry of Jesus that it is no wonder Jesus desired for His followers to carry on His work empowered by the same mighty Spirit. Consequently, Jesus baptizes believers with the Holy Spirit for the purpose of accomplishing His work. This is true New Testament ministry, available for all believers. Jesus indicated this when He said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father” (John 14:12).

C. The Spirit in relation to believers

The Holy Spirit reveals the will of the Father and the Son to and through all believers. With this in mind, we will look further at the work of the Spirit in relation to the following headings: (1) The Spirit’s work in salvation, (2) The Spirit’s work subsequent to salvation, (3) The Spirit’s work in the ministry and service of the believer and (4) The Spirit’s work in relation to the resurrection of the dead.

1. The Spirit’s work in salvation

   a) Believers are born again through the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:5-6). When a person is born naturally, natural life is imparted. Adam and Eve lost spiritual life when they sinned. God warned Adam and Eve that death would follow their disobedience (Gen. 2:17). As a result of their sin, they were left in spiritual darkness. This subject is dealt with in greater detail in “Chapter Five: The Doctrine of Salvation” under “VII. Salvation and the Process of Regeneration.”
New spiritual life is imparted to believers through the indwelling Holy Spirit. This is the mark of a Christian. “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His” (Rom. 8:9). Myer Pearlman wrote: “One of the most comprehensive definitions of a Christian is that he is a man in whom the Holy Spirit dwells. His body is a temple of the Holy Ghost, in virtue of which experience he is sanctified as the Tabernacle was consecrated by Jehovah’s indwelling.”

Paul wrote, “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?” (1 Cor. 6:19). This is not to be confused with the baptism with the Holy Spirit, which is an outpouring of the Spirit subsequent to salvation for the purpose of providing power for spiritual service and holy living.

b) The Holy Spirit bears witness to the believer’s “sonship” (Gal. 3:26): “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God…” (Rom. 8:16). “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’” (Gal. 4:6). Each of these verses clearly states that it is the Spirit who takes the initiative. The Holy Spirit is the one who bears witness within the heart of the believer. This is more than just an inner feeling; it is the divine witness of a new relationship brought about and testified to by the Holy Spirit.

c) The Holy Spirit baptizes the believer into the body of Christ: “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:12-13). In this passage, Paul referred to the process by which individuals are baptized into Christ’s death and resurrection through the work of the Holy Spirit. Water baptism is an outward symbol of what happens in this process. In the process of salvation, sinners, by faith, die with Christ on Calvary. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, sinners are brought

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into new life and made members of the body of Christ (the church). This is similar to how Paul spoke of Moses and the Israelites: “Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea…” (1 Cor. 10:1-2). Through the Holy Spirit, individuals are “baptized into” Christ’s body.

It is important to note the difference between being baptized into the body of Christ and being baptized with the Holy Spirit. Being baptized into the body of Christ is a work of the Holy Spirit that deals with the believer’s position in Christ. Being baptized with the Holy Spirit is a work of Christ that deals with the believer’s empowerment for ministry and holy living.

d) The Holy Spirit seals the believer: “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory” (Eph. 1:13-14). Paul wrote that “…you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30). When believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit, God is placing His seal of ownership upon them. The presence of the Holy Spirit, indwelling the hearts of believers, is a sign that every believer belongs to God. The seal of the Holy Spirit is also a promise from God to all believers that, through faith in Jesus, they will receive their inheritance on the day of redemption. Paul wrote, “Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are His...’” (2 Tim. 2:19).

2. The Spirit’s work subsequent to salvation

The Holy Spirit plays a vital role in the salvation of a soul. Without the ministry of the Holy Spirit, no one could ever become a child of God. The Holy Spirit regenerates the human heart and imparts the life of Christ to every new believer. However, subsequent to salvation, the Holy Spirit still plays a vital role in the life of the believer. The Holy Spirit does not leave the believer but instead seeks to strengthen the believer’s new spiritual life. The
following are ways the Holy Spirit continues to be the active agent of transformation in the progressive walk of the children of God.

a) Believers are sanctified by the Holy Spirit. As previously mentioned in the study of soteriology, the Holy Spirit plays an integral role in the sanctification of the believer. “But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth…” (2 Thess. 2:13; see also 1 Pet. 1:2). In sanctification, believers are set apart for the Lord to be continually cleansed from sin and progressively conformed to the image of Christ. The world, the flesh and the Devil are ever present in the Christian’s daily walk. Just as a sinner cannot save himself, so a believer cannot live victoriously apart from the daily strength that the Holy Spirit imparts. Christians will enjoy and grow in the gracious ministry of sanctification as they believe God’s Word and yield to His Holy Spirit.

b) Believers are enabled to put to death the deeds of the flesh through the Holy Spirit.

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace…But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you…And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness…Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live (Rom. 8:5-13).

The word “carnal” means “flesh.” This passage clearly states that it is impossible to do the will of God while living according to the carnal mind. Rather, it is the Holy Spirit who enables believers to die to the
flesh and live victoriously in the Spirit. Believers put to death the deeds of their flesh by reckoning their old nature crucified with Christ and by choosing to walk under the guidance and power of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom. 6).

c) The Holy Spirit transforms believers into the image of Christ. This is closely associated with the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit in transforming the nature of the children of God. “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18). The Weymouth New Testament Bible translates this verse: “And all of us, with unveiled faces, reflecting like bright mirrors the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same likeness, from one degree of radiant holiness to another, even as derived from the Lord the Spirit.”

Before this passage, Paul had been speaking of the fact that Christians are epistles of Christ, “…written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart” (2 Cor. 3:3). Then Paul likened the Christian to a mirror, reflecting the image of the glory of the Lord. He pointed out that Moses’ face radiated so brightly from communing with God on Mount Sinai that he had to put a veil on his face because of the brilliant glory (2 Cor. 3:7). In contrast, Paul wrote that believers’ faces are not veiled but open as they reflect the unfading glory of Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 3:16-18). While believers reflect the glory of the Lord so that others can see it, something even more wonderful is taking place within their lives. Through the operation of the Holy Spirit, they are being transformed into the same image of Christ that they are endeavoring to reflect. When believers focus their attention on Jesus, the image of Christ is implanted upon their lives through the inner ministry of the Holy Spirit.

d) The Holy Spirit strengthens believers for greater revelations of Christ. Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians was:
…that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:16-19).

These verses confirm what Jesus said concerning the Holy Spirit that “He will glorify me” (John 16:14). Who but the Spirit of God could make Christians able to comprehend such gracious revelations of the person and nature of God? The Holy Spirit brings revelation to the renewed minds of believers so they can “…be filled with all the fullness of God” (Eph. 3:19). As the Spirit reveals the things of God, believers are able to see the desirability of embracing those things. In response to this desire, believers are drawn to reach out in faith to experience the love of God that surpasses knowledge.

e) The Holy Spirit leads the sons and daughters of God: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God” (Rom. 8:14). Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit “…will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come” (John 16:13). One of the greatest privileges of being a child of the Lord is being led by the omniscient, unerring guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a person who personally guides the lives of those who trust His leading and care. Not only does He lead the sons and daughters of God, the Holy Spirit also enables and empowers believers to walk in the path He has chosen for them.

believers honor and express the will of God. This will be discussed later in detail in the Ministry of the Holy Spirit as the Helper section.

g) The Holy Spirit brings forth fruit in the life of every believer. The following scriptures are pertinent for understanding the Holy Spirit’s role in producing fruitful believers: Romans 14:17; 15:13; 2 Corinthians 6:6; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:8-9. This subject is also dealt with later in the fruit of the Spirit section.

3. The Spirit’s work in the ministry and service of the believer

The Holy Spirit imparts and develops spiritual life within Christians. The Spirit also empowers believers for a life of ministry and service in the kingdom of God. Scripture frequently demonstrates that God-ordained ministry and service is accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit rather than merely through human abilities. This is expressed in God’s word to Zerubbabel: “‘…Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ Says the Lord of hosts” (Zech. 4:6).

a) The Holy Spirit baptizes and endues believers with power for service. After Jesus gave his disciples the Great Commission to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15), He told them to “…tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). This baptism with “the Holy Spirit and fire” (Luke 3:16) demonstrates a new phase in the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus announced this new empowerment before He ascended to the Father: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

It is important to note that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is distinct from, and subsequent to, the Holy Spirit’s regenerating work in the hearts of the unsaved. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is specifically for believers to have the necessary spiritual power for ministry and holy living. This will later be discussed in detail in Section IV. The Baptism with the Holy Spirit.
b) The Holy Spirit helps believers understand and discern the meaning of Scripture. The Bible is the chief physical tool for every Christian worker. The Bible contains God’s perfect revelation to humanity. It points to the means of salvation and gives instructions on how to live the Christian life. One of the most important ministries of the Holy Spirit is that He reveals the truth of the Bible to the heart of believers. The Scripture states, “…prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:21). The Scripture is Holy-Spirit-inspired prophecy; therefore, the Holy Spirit is best able to explain its contents and meaning. Through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, believers have the author of the Bible as their own personal teacher and guide. The Holy Spirit not only gives understanding to the meaning of Scripture but also leads believers to experience the truths of the Bible, making the written word a living word.

c) The Holy Spirit helps believers pray. Along with studying the Bible, prayer is one of the chief sources of strength and guidance for believers. The Holy Spirit is vitally connected with both of these sources of Christian empowerment.

(1) “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Rom. 8:26-27).

(2) “…praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit…” (Eph. 6:18).

(3) “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 20-21).

The Spirit’s ministry in prayer is very precious. Praying in the strength and wisdom of the flesh is difficult and trying because it is hard
to exercise faith for things an individual cannot see. It is impossible to truly know how to pray about things that are beyond human understanding. However, that changes when the Holy Spirit anoints the heart and mind of a believer. When the Holy Spirit anoints believers to pray, the presence of God becomes real to them and their minds become open to spiritual understanding. Spirit-empowered prayer simplifies faith and awakens the believer to the reality of God.

As believers are lifted up in the Spirit, spiritual and eternal matters become more important than temporal matters. The Holy Spirit also gives believers wisdom regarding how to petition the Father, constantly reminding believers of the promises God has given His children. Often the Holy Spirit enables intercessors to pray in other tongues concerning problems that cannot be understood by the natural mind but only through prayer “with the Spirit” (1 Cor. 14:13-15). Praying under the anointing and guidance of the Holy Spirit is one of the precious privileges of Spirit-filled living.

d) The Holy Spirit gives believers power to preach the word of God. Paul testified, “And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power…” (1 Cor. 2:4). Again he proclaimed, “For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit…” (1 Thess. 1:5). Peter recognized the presence of the Holy Spirit in his preaching as he testified before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. He declared, “And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit…” (Acts 5:32). The anointing of the Holy Spirit is crucial for believers to effectively preach the gospel. The power of the Holy Spirit is necessary to help individuals value the things of God and fully realize their spiritual needs. Jesus testified that He was anointed by the Spirit to “preach the gospel” (Luke 4:18-19). If the Spirit’s anointing was necessary for Jesus to preach, it most assuredly is necessary for His followers.

The signs that follow the preaching of the gospel are important, for they demonstrate the God-given truth of the gospel (Mark 16:20). Even so, the power for salvation is not in the accompanying miracles but in the
gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16-17). “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:20-21). This is the gospel, and God has given believers the Holy Spirit to empower the preaching of this message. Everyone who thrills in the signs of Pentecost must never fail to remember that the Holy Spirit has been poured out for the primary purpose of saving the lost through faith in Jesus Christ.

e) The Holy Spirit gives believers spiritual gifts for ministry to others. Scripture teaches that spiritual gifts are to be used in spiritual service for ministry to others (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11). “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all…” (1 Cor. 12:7). This subject is thoroughly discussed later but is mentioned here to show the role of the Holy Spirit in relationship to ministry and service.

4. The Spirit’s work in relation to the resurrection of the dead

a) The Holy Spirit will raise the bodies of believers in the last day. “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you” (Rom. 8:11). The physical body is a definite and important part of humans that is included in Christ’s redemption (Rom. 8:23). As Christ was raised from the dead and now lives in a glorified body, so each believer who dies in Christ will experience a similar resurrection. This is attributed to the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Although aspects of this resurrection are a mystery, the Scripture states that the Holy Spirit will one day “give life” to the mortal body of every believer. “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself” (Phil. 3:20-21).
b) The Holy Spirit strengthens and heals the mortal bodies of humans as a foretaste of their final resurrection (Rom. 8:11). The expression “will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit” seems to also point to the Holy Spirit’s role in strengthening and healing the mortal body of the believer. Paul wrote, “…you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession…” (Eph. 1:13-14). The seal of the Holy Spirit is a pledge of the resurrected life to come. Paul spoke of this resurrection life being manifested “in our mortal flesh” (2 Cor. 4:10-11). The strengthening and healing of the mortal body is a foretaste of the resurrection life to come.

II. The Ministry of the Holy Spirit as the Helper

In the gospel of John, Jesus describes the Holy Spirit as our “Helper” (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). “Helper” is a powerful name for communicating the unique work of the Holy Spirit. The Greek word for “Helper” is paraclete, meaning one who is called to stand beside for the purpose of helping. Jesus validated the importance of the Holy Spirit’s ministry as the Helper when He said, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you” (John 16:7). Apparently, Jesus considered it more important for the Holy Spirit to be present with the disciples than for Him to be bodily present with them. Jesus was geographically limited by His incarnation. However, the Helper is not geographically limited and is able to dwell in each believer throughout the world.

Two important expressions are used in John 14:16 in regard to the coming of the Helper. First, Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit as “another Helper.” This word “another” is the key clue to the meaning of the word “Helper.” In this context, the word “another” means another of the same kind. The Holy Spirit is not another kind of helper, but another helper in the same manner as Jesus. Whatever Jesus was to that little band of disciples, the Holy Spirit would be to them and many others. Jesus said, “I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you” (John 14:18). Jesus did not leave His disciples as orphans.
Instead, He gave them the Holy Spirit so that the disciples could know His will and continue to follow His leading. The will of the Father and the Son is revealed to believers through the Holy Spirit.

Jesus ministers the Father’s will to the church through the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit, believers have relationship with Jesus. Through the Holy Spirit, believers can experience the fullness of Christ. This is not to say that Jesus and the Spirit are the same. Rather, just as Jesus was full of the Spirit, so is the Spirit’s presence full of Jesus. If the Spirit can dwell in the Son, then the Son, in His glorified state, can dwell in the Spirit. Jesus was in the Father, and the Father was in Jesus so that those who saw the Son saw the Father. Through the Holy Spirit, we are in Christ, and He is in us. Scripture states, “So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs” (Mark 16:19-20). Although the Lord is in heaven, He is also on earth in the power of the Spirit, working His same signs and miracles. This is possible only because each member of the Trinity is omnipresent, and each is present in the others.

Along with being “another Helper,” Jesus said the Helper would be sent “that He may abide with you forever.” The promised Helper was given in a permanent sense. He abides with the believer forever. As long as there is a church, there will be a Helper. Therefore, believers should expect that the Spirit’s permanence in the church will result in the same works of power and blessing in every age. It is through the Spirit that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8).

Some versions translate helper (paraclete) with the word “advocate.” Advocate seems to be the clear meaning when applied to Jesus: “And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate [paraclete] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1). An advocate represents another or pleads the cause of another. Scripture points out that the role of advocate is one of the real functions of the indwelling Holy Spirit: “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but
the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Rom. 8:26). The Son and the Spirit are both advocates for believers, both making intercession for them. The Spirit intercedes from within the believer while the Son intercedes at the throne of grace.

There is yet another meaning for the word *parakletos*. The verb form of *parakletos* means “to beseech” or “to exhort.” It is used in Romans 12:1: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice…” The Spirit comforts, encourages, intercedes and helps, but He also entreats, exhorts and beseeches. The Holy Spirit is a persuader. Without the persuasion of the Holy Spirit, no preaching could succeed, and no sound doctrine could remain uncorrupted. No consideration of the Spirit’s work is complete without taking into account His beseeching, convicting and convincing operations.

Even when all definitions are considered, it is important to realize that the Holy Spirit is more than a definition or a doctrinal distinctive. A. J. Gordon wrote:

> The name is the person himself, and only as we know the person can we interpret his name. Why attempt to translate this word any more than we do the name of Jesus? ...Certain it is that the language of the Holy Ghost can never be fully understood by an appeal to the lexicon. The heart of the church is the best dictionary of the Spirit. While all the before-mentioned synonyms are correct, neither one is adequate, nor are all together sufficient to bring out the full significance of this great name, “The Paraclete.”

The ministry of the Helper is detailed in the following four passages from the gospel of John:

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1. “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you” (John 14:16-18).

2. “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you” (John 14:26).

3. “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me” (John 15:26).

4. “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you” (John 16:7-15).

In these passages the ministry of the Holy Spirit is divided into four phases: He is (1) the believer’s teacher, (2) the believer’s reminder, (3) the one who reveals Jesus and (4) the one who reproves the world.

A. The Holy Spirit teaches believers

The Holy Spirit is “The Spirit of truth” (John 15:26) who “will teach you all things” (John 14:26).
1. The Holy Spirit guides believers into truth: “He will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13). Half-truth is sometimes worse than ignorance. Christ desires that every believer come to a full knowledge of all divine truth relative to redemption and God’s glory.

The Holy Spirit guides believers into the truth of Scripture, making the teachings of the Bible clear and causing even the most familiar passages to radiate new beauty and deeper meaning. The Bible is a spiritual book that requires spiritual discernment (see Acts 8:30-31; 1 Cor. 2:14). Who better to guide the reader than the Holy Spirit who first inspired the Bible’s writers?

Before the disciples received the infilling of the Holy Spirit, they were spiritually ignorant. They failed to comprehend what Jesus meant when He referred to the “leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” (Matt. 16:6-11). They could not grasp the meaning of His parables (Mark 4:10). They failed to perceive what Jesus referred to when He spoke of the death of Lazarus as a “sleep” (John 11:11-14). They completely missed the truth concerning His resurrection (John 20:9).

However, after the Day of Pentecost they were like different men, able to give wonderful expositions of the meaning and application of Old Testament scriptures. They were able to fully understand and communicate what the Scripture said concerning Christ’s resurrection (Acts 2:25-31). Before Pentecost, they could not see that Jesus must suffer, but after Pentecost they understood the Old Testament prophecies concerning Jesus’ crucifixion (Acts 4:25-28). Many of the sermons the disciples preached were masterful expositions of passages from the Old Testament (Acts 2:16-21; 3:12-26; 7:2-53). Through the infilling of the Holy Spirit, they gained wonderful insight into the truth of Scripture.

2. The Holy Spirit reveals God’s words and desires: “…when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak…” (John 16:12-13).
a) The Holy Spirit inspired chosen individuals to write the New Testament scriptures. Paul declared that he received the marvelous truths contained in his epistles by revelation (Gal. 1:12-16; Eph. 3:3-5). This was accomplished through the ministry of the Helper, the Spirit of truth.

b) The Holy Spirit speaks to the hearts of Christians, revealing God’s unique plan of ministry and service for every believer. For example, the Spirit guided Philip to join the Ethiopian eunuch for the purpose of leading the eunuch to Christ (Acts 8:26-29) and led Paul in regard to where he should minister (Acts 16:6-10).

3. The Holy Spirit reveals to the believer things that are yet to come: “He will tell you things to come” (John 16:13).

a) He tells believers of future blessings. In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul spoke of the amazing things ahead that God has prepared for His children (1 Cor. 2:9-12). This refers to the fullness of the glorious redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Paul declared, “But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit” (1 Cor. 2:10). In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul pointed out that there were wondrous spiritual truths in relation to the Lord that believers had not yet grasped. Consequently, he prayed that they “may know” these truths (Eph. 1:17-21). The Helper continually stirs the heart of each Christian to a greater desire to seek the fullness of God.

b) He reveals dispensational truth. The Holy Spirit will witness to what lies ahead for the world and the church, making the prophetic scriptures clear (Gen. 18:17; Amos 3:7). Even so, no personal revelations should be accepted that are not perfectly in keeping with the teachings of Scripture. The Paraclete teaches nothing that is independent from the Father and the Son. The Spirit will not reveal anything that is in conflict with the teachings of Christ. All attempts to overrule Christ’s teaching by new revelation are to be rejected. Any teaching that belittles or cheapens the authority of Scripture does not come from the Holy Spirit.
c) He reveals what lies ahead in the pathway of the believer. When God chooses individuals for specific tasks, He brings His call to their hearts by the Holy Spirit. Many times He will make known certain aspects of what is to come to prepare the individual worker for unforeseen eventualities. Agabus was sent by the Holy Spirit to tell Paul of the dangers that lay ahead for him in Jerusalem (Acts 21:10-11). Consequently, Paul and his companions were strengthened and prepared for the coming conflict.

B. The Holy Spirit reminds believers of His word

The Holy Spirit reminds believers of Scripture: “...He will...bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you” (John 14:26). Even though human memory has suffered as the result of the Fall, believers have a wonderful reminder in the Holy Spirit. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the disciples were repeatedly reminded of the words of Jesus and the prophetic scriptures that confirmed the good news of the gospel. For example, Peter mentioned that after the Holy Spirit fell on him, he “remembered the word of the Lord” concerning the salvation of the Gentiles and the baptism with the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:15-18).

The Holy Spirit reminds believers of the promises, commandments and instructions of Scripture. When Christians are persecuted, the Holy Spirit helps them “Remember the word that I [Jesus] said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you” (John 15:20). When believers preach or witness to unbelievers, the Holy Spirit often brings to remembrance the right scripture for that specific occasion (Luke 21:14-15). When facing personal hardship, the Holy Spirit reminds believers of God’s personal, past promises. When Paul was facing murderous threats while being held captive in the barracks at Jerusalem, the “…Lord stood by him and said, ‘Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome’” (Acts 23:11). The Holy Spirit assuredly brought this promise to Paul’s remembrance as he faced many seemingly life-threatening trials before finally reaching Rome (see Acts 27:24-25). The Holy Spirit brings to remembrance the promises of God when strength and perseverance are needed.
C. The Holy Spirit reveals Jesus

Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit comes, “He shall testify of me” (John 15:26) and “He shall glorify me” (John 16:14). These promises of Christ were certainly fulfilled in the early church, and they continue to be fulfilled whenever the ministry of the Holy Spirit is honored. Wherever the Spirit is powerfully moving, Jesus will be powerfully glorified. Through the operation of the Holy Spirit there is a three-fold revelation of Jesus Christ.

1. Christ is revealed to the believer by the Holy Spirit

“He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you” (John 16:14-15). The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one. The Holy Spirit fully knows Jesus. The Holy Spirit has been with Christ forever and was with Christ throughout His earthly ministry, even to His sacrifice on the cross. The Holy Spirit reveals the glories of the Christian’s heavenly bridegroom.

2. Christ is revealed in the believer by the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit seeks to form new believers into Christ’s own image and to implant the likeness of Christ within every believer’s heart. Scripture states that believers “…are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18). Paul spoke of this image as Christ “formed in you” (Gal. 4:19). Scripture demonstrates that it is God’s great pleasure to “reveal His Son” in the life of every believer through the working of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 1:15-16).

3. Christ is revealed through the believer by the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit never magnifies Himself or the human vessel through whom He operates. Instead, He magnifies the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. Jesus said the Holy Spirit “…will not speak on His own authority… He will glorify Me…” (John 16:13-14). Whenever the Holy Spirit is leading,
Christ is exalted. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, full of the Holy Spirit, exalted Jesus: “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). Philip also focused on Jesus when guided by the Holy Spirit: “Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him” (Acts 8:35). Before the incarnation of Jesus, God manifested Himself through the Law and the Prophets. In the incarnation, Jesus manifested God through yielding to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Now, God manifests Himself through the Holy Spirit’s revelation of Jesus Christ through human vessels.

III. The Fruit of the Spirit

Believers who actively follow the leading of the Holy Spirit will manifest the fruit of the Spirit. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law” (Gal. 5:22-23). Spirit-filled fruitfulness is available for every believer who actively surrenders to the leading of the Holy Spirit. “But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life” (Rom. 6:22). The fruit of the Spirit gives evidence to the reality and character of Christ within believers. Jesus proclaimed this truth to His disciples:

You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them (Matt. 7:16-20).

The fruit of the Spirit is the true characteristic of the Christian life. The psalmist wrote of the “blessed man” that “his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season...” (Ps. 1:2-3).
Jeremiah prophesied that there would come a day when God would make a new covenant with His children and put His “…law in their minds, and write it on their hearts” (Jer. 31:33). Deuteronomy states that in that day “…the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live” (Deut. 30:6). With circumcised hearts, believers are able to produce fruit in keeping with righteousness, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The principal purpose of a tree is that it may bring forth fruit. Jesus demonstrated this principle in His reaction to a fruitless fruit tree. “And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, ‘Let no fruit grow on you ever again.’ Immediately the fig tree withered away” (Matt. 21:18-19). Christ said of the Father that “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit” (John 15:2). A life yielded to the working of the Holy Spirit will produce fruitfulness in keeping with the character and purposes of Christ.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal. 5:22-23). True Christian virtues are the fruit of the Spirit. Believers have the power to bear the fruit of the Spirit when they have the Spirit. Believers bear long-lasting, kingdom-advancing fruit when they live in cooperation with the indwelling Fruit Bearer. The fruit of the Spirit is the character of Christ, produced by the Spirit of Christ, in the follower of Christ. The more individuals are completely infused with the Spirit’s presence, the more they manifest the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. When believers completely yield and surrender their will to the fullness of the Holy Spirit, they are able to more fully exhibit the character of Christ.

Some endeavor to produce the fruit of the Spirit or the character of Christ through human effort alone. They attempt to build character through the exercising of their will and educating their mind. Although education and human effort have some value, they cannot produce lasting spiritual fruit. When individuals turn from wickedness and submit to the leading of the
Holy Spirit, Christ-like virtues will be the result: a result as seemingly natural as the growing of apples on an apple tree. Attempts founded solely in human effort will eventually lead to death: “…but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (Rom. 8:13). If Christians are devoid of spiritual fruit, they are not yielding to the Spirit of Christ.

It is important to realize that although the Spirit produces the fruit, it is the result of believers actively partnering with the Spirit’s leading. Abiding in the vine is not passive. It requires believers to willingly cooperate with the leading and authority of the Holy Spirit. Spirit-given fruit is produced when believers turn from evil to embrace God’s good purposes for their lives. As the believer submits to the authority of God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit produces spiritual fruit. Fruitfulness requires both the power of the Spirit and the obedience of the believer.

Paul’s list of the characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit actually summarizes the heart of the Sermon on the Mount. The fruit of the Spirit is the ideal of Christian living in its most concentrated expression. Even the love verses of 1 Corinthians 13 can be viewed as an extension to Paul’s teachings concerning the fruit of the Spirit. Paul emphasized this fruit of the Spirit principle of Christian living when he wrote: “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things” (Phil. 4:8). Peter also confirmed this principle of character and fruit bearing when he wrote the following:

But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:5-8).
Any concept of spiritual growth that does not recognize the fruit of the Spirit as the pattern of Christian character is a false concept. In many ways, the fruit of the Spirit is one of the believer’s greatest treasures, like a golden chain with nine precious links of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Engraved on this precious gift are the sacred words: “The fruit of the Spirit.” As believers yield to the leading of the Holy Spirit, they grow in their appreciation and expression of this sacred gift.

A. Contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit

Before Paul listed the fruit of the Spirit, he addressed the “works of the flesh.”

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21).

The fruit of the Spirit is manifest; it cannot be hidden. So likewise are the works of the flesh manifested. Spirit-filled people are distinguished by their fruit. Those who live according to the flesh are identified by their self-centered works. They are not dominated by the indwelling Spirit of God. The struggle in all human personality is a struggle between self and Christ. If the self wins, the personality of the individual becomes self-centered. If Christ wins, the personality of the believer becomes Christ-centered. The result of an egocentric life is the manifestation of the works of the flesh. The result of a Christ-centered life is the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit.

The principle of fruit bearing is a principle of life. Fruit is not made; it grows. Looking at the contrast between the fruit of the Spirit and the works of the flesh in Galatians 5, Samuel Chadwick wrote the following:
The most striking feature of the contrast is the emphatic change from works to fruit. Works belong to the workshop; fruit belongs to the garden. One comes from the ingenuity of the factory; the other is the silent growth of abounding life. The factory operates with dead stuff; the garden cultivates living forces to their appointed end. Works are always in the realm of dead things. Every building is built out of dead material. The tree must die before it can be of use to the builder. There is no life in stones and brick, in steel joists and iron girders. They are all dead and in the process of disintegration. Nothing material lasts. Man’s best works fail and fade, crumble and pass away ... Fruit does not come of man’s labor. It requires his diligence, but it is neither his invention nor his product. He does not make the flowers. No skill of his brings the golden harvest of the fields, or the luscious fruit upon the trees. When man has done all he can, then God begins and life proceeds. Fruit is God’s work. The phrase “fruit of the Spirit” assigns the graces of the Christian character to their proper source. They are not of man’s producing.⁴

The difference between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit is quite apparent. The flesh produces works; the Spirit produces fruit. Chadwick reminds us that works of the flesh are the product of the factory; the fruit of the Spirit is of the garden. The works of the flesh are dead; the fruit of the Spirit is life.

B. Ways to bear fruit

1. Believers bear fruit when they abide in Christ

In John 15:1-8, Jesus taught his followers how to bear fruit. Jesus said that anyone who bears no fruit “is cast out as a branch and is withered” (v. 6).

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Others are described as having “fruit,” “more fruit,” “much fruit” and “fruit that abides.” This principle holds true both in the producing of the fruit of the Spirit and the multiplication of disciples.

Individuals bear fruit when they abide in Christ. “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:4-5). Fruit bearing is the result of the life of the Vine, Jesus Christ, flowing through the branch or life of the believer. Jesus said, “… without Me [lit. ‘apart from me’ or ‘separated from me’] you can do nothing” (John 15:5). To produce life, the branch must abide in the vine.

It is important to realize that the fruit of the Spirit in believers is greatly strengthened by the baptism with the Holy Spirit. All believers have the Holy Spirit abiding in them. When believers continue to abide in Christ, they experience a measure of the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. Certainly, those who are baptized with the Spirit, immersed in the Spirit, “full of the Holy Spirit” will experience a greater measure of “more fruit,” “much fruit” and the “fruit that remains” in their lives. Even so, the fruit of the Spirit is evident whenever individuals abide in Christ. Consequently believers who have not been baptized with the Holy Spirit are still able to evidence the fruit of the Holy Spirit as they abide in Jesus.

The fruit of the Spirit is a result of abiding in Christ. This may explain why some who have received the baptism with the Holy Spirit seem lacking in the fruit of the Spirit. Paul frequently wrote to Christians who had received the Pentecostal anointing yet seemed to be lacking love. His instructions to the Galatians concerning the fruit of the Spirit demonstrate that individuals once full of the Holy Spirit can fall short of producing Spirit-filled fruit. The Galatian church had previously experienced the fullness of the Spirit; when Paul wrote them, many were not living in that fullness.

It is tremendously important for believers to realize the necessity of abiding in Christ. “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away” (John 15:2). This passage refers to Christians. The expression “in Me” shows
that the branches that are taken away for failure to produce fruit were originally true branches in the vine. They were branches, but they did not continue in contact with the life-giving vine to bear fruit. Note that it is the branch that is taken away, not the fruit. Jesus said to his followers, “I am the vine, you are the branches” (John 15:5). People who believe Christians cannot lose or reject their salvation sometimes argue that God only rejects the “fruit” of apostates but not the apostates themselves. However, this passage states that it is not the fruit that is cast into the fire, but it is the branch that is cast into the fire because it bears no fruit. Abiding in Christ is the sole responsibility of the believer. Fruit is the natural product of abiding. If individuals do not bear fruit, they have chosen not to abide in Christ and to separate themselves from the life of the vine. Therefore, they are removed from the vine.

2. Believers bear fruit when they are pruned

Fruitful branches and fruitful believers are pruned. “…every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit” (John 15:2). Every branch that does not bear fruit is taken away, but the branch that does bear fruit is pruned that it might bear even more fruit. The pruning process in the life of a sincere Christian is never an easy one. Pruning suggests chastening or disciplining. The author of Hebrews wrote, “Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it” (Heb. 12:11). A large, leafy tree may appear beautiful, but trees that are not pruned seldom produce much fruit. Sometimes the Lord must cut away some of the “leaves” of self-indulgence so that believers might bear “more fruit,” and even “much fruit.” Although the process of pruning might appear too painful, the believer must remember that Jesus said, “My Father is the vinedresser” (John 15:1). It is the loving Father who prunes the vine. Therefore, all believers may safely trust themselves to His care.

C. What does it mean to abide in Christ?

Jesus taught his followers how to abide in Him through using the image of the vine and the branches. The branch is an integral part of the vine. The branch grows from the vine and must never be severed from the vine, which
is its source of life. In relationship to the believer, this process represents the believer’s unbroken fellowship with Christ. First and foremost, this relationship is sustained by believers having unwavering faith in what Christ has done for them and in who they are in Christ. Believers must continually rejoice in the saving grace of Jesus Christ and constantly realize that they are redeemed, justified and born into the family of God as joint heirs with Christ. In response to these glorious realizations, believers will remain constant in thanksgiving, praise, prayer, communion and conscious fellowship with the Lord. There will be an ever-increasing earnest endeavor in the believer to yield to God’s abiding Holy Spirit, to obey His commands and to walk in His will. To abide in Christ believers must “live in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25), be “led of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:18) and “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16-25).

D. The difference between the gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit

It is important for believers to be aware of the differences between the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. Although they are both expressions of the Spirit, they are in different categories of spiritual blessing. The following are some key differences between the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit.

The gifts of the Spirit have to do with spiritual capabilities: what people do in the service of the Lord. The fruit of the Spirit has to do with spiritual character: who people are in the Lord. The fruit of the Spirit is developed gradually as believers abide in Christ and yield to the working of the Holy Spirit. In contrast, the gifts of the Spirit are given instantly for the purpose of ministry. The fruit of the Spirit is the development of the character of Christ, while the gifts of the Spirit are the impartation of capabilities. Since gifts are given for the purpose of ministry assignments, they are not necessarily a means of judging the depth of a person’s spiritual life. However, fruit does point to the development of spiritual character and maturity. There is one fruit of the Spirit but a variety of gifts.

Spiritual gifts indicate spiritual capabilities imparted by God, while the fruit of the Spirit denotes spiritual character developed over time. Outside of the gifts of the Spirit, there are many natural gifts and talents people are
endowed with at birth. Human existence and natural capacity are most assuredly gifts from God. Jesus used the parables of the “talents” to indicate that every person is responsible to serve God with his or her natural talents (Matt. 25:14-30). Just as individuals do not choose their natural talents, so they do not choose the gifts of the Spirit. The manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit are bestowed upon individuals based on God’s divine choosing and the ministry needs of each individual’s situation and calling. Regardless of their various giftings, believers are called to abide in Christ and develop the same fruit of the Spirit.

The manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit seems intricately connected with the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. After being baptized with the Spirit, the disciples and early church believers seemed to possess abilities they did not manifest before being Spirit baptized. Paul spoke of the Holy Spirit “…distributing [gifts] to each one individually as He wills” (1 Cor. 12:11). These gifts seem to be instantly received in a similar manner to the receiving of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit “suddenly” filled those waiting to be baptized. “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4). At one moment they were not able to speak with tongues and the next moment they were. A similar instant occurrence happened in Ephesus: “And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied” (Acts 19:6). While gifts of the Spirit come instantly, the fruit of the Spirit is the result of slow, gradual development.

There is a tendency among some to view individuals with many gifts of the Spirit as though they are super-spiritual individuals. It is important to realize that gifts are not, of themselves, the indication of an individual’s spiritual depth. Paul indicated that the Corinthian church was full of the gifts of the Spirit, and he eagerly desired that they would “come short in no gift” (1 Cor. 1:7). Even so, he spent a large portion of his letters dealing with their carnal spiritual immaturity and lack of Christ-like character (1 Cor. 3:1-4). The Bible has many examples of spiritually immature or disobedient people possessing gifts of the Spirit. King Saul was able to prophesy even while rebelling against God’s will (see 1 Sam. 16:14; 19:23-24). The story of Balaam is
also an example of an individual possessing gifts but having little spiritual maturity (Num. 22-24).

There are varieties of gifts, but one fruit of the Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, Paul listed nine different gifts of the Spirit. Other passages, such as Romans 12:6-8, Ephesians 4:11 and 1 Peter 4:10-11 indicate that there may be many more gifts than written in Scripture. In contrast to many gifts, there is only one fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23 does not list eight separate fruits but eight separate characteristics of the one fruit of the Spirit. Although Christians may receive different spiritual gifts, they should each be known by the same fruit of the Spirit expressed as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

E. The relationship between the gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit

While there are definite differences between the gifts and fruit of the Spirit, there is also a very vital relationship between them. It is not by chance that 1 Corinthians 13 comes right between 1 Corinthians 12 and 1 Corinthians 14. First Corinthians 12 and 14 deal with the gifts of the Spirit, while 1 Corinthians 13 is all about love, one of the clear expressions of the fruit of the Spirit. This placement emphasizes the importance of having the fruit of the Spirit in close relation to the gifts of the Spirit. Paul made it very clear that the gifts of the Spirit without the fruit of love are powerless and of little use. In fact, he ultimately argued that the gifts without love are “nothing.”

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing (1 Cor. 13:1-2).

Love is at the very essence of the fruit of the Spirit. The gifts of tongues, prophecy, wisdom, knowledge and faith mean absolutely nothing without the fruit of the Spirit expressed in love. Therefore, the fruit of the Spirit
must accompany the use of all spiritual gifts. While Paul emphasized that the gifts have no value outside of the fruit of the Spirit, believers must also recognize that gifts with the fruit of the Spirit have great power and usefulness in accomplishing the work of the Lord. The Holy Spirit is concerned with expressing both the character and power of Christ in and through every Spirit-filled servant of God.

F. Detailed characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit

1. Love: “Now the fruit of the Spirit is love” (Gal. 5:22).

   It would be impossible to over-emphasize the prominence of this gracious virtue as the chief characteristic of the Christian life. “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love” (1 John 4:7-8). Love is the evidence that one has been born of God. It is not only the inner evidence but also the outer evidence. Jesus said, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). He also gave His disciples the command: “…Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you” (Luke 6:27-28). This kind of love cannot be produced by human effort. Rather, it must be “…poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit…” (Rom. 5:5). The love that the Spirit produces is something more than ordinary, human affection. It comes from a person abiding in Christ and experiencing His love. Love is the cement that binds together all the other virtues of the fruit of the Spirit into a united whole. It is the common denominator of all Christian character. A person cannot fully love and yet fail to have any of the other virtues. To be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with love.

2. Joy: “…for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17).

   Joy is love’s reaction to God’s mercies, blessings and benefits. Christian joy is not dependent upon circumstances. Joy, which is a facet of love, trusts God even in the most trying circumstances. Human joy looks at the things of
the earth and is affected by the surrounding conditions. Joy, as an expression of the fruit of the Spirit, looks heavenward and is unaffected by surrounding conditions, knowing heaven’s benefits are unvarying. Joy accepts various trials as divine blessings in disguise. The true Christian life is a joyful life.

Individuals who suppress exuberant expressions in Christian worship and label enthusiasm and rejoicing as inappropriate emotionalism do not have an appropriate understanding of Scripture. Not one sentence in Scripture condemns the healthy expression of intense emotions. Joy is natural to Christianity. Paul used “joy” and “rejoice” seventeen times in his short epistle to the Philippians. Emotionless worship is passionless worship. Genuine emotion is the result of being inwardly moved. Inappropriate emotionalism is the seeking of emotion for emotion’s sake. Christians should be able to distinguish between emotional extravagance and the true operation of the Holy Spirit. Even so, Christians full of the Holy Spirit will sing joyfully, pray earnestly, preach zealously, testify forcefully and give cheerfully “for the joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh. 8:10). When the Spirit of God fills an individual, the joy of the Lord will be present, for in His “presence is fullness of joy” (Ps. 16:11).

3. Peace: “...for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17).

Peace is deeper and even more constant than joy. Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). Paul said “…the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7). Peace with God is ultimately the result of being justified by faith (Rom. 5:1). But peace, as an expression of the fruit of the Spirit, is an inner characteristic that manifests itself in peaceableness with others. It signifies freedom from a quarrelsome, contentious or partisan spirit. It seeks to live peaceably with every person. Along with having peace with God, Spirit-filled believers may also have “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding” (Phil. 4:7) because “…the God of peace shall be with you” (Phil. 4:9).
4. Longsuffering (Patience)

Virtually all modern translations render the word “longsuffering” as “patience.” Patience is not a very prevalent characteristic of the human spirit. However, patience is a very special characteristic of God’s love that grows in believers when they abide in Christ. As previously noted, “longsuffering is love untiring.” It is love persevering through the storm and flood. As believers realize how longsuffering the Lord has been with them, it enables them to be more patient with others. God is patient in calling all to repentance: “The Lord…is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). The psalmist proclaimed “But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth” (Ps. 86:15). Every believer needs the Holy Spirit’s help to produce Christ-like patience. The patience of God is crucial for spiritual contentment. James understood the value of patience when he wrote: “But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing (Jas. 1:4).

5. Kindness

The Bible frequently uses the word kindness to depict how God deals with His people. The people of God, in turn, bring glory to God as they manifest kindness to each other. Kindness is love expressed to others in response to their weaknesses or faults. Kindness is closely associated with every believer’s need of grace. Paul wrote that God demonstrates “…the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:7). Sadly, unkindness often discredits the ministry of some Christians. When confronting sin and rebellion, Christians are still called to express kindness. Paul clearly instructed the Corinthians that “Love suffers long and is kind” (1 Cor. 13:4). The ability to proclaim the truth yet demonstrate loving kindness is a powerful manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit.
6. Goodness: “…for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth…” (Eph. 5:9).

The goodness mentioned references practical, loving acts of goodness shown to others. When individuals are truly good at heart, they do good to others: “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good …” (Luke 6:45). Goodness is “love in action.” It is love actively doing good to bless and benefits others. Christians do good because they abide in the goodness of Christ. Spirit-filled believers will demonstrate a practical, loving goodness that overflows to all people.

7. Faithfulness

Faithfulness deals with the character of an individual in relationship to others. J. Lancaster said, “While faith in God and His Word is the basis of our relationship with Him, and the avenue through which His blessings flow into our lives, what is in view here is the faithfulness of character and conduct that such faith produces.” The fruit of a tree is not for the tree but for others. Consequently, faithfulness indicates the attitude of believers toward others. There are at least two aspects to faithfulness. The first expression of faithfulness is “trustworthiness.” In the parable of the talents, the servants who valued and invested their talents were praised for their faithfulness: “Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things…” (Matt. 25:21, 23). Likewise, those who bear the fruit of loving faithfulness will be faithful to their covenants, promises, duties and obligations. True Christians fulfill their responsibilities.

The second aspect of faithfulness is “trustfulness.” In his commentary on Galatians, Martin Luther wrote:

In listing faith among the fruits of the Spirit, Paul obviously does not mean faith in Christ, but faith in men. Such faith is not suspicious of people, but believes the

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best. Naturally the possessor of such faith will be deceived, but he lets it pass. He is ready to believe all men. Where this virtue is lacking, men are suspicious, forward, and wayward and will believe nothing, nor yield to anybody. No matter how well a person says or does anything, they will find fault with it, and if you do not humor them, you can never please them. Such faith in people, therefore, is quite necessary. What kind of life would this be if one person could not believe another person?"6

Paul spoke of this faith that believes or trusts others when he wrote that love “…does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Cor. 13:6-7). Trustworthiness and trustfulness are both necessary aspects of faithfulness. A true Christian will be neither unfaithful nor overly suspicious.

8. Gentleness: “Let your gentleness be known to all men” (Phil. 4:5).

Jesus said, “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matt. 11:29). Gentleness is a calmness of demeanor, a slowness to be angered or take offense. Believers who are gentle are not selfishly aggressive. They are not quarrelsome or demanding. They are not argumentative or boastful. Gentleness is not the same as shyness, timidity or weakness. Gentleness is not cowardice or a lack of leadership. Rather, individuals are gentle when they are confident of their worth in Christ. Gentle people do not feel the need to prove their worth by controlling people. Rather than a disqualification for leadership, gentleness is an essential characteristic for ministry leaders (see 1 Tim. 3:3; 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:24; Tit. 3:2).

9. Self-Control

Self-control is a vital expression of the fruit of the Spirit. Proverbs states, “He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules

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his spirit than he who takes a city” (Prov. 16:32). True self-control is true self-love. Individuals who respect themselves, who consider their bodies to be temples of the Holy Spirit, will desire to grow in exercising control over their own impulses. True self-control is not just control over food and drink, but over every phase or desire of life. It is control over anger, carnal passions, appetites, desires for worldly pleasures and selfishness. Before individuals can lead a city, community, church or nation, they must first be able to rule their own spirit. Paul addressed the importance of self-control when he wrote the following:

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power (1 Cor. 6:12-14).

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

In his concluding remarks concerning the nine graces of the fruit of the Spirit, Samuel Chadwick wrote this beautiful paraphrase of Galatians 5:22-23:

In newspaper English, the passage would read something like this: The Fruit of the Spirit is an affectionate, lovable disposition, a radiant spirit and a cheerful temper, a tranquil mind and a quiet manner, a forbearing patience in provoking circumstances and with trying people, a sympathetic insight and tactful helpfulness,
generous judgment and a big-souled charity, loyalty and reliability under all circumstances, humility that forgets self in the joy of others, in all things self-mastered and self-controlled, which is the final mark of perfecting.\(^7\)

The characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit are not imposed upon the Christian from without but are the result of the life of Christ within the believer. Ultimately, the fruit of the Spirit demonstrates the character of Jesus Christ in the life of the believer. J. Lancaster explained:

In some ways the term “Christlikeness” is inadequate, since the Christian is called, not merely to resemble Christ, but to share His very life. With deference to a great Christian classic, the life of the believer is more than the imitation of Christ; it is becoming “a partaker of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4). One might be bold enough to suggest that “Christness” would be nearer the mark, since the believer is more than a copy of Christ; he is part and parcel of His very being, “bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh,” as Paul daringly puts it in Ephesians 5:30. Our likeness to Christ is therefore not something applied from without—a cosmetic transformation produced by the formulae of some religious make-up department—but a genuine likeness produced by an intimate relationship with Him. Christ’s own analogy of the vine and the branches upholds this (John 15). The branches are not merely “vine-like,” they are part of the vine; likewise the fruit does not merely resemble grapes, but possesses their inherent structure and taste.\(^8\)

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7 Chadwick, 104.
8 Lancaster in Brewster, 74-75.
IV. The Baptism with the Holy Spirit

After Jesus rose from the grave and before He ascended to be with the Father, He gave His disciples specific instructions to “wait for the promise of the Father” (Acts 1:4) and “tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). Jesus told His disciples that “…John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (Acts 1:5). Just a few weeks later, on the Day of Pentecost, Jesus fulfilled His promise to baptize His followers with the Holy Spirit. This baptism was responsible for the miraculous growth of the church in the apostolic and post-apostolic age. It is also responsible for activating the dynamic Pentecostal revival that has swept the world since the turn of the 20th century. With “at least one quarter of all Christians” worldwide attending Pentecostal gatherings, Pew research estimates that “Within Christianity, Pentecostal and related…Spirit-filled movements are by all accounts among the fastest growing.”

It is not the intent of this work to exalt the empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit above the redemptive work of Christ. As previously mentioned, the principal work of the Holy Spirit is to exalt Christ. Even so, it is important to realize that Christ’s finished work has made room for a fullness of the Spirit beyond regeneration. This fullness is known as the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The greatest promise to the world is “…that whoever believes in Him [Jesus] should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). However, the greatest promise to the church is “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me” (Acts 1:8). The baptism with the Holy Spirit is of utmost importance for the spiritual life and service of every believer. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is the key to the church’s power. Through the baptism with the Spirit, individuals and Spirit-filled communities are able to proclaim and live with power the message of the gospel.

The next sections will deal with the following aspects of the baptism with the Holy Spirit: the biblical name used to describe the experience; the definition, purpose and necessity of the baptism with the Holy Spirit; those who can receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit; the conditions for obtaining the baptism with the Holy Spirit; how to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit; ways the baptism with the Holy Spirit was received in the New Testament church; evidences and results of the baptism with the Holy Spirit; and additional infillings of the Holy Spirit.

A. The biblical name

1. Biblical name: The Scripture uses the term “the baptism with the Holy Spirit” to describe Christian men and women being filled with the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Notice the explicit language of the following scriptures: “He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matt. 3:11); “I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (Mark 1:8); “For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (Acts 1:5). When dealing with scriptural truths and experiences, it is important to use scriptural names. It is best to refer to the baptism with the Holy Spirit by its biblical name so that individuals can fully understand, know and communicate what they are pursuing or have received.

2. Misconceptions

   a) Some call the baptism with the Holy Spirit “the second definite work of grace.” However, this expression is not used in the Bible. Although believers continually grow in God’s grace, the Scripture does not speak of grace as distinct works to be enumerated as second, third, fourth, fifth, etc. Although the baptism with the Holy Spirit is certainly an expression of God’s grace, it is not biblical to define this experience as “the second definite work of grace.”

   b) Some call the baptism with the Holy Spirit “the second blessing.” This expression is not used in Scripture. Although God has undoubtedly a second, as well as many other blessings for His children, Scripture does
not use “the second blessing” terminology to describe the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

c) Some call the baptism with the Holy Spirit a baptism of “sanctification” or “holiness.” Although the baptism with the Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in helping believers live holy lives, it does not instantly and completely transform the behavior of Christians. Progressive sanctification and holy living happen over time as believers surrender completely to the fullness of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Holy living is developed; it is not received as a single gift or blessing.

When individuals fail to identify and call the baptism with the Holy Spirit by its scriptural name, they weaken their ability to communicate to others the need for this baptism. When believers use non-biblical terms, they confuse others concerning the blessings, purposes and provisions available in the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

B. The definition of the baptism with the Holy Spirit

1. Definition

   a) The baptism with the Holy Spirit is a definite experience, subsequent to salvation, where the Holy Spirit comes upon believers to anoint and empower them for spiritual service and holy living. The New Testament describes this experience as the Spirit “falling upon,” “coming upon” or being “poured out upon” the yielded believer in a sudden and supernatural manner.

   b) The baptism with the Holy Spirit is the promise of the Father: “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you…” (Luke 24:49; see also Ezek. 36:27). Before ascending to the Father, Jesus spoke to His followers and “…commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father…” (Acts 1:4). The fact that the Father promises the indwelling Holy Spirit is a great encouragement to the seeking heart. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is not something believers
must persuade the Father to give them. Rather, God took the initiative and promised the Holy Spirit. The great experience of being baptized with the Holy Spirit did not originate with humans but with God. The Father will not forget what He has promised. He is abundantly able to fulfill the promise He has given.

c) The baptism with the Holy Spirit is a gift: “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’” (Acts 2:38). Later, Peter and the other apostles proclaimed, “And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him” (Acts 5:32). The baptism with the Holy Spirit is a gift. It is free and cannot be worked for, merited or deserved in any manner. Believers do not receive the fullness of the Spirit as a reward for hours of prayer or deep sacrifices. Instead, the baptism with the Spirit comes to every believer as a gift of God’s grace to be received freely.

d) The baptism with the Holy Spirit is commanded by God: “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me...’” (Acts 1:4; see also Luke 24:49). Believers should not view the baptism with the Holy Spirit as an optional experience that they can follow or reject based on their own personal preferences, rather, it is a commandment of the Lord to be obeyed.

2. Misconceptions

a) Some believe that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is the new birth. However, this is not an accurate view. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is subsequent to, and distinct from, God’s regenerative work of salvation. A full Christian experience should certainly contain both the new birth and the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Even so, many are genuinely saved who have never been filled with the Spirit. The following facts prove this distinction.
(1) The apostles were converted under the ministry of Jesus (Luke 10:20; John 1:35-50; 13:10-11; 15:3). They were commanded to tarry and were filled with the Spirit after their conversion (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1-4).

(2) The Samaritans were saved under the ministry of Philip (Acts 8:5-8, 12). They were baptized with the Holy Spirit under the ministry of Peter and John some days later (Acts 8:14-17).

(3) Paul was converted on the road to Damascus through a personal vision of the resurrected Christ (Acts 9:3-9). He was baptized with the Holy Spirit under the ministry of Ananias three days later (Acts 9:17-19).

(4) According to Paul’s own words, the twelve men at Ephesus were believers: “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” (Acts 19:2). They answered this question by saying, “…We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit…” (Acts 19:2). This response shows that individuals can be believers but not filled with the Holy Spirit. In response to their lack of understanding concerning the Holy Spirit, the Ephesian believers were baptized in water and received the baptism with the Holy Spirit subsequent to the laying on of the apostle’s hands (Acts 19:2-7). There does not need to be a long period of time between salvation and the fullness of the Spirit. Even so, the baptism with the Spirit is an additional experience to the new birth.

b) Some wrongly believe that the baptism with the Holy Spirit brings instantaneous sanctification. As mentioned under soteriology, sanctification has to do with believers being separated to God and purified for His service. It is two-fold: (1) instantaneous (John 15:3; 1 Cor. 6:11; Heb. 10:10-14), referring particularly to the believer’s standing in Christ; (2) progressive (1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 6:1; 12:14), referring to the daily process where the believer grows in expressing the character and nature of Christ. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is crucial in the process of progressive sanctification. Through the infilling of the Holy Spirit, believers are given the power and direction to live holy lives. However, this sanctification is
not an instant result of being baptized with the Holy Spirit. Instead, it is the result of Spirit-baptized believers yielding control of their lives to the leading and power of the Spirit.

c) Some believe that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is a reward for years of Christian service or a gift given only to the spiritually mature. They have wrongly adopted the idea that the baptism with the Holy Spirit marks them as superior in spirituality and therefore worthy of a special dispensation from God. On the contrary, the apostle Peter taught believers that the fullness of the Spirit is immediately available after conversion and water baptism: “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’” (Acts 2:38). In other words, the baptism with the Spirit is available to newly born, spiritually immature, babes in Christ.

d) Some believe that the baptism with the Holy Spirit was limited to a one-time event in history on the Day of Pentecost. They believe Christians should not expect further Holy Spirit baptism experiences either individually or collectively. There are many things wrong with this assumption.

When Peter quoted Joel 2:29 he did not say: “Now is fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.” If he had said the prophecy “is fulfilled,” there would be nothing more to expect. But what he did say was: “But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel” (Acts 2:16). Peter spoke of Joel’s prophecy in a way that left an expectation for further, similar manifestations. Notice the specific wording in Scripture when a prophecy is finally fulfilled: “All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet…” (Matt. 21:4); “Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet…” (Matt. 27:35). The Day of Pentecost was not the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy. Rather, the prophecy of Joel was ushered in at Pentecost. There have been many manifestations of Joel’s prophecy since that day.
Furthermore, the above-mentioned position is untenable because the book of Acts records at least four other occasions when the Spirit was poured out after the Day of Pentecost (Acts 8:14-17; 9:17; 10:44-46; 19:2-7). The baptism with the Holy Spirit was given at the Day of Pentecost for all believers to receive, just as the gift of eternal life was given for all at Calvary. Even so, there must be a definite, individual acceptance and experience of each. If the Spirit had been poured out only at Pentecost, then those 120 or so would have been the only ones who would have received the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Salvation is not by proxy; it is not handed down from one generation to another, neither is the baptism with the Spirit. Each must be received individually.

C. The purpose and necessity of the baptism with the Holy Spirit

1. Power for witness

The baptism with the Holy Spirit gives believers power for Christian service. Just prior to His ascension, Jesus gave His disciples this great promise: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Power for special service is the distinctive result of having been filled with the Spirit.

Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit before He began His public ministry. He also performed His mighty works by the power of the Spirit. He preached and healed under the anointing power of the Holy Spirit: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed…” (Luke 4:18). Peter, preaching to Cornelius’ household, spoke of “…how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38). When confronting the Pharisees who challenged His authority, Jesus taught that He “…cast out demons by the Spirit of God…” (Matt. 12:28). The Scripture gives many examples of Jesus’ earthly ministry being empowered by the Holy Spirit.
Jesus promised His disciples that He would send them the Holy Spirit after He returned to the Father so that they could perform greater works through the power of the Spirit: “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father” (John 14:12). The disciples would do greater works in quantity, rather than in quality, as the Holy Spirit would now be actively working in all those who yield to the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

The disciples were transformed into different men after the Holy Spirit came upon them at Pentecost. In John 20:19, they are portrayed as huddled together behind closed doors “for fear of the Jews.” After Pentecost, that same group of men could not be kept behind closed doors (Acts 5:12-20). In fact, in the power of the Holy Spirit the disciples became as bold as lions. Peter and John, before the threats of the Sanhedrin, fearlessly proclaimed, “…Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:19-20). The prayers of the disciples demonstrate that they fully understood the source of their power for ministry: “Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word…and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:29-31). Stephen’s ministry was empowered by the Spirit: “And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people…And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke” (Acts 6:8, 10). Paul preached in the Spirit’s power: “And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power…” (1 Cor. 2:4)

2. Power to know the will of God

Through the baptism with the Holy Spirit, believers have power to discern God’s will for their lives. Peter, quoting the prophet Joel, proclaimed: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. And on My
menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy” (Acts 2:17-18).

Through the baptism with the Holy Spirit, believers are able to discern the prophetic will of God. Scripture has many examples of the followers of Christ being led through prophetic dreams, visions and inclinations. Peter was guided to accept the Gentiles into God’s plan of salvation through a dream given by the Spirit of God (Acts 10:9-16). Paul’s missionary journeys were continually influenced by the guidance and leading of the Holy Spirit. The Scripture states that Paul and his companions “…were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them” (Acts 16:6-7). Later, “…a vision appeared to Paul in the night…after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them” (Acts 16:9-10). It is clear that Paul and his fellow followers of Christ believed that the Holy Spirit empowered them to discern the will of God. Believers who are baptized with the Holy Spirit will have greater power to discern and do the will of the Lord.

3. Power for spiritual warfare

Believers have been called to a way of life and to Kingdom tasks that need the fullness of the power of the Holy Spirit. God gives every believer Spirit-given tasks that require Spirit-given ability. In advancing the purposes of Christ, Christian workers face great demonic opposition from the enemy and intense conflict in the spiritual realm. Consequently, Christians need spiritual ability and power to be successful in their work: “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12). The Holy Spirit provides spiritual or Spirit-given weapons to fight the battle: “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ…” (2 Cor. 10:3-5). There is no substitute for the power of the Holy Spirit. Those who refuse or
resist the Holy Spirit are helpless, but those who yield to the Holy Spirit find power to stand strong “...because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

4. Power for “overflow”

Jesus cried out, “...If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:37-39). Note particularly that the power Jesus spoke of flows “out of” the believer. It is not enough that the Lord has the power; the individual worker must have it too. God’s servants are more than empty channels; they are vessels. The Lord is looking for individuals He can fill with His presence and power so that they will flow over to others. The ultimate blessing believers bring to others is the overflow of their own experience with God. Ministry is not how much individuals can hold but how much they can overflow.

Note Paul’s great promise to the Ephesians: “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us” (Eph. 3:20). What a mighty promise! But notice the closing statement: “…according to the power that works in us.” It is not enough that God has all this exceeding, abundant power; the believers must have this power before they can be mightily used of God. Jesus gave His disciples power to heal the sick and to cast out demons (Matt. 10:1). It was God’s power, but He bestowed it upon them. Believers today may have this same power through the fullness of God’s Holy Spirit.

5. Power for ability

Power from on high is “ability” from heaven. Power from on high is God-given ability to do God-given tasks and to carry out God-given commissions. It is the ability to follow divine guidance into fields known only by God. It is ability to respond to God’s providence. It is ability to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ. It is ability to love divinely as Jesus loved. It is ability to preach Christ
with conviction and persuasion. It is the ability to exercise spiritual gifts for the edification of the church. It is the ability to suffer persecution for the Lord’s sake. It is the ability to live a holy life above the wicked standards of the world. Power from on high is ability to work for God: to work lovingly, willingly, faithfully and with perseverance. The baptism with the Holy Spirit gives believers the ability to work until Jesus comes or until they complete the race on earth they have been set to run.

D. Those who can receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit

1. Recipients: The baptism with the Holy Spirit is available to every Christian. It is an experience for every Christian in every age. It is intended to be the normal, divine provision for all believers who yield to the fullness of the Holy Spirit in their lives. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is not limited to a special class of Christians; rather, it is available to anyone who is willing to receive this powerful experience and gift.

2. Misconceptions

   a) Some teach that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is only for those who lived in apostolic days and that the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit was just for those who lived at that time. This idea is not in keeping with Peter’s words on the day of Pentecost: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:38-39). Peter specifically included the next generation with the words “and to your children.” It also seems he was thinking of future generations when he said, “and to all who are afar off.” Some have limited this promise to a few hundred years. However, the phrase “even as many as the Lord our God shall call” implies that the promise is for every Christian in every age.

   The baptism with the Holy Spirit is for God’s church in all ages. As long as the Great Commission is still in effect, binding Christians to the duty of worldwide evangelization, there is still a need for the provision of
power to fulfill that commission. As long as God calls believers to holy living, He will also provide the baptism with the Holy Spirit to help them live holy lives. The fullness of the Holy Spirit is needed for the challenges and struggles of every age.

b) Some believe that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is just for ministers, missionaries and those in special service for the Lord. This is contrary to the Scripture’s emphasis on the unity of the body of Christ and the importance of every member in Christ’s body. The apostle Paul emphatically taught that all members of the body have equal importance.

And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another (1 Cor. 12:21-25).

Every Christian has an important role in the church; therefore, every believer needs the baptism with the Holy Spirit to fulfill his or her spiritual assignment and follow the leading of God.

c) Some believe that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is just for a special privileged class. However, this is an erroneous assumption. Peter learned that the fullness of the Spirit was for Gentiles as well as Jews (Acts 10:34-35, 44-48; 11:15-18). The Lord is no respecter of persons and does not play favorites. The gift of the baptism with the Holy Spirit is available to all Christians who are willing to receive. Even so, those who have received the baptism with the Holy Spirit should not consider themselves better than others. All of God’s gifts are unmerited grace gifts. All glory for any gift is to be given to God. The reception of the fullness
of the Spirit does not increase the personal prestige of believers, but it does increase their responsibility. In providing great power, God has the right to expect greater service.

d) Some believe that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is for mature Christians only; they believe that Christians must wait until they are mature enough to attain the fullness of the Spirit. However, Scripture demonstrates that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is available to new believers as well. The Bible has several examples of new believers receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The Samaritan Christians were baptized with the Spirit just a few days after their conversion (Acts 8:14-17). Those in the house of Cornelius were filled with the Spirit almost immediately after believing Peter’s message. In fact, it seems Peter’s sermon was interrupted by the Holy Spirit falling upon them (Acts 10:44-46). Christians were taught to expect the baptism with the Holy Spirit immediately after conversion and water baptism (Acts 2:38). It is clear from Scripture that Spirit-filled fullness is available immediately to anyone who has experienced the new birth.

E. Conditions for obtaining the baptism with the Holy Spirit

1. Repentance from sin

The multitude who heard Peter on the Day of Pentecost were cut to the heart and said, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:37-38). Peter’s response demonstrated that repentance is the first step to experiencing the baptism with the Holy Spirit as repentance is also closely tied to the work of salvation.

2. Saving faith

An individual’s repentance must be accompanied by saving faith in Jesus Christ. Luke 11:13 stresses that it is “your heavenly Father” who gives “the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” The Holy Spirit is the gift of the Father,
and only those who have been saved can call God their “Father.” In fact, the Spirit testifies to the truth that God has made us His children: “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’” (Gal. 4:6).

3. Water baptism

Again, it is important to note Peter’s words to those on the Day of Pentecost who asked, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:37-38). The order in Peter’s response seems to be: repentance, regeneration, water baptism and then the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Each step of obedience opens the way for the next. This is not to say that one who has not been baptized in water could never receive the fullness of the Spirit. However, since water baptism is an act of obedience, it is an important step believers should take to receive the fullness of the Spirit.

Although water baptism is important, Acts records two different times when the outpouring of the Holy Spirit preceded water baptism. It seems that Saul of Tarsus, the apostle Paul, was healed of his blindness and filled with the Spirit as Ananias laid his hands on him in the house of Judas on the street called Straight. “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” After this we read: “Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized” (Acts 9:17-18).

Along with Paul’s conversion, we know that those gathered in the house of Cornelius, at Caesarea, believed the word Peter preached and were filled with the Spirit before being baptized in water. Seeing this, Peter said, “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have” (Acts 10:44-48). In both of these cases, the Holy Spirit came upon new believers before they had a chance to be baptized in water. However, after their acceptance of Christ and their Holy Spirit baptism, they were immediately baptized in water. Holy Spirit baptism and
water baptism are strongly connected in the Scripture. Many have received the baptism with the Holy Spirit as they were brought up out of the waters of baptism.

4. A deep conviction of need

There is often a real hunger and thirst for more of God before individuals receive the baptism with the Spirit. Those who seek the baptism with the Spirit have a strong awareness of their deep need for God’s empowerment and leading. In the baptism with the Spirit, God fulfills this hunger in the believer. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled” (Matt. 5:6). Jesus proclaimed, “‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive…” (John 7:37-39).

5. A measure of consecration

In seeking the baptism with the Holy Spirit, individuals are ultimately yielding their lives to be led and used by God. They are surrendering their self-will for the empowering will of God. They are acknowledging their desire to be led in the path of God’s choosing. This yielding of the will does not make the believer’s will disappear. At all times, believers are in full possession of their will and their faculties. When individuals surrender to God’s will, they are making Christ’s will the center of their lives. God makes the greatest use of individuals willing to yield their will to the direction and control of the Holy Spirit.

F. How to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit

How does a believer receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit? This is not an easy question to answer because God is not confined to just one method of fulfilling His promises, and no two humans are exactly alike in their reception of spiritual things. However, there are certain observable, general principles that can serve as a guide to those sincerely seeking the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is received in the following ways:
1. By faith

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is received by faith: “…that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Gal. 3:14). Jesus said, “‘He who believes in Me…out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive …” (John 7:38-39). The promises of God are received through faith in God: “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6). The baptism with the Spirit is not primarily a matter of feelings, signs or evidences. Rather, it is a matter of believing that God will fulfill His promise, that Jesus will baptize every person who earnestly desires the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Even so, it is important not to confuse receiving something by faith with merely hoping for or thinking that you have received it. The baptism with the Spirit is something individuals truly know they have received. Consequently, individuals should keep their hearts open before God with an expectant faith until they actually know they have been baptized with the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit comes in His fullness, no one needs to be told that the Spirit is present. Still, believers must keep in mind that the Spirit will come as they believe by faith in the promises of God. This faith operates in the following ways:

a) Faith in the promise of God

Faith to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit is not centered in the individual’s strength, but on the fact that God has promised to give the Holy Spirit, and He will keep His word.

If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how
much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him! (Luke 11:11-13).

b) Faith that the promise is for every believer

In speaking of the gift of the Holy Spirit, Peter proclaimed, “For the promise is to you…” (Acts 2:38-39). Jesus said, “For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened” (Luke 11:10). A general belief in the promise of God is not sufficient. There must be a personal appropriation of the promise of the Spirit. Believers receive the promise of the Holy Spirit not because of their worthiness but because of the worthiness of Jesus to fulfill God’s promise for every believer. God is no respecter of persons; if He has bestowed the Spirit on others who are saved by grace, He will also hear and meet the cry of each one who comes to Him in sincerity. What the Lord will do for one of His children, He will do for all who seek Him by faith.

c) Persistent faith

Jesus told several parables that emphasize the importance of individuals having consistent, persistent faith that will not be denied (Luke 11:5-10; 18:1-8). Receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit marks a great turning point in the Christian experience. Consequently, the Lord may delay the granting of Spirit baptism to test the motives and desires of the seeker’s heart. Many seekers have been the most discouraged just before the Spirit came in His fullness. Therefore, believers should stand on God’s promise until it is completely fulfilled.

d) Faith that is manifest in praise and thanksgiving

When believers realize the greatness of what God has promised and what He is about to do, their hearts should rejoice and overflow with thankfulness. Almost invariably, the Holy Spirit comes when an individual is praising the Lord. Praise is a manifestation of faith. Praise can be given to God even when one does not feel like praising God.
Thankfulness and praise to God are not to be centered in one’s feelings but in the greatness of God. Regardless of how people feel, God is the same and worthy of adoration.

2. By fully yielding to the Holy Spirit

This is often the most difficult condition to fulfill. After believers realize their need for the baptism with the Spirit and come to the Lord for this blessing, they still must yield their entire being to the control of the Spirit. Humans generally find it easier to do something themselves rather than yield to another to do it for them. John said concerning Jesus, “He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16). When the subject of the baptism with the Holy Spirit is mentioned, people usually think primarily of the Holy Spirit. However, individuals should realize that this mighty experience is primarily an encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter confirmed Jesus’ personal association with this Pentecostal experience when on the day of Pentecost he said, “This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear” (Acts 2:32-33). When individuals receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit, they are yielding to Christ. If they reject the Pentecostal experience, they are rejecting a distinct ministry of Jesus Christ. For there to be a baptism, there must be a baptizer. Just as individuals yield completely to the one who is immersing them in water baptism, they must also yield to the One who is baptizing them with the Holy Spirit.

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is a total yielding to the Lord Jesus Christ. It brings the recipient into a new and more intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. This idea of believers completely yielding is perhaps the fundamental thought behind the entire Spirit-filled life. After believers are baptized with the Spirit, every phase of holy living and service must be the result of yielding to the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. In welcoming the
baptism with the Holy Spirit, God teaches believers, right from the start, the secret of fully yielding to Him.

Yielding is something that it is virtually impossible to tell another how to do. Some have sought the fullness of the Spirit for years and wondered why they did not receive the full anointing. Upon receiving, they have testified that if they had only known how to yield to the Spirit, they could have received years before. However, all believers must learn this important lesson for themselves, for God wants all individuals to know how to let Him have His way in the days to come. There is something blessedly personal about this great experience with God, and it seems that the Lord has left it so all believers may learn for themselves the path of surrender.

It is still vitally important to realize that at no time does the Lord require a believer to surrender his own personality. Some cults seek to bring people to a negation of their own personality. This is dangerous, and the Lord does not work this way. God has given all individuals their own personality that they possess and God desires to work through. The Holy Spirit does not take the place of individuals. He simply seeks to shine through them, enhancing and glorifying their human talents. He does not supply a new set of functions, but uses those that are already there and yielded to Him. Moses was amazed as he turned aside to see the bush that was burning on the backside of the desert (Exod. 3:2-3). What impressed him was not that the bush was aglow, but that it was not consumed. Likewise, when the Holy Spirit sets the hearts and lives of believers aglow with the fiery glory of His presence, the individual personalities are not consumed. The dross is consumed, but the life itself becomes radiant with God’s glory.

3. A word about “tarrying” for the baptism with the Holy Spirit

In the early days of the twentieth-century outpouring of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, it was quite customary to speak of “tarrying” for the baptism with the Spirit. The idea of “tarrying” for the Pentecostal experience comes from two verses of Scripture: “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power
from on high” (Luke 24:49). “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father…” (Acts 1:4).

In obedience to these commands, the disciples did tarry a number of days until the Day of Pentecost at which time they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. It was necessary for the disciples to wait for the promise because the arrival of the Holy Spirit was set for that specific day, just as the arrival of Jesus was set for a certain day. Clearly, the disciples could not have received before the set Day of Pentecost. Before the Day of Pentecost, it was necessary to wait for the promised Comforter; since the day of Pentecost, the abiding Comforter waits for the believer. Consequently, it is now not necessary to wait a prolonged period of time to be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

An examination of all other mentions of Holy Spirit baptism in Acts reveals that, in every case, the believers who received the blessed experience received it in their first prayer meeting or on the first occasion they sought the baptism. The apostles did not hold “tarrying” meetings; they held “receiving” meetings. Now, because of a misunderstanding of the word “tarry,” some hungry seekers have been given the impression that Spirit baptism can only be received after weeks or months of tarrying. Those who have been given this impression may find it hard to exercise faith for immediate reception. Therefore, seekers should be taught that the Spirit is willing to fill them as soon as they open their hearts, yield their lives and exercise faith.

When conducting a prayer meeting for individuals to experience the baptism with the Holy Spirit, it is important to understand what is happening in the prayer gathering. Believers are not waiting for God to be ready, but rather God is waiting for the believer to be ready. Note the manner in which believers received the Holy Spirit in the revival at Samaria:

Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.
For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17).

When the apostles from Jerusalem went to Samaria, they found a great revival in progress. Many had been gloriously saved, but none had received the Holy Spirit. The apparent reason for this was they had not received teaching on this subject. After Peter and John taught them concerning the Holy Spirit, they held a prayer meeting with the new converts, laid hands on them and the Spirit was poured out. In Samaria, there was no “tarrying,” but there was certainly praying.

The question might well be asked in light of the Scripture, “Why do many pray a long period of time before receiving?” The Bible does not record a single case of an individual seeking for a long period of time before receiving. This might be because the biblical examples are taken from an era of more ideal conditions. Faith was high, and doctrinal teachings were quite uniform. The apostles were men of great faith and spiritual power who created high expectancy in those who heard them. This is not always the case today. When churches do not cultivate an environment of expectancy and faith, many seeking a deeper experience may not fully realize what they are seeking and may not have the faith to expect immediate results. Regardless, Jesus is the same today as in the early days of the Spirit-filled church. The reception of the Spirit today does not need to differ from what is revealed in Scripture.

Along with the issues previously mentioned, the following conditions could also cause delay in receiving the fullness of God’s promise: weak faith, unholy living, lack of surrender and egocentric motives.

Weak faith in individuals could be caused by their meager knowledge of the blessing to be received and the notion that long periods of “tarrying” are invariably necessary before receiving. Followers with appropriating faith believe the blessing is available now.
Because the Holy Spirit is holy, unholy living could also be a real barrier to receiving His fullness. Paul spoke of the necessity of cleansing before a vessel can be “useful for the Master.” A desire to “depart from iniquity” (2 Tim. 2:19-21) should precede an individual’s desire to be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Lack of surrender can also be a hindrance to receiving. The baptism with the Spirit is given to empower individuals for service and holy living. Anyone who seeks the fullness of the Spirit without intention of following or serving the Lord should remember Paul’s admonition to “…present your bodies a living sacrifice…which is your reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1).

Finally, the egocentric motives of believers may also be a reason for a delay in receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit. When individuals desire the baptism with the Spirit, their intentions should not be selfish but rather for the purpose of being more useful to God, for the winning of souls and the extension of His kingdom. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is not a badge of spiritual prestige. Rather, it is a gift available to all Christians for the purpose of godly living, radiant witnessing and powerful service.

G. Ways the baptism with the Holy Spirit was received in the New Testament church

The following outline shows the various ways in which the baptism with the Holy Spirit was received in the New Testament church. God is a God of infinite variety. Therefore, it should not be assumed that these are the only ways the Spirit can be received.

1. Suddenly, while sitting and expecting Him to come (Acts 2:1-4)

2. Instantly and unexpectedly, while listening to the proclamation of the gospel (Acts 10:44-46)

3. Through prayer and the laying on of the apostles’ hands (Acts 8:14-17; 9:17; 19:6)

5. Immediately following water baptism (Acts 19:5-6)

H. The evidence and results of receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is accompanied by unmistakable evidences so that recipients of this great and important experience have confidence that they have indeed received the promise of the Father. Some of the evidence is manifested immediately, while other evidence continues on a permanent basis as believers walk in the fullness of the Spirit.

1. Immediate evidences

   a) Speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance is an immediate evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; 10:44-46; 19:6). The issue of essential evidence is of paramount importance to all who hunger for the baptism with the Holy Spirit. It seems logical that the supernatural experience of the baptism with the Holy Spirit would be accompanied by a definite and unmistakable sign to assure seekers that they have received the Spirit’s fullness. There are many operations of the Spirit, but only one baptism with the Spirit. If there were not a particular, supernatural evidence of the baptism with the Spirit, individuals would not be able to distinguish this experience from other operations of the Spirit.

We believe that the essential evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit is speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance.¹⁰ The

¹⁰ Editor’s note: Although Duffield and Van Cleave were theologians within the Foursquare Church, the language they used here concerning “initial evidence” and the baptism with the Holy Spirit is not the wording found in the Declaration of Faith compiled in 1923 by Aimee Semple McPherson, the founder of the Foursquare Church. Duffield and Van Cleave used the term “initial evidence” to describe the function of speaking in tongues as it relates to the baptism with the Holy Spirit. However, the statement on the baptism with the Holy Spirit in the Declaration of Faith did not use the term “initial evidence” but rather said, “…the believer may have every reason to expect His incoming to be after the same manner (Acts 2:4) as that
evidence of the Spirit’s fullness on the Day of Pentecost was that of speaking with other tongues by the prompting of the Holy Spirit. “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4). The manifestation of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was the original outpouring of the empowerment of the church. It was the pattern for the Pentecostal experience. It is reasonable to expect that what the disciples did when they were first filled, all believers will do when first filled with the Holy Spirit. As one of the primary purposes of the baptism with the Holy Spirit is to give power to witness, it is not surprising that the sign of this experience is manifested in the believer’s utterance.

In addition to describing the initial outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4), the Scripture also gives the account of believers receiving the Spirit in the house of Cornelius.

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God (Acts 10:44-46).

It is important to note how the Jews who came with Peter determined that these Gentiles had received the same Holy Spirit experience that the disciples of Jesus had received on the Day of Pentecost. The Scripture says they knew because “they heard them speak with

in which He came upon Jew and Gentile alike in Bible days (Acts 8:17), and as recorded in the Word (Acts 10:44-46), that it may be truly said of us as of the house of Cornelius: (1 Cor. 3:16) the Holy Ghost fell on them as on us as at the beginning” (Declaration of Faith, X, The Baptism of the Holy Spirit). The Declaration of Faith states that the baptism with the Holy Spirit will occur in every believer’s life in the same manner as happened in Bible days. Therefore, the Foursquare Church believes that everyone baptized with the Holy Spirit can speak in tongues (Acts 2:4; 10:45-46; 19:6). However, Foursquare also leaves room for the reality that not everyone speaks in tongues at the moment when this baptism occurs. Speaking in tongues is normally instantaneous with the baptism with the Holy Spirit, but experience has shown that sometimes it needs pastoral guidance to be released.
tongues.” This verse literally reads, “for they were hearing them continuing to speak with tongues.” Their speaking in tongues was not a brief confusion of syllables but a full and flowing speaking of a language that brought amazement to the hearers. If those present were convinced that the Gentiles had an equivalent, Holy Spirit experience to those on the day of Pentecost, based on the evidence that they also were speaking with tongues, then tongues must be the unmistakable sign or essential evidence of the Pentecostal experience. Believers can know that their baptism is a genuine Pentecostal experience equivalent to that of the disciples when they experience speaking with other tongues by the power of the Spirit. Believers are not to seek the tongues but the Spirit Himself. However, believers can be confident that they will experience the same sign that Spirit-filled believers experienced in the Bible.

A third account that specifically mentions that believers spoke with tongues after receiving the fullness of the Spirit is recorded in Acts 19:6: “And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.” It is important to note that this event occurred in the city of Ephesus. Some argue that the evidence of speaking with other tongues was only given when a new racial group accepted the gospel, such as the Jews at Pentecost, the Samaritans in Philip’s revival and the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. This theory breaks down in the Acts 19:6 passage because this is not the story of a new ethnic group receiving the gospel. The same is also true of the Corinthians who certainly spoke with tongues.

Some do not believe that tongues is the exclusive evidence because the Bible does not always mention tongues in connection with the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Although it is true that three Spirit-baptism accounts say nothing of tongues, the omission is most likely due to the brevity of those accounts. The scriptural record of the outpouring on the Samaritans does not mention the accompanying sign of tongues (Acts

11 See footnote 10.
12 See footnote 10.
8:14-19). However, the fact that Simon was willing to pay money for the power to impart the gift of the Spirit shows that some audible or visible sign made the gift spectacular. It seems logical to assume that he heard them speak with tongues.

In Acts 4:31 there is also no mention of tongues. However, this scripture seems to describe a refilling of those who were initially baptized on the Day of Pentecost. “And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”

In Acts 9:17 Luke does not mention that Paul spoke with tongues when he received the Spirit. However, it is certain from Paul’s testimony that tongues played an integral role in his Spirit-filled life: “I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all…” (1 Cor. 14:18).

In the connection between tongues and essential evidence, two other thoughts should be noted. First, the Bible’s first and last accounts of the reception of the Holy Spirit mention that the recipients spoke with tongues (Acts 2:4; 19:6). Second, in every account of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in which an immediate sign is mentioned, tongues is signified. When the Scripture does not speak of a sign, there is still implied evidence that the recipients did speak in tongues.

The Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches of North America (PCCNA) is an association of over 90 million followers of Christ in 32 Spirit-filled North American denominations. The PCCNA’s statement of faith, which is agreed to by all member groups, states the following: “We believe the full gospel includes holiness of heart and life, healing for the body and baptism in the Holy Spirit, with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance.”

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13 https://pccna.org/about_statement.aspx
Some teach that the initial evidence of tongues is not always necessary to assure that a person has received the fullness of the Spirit. They believe that any of the other gifts of the Spirit can also be the evidence of the Pentecostal experience. These individuals sometimes mention Acts 19:6 where it is written that “...they spoke with tongues and prophesied.” The Bible does not mention that individuals will only speak with tongues when filled with the Spirit. Other gifts may also be manifested. All that is claimed in this instance is that the newly baptized believers at Ephesus spoke with tongues and prophesied.

The uniqueness of tongues in comparison to any of the other gifts is one of the primary reasons it is the sign of Holy Spirit infilling. All of the gifts of the Spirit seem to have been manifested in Old Testament times with the exception of speaking with other tongues and the accompanying gift of interpretation of tongues. Note the word of wisdom of Joshua (Deut. 34:9) and Solomon (1 Kings 3:9-12); the word of knowledge of Bezalel (Exod. 31:1-3); the faith of Abraham (Gen. 15:6); the gift of healing in Elijah (1 Kings 17:17-23) and Elisha (2 Kings 4:18-37); the working of miracles in Elijah (2 Kings 1:10), Elisha (2 Kings 6:4-7) and Moses (Exod. 7:10-20); the prophecy of Isaiah, David (2 Sam. 23:2) and Balaam (Num. 24:2); the discerning of spirits by Ahijah (1 Kings 14:1-6) and Moses (Exod. 32:17-19). God did a new thing at Pentecost, something that no one had ever experienced. The sign accompanying this new thing was something no one had ever witnessed. Consequently, speaking in tongues was and is a very significant and powerful sign.

b) Important points to note concerning the initial evidence of tongues:

(1) Speaking in tongues is not the baptism with the Holy Spirit; it is the initial evidence. 

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14 As mentioned in footnote 10, the Foursquare denomination believes that speaking in tongues is available to all who have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, yet Foursquare also recognizes that not everyone seems to be able to speak in tongues at the moment when this baptism occurs. Regardless, the gift of tongues is available to every person baptized in the Holy Spirit whether or not it is initially evidenced.

15 See footnotes 10 and 14.
(2) Believers should not seek to speak with tongues as though the speaking in tongues is the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Instead, they should earnestly seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit. God will provide tongues as a sign of the Holy Spirit’s infilling.

(3) Some individuals who have not received the baptism with the Holy Spirit have claimed to speak in tongues. The word “claimed” is used because these “tongues” may not have been from the Holy Spirit. Satan has a counterfeit for the gift of tongues as he does for all other gifts. Even so, earnest Christian seekers can have confidence that they will receive the fulfillment of God’s promise when they yield to the fullness of the Spirit (Luke 11:11-13).

c) Other immediate evidences

Other immediate evidences that accompany the baptism with the Holy Spirit include: prophecy (Acts 2:17-18; 19:6); praise to God (Acts 2:11, 47; 10:46); an overflowing joy (Acts 2:46); an awareness of the resurrected Jesus (Acts 2:32) and a deep burden and desire to preach or testify about Jesus (Acts 1:8; 2:14-18; 3:31; 19:6).

2. Permanent evidences

a) The baptism with the Holy Spirit glorifies and reveals Jesus Christ as never before (John 14:21-23; 15:26; 16:13-15). The Holy Spirit centers all things in Christ. The baptism with the Holy Spirit produces a new love for Jesus that will increase in intimacy as the believer continues in the Spirit-filled life. The Holy Spirit makes believers able to comprehend the person, provisions and greatness of Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:17-23).

b) The baptism with the Holy Spirit gives believers power to continue the miraculous ministry of Jesus. Jesus told his disciples to “…tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49; John 14:12; Acts 1:8).
c) The baptism with the Holy Spirit gives believers a deeper passion to save unbelievers. It is clear that after the Day of Pentecost there was a burning desire among the followers of Christ to proclaim the way of salvation (Acts 2:14-41; 4:19-20; 5:29-33; 6:8-10; 11:22-24; 26:28-29).

d) The baptism with the Holy Spirit gives believers a greater power and boldness to witness (Acts 1:8; 2:41; 4:31-33; John 15:26-27; 1 Cor. 2:4-5).

e) The baptism with the Holy Spirit gives believers a new power in and desire for prayer and worship (Acts 2:11; 3:1; 4:23-31; 6:4; 10:9; Rom. 8:26; 1 Cor. 14:14-17; Eph. 5:18-20; 6:18; Jude 20).

f) The baptism with the Holy Spirit gives believers a deeper love for and richer insight into the Word of God (John 6:3).

g) The baptism with the Holy Spirit gives believers manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4-11).

h) The baptism with the Holy Spirit gives believers power for holy living (Rom. 8:12-13; Gal. 5:16-24).


I. Additional infillings with the Holy Spirit

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is a definite experience in a Christian's life. But it is more than just an experience; it is a way of life. An experience is of little value if it does not transform an individual's life. This is particularly true of the baptism with the Spirit. A short season of spiritual ecstasy is very blessed while it lasts, but its value is limited if it does not lead to daily, permanent, Spirit-filled living. The baptism with the Holy Spirit should lead
believers into a consistent, Spirit-filled life. Paul admonished Christians: “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit…” (Eph. 5:18). This scripture literally says, “Be being filled with the Spirit” which implies a continuous experience. The book of Acts seems to indicate that there is one baptism but many infillings. The following is a brief outline of four additional fillings the disciples received after the day of Pentecost.

1. Infilling for defending the faith: “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders of Israel…’” (Acts 4:8). Following the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple and the great sermon Peter preached in Solomon's Porch, the disciples were imprisoned. The following morning, the Sanhedrin brought them out and asked the question, “By what power or by what name have you done this?” (Acts 4:7). Peter’s bold and inspiring answer was the result of being “filled with the Spirit.” Jesus had told them that times like these would come, but the Holy Spirit would teach them what to say in that hour. “Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say” (Luke 12:11-12). The leaders “marveled” at the disciples’ new-found boldness (Acts 4:13).

2. Infilling for rebuking the power of the devil: “Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, ‘O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?’” (Acts 13:9-10). In this passage, Paul was on the island of Cyprus ministering to the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, when the sorcerer, Elymas, sought to turn the deputy away from the faith. Paul received a special anointing of the Spirit and rebuked Elymas. When Satan seeks to hinder the word of God, believers may expect special infillings of the Holy Spirit to help them overcome the enemy and succeed in following God’s will.

3. Infilling to give disciples new boldness and power: “And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God
with boldness” (Acts 4:31). This happened after the Sanhedrin had com-
manded the disciples and threatened them, “…that from now on they speak
to no man in this name” (Acts 4:17). In response to this threat, the disciples
resorted to prayer, and a new filling with the Spirit came upon them that gave
them boldness and power to continue preaching the word of God.

4. Infilling for grace and power to endure persecutions for the sake of the
gospel: “And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit” (Acts
13:52). As a result of their great success in preaching the gospel in Antioch
of Pisidia, “…the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and
the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas,
and expelled them from their region. But they shook off the dust from their
feet against them, and came to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with
joy and with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 13:50-52). No individual enjoys being
persecuted. However, in response to this persecution, the disciples received
a special filling of the Holy Spirit. The Greek verb used here is in the imperfect
tense, signifying that they were being continuously filled with the Holy Spirit.
In response to daily persecution, they experienced a fresh daily infilling.

V. Offenses Against the Holy Spirit

The New Testament mentions six offenses against the Holy Spirit. This
text will divide those offenses into those committed by unbelievers and those
by believers. Even so, there may be overlap between the two categories.

A. Offenses committed by unbelievers

1. Resisting the Holy Spirit: “You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in
heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do
you” (Acts 7:51). These words were proclaimed by Stephen as he spoke to
the unbelieving Sanhedrin. The Holy Spirit seeks to speak to the heart of the
unbelievers to lead them to God. The Spirit is patient and persistent, but it
is possible to resist His pleadings (Gen. 6:3). Although the religious leaders
even recognized the wisdom or truth of the Spirit’s message (Acts 6:10), they
were unwilling to yield to the leading of the Spirit in their hearts.
2. Insulting the Holy Spirit: “Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?” (Heb. 10:29). The Holy Spirit presents the saving work of Jesus Christ to the unsaved. When individuals refuse to accept Jesus Christ, they are actually insulting the love of God manifested in the “Spirit of grace.” To resist the Spirit’s appeal is to insult God and reject His salvation.

3. Blasphemying the Holy Spirit, the unpardonable sin:

Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come (Matt. 12:31-32; see also Mark 3:28-30; Luke 12:10).

This is the most serious offense against the Holy Spirit, for there is no forgiveness for individuals who commit it. To understand what constitutes blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, it is important to look at the context of this scripture (see Matt. 12:22-30). The Pharisees were accusing Jesus of working miracles by the power of the devil when he had just cast out a demon by the power of the Holy Spirit. In other words, the Pharisees were attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to the devil. Mark’s version of this event specifically notes that Jesus spoke these words about blasphemy “because they said, ‘He has an unclean spirit’” (Mark 3:28-30). It is important to realize that Jesus was not talking about a one-time rejection of the Holy Spirit. If that were the case, Jesus would not have warned the Pharisees against continuing to reject the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God.

B. Offenses committed by believers

1. Grieving the Holy Spirit: “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath,
anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice” (Eph. 4:30-31). To grieve means to make sad or sorrowful or to offend. Individuals grieve the Holy Spirit when they say and do things that are against God’s will and unlike God’s nature. It seems clear that the Holy Spirit grieves because He loves and desires the best for those who follow Him.

2. Lying to the Holy Spirit: “But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?’” (Acts 5:3). When individuals consecrate something to the Lord but do not follow through on that consecration, they are lying to the Holy Spirit. They may pledge to consecrate money, time, service or other worthy things. However, if believers do not intend to be faithful to their promises, they are lying to God and would most likely have been better off not making the false promise in the first place. Believers who make false commitments before other believers are actually making false commitments to God. Peter confirmed this truth when he told Ananias, “You have not lied to men but to God” (Acts 5:4).

3. Quenching the Holy Spirit: “Do not quench the Spirit” (1 Thess. 5:19). The thought of quenching suggests an individual trying to put out or extinguish a fire. Unbelief, fear, fleshly criticism and the need to control may all serve to quench the Holy Spirit moving in an individual or congregation. Believers and believing communities must continually examine their actions and attitudes to make sure they are not limiting the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives and gatherings.

VI. The Gifts of the Spirit

A thorough treatment of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit cannot be made without carefully examining what the Bible teaches about the gifts of the Spirit. In the New Testament, three entire chapters and two partial chapters are devoted to addressing the gifts of the Spirit. There are approximately one hundred New Testament references to the subject of spiritual gifts and the exercise of those gifts. This does not include references to the miracles of Jesus
recorded in the Gospels. In spite of the frequent manifestations of the Spirit mentioned in the New Testament, many doctrine and theology books ignore, lessen or misunderstand the importance of the gifts of the Spirit in the believer’s life. Although some claim that the gifts of the Spirit ceased at the end of the apostolic age and the canonization of Scripture, there is not the slightest inference in the New Testament that any endowment of the Holy Spirit would cease before Christ’s return. In fact, the apostle Paul wrote that none of these gifts will pass away until we “see Him face to face” (1 Cor. 13:12).

The gifts of the Spirit play an integral role in the theology of Pentecostal believers and denominations. Regarding spiritual gifts, Foursquare’s *Declaration of Faith* says the following:

> We believe that the Holy Spirit has the following gifts to bestow upon the believing church of the Lord Jesus Christ: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing miracles, prophecy, discernment, tongues, interpretation; that, according to the degree of grace and faith possessed by the recipient, these gifts are divided to every man severally, as He, the Holy Spirit will; that they are to be earnestly desired and coveted, in the order and proportion wherein they prove most edifying and beneficial to the church ...  

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A. The background for spiritual gifts

1. The promise given

Jesus told His followers that special spiritual enablement would be provided so that they could carry out God’s mission for the church. Jesus instructed His followers that before they were to go into the world and preach “repentance and remission of sins,” they were to wait until they were “endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:47-49). In giving the Great Commission,
Jesus promised that, “And these signs shall follow them that believe” (Mark 16:17, KJV), such signs as: casting out demons, speaking with “new” tongues and the recovery from sickness by the laying on of hands (Mark 16:18). When Jesus announced His return to the Father, He promised His followers that He would send the Comforter who would abide forever, teach them all things, bring all His sayings to their remembrance, guide them into all truth, convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, and testify of Jesus.

2. The promise fulfilled

On the Day of Pentecost, the promised Holy Spirit was poured out upon the waiting church with visible and audible signs (Acts 2:1-4). Those baptized with the Spirit began to speak in tongues as promised by Jesus (Mark 16:17). Once these believers were filled with the Holy Spirit, they were so thoroughly enabled by the Spirit’s power that everywhere their ministry was marked by the supernatural. The disciples were not mere guardians of orthodoxy; they were ambassadors of Christ, equipped with God-given capabilities. They had a divine work to do and a divine power to do it. This is also true of Christians today. The church’s mission is more than propagating a new philosophy or calling people to a new morality. Instead, the church’s mission is to deliver people from the bondage of Satan; it is to bind the enemy and loose the bound in the name of Jesus (Matt. 16:19). It is true that a certain amount of worthy philosophizing and moralizing can be done with mere human capabilities, but to deliver individuals from bondage and bring them to repentance and faith requires an anointing of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 3:4-6). God takes natural capacities and transforms them into spiritual operations (Exod. 35:29-35; Rom. 15:13-14; 1 Tim. 1:7-9; 2 Tim. 2:2). God accepts and honors all human talent dedicated to His service, but He enhances and empowers those talents through the Holy Spirit.

B. The vocabulary of spiritual gifts

The vocabulary Scripture uses to address spiritual gifts demonstrates to a large degree the nature of those gifts. The first reference to the gifts of the Spirit as a general class of phenomena is found in 1 Corinthians, which was written about A.D. 55. First Corinthians 12-14 are devoted entirely to
spiritual gifts. First Corinthians 12:1-7 deals with the gifts as a class and provides a vocabulary for their description. The New Testament uses the following Greek words to refer to spiritual gifts.

1. *Pneumatika* (spiritual gifts/spirituals): “Now concerning spiritual gifts [pneumatika], brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant…” (1 Cor. 12:1). Although translated as “spiritual gifts,” pneumatika literally meaning “spirituals” or “things of the Spirit” (see also 1 Cor. 14:1). The “spirituals” in one sense are gifts, but they are more than gifts as will be shown.

2. *Charismata* (gifts/spiritual gifts/grace-gifts): “There are diversities of gifts [charismata], but the same Spirit…” (1 Cor. 12:4). The Greek word charisma is rendered “gift” or “spiritual gift.” It comes from the basic word charis, which means “grace.” A charisma is a grace-gift: an enablement, an endowment or a blessing bestowed freely by God. The text in Corinthians refers to the gifts (charismata) as spirituals (pneumatika) because they are capacities freely bestowed by the Holy Spirit. They come from God and cannot be merited or earned. Although they operate through Spirit-filled persons, they are gifts from God to the church and the world (1 Cor. 12:11-27).

3. *Diakoniai* (ministries): “There are differences of ministries [diakoniai]…” (1 Cor. 12:5). The spirituals (pneumatika) are gifts (charismata) in regard to their origin and source, but they are ministries (diakoniai) in regard to their application. Individuals who exercise their spiritual gifts in the body minister to the body. There are as many kinds of ministries as there are spiritual gifts and spiritual offices. The gifts are not merit awards, nor are they given primarily to benefit the possessor. Instead, the Spirit imparts the charismata for believers to minister to others. The value of the gifts resides in their capacity to minister spiritual profit and edification to the body and to empower the church to reach out to the world.

4. *Energemata* (activities): “And there are diversities of activities [energemata]…” (1 Cor. 12:6). The spirituals (pneumatika) are activities (energemata) in the sense that they are gifts and ministries “activated” by the Holy Spirit. The Greek word for “activities” is energema, which means “active principle” or
“effect.” The English word “energy” comes from the same root. The spiritual gifts are activities of the Spirit that produce spiritual effects.

5. Phanerosis (manifestations): “But the manifestation [phanerosis] of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all…” (1 Cor. 12:7). Every operation of the spirituals (pneumatika) is a manifestation (phanerosis) of the Spirit. Manifestation is defined as an “outward evidence.” The gifts of the Spirit give outward evidence of the Holy Spirit at work. Individuals become aware of God’s presence through the operation of the gifts. Every Spirit-filled believer is given some capacity for the manifestation of the Spirit. This manifestation is ultimately for the benefit and profit of the whole body: “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all…” (1 Cor. 12:7).

6. Diairesis (diversities/differences): “There are diversities [diairesis] of…” (1 Cor. 12:4-6). The idea behind “diversities” or “differences” is that of distribution. God is a God of infinite variety. The “spirituals” are of great variety, but there is one Lord and one Holy Spirit operating in the great diversities of spiritual manifestations and ministries.

It is not God’s intention that only a few gifts operate through a limited number of believers. There are many different spiritual gifts, far more than the nine mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12. In fact, there may be as many gifts as there are useful functions in the church or needs in the world. Every believer should have some manifestation of the Spirit, and all the gifts of the Spirit should be available to every church body.

C. The purpose of spiritual gifts

The purpose of the spiritual gifts is for the edification and profit of the church. “Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel” (1 Cor. 14:12; see also 1 Cor. 14:26). If the exercise of the gifts does not edify and build up the body, they are valueless. Gifts are bestowed with the purpose of bringing spiritual profit and edification to the whole body. “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all…” (1 Cor. 12:7). An individual who
exercises his or her gifts without love or merely for personal display is a “… sounding brass or a clanging cymbal” that profits no one (1 Cor. 13:1).

Prophecy is one example of how spiritual gifts build up and profit the church. Paul wrote that prophecy has the following effects: “But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men” (1 Cor. 14:3).

1. Edification: The word “edification” comes from the Greek word oiko-
dome and means “the act of building a structure.” The vocal gifts are intended to build Christ’s church.

2. Exhortation: The word “exhortation” translates the Greek word parak-
lesis means “to exhort or encourage.” It is related to the word Paraclete, the name Jesus used to speak of the Holy Spirit. The name “Barnabas” was said to mean “son of consolation” or “son of encouragement.” The Greek word translated as “consolation” is also paraklesis. The ministry of Barnabas was a great blessing and profit to the whole church, especially the church at Antioch (Acts 11:22-26). The verb form of paraklesis (exhortation) is frequently translated “I beseech you.” Individuals who exhort the church stir and motivate believers to do God’s whole will. The author of Hebrews provided a good example of this kind of exhortation: “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works…” (Heb. 10:24).

3. Comfort: The word “comfort” from the Greek word paramuthia means “to soothe, comfort, console.” The church often needs the ministry of comfort or consolation during times of persecution, trials and sorrow.

There is a process of growth and maturity in the exercising of spiritual gifts. God desires that believers exercise the gifts maturely in order that the church is truly edified: “Brethren, do not be children in understanding…but in understanding be mature” (1 Cor. 14:20). Paul taught extensively about the mature use of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 14). Christians should give attention to these teachings wherever the gifts of the Spirit are in operation.
D. The gifts enumerated in 1 Corinthians 12

In 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, Paul first enumerated nine gifts of the Spirit. However, in 1 Corinthians 12:28, after repeating the mention of miracles, healings and tongues, Paul added the gifts of helps and administrations without making any distinction in classification. Paul did not distinguish sharply between the offices of apostles, prophets and teachers, and the endowments of miracles, healings and tongues. Apparently, when God sets apart individuals for an office, He bestows upon them spiritual enablements that corresponded with the office or ministry. Perhaps the mention of two additional gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:28 was made to show that the number of gifts could be lengthened considerably.

Some have seen the need to fix the number of gifts at nine to correspond with the nine fruits of the Spirit. However, a careful search will reveal other fruits of the Spirit in addition to the nine listed in Galatians 5. Also, Paul mentioned 17 works of the flesh and then ended the list with the phrase “and such like” (Gal. 5:21, KJV). If there are works of the flesh not mentioned in Scripture, it is possible that some of the fruit and gifts of the Spirit were not mentioned as well. In 1 Corinthians 12-14, Paul mentioned the gifts that were well known to the Corinthians; in Romans he introduced other gifts that illustrated his discussion. August Hermann Cremer argued that Paul’s gift lists are not exhaustive:

The place, therefore, that each member has in the community he has by virtue of a “charisma,” which he is to administer to his brethren (1 Pet. 4:10). Natural powers as such are useless to the life of the body of Christ; what it needs must, like itself, be spiritual. Charismata, then, may be defined as powers and capacities necessary for the edification of the church, bestowed by the Holy Spirit upon its members, in virtue of which they are enabled to employ their natural abilities in the service of the church, or are endowed with new abilities for this purpose. According to 1 Cor. 12:11-18; Rom. 12:5-8; Eph. 4:11, the “charismata” form the basis of
the offices in the church. There can be no office without a charisma; but not all charismata are applicable to the exercise of an office. Those that correspond to the permanent and invariable needs of the church form the basis of offices, the others do not ... Since the number of the charismata must correspond to the needs of the church, it follows that the lists in 1 Cor. 12, Eph. 4, and Rom. 12 cannot be taken as exhaustive. 17

1. Word of wisdom

This is not the gift of wisdom in general, but the gift of a “word of wisdom.” However, by itself it is not necessarily a vocal gift. Word (logos) is defined as a concept, idea, saying, subject matter, reason, narrative or doctrine. If “utterance” had been meant, probably the Greek word rhema would have been used instead of logos. Working together with prophecy, the word of wisdom could function as a vocal gift. It is likely that this is the gift that operated in Stephen in Acts 6:10: “And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.” When settling a dispute in the early church, the Jerusalem Council wrote: “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things…” (Acts 15:28). The mind of the Holy Spirit was probably conveyed to the apostles by a word of wisdom. Wisdom, in contrast to knowledge, probably means an insight for “practical conduct or action.” In local church life, there are times when important decisions need to be made through the leading of the Holy Spirit. The operation of a word of wisdom provides the Spirit’s guidance (see 1 Cor. 2:13-16).

2. Word of knowledge

Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 1:5 may refer to the gift of a word of knowledge: “…that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge.” If a word of wisdom gives insight for practical action, a

word of knowledge brings to light the principles of doctrine that form a basis for the action. A word of knowledge may bring scriptural truth to the attention of the church, or it may reveal facts that are needed for further response. Paul had confidence that spiritual knowledge operated in the church when he wrote: “Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another” (Rom. 15:14). John probably exercised the gift of a word of knowledge when discerning the spiritual conditions of the seven churches he addressed in Revelation (Rev. 2-3). The word of wisdom and word of knowledge are gifts to guide believers in knowledge and action. Gifts of revelation work in harmony with the Bible never contradicting the teachings of Scripture (1 Pet. 4:11; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

3. Special faith

Many writers on the gifts refer to the gift of faith as that of “special faith.” This is because the gift of faith differs from saving faith or daily faith by which individuals come to God believing “…He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6). Although all faith is alike in nature, the gift of special faith differs from other faith in degree and application. Special faith often works in conjunction with healings and miracles. The gift of faith is most likely expressed in the healing of the lame man at the gate called Beautiful (Acts 3). Peter had a gift of miraculous faith to command the lame man to rise and walk in the name of Jesus. Donald Gee wrote concerning this faith:

It would seem to come upon certain of God’s servants in times of special crisis or opportunity in such mighty power that they are lifted right out of the realm of even natural or ordinary faith in God—and have a divine certainty put within their souls that triumphs over everything.18

Perhaps Jesus was describing this quality of faith when he said to His disciples, “Have faith in God” (Mark 11:22). The Greek in this passage literally reads, “Have the faith of God.” Jesus suggested that with this divinely imparted faith a person might say to a mountain, “…Be removed and be cast into the sea…” (Mark 11:23), and it would happen. The mountain symbolized any seemingly impossible obstacle to the mission of the church.

4. Gifts of healings

As a general term, charismata (gifts) is used in 1 Corinthians 12 to refer to all “spirituals” (vv. 4, 31). However, when addressing specific gifts, charismata is only attached to the gift of healing (vv. 9, 28, 30). In the Greek, the terms “gifts” and “healings” are plural. This suggests there are either many gifts of healing for different diseases or that each exercise of healing power is a separate gift. Nowhere in the New Testament is a person said to have “the” gift of healing. Most evangelists and pastors with effective healing ministries do not claim to have the gift of healing. Certainly, no one has had the ministry of healing every sick person. On some occasions Jesus healed all who came to Him, but on other occasions He was limited by the lack of faith on the part of the people (Matt. 13:58). What is certain is that God has made physical healing a ministry of His church through gifts of healings that operate along with faith.

Jesus promised His disciples that signs would follow their preaching of the gospel (Mark 16:15-18). One of those signs was that “…they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover” (Mark 16:18). Jesus promised that, for as long as it took to preach the gospel to every creature, signs would follow those who believed. One of those signs was the miraculous healing of the sick. Since not every creature has yet heard, it would seem that signs of healing are still present today. The clause “those who believe” suggests the signs or gifts were not limited to the apostles but available to all who have faith. In the command and promise of Jesus, the “laying on of hands” is an outward expression of faith and love on the part of those who pray, showing that God uses faithful believers as a channel of His power. In James’ admonition to pray for the sick by the laying on of hands and anointing the sick with oil, the oil symbolizes the work of the Holy Spirit (Jas. 5:14-16). When Jesus sent
out the twelve disciples to minister, they “anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them” (Mark 6:13). The believer is the vehicle of power, but healing is the Spirit’s work.

While on some occasions the sick are healed through the faith of the one who prays, faith on the part of the afflicted person is important and sometimes essential: “Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, ‘Stand up straight on your feet!’ And he leaped and walked” (Acts 14:9-10). Paul exercised the gifts of faith and healing. Nevertheless, his command to stand up was given after he discerned that the lame man had faith to be healed. The need for the afflicted to have faith suggests that candidates for healing might well benefit from teaching that builds their faith. The most effective faith-building comes through the word of God: “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Old Testament promises of healing are found in Exodus 15:26; 23:25; Deuteronomy 32:39; 2 Kings 20:5; Psalm 30:1-2; 103:3; 107:17-22; Isaiah 38:4-5 and 53:5. New Testament healing passages are found in Matthew 4:23; 8:8, 16-17; 10:8; Mark 3:14-15; Luke 4:40; 9:6; Acts 3:1-11; 4:30; 5:15-16; 8:7; 28:8; 1 Corinthians 12:9; James 5:14-16 and 1 Peter 2:24.

5. Working of miracles

The working of miracles is the translation of the Greek energeinata dunameon, which literally means “operations of supernatural powers.” As with gifts of healings, working of miracles is also plural. This is not a gift that makes a person a “miracle worker.” It seems from the plurality of the expressions that each miracle is operated through an individual with a gift of faith (see Matt. 17:20; 21:20-22). A miracle is “An event or action that apparently contradicts known scientific laws and is hence thought to be due to supernatural causes, especially to an act of God.”\(^{19}\) In the New Testament, events of supernatural origin are called “miracles, wonders and signs” (Acts 2:22, 43; 6:8; 8:13; Heb. 2:4). The Greek words translated “miracles, wonders

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and signs” are *dunameis, terata, semeia*. They literally mean, “events of divine power,” “events that cause wonderment” and “events that signify something” (about God or His working). It is noteworthy that the term “wonder” is always used together with the term “sign.” God does not manifest His miraculous power just for the sake of wonderment but also to bear witness to the gospel: “…how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?” (Heb. 2:3-4).

Many examples of the working of miracles are found in the book of Acts: supernatural deliverance from imprisonment (Acts 5:18-20; 12:5-10; 16:23-30); Elymas the sorcerer struck by blindness (Acts 13:8-12); Philip instantly transported from Gaza to Azotus (Acts 8:39-40); Dorcas and Eutychus raised from the dead (Acts 9:36-42; 20:9-12); and Paul suffering no harm from the bite of a poisonous snake (Acts 28:3-5). The healing of the sick and the casting out of demonic spirits may also be classified as gifts of miracles when they have a great sign value. Paul’s ministry in Ephesus is an example of the working of miracles: “Now God worked unusual miracles [literally ‘not ordinary miracles’] by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them” (Acts 19:11-12). Peter also demonstrated this kind of miraculous gift in Jerusalem when his shadow fell upon the sick and they were healed (Acts 5:12-15).

6. Prophecy

The word prophet is a transliteration from the Greek *prophetes*, which is derived from two words: pro meaning “before, forth, for or in behalf of” and phemi meaning “declare or speak.” Therefore, *prophetes* can mean “one who predicts” (tells beforehand), “one who speaks forth” or “one who speaks for or in behalf of.” Since the office of the prophet begins in the Old Testament, it is important to look at the Hebrew definition as well. The Hebrew word for “prophet” is *nabi*, meaning “to announce, witness or testify.” The Scripture clearly defines the office of the prophet: “I will raise up for them a Prophet
like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him” (Deut. 18:18). A prophet speaks to people, on behalf of God, the words God puts in his or her mouth. God confirmed the role of the prophet when He spoke of Aaron as the prophet of Moses: “See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh…” (Exod. 7:1-2). Aaron was called the prophet of Moses because he spoke on behalf of Moses, delivering Moses’ message. The same idea of speaking “for” God is demonstrated by the testimony of Jeremiah the prophet: “Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me: ‘Behold, I have put My words in your mouth’” (Jer. 1:9). Sometimes prophets would speak to the people, on God’s behalf, a message for their times; often prophets would predict coming events. In either case, they were simply speaking the Lord’s message.

Deuteronomy 13 and 18 give qualifications for prophets and tests of their authenticity:

a) Prophets are taken from among the people (Deu. 18:18).

b) Prophets are to speak to the people in the name of the Lord (Deu. 18:19).

c) Prophets may show signs and wonders with their prophecies (Deu. 13:1).

d) If prophets prophesy the worship or pursuit of “other gods,” they are to be rejected regardless of any accompanying signs or wonders. God may allow these false prophecies to test the love of His people (Deu. 13:1-3).

e) If prophets predict the future and their predictions fail to come to pass, the prophets are to be rejected (Deu. 18:20-22).
The New Testament describes two kinds of prophets: those who occupy the office of a prophet (Eph. 4:11) and those who exercise the gift of prophecy. Those of the first category are among the ministry gifts; those of the second can include any Spirit-filled believer. It seems not all can occupy the office of a prophet: “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets…” [Eph. 4:11], but among Spirit-filled believers “…you can all prophesy one by one…” (1 Cor. 14:31). Joel prophesied, “And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy…I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy” (Acts 2:17-18). Since every Spirit-filled believer can prophesy, having the gift of prophecy does not necessarily mean someone occupies the ministry office of a prophet.

Among the gifts in 1 Corinthians, Paul listed prophecy as the most earnestly to be desired (1 Cor. 14:1, 5, 24-25, 39). Prophecy’s importance is indicated by the fact that some form of the word is found 20 times in 1 Corinthians 12 through 14. These chapters define prophecy in the following way: “But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men” (1 Cor. 14:3). The Amplified Bible Classic Edition translates this verse: “…the one who prophesies…speaks to men for their upbuilding and constructive spiritual progress and encouragement and consolation.” Within the local church, the gift of prophecy operates to spiritually build up the body.

When the church faces a problem of missing facts or needs divine wisdom for practical action, a word of knowledge or a word of wisdom may operate in conjunction with the gift of prophecy. A word of wisdom may have assured the apostles in their instructions to the Gentiles “…to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things…” (Acts 15:28). When the conclusions of the Jerusalem Council were delivered to the Gentile church in Antioch, Luke reported: “Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words” (Acts 15:32). In the operation of the gift of prophecy, the Spirit heavily anoints believers to speak forth to uplift and encourage
individuals, to incite people to faithful obedience and service and to bring hearers comfort and consolation.

Even though prophecy proclaims the will of God, individuals do not need to speak in the first person as if the voice of God is speaking through them. Although prophecy is a word from God, individuals do not need to alter their voice or speaking style to prophesy. For example, individuals don’t need to shout to prophesy. Instead, they can simply speak in their normal voice and still be prophesying. Other aspects of the vocal gifts will be addressed later when dealing with the gifts of tongues and prophecy.

7. Discerning of spirits

“Discerning of spirits” comes from the Greek diakreisis pneumaton. The Greek word diakreisis is defined “to discern, to discriminate or to distinguish.” The verb form is used in Hebrews 5:14: “But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” Paul used the verb several times in 1 Corinthians. For instance, he used diakreisis in questioning whether the church had anyone wise enough to “judge between his brethren” (1 Cor. 6:5). Later Paul used the word to reproach the Corinthian church for “not discerning the Lord’s body” (1 Cor. 11:29). The gift of discerning of spirits is the capacity to discern or judge the source of a spiritual manifestation whether it is the Holy Spirit, an evil spirit or merely the human spirit. Paul wrote: “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge [diakrino]” (1 Cor. 14:29). This seems to imply that the gift of discernment will be present when the gift of prophecy is used. Apparently, in Corinth, the gift of discernment was as common as that of prophecy (“let the others judge”).

Ultimately, all Spirit-filled believers are able to judge the operation of vocal gifts based on whether or not they are spiritually edifying to the body. Individuals are not infallible in their exercise of gifts. For instance, if a speaker’s utterance (prophecy or interpretation of tongues) is not received by others, he or she should not be discouraged but should humbly pray for more wisdom in exercising and discerning the gifts of the Spirit. Believers should
follow the admonition of Paul: “Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good” (1 Thess. 5:19-20). Solid biblical teaching on spiritual gifts will lead to mature and appropriate expressions without creating a fear or distrust that quenches the Holy Spirit’s work within the body of Christ. It is important to note that the discerning of spirits is not the judging of people but the judging of the spirit behind the manifestation. It is the process of discerning whether a manifestation is divine, satanic or human.

8. Kinds of tongues

In the Greek, “kinds of tongues” is gene glosson. The term “kinds” refers to the fact that there are “new tongues” and “tongues of men and of angels” (1 Cor. 13:1). Some tongues are human languages, such as on the Day of Pentecost when the multitude each heard in their “own tongues the wonderful works of God” to show that the gospel was for all races and nations (Acts 2:5-21). Other tongues are of heavenly origin and are used for praise and prayer that supersedes the constraints of the mind (1 Cor. 14:2; Rom. 8:26-27). It is said that he who speaks in this “tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries” (1 Cor. 14:2). It is very important to observe that there are different uses of tongues. Paul A. Hamar, in his commentary on 1 Corinthians, remarked: “There is an acknowledged difference between tongues as the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and in individual praying, and tongues as a gift (as used here). The difference is basically one of purpose: one is to edify one’s own spirit; the other to edify the congregation.”

The personal prayer language of tongues is given to every believer who is baptized with the Holy Spirit. It is provided to evidence Spirit baptism and to give believers the ability to pray, sing and praise God in the Spirit. Although everyone baptized with the Holy Spirit has the evidence of tongues as a prayer language, not everyone has the gift of tongues and interpretation in the congregational setting. When Paul asked, “Do all speak in tongues?” he was speaking of tongues as the congregational gift accompanied by interpretation.

(1 Cor. 12:30). He was not speaking about the personal prayer language of tongues that is available to every believer baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Unlike private tongues speaking, the public proclamation of tongues within a congregational setting must be interpreted. If no interpreter is present, the one with the gift of tongues should remain silent or pray for the accompanying gift of the interpretation of tongues. If tongues speakers do not know whether an interpreter is present, they must be ready to interpret their own utterances (1 Cor. 14:13, 28).

The following is a summary of the discernibly different uses of speaking in tongues:

(1) The initial physical evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; 10:45-46; 19:6)

(2) Tongues as a prayer language that transcends the mind and allows the spirit to commune directly with God (Rom. 8:26-27; 1 Cor. 14:2, 14-15)

(3) Tongues with interpretation for the spiritual edification of the church body (1 Cor. 14:5, 26-28)

(4) Tongues together with interpretation as a “sign” to the unbeliever (1 Cor. 14:22) Note: This may be a sign to unbelievers because they sense the presence of God or they actually hear their language spoken in the tongues.

9. Interpretation of tongues

The word “interpretation” translates the Greek word hermeneia, from which is derived the English word “hermeneutics” (the science of interpretation). The Greek word means “translation, explanation or interpretation.” The verb form of the word is used several times to mean “translation”
(John 1:38, 42; 9:7; Heb. 7:2). The noun form *hermeneia* is found only in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 where it is used in association with tongues. The basic meaning of the word suggests the idea of “explanation” or “interpretation.” Consequently, the interpretation of an utterance in tongues is an explanation of the tongues’ meaning, not a literal word-for-word translation. Since it is an explanation, it will most likely vary in length from the tongue being interpreted. When the gift of tongues is exercised for the edification of the church or as a sign gift, interpretation is essential. Paul seemed to limit the gift of tongues to personal prayer language unless accompanied by interpretation (1 Cor. 14:13, 27-28). Those who have the gift of tongues are encouraged to pray for the gift of interpretation (1 Cor. 14:13).

10. Helps

The nine gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 do not constitute the total number of *charismata*. Later in the same chapter, Paul introduced the *charismata* of helps and administrations (1 Cor. 12:28). The word “helps” comes from the Greek word *antilepsis*, which is used only once in the New Testament. *Antilepsis*’ verb form, *antilambano*, occurs in three passages. One of these passages gives a good indication of how the helps gift is expressed: “I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support [antilambano] the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35). In this passage, Paul instructed the Ephesian elders on how to care for the Ephesian church. He told them that after he departed, they were to carry on a ministry of “helps” (*antilambano*) for the benefit of those who were weak physically and financially. In this context, the helps gift seems to be associated with helping the sick and financially needy.

It seems that believers need the gift of helps to most effectively minister to the sick and poor. Prolonged, impactful ministry to the needy and afflicted requires a deep, spiritual burden and a God-given love. Human compassion is important, but a divine call and the Spirit’s anointing are crucial to keep the helper from becoming discouraged or critical. Although all believers are called to help those in need, the gift of helps seems to be a special gift for
ministering to those who are weak or have deep need. For every kind of spiritual work, God has supplied a corresponding spiritual gift.

11. Administrations

“Administrations” comes from the Greek word *kubernesis*. As in the case of the gift of helps, administrations (*kubernesis*) is found only once in the New Testament. However, the noun form *kubernetes* occurs twice, referring each time to a shipmaster (Acts 27:11; Rev. 18:17). The verb form means “to steer or to be a helmsman.” In this context, the gift of administrations would seem to describe a spiritual capacity given to leaders to steer the church or individuals through storms and difficult seas. On the basis of 1 Timothy 5:17, some have reasoned that there were two classes of elders in the church: teaching elders and ruling elders. They suggest that the elders who did not minister the word may have exercised their ministry in the business and structural affairs of the church. It would seem that the gift of administrations would be crucial to keep churches on an even keel.

E. Special instructions on the gifts of tongues and prophecy

First Corinthians 14 was written to instruct Christians on the proper use of spiritual gifts, especially the vocal gifts of tongues, interpretation of tongues and prophecy. Some have inferred that Paul wrote to the Corinthians to discourage the use of tongues. However, Paul would certainly not have said, “I wish you all spoke in tongues…” if he had wanted to discourage the practice (v. 5). The apostle who said, “I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all” (v. 18) was not writing to prohibit tongues but to discourage the expression of uninterpreted tongues in public meetings. Paul wanted all believers to use tongues as a prayer language (vv. 2-4). However, it seems the Corinthians thought that when the Spirit moved, they were expected to exercise their gift even if they all spoke at once without interpretation or regard for unbelievers in their midst. They did not know that the spirit of a gifted person is still subject to his or her personal control (v. 32). They overlooked the fact that God gives believers endowments to use intelligently, in accordance with Scripture and for the sole purpose of the spiritual edification
of the whole body. They didn’t realize that the gifts must not be used selfishly, ostentatiously or without love because spiritual gifts actually belong to the church more than they belong to the individual (1 Cor. 13). Ultimately, the use of the vocal gifts among members of the body must also accompany the teaching of the Bible and the preaching of the gospel (vv. 27-29). The gifts are a great blessing when they are in submission to sound biblical teaching and wise spiritual leadership.

1. The importance of tongues and prophecy

In 1 Corinthians 14 Paul wrote: “Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues” (v. 39). The tongues referred to here seem to be with interpretation, for Paul had already forbidden the Corinthians from speaking in tongues in a public service without interpretation: “But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God” (v. 28). Tongues with interpretation and prophecy are to be desired and encouraged in public services. Both prophecy and tongues with interpretation are to be expressed for the purpose of edifying, exhorting and comforting the church.

2. The private use of tongues

The most prevalent use of tongues is tongues as a prayer language (1 Cor. 14:2, 14-15; Rom. 8:26-27). Some suggest Jesus spoke in tongues inwardly when He prayed for the deaf and mute man in Mark 7:34. This is because the Mark passage uses the same Greek word stenazo that is translated “groanings that cannot be uttered” in Romans 8:26. Prayer in tongues should be the normal practice of every Spirit-filled Christian. Believers are commanded to pray: “…praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit …” (Eph. 6:18; see also Eph. 5:18-19). Prayer in the Spirit promotes a deepening of a person’s prayer life and the spiritual development of one’s personality. Some critics of tongues have inferred that tongues speaking may be unsettling to the mind. However, psychological studies have shown that tongues speaking tends to integrate and solidify the personality and make possessors of the
gift more able to cope with life’s problems. Paul suggested that the Spirit “helps in our weaknesses” when “we do not know what we should pray.” The Spirit “Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Rom. 8:26-27), accomplishing intercession on a higher level than that of our conscious petitioning.

3. Prayer and praise in the Spirit

Much has already been written on this aspect of tongues as a Spirit-provided vehicle for individual prayer and praise. However, there is also an exercise of tongues in prayer and singing in the Spirit that calls for interpretation. “What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding” (1 Cor 14:15). First Corinthians 14:16 indicates that this is ministry to the body: “Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say ‘Amen’ at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say?” This exercise seems to differ from tongues as a private prayer language as described in 1 Corinthians 14:14 and 14:28.

4. Limitations on tongues and prophesying

Apparently, the meetings in Corinth gave so much time to specific, vocal gifts, especially tongues speaking both with and without interpretation, that other ministry was reduced or eliminated. First Corinthians 14 was written to put vocal gifts in proper perspective and to teach on the mature exercise of the gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, Paul emphasized the need for variety in the distribution of gifts. If all the gifts are to be exercised, and if all believers are to exercise some gift (1 Cor. 12:11), the vocal gifts should not occupy the whole service. Prophecy and tongues with interpretation, exercised in scriptural order, are very edifying. However, along with these gifts there should also be anointed teaching, preaching and other ministries. This is most likely why Paul wrote that utterances with tongues should be limited to two or three

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with proper interpretation. Likewise, prophesying should also be restricted
to two or three in any one gathering. Supernatural utterances must not be so
numerous that they take over the service and overwhelm the listeners. This
may have happened in Thessalonica, prompting Paul to write the warning,
“Do not despise prophecies” (1 Thess. 5:19-20).

Paul’s instructions in 1 Corinthians 14 concerning the vocal gifts demon-
strate that they can be exercised in an ordered way: “And the spirits of the
prophets are subject to the prophets” (1 Cor. 14:32). He added: “For God is
not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints”
(1 Cor. 14:33). Everyone who exercises vocal gifts should pray for the wisdom
to recognize when their utterance is edifying. Only on rare occasions should
other ministry be interrupted by an utterance. There should be enough pauses
within a service for a gift of edification to be exercised without the need for
anyone to be interrupted. There may be exceptions, but they are rare.

5. Not to be considered infallible

Another principle for the exercise of the gifts is that no operation expressed
through human instruments is infallible. The gift of the discerning of spirits
should operate in every assembly where the gifts are exercised. This does not
mean individuals must make a public pronouncement of judgment concern-
ing every expression of a vocal gift. Paul wrote: “Let two or three prophets
speak, and let the others judge” (1 Cor. 14:29). All Spirit-filled believers have
some ability to judge whether utterances are spiritually edifying. If all are
to discern, then it must be that every person discerns whether the utterance
has spiritual value for his or her life. If the prophetic word has value and
application for specific individuals, then those individuals should receive the
message and act upon it in their own lives. Not all messages are meant to
apply to every person present. If the utterance is totally from a human spirit
and unedifying, then one with the gift of discernment may declare it unprof-
itable. If the utterance is from an evil spirit, then it should be denounced
and corrected. Words discerned to be from the Lord should be affirmed and
encouraged. Leadership should covet the gift of discernment. “Pursue love,
and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy” (1 Cor. 14:1).
F. The gifts of the Spirit listed in Romans 12

1. Prophecy

In the study of 1 Corinthians 12, at least eleven gifts were identified, and three of the ministry gifts were briefly mentioned (ministry gifts will be addressed in the next section). Prophecy is the only gift common to both the Corinthian and Roman gift lists. This might mean that prophecy was the primary vocal gift exercised in Rome or that the other vocal gifts were simply not mentioned in Paul’s letter to the Romans. Regardless, since prophecy is the vocal gift of preference, it certainly accomplished the purpose of edifying, exhorting and comforting the church in Rome. In the Romans gift list, Paul added that “faith” is the operational principle underlying prophecy, and that prophecy must be exercised in proportion to the measure of one’s faith. This “faith” is not the saving faith that all possess as a gift but rather the faith associated with works of power (Matt. 9:29).

2. Ministry

To the church at Rome, Paul mentioned the gift of “ministry” (diakonia) which probably included a number of gifts. Paul wrote to the Corinthian church: “There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord” (1 Cor. 12:5). This suggests that all gifts are ministries or vehicles of service to the body. After mentioning “prophecy” and “ministry,” Paul turned the focus away from the gifts to the persons who exercise the gifts.

3. Teachers and their teaching

God does not impart gifts for selfish acquisition, but He gives gifts so that individuals can minister the purposes of God to each other and spiritually build up the church. When God provides the teaching of divine truth, He actually gives two gifts. He gives to the church a teacher as well as the gift of teaching. Teachers are of little value unless they exercise their teaching gift. In Romans 12:7, Paul is saying in effect, “If individuals are God-anointed teachers, let them use their gift to teach.” In other words, the proof that a person is a teacher is seen in the fact that he or she is practicing constructive
teaching. Ministers do not demonstrate their gifting in their titles but in their ministry. What authenticates God-ordained teachers are students who grow in grace and knowledge under their teaching (1 Cor. 2:10-16; 1 Tim. 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:2; 1 John 2:20, 27).

4. Exhorters and their exhortations

Paul wrote that exhortation (paraklesis) is one of the exercises of the prophet (1 Cor. 14:3). Since “he who exhorts” is mentioned here (Rom. 12:8) separate from the one who prophesies (Rom. 12:6), it would appear that there were those in Rome who were known as “exhorters.” Barnabas was called “the son of exhortation [paraklesis]” (Acts 4:36, ASV). Since Paul frequently used the verb “to exhort” in the sense of “to implore, to urge, to beseech or to entreat” (see Rom. 12:1), the work of the “exhorter” was probably that of arousing and motivating the church to patient endurance, brotherly love and good works. The author of Hebrews was an exhorter when he implored:

> Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching (Heb. 10:23-25).

Some religious groups recognize an office of the exhorter and grant a corresponding ministerial credential (see Acts 9:31; 11:23; 14:22; 15:31-32; 16:40; 20:2; 1 Thess. 5:14-22).

5. Givers and their liberality

In the church, there are those who have a gift of “giving.” This is not one who administers the charities of the church. Rather, givers are individuals who share with others their own possessions with great liberality. “He who
gives” translates the Greek ho metadidous. The term is found in Ephesians 4:28: “Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give [metadido-nai] him who has need.” The same word is used in Luke 3:11 in reference to the preaching of John the Baptist: “He answered and said to them, ‘He who has two tunics, let him give [metadoto] to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise.’” This is not institutional giving but personal sharing. These gifted givers may channel their gifts through the church, but they are more than officials who distribute the gifts of others. They are givers of their own things who, motivated by the Holy Spirit, give with extraordinary generosity.

An example of such giving is found in 2 Corinthians 8. Paul, writing about a collection for the poor, said: “Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace [charis] of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality...And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God” (2 Cor. 8:1-5). Then, using the Macedonian churches (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea) as an example, he urged the Corinthians (the gifted church) to manifest the same gift of giving for the poor. He said further: “But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge...see that you abound in this grace also” (2 Cor. 8:7). Paul used the word “grace” (charis) here in the same sense as the word “gift” (charisma). He called the gifts (charismata) which the Corinthian church possessed “graces.” W. E. Vine gave one of the meanings of “grace” as “the power and equipment for ministry.”

22 This definition of “grace” as a spiritual gift is exemplified by Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 1:4-7: “I thank my God...for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge...so that you come short in no gift [charisma], eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ...” All believers, out of love, compassion and a sense of responsibility to Christ’s kingdom, will give to the church and to the needy. Beyond this normal giving, there are those who, gifted by the Holy Spirit, give with extraordinary liberality, even when facing affliction and poverty.

6. Leaders and their diligence

Paul hinted in 1 Timothy 5:17 that there were church elders other than those who ministered the word of God. The church needs a number of different kinds of leadership. In Romans 12:8 (NIV), Paul wrote: “if it [a person’s gift] is to lead, do it diligently…” The same Greek word translated “he who leads” (ho proistamenos) in Romans 12:8, is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13: “And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.” Many of God’s faithful servants occupy executive positions of leadership, administration, management of funds, personnel guidance, strategy planning and missionary oversight. These positions might be seen as being outside the realm of the Holy Spirit’s moving. But in fact, these leaders need the Holy Spirit’s endowments as much as those who preach or teach. Believers should pray constantly that their leaders, including their pastors, enjoy a powerful anointing of the Spirit upon their offices (2 Cor. 1:11; Eph. 6:18-20; Col. 2:2-4; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24; 1 Tim. 2:1-3).

Some believe the gift of leadership listed in Romans 12:8 is the same as the gift of “governments” mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:28. This is possible; however, different Greek words with different basic meanings are employed in each passage. The gift listed in Romans 12:8 has the meaning of “being over” others as their leader, while that in 1 Corinthians 12:28 has more the meaning of guidance through all kinds of seas (a helmsman). Both kinds of leadership are needed in the church, and one person very well might have both capacities. It is encouraging to know that the leaders of Christ’s church do not have to exercise their offices with mere human wisdom and ability. Paul declared that the characteristic virtue of spiritual leadership is “diligence.” Perhaps he was describing this diligence in 2 Corinthians 11:28 when he spoke of his “concern for all the churches” (see also 2 Tim. 2:15).

7. Those who show mercy and their cheerfulness

It is quite possible that the gift described here in Romans 12:8 as “he who shows mercy,” may be the same gift listed in 1 Corinthians 12:28 as “helps.” The Greek word for “have mercy” is eleo, which is defined as “to have pity,
mercy or compassion on.” Mercy is an attribute of God: “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us…” (Eph. 2:4). The sick who cried out to Jesus exclaimed, “Have mercy on me!” (Mark 10:47). It would seem that the gift of showing mercy is a ministry of care for the sick and afflicted by means of visitation and prayer. Consequently, “gifts of healings” are probably exercised by those who also have the ministry of showing mercy. All believers have some responsibility to show mercies to the poor and afflicted, but there are those who are uniquely gifted by the Lord to carry out works of compassion as an anointed ministry. There are those, who by the Spirit’s anointing, are “cheerful givers” who share readily with the needy (2 Cor. 9:7). There are others with a different gift who share their love, compassion, time and presence to heal and restore the poor and afflicted. It is fitting that the God of all mercy and compassion places such gifted people in the body of Christ. It is also comforting to know that God has blessed a variety of Spirit-anointed gifts and ministries to meet the needs of every individual, community and situation.

G. The ministry gifts

The apostle Paul, writing to the Ephesian church, declared a remarkable truth concerning the spiritual leaders in the body of Christ:

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men.” …And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:7-12).

The remarkable truth is that spiritual offices in the church are to be thought of as gifts from Christ to His body. Therefore, humans cannot make themselves leaders or be made leaders by the whim of others (Rom. 1:5; 1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:1, 15-16). The church must set apart as spiritual leaders and ministers those whom God has called and chosen (Acts 13:1-3). When Christ
gives individuals to the body of Christ, He endows them with spiritual gifts that correspond to their offices. Some Bible teachers draw a sharp distinction between the ministry gifts and the charismata, contending that the former are gifts of Christ while the charismata are gifts of the Spirit (pneumatika). That all divine offices and enablements are ultimately gifts from our triune God is seen in Paul’s introduction to the charismata: “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all” (1 Cor. 12:4-6). Furthermore, Paul intermingled the offices of apostle, prophet and teacher along with endowments in his summary of the charismata: “And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues” (1 Cor. 12:28). In the Romans 12 passage, Paul listed seven gifts, mixing two gifts (charismata) with five kinds of possessors of gifts. These passages demonstrate that all divinely-ordained humans are given gifts of enablement, and all spiritual gifts equip for some kind of ministry. Of course, not every exercise of a gift makes someone a leader (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). However, whether leaders or followers, there are spiritual gifts that divinely equip believers to do God’s work. The Bible does not describe a wide gulf between leaders and believers. Nevertheless, the offices of the church are divine gifts that mature, direct and protect the church from error. The offices and their endowments are as follows:

1. Apostle

The apostles were the first leaders of the church, first in time (Matt. 10:1-2; Luke 22:14-15; Eph. 2:20), first in authority (Mark 6:7; Acts 1:21-26), first in ministry (Acts 2:37; 6:1-4) and first in the scriptural lists (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11). The apostles were those commissioned and sent forth by Jesus to initiate and direct the preaching and teaching of the gospel and, together with Him, to found the church (Eph. 2:20; Rev. 21:14).

The title “apostle” comes from the Greek word apostolos, which means “a messenger, one sent with a commission, an apostle of Christ.” The basic idea expressed by the word “apostle” is that of one sent as a representative of
another and who derives his or her authority from that sender. In the classical Greek, *apostolos* also meant “a fleet of ships or expedition.” The meaning is extended to “one commissioned and sent to another country,” such as a missionary. The verb *apostello* means to “send from or away.”

The first group to be called apostles in the New Testament were the twelve disciples of Jesus (Matt. 10:2; Luke 6:13). In addition to the twelve, several others were called apostles: Barnabas (Acts 14:14), Silas and Timothy (1 Thess. 2:6), James (1 Cor. 15:7), Paul (Rom. 1:1) and probably Andronicus and Junias (Rom. 16:7). The last two, who were Paul’s kinsmen, are referred to in 2 Corinthians 8:23 as “messengers [*apostolos*] of the churches.” Epaphroditus is called, by Paul, the messenger (*apostolos*) of the Philippian church (Phil. 2:25). It appears that the term “apostle” was used with several different meanings: (1) the twelve apostles of Jesus (Matt. 10:2; 19:28; Luke 22:14); (2) all those commissioned by Jesus, possibly the 70 sent out in Luke 10:1 and the 120 in Acts 1:15 (see also 1 Cor. 15:5-7); (3) Paul as a special apostle to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:7-9), and (4) certain associates of Paul in his ministry to the nations (Acts 14:14; Rom. 16:7).

Different levels of apostleship seem to be set forth in 1 Corinthians 15:4-10:

…He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve… After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

A comparison between 1 Corinthians 15:5 and 15:7 shows that Paul made a clear distinction between “the twelve” (v. 5) and “all of the apostles” (v. 7). Grosheide commented on verse seven: “There is thus an analogy with
verse five: there it was Peter first and then the twelve; here James first and then a greater circle of apostles.”

Finally, Paul referred to himself as the last and the least of all the apostles. In this context, it seems Paul defined apostles as men who had seen the Lord Jesus (see 1 Cor. 9:1). If Paul is the “last of all” the apostles, then there cannot be apostles such as he was in later times. The larger circle of apostles probably included the 70 Jesus personally commissioned, or even the 120 who received the Spirit’s fullness on the Day of Pentecost. That these latter apostles were not considered to be on the same level with “the twelve” is supported by passages such as Acts 1:22-26 and Revelation 21:14. Barnabas, Silas, Andronicus and Junias could well have been among the 70 or the 120 who were witnesses to Jesus’ resurrection (Acts 1:21-22). Paul seemed to class himself in a third category of apostles “born out of due time,” one to whom the risen Lord had appeared after His ascension (1 Cor. 15:8). Paul had seen the Lord (1 Cor. 9:1); the signs of an apostle had appeared in his ministry (2 Cor. 12:12); he had received the right hand of fellowship from the original Jerusalem apostles (Gal. 2:9), and he had authority from them to carry the gospel to the Gentiles.

Subsequent history demonstrated Paul’s apostleship in that he was used of the Lord to pen more books of the New Testament than any other human author. Yet, the fact that Paul was forced to contend so strongly for his own apostleship shows that the early church had set exceedingly high qualifications for the office of an apostle (1 Cor. 9:1; 2 Cor. 12:11-12). Those who claimed apostleship falsely were strongly condemned (2 Cor. 11:13; Rev. 2:2). The apostles are called the foundation of the church; a structure can have only one foundation (Eph. 2:20). Around Paul at Antioch, a circle was formed of men such as Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Titus and Epaphroditus who were called apostles because they were commissioned by the church at Antioch to be “missionaries” (another meaning of the word apostolos). In this missionary sense, there have been apostles in every age of the church: individuals with mighty gifts of the Spirit, who through the power of the risen Christ have pushed the frontiers of the church to the ends of the earth. Even if they have not called themselves “apostles,” they have done the work and produced the

fruit of apostles. The title of apostle seems to belong to the first generation of
the church; however, the spiritual endowments needed for apostolic work will
continue to be poured out as long as there are unreached peoples on the face
of the earth. Jesus is still sending forth, with a commission, individuals who
are given His authority over powers of darkness, who have authority to bind
and loose, and who preach the gospel with the anointing of a prophet. This
apostolic work continues among us today.

2. Prophet

The prophet, which Paul also listed among the ministry gifts to the church
(Eph. 4:11), is second in importance only to the apostles. In the New Testament,
the prophet was an individual who not only exercised the gift of prophecy, but
also occupied a place of leadership ministry along with the apostles and teachers

In the early New Testament church, there were two classifications
of prophets. Any member of the general body of believers could minister
edification, exhortation and comfort through the gift of prophecy (1 Cor.
14:24, 31), but there was another classification consisting of such individuals
as Barnabas, Silas, Judas, Agabus and others mentioned in Acts 13:1 who
were considered to be a part of the spiritual leadership (Acts 21:22). They
are referred to by Paul in Ephesians 4:11 as among the ministry gifts to the
church. Although those of the latter group exercised the same gift of proph-
cesy, they also possessed an additional **charisma** of leadership. The following
are ways the gift of prophecy operates in and through those who exercise it:

a) The prophet speaks as the Lord’s agent. Prophets speak that which
the Lord wills them to speak. Peter defined the function of the prophet
as follows: “As each one has received a gift [charisma], minister it to one
another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks,
let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as
with the ability which God supplies…” (1 Pet. 4:10-11). In all gifted
ministry there is a supernatural element.
b) Often the content of the prophet’s message will be given extemporaneously at the time of speaking. However, the message may be given beforehand during prayer or meditation. Many of the Old Testament prophets received their prophecies in dreams, visions or prayers, and delivered these messages to the people at a later date (Isa. 6:9-13).

c) Sometimes the content of the prophecy may consist of data well known to the prophet, such as scriptural truth or history. Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-37) and Stephen before the Sanhedrin (Acts 7) both delivered prophetic messages that were filled with quotations from the Old Testament. It is clear from the accounts in Acts that both spoke in the power of the Spirit. The word used to describe Peter’s utterance in 2:14 is _apophthengomai_, the same word used in the clause “and began to speak with other tongues” in Acts 2:4. It is a term used to express the speech of prophets, seers and oracles. Stephen concluded his message with a vision of Christ “standing at the right hand of God” (Acts 7:56). It appears from these examples that prophets may employ scripture in their messages as the Holy Spirit directs them in the choice of material and in the application of those scriptures to specific situations. A prophet may be moved strongly by the Spirit to proclaim a certain scriptural passage where the Spirit also provides a special boldness and power of communication: “…and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness [parresia]” (Acts 4:31; see also Eph. 6:18-20).

Not all preaching is prophecy, but preaching becomes prophetic when great, unpremeditated truth or application is provided by the Spirit, or when special revelation is given beforehand in prayer and is empowered in the delivery. When a person speaks in tongues, the mind is inactive (1 Cor. 14:14), but when a person prophesies, the Spirit operates through the mind to supply a message: “…yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue” (1 Cor. 14:19). Here, Paul was not contrasting gifted utterance with non-gifted speech. Instead he was contrasting tongues with prophecy. First Corinthians 14 was written
specifically to deal with the similarities and differences between tongues and prophecy.

d) Before the New Testament was written, many of the apostolic prophets were used of the Spirit to reveal the gospel plan of salvation, for it was only dimly prefigured in the typology of the Old Testament (Eph. 2:20). This prophetic revelation was later written down in the epistles: “...by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets...” (Eph. 3:4-5).

e) While prophecy is more “forthtelling” than it is “foretelling,” sometimes it may involve prediction of the future. The book of Acts records two predictive prophecies of Agabus (Acts 11:27-28; 21:10-14). The first prophecy was relative to the impending famine in Judea, the second pertained to Paul’s soon coming imprisonment in Jerusalem. Both prophecies were fulfilled. It should be noted, regarding the second prediction of Agabus, that Paul did not change his plans as a result of the prophecy or the urging of his friends. This teaches that prophecy may be given to reveal or confirm a coming event but is not provided like a fortune teller for personal guidance. Paul respected the prophecy of Agabus which revealed only what Paul already knew (Acts 20:22-23). Although hearing Agabus’ prophetic warning, Paul followed his own understanding of God’s will for his future. God may reveal the future, but we are not to “inquire of prophets” concerning the future. Those who walk by faith live one day at a time leaving the unknown future to God.

f) It is often asked whether prophetic utterances ought to be phrased in first person (“I the Lord”), or in third person (“Thus saith the Lord” or “The Lord would have”). When individuals exercise vocal gifts, they speak as the Spirit supplies thoughts. In other words, the Spirit reveals, and the prophets speak. God reveals to prophets what He wants said. Paul said: “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge” (1 Cor. 14:29). Since the messages of the prophets are subject to being judged
or discerned, it seems more consistent with humility for the prophet to speak in the third person as Agabus did in Acts 21:11. Paul declared, “that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37). Even so, he expressed his precepts in the third person.

Luke declared, concerning those who were filled with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, that they “began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4). God did not speak through the believers with tongues; rather the believers spoke as they were enabled by the Spirit. God does not normally speak through humans as passive megaphones. He reveals to prophets His will, enabling them to speak what He supplies. Often God spoke directly to the prophets, but when the prophet delivered the message to the people, he said, “Thus saith the Lord” or an equivalent phrase. Prophetic utterances are best phrased in contemporary language rather than with archaic words except when actual scripture is quoted.

3. Evangelist

“Evangelist” comes from the Greek word evangelistes, which is defined as “one who proclaims good news.” The English word “gospel” translates another form of the same Greek word. Evangelists are individuals who devote themselves to “preaching the gospel,” especially the message of salvation. The term “evangelist” is used only three times in the New Testament (Acts 21:8; Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:5). Nevertheless, Paul listed the evangelist as one of the ministry gifts to the church (Eph. 4:11). Only Philip was specifically called an “evangelist” (Acts 21:8); but workers such as Timothy (2 Tim. 4:5), Luke (2 Cor. 8:18), Clement (Phil. 4:3) and Epaphras (Col. 1:7; 4:12) may have also functioned as evangelists. Paul’s words to Timothy suggest that his true calling was that of the evangelist: “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching...But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Tim. 4:2-5; see also 1 Tim. 1:18; 4:14). Paul clearly described an evangelist when he referred to an unnamed worker (most scholars identify him as Luke): “And we have sent with him
the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches…” (2 Cor. 8:18).

The clearest picture of an evangelist at work is found in Acts 8, which describes the ministry of Philip who was specifically called an “evangelist” (Acts 21:8). The following characteristics of Philip’s ministry form a pattern of New Testament evangelism:

a) Philip preached the word of God, especially declaring the heart of the gospel which is Christ the Savior. He “preached Christ unto them” (Acts 8:4-5, 35).

b) Many believed and were baptized (Acts 8:6, 12).

c) Mighty miracles of healing followed Philip’s preaching, and many were delivered from demonic spirits (Acts 8:6-7). The healing miracles gave greater effectiveness to Philip’s ministry (Acts 8:6-8).

d) Philip was ready to witness about Christ as the Savior to whole cities or to one individual. Leaving Samaria, he was directed to the chariot of the treasurer of Ethiopia (Acts 8:27) whom he led to Christ (Acts 8:35-38). True evangelists have a passion for souls that makes them adaptable to mass evangelism or personal evangelism.

e) Philip’s evangelistic ministry took him from city to city (Acts 8:40). The picture of the evangelist in the New Testament and post-apostolic period is that of an individual preaching the gospel message of salvation from church to church and from city to city. Eusebius, the great church historian of the fourth century, described evangelists: “And they scattered the saving seeds of the kingdom of heaven far and near throughout the whole world…Then starting out on long journeys they performed the office of evangelists, being filled with the desire to preach Christ to those who had not yet heard the word of faith”²⁴ (see Rom. 15:20-21).

4. Pastor-teacher

In the grammatical structure of Ephesians 4:11, the term “teacher” does not have a definite article, unlike all of the other preceding terms for the ministry gifts. Therefore, it seems “teacher” should be taken together with “pastor.” This does not mean that the terms are interchangeable. There may be teachers who are not pastors, but there definitely cannot be pastors who are not teachers (Acts 20:28-30). In churches where there were several elders, some might have had a ministry of leadership but were not teachers (1 Tim. 5:17). Even so, the key pastors were teachers: “The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching” (1 Tim. 5:17, NIV). One of the necessary qualifications for bishops (pastors/elders) was that they be “able to teach” (1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:24). A true pastor will have the charisma of teaching (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28).

The words “pastor” and “shepherd” come from the same Greek word ροιμην. The word “pastor” (poimen), used to refer to the spiritual leader of a local church, is found only once in the New Testament (Eph. 4:11). However, the figure of the church as a “flock” (poimen) and of the work of the spiritual leader of the church as “shepherding the flock of God” (poimaino) is found several times (John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). The idea of Israel as the flock of God and Yahweh as their shepherd is a common figure in the Old Testament (Ps. 23:1-4; 80:1-2; Isa. 40:11; Jer. 23:4; 25:34-38; Ezek. 34; Zech. 11). In the New Testament, Jesus used the figure of the shepherd and the sheep in John 10 where He calls Himself the “Good Shepherd.” In addition to the title “Good Shepherd,” Jesus is also called the “Great Shepherd” (Heb. 13:20), the “Chief Shepherd” (1 Pet. 5:4) and the “Gentle Shepherd” (Isa. 40:11). Pastors of the churches are ultimately “under-shepherds,” serving under the “Chief Shepherd.”

The fact that teaching is mentioned in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) shows the importance of the ministry of the teacher. The book of Acts reinforces this observation: “And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ” (Acts 5:42; see also Acts 11:26; 13:1; 15:35; 20:20; 28:31; 1 Cor. 4:17; Col. 3:16; 2 Tim.
2:2). In view of the importance of teaching, it is not surprising that one of the special endowments of the Holy Spirit is the capacity to teach. The prophets inspired, exhorted, comforted and motivated the church. The teachers instructed the church in sound doctrine, guarding the flock from false teachers with destructive teachings. The church at Antioch enjoyed a balanced ministry from prophets, evangelists and teachers. The apostle John referred to the anointing enjoyed by true teachers: “But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.” (1 John 2:20; see also 1 John 2:27). There is a tendency to think of the prophet as one who speaks supernaturally and of the teacher as one who imparts the findings of merely natural scholarship. This is an inaccurate observation. The difference between prophet and teacher is not between the supernatural and the natural. Instead, it is a difference in the manner by which the Holy Spirit operates in the two ministry gifts. The anointing upon the prophet is often more sudden and impromptu with the goal of motivation; the anointing upon the teacher is frequently more measured, operating to illuminate God’s truth and to give the ability to communicate accurately. For every ministry in the body of Christ there is a spiritual charisma.

H. Other probable spiritual gifts

The lists of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12 and Ephesians 4 are not intended to be exhaustive. The following are phases of ministry that may require a special endowment of the Holy Spirit:

1. Hospitality

Peter seemed to categorize “hospitality” as a spiritual gift: “Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift [charisma], minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Pet. 4:9-10). Hospitality was very important to early Christians and was a necessary qualification for bishops (1 Tim. 3:2). Although in the modern world Christian workers are not normally entertained in people’s homes, individuals can still demonstrate hospitality by showing loving interest and concern for others.
2. Intercession

A basic exercise of the Christian life is prayer. Prayer is to spiritual life what breathing is to physical life. However, prayer in the Spirit “with groanings that cannot be uttered,” is a *charisma* of the Spirit (Rom. 8:26-27). Prayer in the Spirit is available for all Spirit-filled believers, but most need to “stir up the gift” (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6). Perhaps prayer and praise in the Spirit are aspects of the gift of tongues or interpretation of tongues. In any case, they are charismatic operations of the Spirit in the believer (1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:18-19; Col. 3:16).

3. Witnessing

Witnessing Christ to others is one of the primary goals of the church of Jesus Christ. Jesus promised, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me…” (Acts 1:8). The Bible does not specifically refer to witnessing as a spiritual gift, but the capacity to witness effectively is clearly declared to be the result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon believers. Since there are many, like Paul, who have a special ministry of witnessing, God may give a special endowment for it: “Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great…” (Acts 26:22; see also Acts 23:11). Two passages declare that witnessing is a special work of the Spirit: “And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him” (Acts 5:32); “And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth” (1 John 5:6). It appears that the more individuals yield to the Spirit, the more they grow in their ability to witness effectively.

I. Gifts for special abilities

In the Old Testament, special gifts of the Spirit were given to artisans who served in the construction of the Tabernacle:

And Moses said to the children of Israel, “See the Lord has called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son
of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; and He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and manner of workmanship, to design artistic works, to work in gold and silver and bronze ... and to work in all manner of artistic workmanship” (Exod. 35:30-33).

God supplied supernatural gifts for every skill needed in the building of the Tabernacle. He also supplies in this age of spiritual enablement what is needed to help His children worship Him. This may include the composing of spiritual music, the mastery of musical instruments that aid worship, the writing of Christian literature that produces spiritual growth or even the building of structures that serve for worship and teaching.

If anyone has a service that is useful to Christ’s church, it should be expected that God will endow that service with a special anointing so that no work in Christ’s body is done merely with human strength. “If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen” (1 Pet. 4:11).

J. The importance of love

Critics of the operation of spiritual gifts sometimes say, “I would rather have love than tongues or miracles.” Fortunately, they are not mutually exclusive alternatives. One does not have to choose between love and miracles, or between the gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit. The Spirit bestows both the fruit and the gifts; both are essential for a complete church. As mentioned previously, love is an expression of the fruit of the Spirit. The great “love chapter” of the Bible, 1 Corinthians 13, is positioned between the two great “gift chapters.” This is to demonstrate that love is not an alternative to the gifts but is to be the true motivation for the exercise of all the gifts.

Paul said: “Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts” (1 Cor. 14:1). He warned the church that the exercise of the gifts without love has no value (1 Cor. 13:1-3). If individuals exercise gifts but are unteachable or have no
concern to edify the whole body, then they contribute nothing of value to the body of Christ (1 Cor. 13:2). Love is the basic qualification for the ministry of gifts; it also ought to be the underlying motive for the desire of the gifts. The gifts and the fruit of the Spirit should be the quest of every Spirit-filled believer. The Holy Spirit bestows gifts upon believers to be expressed in love for the glory of God.

VII. Conclusion

This section of this book has examined the many ways the Holy Spirit works in and through believers. The Holy Spirit is the Helper of individual Christ-followers as well as the gathered church. Consequently, there is great benefit in yielding to and receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit provides fruit and gifts for the edification of the church and the advancement of God’s purposes. Through the baptism with the Holy Spirit, believers are empowered for spiritual service, holy living and deeper intimacy with God. Central to Pentecostal theology is the foundation of Spirit-filled living and Spirit-empowered ministry. Ultimately, to truly understand and know the Holy Spirit, individuals must fully yield to the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. In yielding to the fullness of the Holy Spirit, believers are given a greater capacity to know and do the will of God.
Chapter Seven
The Doctrine of Divine Healing

INTRODUCTION

The doctrine of divine healing is a key tenet in Pentecostal theology. The Declaration of Faith of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel states the following:

We believe that Divine Healing is the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to heal the sick and the afflicted in answer to believing prayer; that He who is the same yesterday, and today and forever has never changed but is still an all-sufficient help in the time of trouble, able to meet the needs of, and quicken into newness of life, the body, as well as the soul and spirit, in answer to the faith of them who ever pray with submission to His divine and sovereign will.1

Every minister should study, teach and practice the ministry of divine healing. A thorough study of Scripture will lead to a greater appreciation of and availability to the ministry of divine healing. The following chapter will examine the reasonableness of divine healing, the origin of sickness, the spiritual nature of sickness, healing and the will of God, scriptural support

of divine healing, divine healing through the church age, divine healing and the atonement, why Jesus healed the sick, why Christians should seek divine healing, methods of administering divine healing, why some are not healed, how to respond to divine healing, divine life for the body and answers to objections to divine healing.

I. The Reasonableness of Divine Healing

A careful examination of Scripture should lead to a reasonable expectation that God heals the physical afflictions of those who seek His aid. Based on what the Bible reveals about God’s will, purpose and power, it is entirely reasonable to believe that God is interested in the physical health of all humans. In fact, from the beginning of creation, God has demonstrated His concern and care for the physical needs of humans. God’s promises to care for the physical needs of humanity have always surpassed humanity’s faith to receive what God has promised.

A. God cares about the human body

In 1 Corinthians Paul wrote about God’s concern for the human body:

Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For “the two,” He says, “shall become one flesh.” But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your
body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s (1 Cor. 6:13-20).

Along with the soul and spirit, the human body is intended to be for God: “Now the body is...for the Lord, and the Lord [is] for the body.” God has not only provided for the needs of the spiritual nature of humans, He has also provided for the physical needs of humans: “The Lord [is] for the body.” The following are some of the ways God expresses concern for the human body:

1. Humans were created in the image of God: “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Gen. 1:26-27). While this applies particularly to the spiritual nature of humans, the “image of God” must have some relation to the human body as well. This is also suggested in Genesis 9:6 which states, “Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.” The punishment for murdering another human being is based on humans being made “in the image of God.” This seems to point to the image of God having some relationship to the physical body of humans. The incarnation of Jesus also demonstrates that the human body is able to express the divine will and purposes of God and is therefore important to God.

2. The human body is included in Christ’s redemption: “…even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:23). The body of a Christian belongs to God because it has been purchased by God: “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price…” (1 Cor. 6:19-20). The soul, spirit and body are all included in Christ’s redemptive work.

3. The body of a Christian is a member of Christ: “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?” (1 Cor. 6:15). Again, it is the physical body that is emphasized in this scripture, not the soul or spirit.
4. God is deeply concerned about the sanctity of the physical body: In the 1 Corinthians 6:15-18 passage, Paul emphasized sins that specifically defile the physical body.

5. The body of a Christian is the temple of the Holy Spirit: “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit…” (1 Cor. 6:19). If God was deeply concerned with every detail of the Tabernacle in the wilderness and the Temple in Jerusalem, how much more is He concerned with the human body, which is the dwelling place of His Holy Spirit.

6. Christians are urged to glorify God in their physical bodies: “For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:20). Just as individuals can glorify God with the attitude of their spirit, they can also glorify God with the actions of their physical body.

7. Christians are urged to present their bodies to God as a living sacrifice: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1). Again, note that the emphasis of this passage is on the body, not the soul or spirit. After Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego came out of the fiery furnace unharmed, Nebuchadnezzar said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God!” (Dan. 3:28). The king was ultimately impressed that these three faithful followers of God had “yielded their bodies” in sacrifice to the Lord.

8. The human body is to be resurrected: “And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power” (1 Cor. 6:14). All humans will be resurrected. Christians will live in resurrected, glorified bodies. This reveals that our bodies are important to God both in this life and the life to come (1 Cor. 15:42).
B. The vital relationship between the soul, spirit and body

The condition of the body affects the soul. Having a healthy body can lead to a cheerful disposition, while being sick can lead to sadness or even depression. Likewise, the condition of the soul and spirit also affect the body. Good news can produce in people a feeling of physical exhilaration, while sad news can lead to physical fatigue. The condition of the soul, spirit and body are interconnected. Therefore, God has made provision for all aspects of the human condition and cares about the spiritual and physical health of every individual.

C. The two-fold needs of humans

Humans have two distinct natures. They are both material and spiritual beings. When Adam and Eve sinned, both parts of their nature were affected by their sin. All humanity has inherited this fallen nature as well. Sin has brought corruption to the souls of humans and sickness and disease to their bodies. The complete plan of Christ’s redemption includes the restoration of the spiritual life of individuals as well as the healing of the effects of sin in their physical bodies. In other words, redemption ultimately meets the spiritual and physical needs of humanity. Jesus demonstrated this reality through healing the sick and shedding His blood for the forgiveness of sin. He confirmed this truth in the commission He gave the disciples: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved…they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover” (Mark 16:15-18).

II. The Origin of Sickness

Individuals need a clear understanding of the origin of sickness to comprehend the subject of divine healing. When people view sickness from God’s perspective, they are more able to exercise faith to believe God for healing. This section will show that sickness in the world is ultimately the result of sin and can be directly traced to the influence and power of Satan. Sin clearly expresses itself through sickness in the human body. This does not mean that
every time individuals become sick it is because they have committed sin. However, it does mean that without sin in the world, there would be no sickness. In the following section, we will specifically focus on the historical, physiological and corrective implications of sickness.

A. Historical

Sickness entered the world through the sin of Adam and Eve. If humans, who are made in the image of God, had never sinned, they certainly would not have suffered pain, weakness and disease in their bodies. Paul made it clear that death is the result of sin: “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned…” (Rom. 5:12). Death is sickness matured. Therefore, sickness must also be the result of sin. If sin was not in the world, there would be no sickness. The general principle that sickness is the result of sin and the influence and power of Satan is illustrated in the following:

1. Satan caused Job’s affliction: “So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head” (Job 2:7). Job’s affliction came from Satan, but his healing came from God: “And the Lord restored Job’s losses when he prayed for his friends” (Job 42:10).

2. Those Jesus healed were oppressed by the devil: “...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38).

3. The woman who was infirm for eighteen years was bound by Satan: “So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?” (Luke 13:16).

4. There is enmity between Satan and the offspring of woman: “And I will put enmity Between you [the Serpent] and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed…” (Gen. 3:15).
5. The incestuous man in Corinth was turned over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh: “…deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 5:5). This passage implies that physical affliction would come upon this unrepentant man if he continued to serve Satan with his sinful behavior.

6. Sickness is among the curses for not following God’s commandments: The children of Israel were warned that they would be cursed with various sicknesses and diseases if they sinned against God (Deut. 28:15-35).

7. Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” was from Satan: “…a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me…” (2 Cor. 12:7). Many believe Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” was a physical affliction Paul attributed to Satan.

8. Satan is bound during the Millennium: “He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished” (Rev. 20:2-3). Scripture seems to reveal that during the Millennium there will be no sickness on earth because Satan is bound: “And the inhabitant will not say, ‘I am sick…” (Isa. 33:24); “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain…” (Isa. 11:9); “…The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings…” (Mal. 4:2).

9. Jesus rebuked sickness: “But Simon’s wife’s mother was sick with a high fever, and they made request of Him concerning her. So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her” (Luke 4:38-39). Jesus cast out sickness the same way He cast out demons when He considered an illness to be the work of the devil.

B. Physiological

1. All sickness is ultimately the result of sin

Sin in the world has manifested itself through sickness in the human body. This does not mean that every time individuals become sick it is the
result of their sinning. But it does mean that without sin in the world there would be no sickness.

2. Some sickness and afflictions are the result of specific sins

Jesus said to the man who was healed at the Pool of Bethesda, “Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you” (John 5:14). Certain sins are directly against the body and expose a person to diseases: “There is no soundness in my flesh Because of Your anger, Nor any health in my bones Because of my sin… My wounds are foul and festering Because of my foolishness…For my loins are full of inflammation, And there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and severely broken…My heart pants, my strength fails me; As for the light of my eyes, it also has gone from me” (Ps. 38:3-10). Sin has the power to harm the human body: “For my life is spent with grief, And my years with sighing; My strength fails because of my iniquity, And my bones waste away” (Ps. 31:10).

3. Scientific findings concerning sin and sickness

Science has demonstrated that negative or sinful behaviors such as prolonged anger, hatred, fear or guilt can adversely affect the human body leading to health problems such as a weakened immune system, gastrointestinal issues and cardiovascular ailments. In some instances, a guilty or conflicted conscience can lead to both physical illness and mental anguish. It has also been demonstrated that individuals who have been severely sinned against or abused as children often struggle with psychological ailments such as clinical depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder. It is clear that sin can do harm to the human mind and body.

4. Misuses of the body that lead to sickness

Misuse of the body is sin and can lead to sickness. God gave Israel moral and dietary laws that were for the benefit of their bodies. It seems even the principle of the Sabbath was for the benefit of the human body: “…The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27; see also Heb. 4:1-10). God desires that humans take good care of their bodies
with proper diet, appropriate physical activity and rest. Unhealthy eating, overworking and a lack of proper rest and exercise are all behaviors that can lead to sickness. When individuals don’t take care of their bodies, they are sinning against themselves and God. The body of every Christian belongs to God; it is bought with a price, and it is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Christians should honor God by taking proper care of their bodies.

C. Corrective

1. Because of rebellion against God

Throughout the Old Testament, God warned His children that rebellion would lead to sickness: “If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book...then the Lord will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues—great and prolonged plagues—and serious and prolonged sicknesses. Moreover He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you” (Deut. 28:58-60; see also 28:15, 20-24; Exod. 15:26). The context of these scriptures suggests that God sometimes removes His protection against sickness to demonstrate His displeasure with the sinful and rebellious activity of humans. Ultimately, the purpose of this discipline is to lead people to obedience: “Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the Lord your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers...And the Lord will take away from you all sickness, and will afflict you with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt which you have known...” (Deut. 7:12-16). The goal of God’s discipline is not punishment but repentance: “Fools, because of their transgression, And because of their iniquities, were afflicted...And they drew near to the gates of death. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, And He saved them out of their distresses. He sent His word and healed them, And delivered them from their destructions” (Ps. 107:17-20).

2. Because of rebellion against God-appointed leaders

Sickness sometimes came upon individuals who refused to honor or follow God’s appointed leadership. Plagues came upon the children of Israel
when they disobeyed and murmured against Moses (Num. 16:46-50). Even Miriam’s criticism of her brother Moses led to sickness (Num. 12).

3. Because of failure to rightly discern the Lord’s body

Paul said that in consuming the Lord’s Supper, “…he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep” (1 Cor. 11:28-30). In this case, Paul believed that sickness and even death were the result of Corinthian believers not rightly discerning the Lord’s body in their observance of communion. He added, “For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world” (1 Cor. 11:31-32). Ultimately, God disciplines individuals because He loves them: “My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens…” (Heb. 12:5-6).

Some of the afflictions Christians endure are the result of their own disobedience and sin. In praying for healing, these individuals need to repent of their disobedience and sin. Many individuals have become well the moment they confessed their sin and asked God for forgiveness. Others have been healed when they let go of their hatred and forgave the individuals who had wronged them.

III. The Spiritual Nature of Sickness

Some individuals make too great of a distinction between sin and sickness. They look at sin from a spiritual point of view, while they deal with sickness only through natural means. However, Scripture demonstrates that sickness has a spiritual significance. If sickness has a spiritual component, then the spiritual remedy of divine healing is needed. The following is a brief summation of what has already been presented concerning the spiritual nature of physical sickness:
• Sickness is in the world because of sin and the activity of Satan: Satan is a spiritual being, and sin occurs in the spiritual realm. Therefore, the original source of sickness is spiritual.

• Some sicknesses are the result of specific sin: Certain sicknesses are known to be the direct result of engaging in specific sinful behaviors. These physical ailments have spiritual significance because there is a close relationship between the sickness and the sin.

• Some sickness is a form of discipline or correction: God sometimes allows sickness as a disciplinary measure for those He loves. These sicknesses have spiritual significance because their purpose is to lead individuals to repentance and spiritual transformation.

If sickness has a spiritual cause, then there must also be a spiritual cure. This means that individuals need to look at both the physical and spiritual aspects of sickness. For instance, a physician’s remedy may alleviate the physical symptoms of sickness, but it might not address the spiritual causes behind those physical symptoms. In contrast, a healthy theology of divine healing will examine the physical needs of an individual from a spiritual perspective. For example, a number of passages in the Bible address the relationship between the forgiveness of sins and the healing of diseases:

• “…Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases…” (Ps. 103:3).

• “And the inhabitant will not say, ‘I am sick’; The people who dwell in it will be forgiven their iniquity” (Isa. 33:24).

• “And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven” (James 5:15).

These passages show the interrelationship between the great spiritual blessing of the forgiveness of sins and the ministry of healing. In this case, if
people only focused on a natural, physical remedy to sickness, they would not have the opportunity to experience the true joy of forgiveness and the power of God’s loving touch. Anything that falls short of meeting the spiritual needs behind physical sickness is not a sufficient or complete cure.

IV. Healing and the will of God

To minister and receive divine healing, it is important to have a clear understanding of God’s will concerning healing. The central issue is whether or not it is God’s will to heal individuals who come to Him for healing. The question is not about God’s ability to heal. Every Christian believes that God has the ability to do anything He chooses to accomplish. Even many who make no profession of faith still believe in a God that can perform miracles. The question is not about God’s ability to heal but His willingness to heal those who earnestly seek Him. This is an important issue to address because it will influence the manner in which we pray and seek healing. A poor understanding of God’s will may lead some to accept circumstances that are not part of God’s plan. Instead of praying and believing for healing, individuals might become fatalistic in their thinking, assuming that it is God’s will that they face perpetual misery, sickness and sadness. Unfortunately, some individuals view every state or condition in life as simply the will of God to be accepted. Because of this errant view of God’s will, they do not seek God’s transformational healing. Kenneth MacKenzie addressed this inaccurate notion of God’s will when he wrote the following:

The will of God has been a deep shadow on their pathway, obscuring the light of present blessing with its possible decrees of sorrow. It has been a skeleton in their closet, which they have prayed to stay behind closed doors. It has been a presence from whose cold embrace they have pleaded to be released. Their dread of His will has impelled them to school themselves to be ready for its visitation as for the pestilence that sweeps through the land. The will of God is associated with sick rooms, poverty, loss, bereavement, funerals, the open grave. The will of God,
to such, is always dressed in black. And this conception of His will gives us sickly Christians, weak faith, empty joy, puny conquests. With many, no thought of the will of God is given until some calamity presses into their lives and then they awake to such sad surmisings as we have noted. When we say, in prayer, “Thy will be done,” are we always impressed with its significance? God’s will is not a vindictive judge, exercising the keen scrutiny of inevitable retribution. Ah, how we have placed a libel upon our Father’s great heartedness in all these miserable thoughts of Him! His will is a blessed companion, which illumines our way, cheers our spirits, makes glad our lives and brings fruitfulness to all that we do.²

So what is God’s will concerning healing? Is He willing to heal, and is healing a part of His plan for humanity today? It is important to find the scriptural answers to these questions so that individuals can exercise the proper faith for healing. F.F. Bosworth stated: “It is impossible to boldly claim by faith a blessing which we are not sure God offers, because the power of God can be claimed only where the will of God is known... Faith begins where the will of God is known.”³ Some, when petitioning God for healing, add the words “if it be Your will.” A man with leprosy came to Christ with a similar petition saying, “…‘Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.’ Then He [Jesus] put out His hand and touched him, saying, ‘I am willing; be cleansed.’ Immediately the leprosy left him” (Luke 5:12-13). The “I am willing” of Christ answered the “If You are willing” of the leper. Christ’s response to the man with leprosy demonstrates that it is God’s will to heal those who seek Him by faith. In another instance, a man brought to Jesus his son who had been tormented by a mute and violent spirit from childhood. After the disciples were unable to cast out the spirit, the man said to Jesus, “‘But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.’ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, ‘Lord, I believe; help my

³ Fred Francis Bosworth, Christ the Healer: Message on Divine Healing (Miami Beach, 1948) 7th edition, 33.
unbelief’” (Mark 9:22-24). In response to the man’s confession of faith, Jesus cast out the “deaf and dumb spirit” from the boy and restored him to health (Mark 9:25-27). In both these instances, Jesus demonstrated that it is not necessary to ask God “if it be Your will” when seeking healing. Instead, individuals should exercise the faith they have been given by trusting the leading of Jesus and receiving the healing He provides. Scripture states, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8). Therefore, the sick can approach Jesus with the same faith and expectation today as they did in the Bible. It is the will of Jesus to heal.

Every sincere Christian should want God’s will for his or her life. The Word of God declares that healing has been purchased and promised to every believer. God is unchanging; therefore, believers can and should boldly ask the Lord to heal them on the basis of God’s promises in Scripture and God’s leading through the Holy Spirit. It is not necessary to doubt what God has promised. Just as individuals pray “Lord save us,” they should also pray “Lord heal us.” There is no need to add “if it is Your will.” It is God’s will to save and God’s will to heal. To effectively pray, individuals must exercise the faith they have been given.

God is good. He brings blessings and healing to His children. John wrote, “Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers” (3 John 1:2). Paul most assuredly had the whole blessing of God in mind when he wrote, “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:23). It is God’s desire to heal; therefore, His children should earnestly seek to receive His healing.

The Scripture is full of examples concerning God’s will and healing. Throughout Scripture, in every age, physical health and healing have been part of God’s plan for His people. Those who believed God’s word and obeyed God’s promises enjoyed the blessing of healing. The following section will look at the provision God has made for the healing of His people throughout every period of recorded human history.
V. Scriptural Support of Divine Healing

A. Divine healing in the Old Testament

There are many significant examples of healing in the Old Testament. The first recorded case of divine healing in the Bible revolves around the life of Abraham: “So Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants. Then they bore children; for the Lord had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham’s wife” (Gen. 20:17-18). Shortly after the Israelites escaped from Egypt and crossed the Red Sea, before they began their long journey to the Promised Land, God gave the Israelites what some refer to as the Old Testament covenant of divine healing:

There He made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there He tested them, and said, “If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you” (Exod. 15:25-26).

The words “there He made a statute and an ordinance” indicate that this was more than a passing promise for an individual situation. This was to be a statute and ordinance incorporated into the very life of God’s people. In fact, He put one of His redemptive names, Yahweh Rapha, right into the promise. Literally, God said, “I am the LORD your Healer.” God’s promise to heal still applies today, for God’s name is Yahweh, which is literally translated “I AM” or “I AM WHO I AM.” God’s name is not “I WAS” as though to indicate His promises are left in the past. He is “I AM,” indicating His great and eternally unchanging nature. God revealed His name as Yahweh to Moses, Pharaoh and the children of Israel:

Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What
is His name?’ what shall I say to them?” And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you’” (Exod. 3:13-14).

Jesus said this same great name when speaking to the Jews: “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8:58). Hebrews states, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8). From these scriptures, it is clear that it is God’s will to heal the sick and fulfill His promises. Psalm 105:37 testifies to this truth: “He also brought them out with silver and gold, And there was none feeble among His tribes.”

The Old Testament gives various examples of rebellion leading to sickness. Yet even in these stories, we see God powerfully fulfilling His promise to heal. When Miriam grieved the Lord by criticizing the leadership of her brother Moses, she became leprous (Num. 12:1-10). However, when Miriam repented, and Moses prayed to God to heal her, she was delivered (Num. 12:11-14). In response to her rebellion, God showed that He was still Yahweh Rapha, the LORD your Healer. A similar event happened when a plague began to destroy a great number of Israelites who had sinned against God by rebelling against the leadership of Moses and Aaron (Num. 16:41-50). After they repented, the Lord showed His mercy by healing them and stopping the plague.

Later in their journey to go around the land of Edom, the Israelites “became very discouraged on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses…So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died” (Num. 21:4-6). Once again, the people repented, and God healed all who looked at the bronze serpent, which Moses had made at God’s command (Num. 21:7-9). Jesus used this story of the bronze serpent to explain His ministry: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:14). As God healed the Israelites in the wilderness, Christ became the healer of all who look to Him.
The following are other Old Testament scriptures that show God's willingness to heal the sick:

- “So you shall serve the Lord your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you” (Exod. 23:25).

- “And the Lord will take away from you all sickness, and will afflict you with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt which you have known, but will lay them on all those who hate you” (Deut. 7:15).

- “…that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them” (Deut. 30:20).

- “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the Lord delivers him out of them all” (Ps. 34:19).

- “Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place, No evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling” (Ps. 91:9-10).

- “Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases…” (Ps. 103:2-3).

- “He sent His word and healed them, And delivered them from their destructions” (Ps. 107:20).

- “Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones” (Prov. 3:7-8).
Other Old Testament examples of healing:

- Miriam healed from leprosy (Num. 12:12-15)
- People healed from the plague (2 Sam. 24:25; Num. 16)
- A widow’s son raised from the dead (1 Kings 17:17-24)
- The Shunamite woman’s son raised from the dead (2 Kings 4:18-37)
- Naaman healed from leprosy (2 Kings 5:1-15)
- Hezekiah’s life extended fifteen years (2 Kings 20:1-11)
- Job healed of his sore affliction (Job 42:10-13)

These scriptures and others demonstrate that Yahweh was the physician and healer of the Israelites. Even though there are many examples of God healing in the Old Testament, some may ask: “Does God’s provision of healing apply only to the nation of Israel or to all nations?” “Is this provision of healing available today?” The answer to these important questions is found in the study of the compound names of Yahweh. The names of God express His character and purpose. Some aspects of God’s plan never change because they are manifestations of His very nature. Some activities of God never cease because they are a result of His very character. In other words, God does what He does because He is who He is: “For I am the LORD: I do not change…” (Mal. 3:6). James expressed the unchanging character of God this way: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” (James 1:17). The name Yahweh is the name God uses when addressing His covenant with His people. It expresses that He is the eternal, self-existent, unchanging God. The Bible uses seven different compound names that include the name Yahweh. These names reveal the nature of God’s covenant with Israel. However, because God never changes, these names also reveal His
The Doctrine of Divine Healing • Chapter Seven

redemptive relationship with His people today. The following are the seven compound, redemptive names of Yahweh:

- **Yahweh Jireh**: “The Lord will provide” (Gen. 22:14)
- **Yahweh Nissi**: “The Lord our Banner” (Exod. 17:8-15)
- **Yahweh Shalom**: “The Lord our Peace” (Judg. 6:24)
- **Yahweh Raah**: “The Lord our Shepherd” (Ps. 23:1)
- **Yahweh Tsidkenu**: “The Lord our Righteousness” (Jer. 23:6)
- **Yahweh Shammah**: “The Lord is Present” (Ezek. 48:35)
- **Yahweh Rapha**: “The Lord our Healer” (Ex. 15:26)

The nature and character of Yahweh is the same as the nature and character of Jesus. The Old Testament prophesied this truth concerning the coming of Messiah: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord [Yahweh]; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God’” (Isa. 40:3). The New Testament reveals that John the Baptist fulfilled this prophecy: “For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight”’ (Matt. 3:3). John understood that “the way of the Lord” [Yahweh] prophesied in Isaiah was to be fulfilled and revealed by Jesus. Jeremiah also confirms the unity of the ministry of Yahweh and the ministry of Jesus: “‘Behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord [Yahweh], ‘That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS [Yahweh Tsidkenu]” (Jer. 23:5-6). The New Testament reveals that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of this prophecy. Jesus is the King who reigns on the throne of David. Jesus is the Lord our righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30).
Yahweh never changes. His name reveals that what He has been He will always be. Each of the seven compound names of Yahweh reveal some aspect of God’s eternal relationship with His people. Jesus Christ also reveals these same aspects to His church. The following are parallels between God’s work with Israel and God’s work with the church through Christ Jesus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yahweh to Israel</th>
<th>Meaning / Emphasis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yahweh Jireh</strong> “The-Lord-Will-Provide” (Gen. 22:14)</td>
<td>Jesus our provider: “And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yahweh Nissi</strong> “The-Lord-Is-My-Banner” (Exod. 17:15)</td>
<td>Jesus our banner: “…his banner over me was love” (Song of Sol. 2:4). “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends” (John 15:13).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yahweh Shalom</strong> “The-Lord-Is-Peace” (Judg. 6:24)</td>
<td>Jesus our peace: “For He Himself is our peace…” (Eph. 2:14).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yahweh Raah</strong> “The Lord is my shepherd” (Ps. 23:1)</td>
<td>Jesus is our shepherd: “I am the good shepherd” (John 10:11).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yahweh Tsidkenu</strong> “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jer. 23:6)</td>
<td>Jesus is our righteousness: “…Christ Jesus, who became for us…righteousness…” (1 Cor. 1:30).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yahweh Shammah</strong> “THE LORD IS THERE” (Ezek. 48:35)</td>
<td>Jesus is there/present: “For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you’” (Heb. 13:5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yahweh Rapha</strong> “The Lord who heals” (Exod. 15:26)</td>
<td>Jesus is our healer: “And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven” (James 5:15).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There can be no doubt that it was God’s will to heal His people in Old Testament times. However, it is important to remember that God has remained constant throughout all the ages. In Christ, God is still our provider, our banner, our peace, our shepherd, our ever-present one, our righteousness and our healer. God has demonstrated His unchanging nature through His
revealed names and in the ministry of Jesus Christ. God’s promise of healing was for the Israelites, and it is also for the church today. For in Christ, God is the great physician: “…the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8).

B. Healing in the ministry of Jesus

The following section will look at healing in the New Testament through the ministry of Jesus. There is certainly no better way to find God’s will regarding physical healing than by closely studying the ministry and teachings of Jesus. Jesus expressed the Father’s will. In His ministry on earth, Jesus only spoke and did the will of God. Jesus said, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me” (John 6:38). Jesus Christ literally embodied and lived the will of God the Father. Therefore, when Jesus healed the multitudes that came to Him, He was revealing the Father’s will to heal. Jesus said, “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works” (John 14:10). Therefore, when Jesus healed the sick, He was revealing God’s will for humanity. Thomas Holdcroft, concluded:

A total of twenty-seven individual miracles of healing credited to Jesus are to be found in the Scriptures, as well as ten occasions recording the general healing of large numbers of people. His ministry dealt with a wide variety of human ailments: demon possession, sickness, disease, accident, and even death... In each instance, Jesus freely and frankly presented Himself as an object of faith to be sincerely believed. In the face of such an impressive ministry of healing, it is truly remarkable that He should promise His disciples, “Greater works than these shall [ye] do” (John 14:12). In ministering to physical needs, our Lord healed by a word, by a touch, and by physical anointing; He healed those near at hand and at a distance; He healed on the Sabbath; He healed both individuals and groups at large. Among the twenty-seven instances of healing, there are seven cases in which a demon was cast out; on eleven
occasions friends brought the sufferer; on six occasions the patient himself made an appeal; on three occasions our Lord performed the healing while at a distance. He healed eight persons by a touch; He healed seven by speaking a word; three were healed in a ceremony in which He spat and touched the patient, and in one instance He healed by effecting a gradual cure (John 4:52—“He began to amend,” ASV).⁴

The following are lists of the healings performed by Jesus during His ministry on earth recorded in the four Gospels:

### Healings Narrated in One Gospel Only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incident of Healing</th>
<th>Matthew</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Luke</th>
<th>John</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two blind men</td>
<td>9:27-31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mute demoniac</td>
<td>9:32-33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaf and mute man</td>
<td>7:31-37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blind man</td>
<td>8:22-26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow’s dead son</td>
<td>7:11-16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman bent over</td>
<td>13:11-17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man with dropsy</td>
<td>14:1-6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten lepers</td>
<td>17:11-19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severed ear of servant of high priest</td>
<td>22:50-51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nobleman’s sick son</td>
<td>4:46-54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man with infirmity at pool of Bethesda</td>
<td>5:1-15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man born blind</td>
<td>9:1-38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lazarus dead and in the tomb</td>
<td>11:1-45</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Healings Narrated in Two Gospels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incident of Healing</th>
<th>Matthew</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Luke</th>
<th>John</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonic in synagogue</td>
<td></td>
<td>1:23-27</td>
<td>4:33-36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centurion's paralyzed servant</td>
<td>8:5-13</td>
<td></td>
<td>7:1-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blind and mute demoniac</td>
<td>12:22-23</td>
<td></td>
<td>11:14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter</td>
<td>15:21-28</td>
<td>7:24-30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Magdalene demonized</td>
<td></td>
<td>16:9</td>
<td>8:2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Healings Narrated in Three Gospels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incident of Healing</th>
<th>Matthew</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Luke</th>
<th>John</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leprous man</td>
<td>8:2-4</td>
<td>1:40-45</td>
<td>5:12-15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man with a legion of demons</td>
<td>8:28-34</td>
<td>5:1-20</td>
<td>8:26-39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paralytic man</td>
<td>9:2-8</td>
<td>2:1-12</td>
<td>5:17-26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman with issue of blood</td>
<td>9:20-22</td>
<td>5:25-34</td>
<td>8:43-48</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jairus' dead daughter</td>
<td>9:23-26</td>
<td>5:35-43</td>
<td>8:49-56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child with a demon</td>
<td>17:14-21</td>
<td>9:14-29</td>
<td>9:37-43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blind Bartimeaus (two blind men in Matthew)</td>
<td>20:29-34</td>
<td>10:46-52</td>
<td>18:35-43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to these examples, there are other occasions when Jesus healed many at one time (see Matt. 4:23-25; 8:16; 12:15; 14:14; 14:34-36; 15:30; 19:2; 21:14; Luke 6:17-19). In these instances, “multitudes” came or were brought to Jesus for healing. Scripture repeatedly uses certain phrases to describe the vast extent of Jesus’ healing ministry: He “healed all who were sick,” “healed them all,” “healed their sick,” “as many as touched it [the hem of His garment] were made perfectly well.” Although this list of miracles is incredibly impressive, it is not exhaustive. John noted: “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book” (John 20:30). In fact, John concluded his gospel with
this powerful testimony: “And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen” (John 21:25).

The fact that Jesus healed every person who came to Him or was brought to Him for healing is a remarkable truth worthy of deeper consideration. In addition to dealing with a great variety of individual needs, Jesus also had a multitude of sick people regularly brought to Him for healing. Even so, He never turned anyone away. He never refused to heal anyone. He never told individuals that it was not His will or the Father’s will to heal them. In every recorded instance, Jesus healed those who came to Him or were brought to Him for healing. It is clear from the testimony of Scripture that Christians are to seek and expect the healing touch of Jesus.

C. Healing in the ministry of the disciples

Healing was and is such a crucial part of God’s will that He extended the ministry of healing to the disciples of Jesus, giving them power to heal the sick, raise the dead and cast out demons. While Jesus ministered in the flesh on earth, His ministry influence was limited to being present with those needing healing or seeking healing for someone else. To expand the influence of His ministry, the disciples were given the ability to heal the sick: “And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease” (Matt. 10:1).

1. The twelve given power and sent out

And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease… These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying…“And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise
the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give” (Matt. 10:1-8; see also Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6).

2. The seventy given power and sent out

After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. Then He said...“And heal the sick there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you” (Luke 10:1-9).

The powerful results of this commission were quite evident: “Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, ’Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name’” (Luke 10:17). Jesus was not surprised by this report:

And He [Jesus] said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:18-20).

Jesus’ instructions to His disciples reveal that it is God’s will to heal not just a few but many. Jesus told the disciples, “Freely you have received, freely give” (Matt. 10:8). In other words, they were to freely minister the power they had been given to anyone seeking healing. It seems clear that the power given the twelve and the seventy is also the same power Jesus promised the church would receive on the Day of Pentecost (John 14:16-17; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8).

D. Healing in the early church

Luke began the book of Acts by mentioning his former book, the gospel of Luke, in which he gave an account of “all that Jesus began both to do and
teach…” (Acts 1:1). The phrase “all that Jesus began both to do and teach” certainly includes the ministry of healing. It also implies that what Jesus “began” to do He continued to do after returning to the Father. The book of Acts is an inspired account of the continued ministry of Jesus expressed through Spirit-empowered believers. While the gospel of Luke recorded the miracles Jesus performed while He lived on earth, the book of Acts recorded the miracles Jesus performed through the church, which is His body. Acts shows that Jesus continued to heal the sick through the church after His ascension.

All Christians are members of the body of Christ. Jesus Christ is the motivating, living head of His body. Therefore, what Christ did while He was bodily present on the earth He now does through the members of His spiritual body. For example, when Peter and John stood before a lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, Peter said, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk” (Acts 3:6). Peter then took the lame man “…by the hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength” (Acts 3:7). Through Peter, a member of Christ’s body, Jesus reached out and healed the lame man. Through Peter, Jesus ministered healing in the same way as if He had been physically present. In response to this miracle, the multitudes rushed to Solomon’s Porch “greatly amazed” at the miracle. Peter said to the people: “Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this?...The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus...whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know” (Acts 3:12-16). By this statement, Peter was proclaiming, “Jesus is alive. He is not dead. Therefore, He is still manifesting the same power and miracles He performed before He was crucified.” This is the true picture of Christian ministry: the living Christ, ministering healing through His body, the church. The following are examples of healing in the book of Acts:

- The lame man healed through Peter (Acts 3:1-10)
- Many healed through Peter (Acts 5:12-16)
- Wonders and miracles performed through Stephen (Acts 6:8)
• Revival in Samaria through Philip (Acts 8:5-8)

• Aeneas healed through Peter (Acts 9:32-35)

• Tabitha (Dorcas) raised from the dead through Peter (Acts 9:36-42)

• Crippled man at Lystra healed through Paul (Acts 14:8-10)

• Paul raised up at Lystra through the disciples (Acts 14:19-20)

• Slave girl freed from spirit of divination through Paul (Acts 16:16-18)

• God worked unusual miracles through Paul (Acts 19:11-12)

• Eutychus brought back to life through Paul (Acts 20:7-12)

• Father of Publius and the sick on the island of Malta healed through Paul (Acts 28:8-9)

This same provision for healing that we see in the book of Acts is still available for people today. Christ died and rose from the grave. He is alive today. He has poured out the Holy Spirit to empower believers to continue to carry out His Great Commission. Sin still ravages the world today causing pain, sickness and suffering. Many are in need of healing. The Bible gives no indication that God has ever altered His will concerning healing. God was, is and will always be Yahweh Rapha, “the Lord who heals you” (Exod. 15:26).

VI. Divine Healing through the Church Age

Dr. Gerhard Uhlhorn said, “Witnesses who are above suspicion leave no room for doubt that the miraculous powers of the apostolic age continued to
operate at least into the third century.”

Dr. A.J. Gordon made the following important comment concerning Uhlhorn’s observation:

Prove that Miracles were wrought, for example, in the second century after Christ, and no reason can be thereafter urged why they might not be wrought in the nineteenth [and we add “the twentieth”] century. The apostolic age, it must be admitted, was a peculiarly favored one. So long as the men were still living who had seen the Lord, and had companied with Him during His earthly ministry, there were possible secrets of power in their possession that a later generation might not have. It is easy to see, therefore, that this period might be especially distinguished by the gifts of the Spirit. And yet the Savior seems to be careful to teach that there would be an augmenting rather than a diminishing of supernatural energy after His departure.

“But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.” “Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.” But, conceding certain marked advantages possessed by the immediate followers of Christ, if we find in history that there is no abrupt termination of miracles with expiration of the apostolic age, then we must begin to raise the question why there should be any termination at all, so long as the Church remains, and the ministry of the Spirit is perpetuated.

History shows that healing by the direct power of God continued through the early church age right up to present times. The testimonies of the church fathers and revered church leaders reveal that healing continued beyond the New Testament age.

A. Justin Martyr (A.D. 100-165)

In A.D. 165, more than sixty-five years after the death of John, the last of the original twelve apostles, Justin Martyr wrote the following:

For numberless demoniacs throughout the whole world and in your city, many of our Christian men, exorcising them [casting out] in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, have healed, and do heal, rendering helpless and driving the possessing devils out of men, though they could not be cured by all the other exorcists, and those who used incantations and drugs.\(^7\)

B. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-215)

Clement of Alexandria wrote:

Let them [young ministers], therefore, with fasting and prayer, make their intercessions, and not with well arranged, and fifty ordered words of learning, but as men who have received the gift of healing confidently, to the glory of God.\(^8\)

C. Irenaeus (early 2nd century-A.D. 202)

In A.D. 192, Irenaeus declared the following:

Those who are in truth the disciples receiving grace from Him do in His name perform miracles so as to promote the welfare of others, according to the gift which each has received from him…Others still heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yea moreover, as I have said, the dead even have been raised up, and remained among us for years.\(^9\)

\(^7\) Justin Martyr, *Apol.* 1, Ch. 6, as quoted in Gordon, 60.
\(^8\) Clement of Alexandria, *Epis. C.*, XII, as quoted in Gordon, 61.
\(^9\) Irenaeus, *Versus Heretics*, 1, Ch. 34. as quoted in Gordon, 60.
D. Tertullian (A.D. 155-240)

In A.D. 216, Tertullian wrote:

For the clerk of one of them who was liable to be thrown upon the ground by an evil spirit was set free from his affliction, as was also the relative of another, and the little boy of a third. And how many men of rank, to say nothing of the common people have been delivered from devils and healed of diseases.\(^{10}\)

E. Origen (A.D. 185-254)

In A.D. 250, Origen testified to the following:

And some give evidence of their having received through their faith a marvelous power by the cures which they perform, invoking no other name over those who need their help than that of the God of all things, and of Jesus...For by these means we too have seen many persons freed from grievous calamities, and from distractions of mind, madness, and countless other ills which could be cured neither by men or devils.\(^{11}\)

F. Theodore of Mopsuestia (A.D. 350-428)

Theodore of Mopsuestia declared, “Many heathen amongst us are being healed by Christians from whatever sickness they have, so abundant are miracles in our midst.”\(^{12}\)


Augustine was a missionary sent from Rome to establish the English church. So many miraculous events occurred during Augustine’s work that in A.D. 601,

\(^{10}\) Tertullian, Ad. Scap., IV, 4, as quoted in Gordon, 60-61.
\(^{11}\) Origen, Contra Celsurn B., III, Ch. 24, as quoted in Gordon, 61.
\(^{12}\) Theodore of Mopsueste, Christlied: Modern Doubt, p. 321, as quoted in Gordon, 61.
Gregory the Great, the bishop of Rome, sent Augustine a letter admonishing him not to become prideful because of the miracles that were occurring through his ministry: “I know, most loving brother, that Almighty God, by means of your affection, shows great miracles in the nation which he has chosen. Wherefore it is necessary that you rejoice with fear, and tremble whilst you rejoice, on account of the same heavenly gift; viz., that you may rejoice because the souls of the English are by outward miracles drawn to inward grace.”

H. Church Leaders of the Middle Ages or Dark Ages (6th -14th century)

Scholars have used the term Dark Ages to refer to the cultural, economic, demographic and moral decline that occurred between the 6th and 14th century. After Gregory the Great until the Reformation, the world went through a dark age, both in respect to the progress of spiritual things and the advancement of learning. Although God has certainly been at work in every age, there have been ages when church leadership has been more resistant to God’s miraculous power. Speaking of the period after Constantine, John Wesley said: “The grand reason why the miraculous gifts were so soon withdrawn was not only that Faith and Holiness were well nigh lost, but that dry formal orthodox men began to ridicule whatever gifts they had not in themselves, and to decry them all as either madness or impostures.” However, even during these dark times, there were still people who believed in and made room for God's miraculous power.

I. Peter Waldo (A.D. 1140-1218)

Peter Waldo was a mendicant preacher who founded a deeply spiritual Christian sect that eventually became known as the Waldenses. The following is an excerpt from The Confessions of Faith of the Waldenses:

Concerning this anointing of the sick, we hold it as an article of faith and profess sincerely from the heart that sick persons, when they ask it, may lawfully be anointed

with the anointing oil by one who joins with them in praying that it may be efficacious to the healing of the body, according to the design and end and effect mentioned by the apostles; and we profess that such an anointing performed according to the apostolic design and practice, will be healing and profitable.\textsuperscript{15}

J. Count Zinzendorf (A.D. 1700-1760)

Count Zinzendorf was a bishop of the Moravian movement [United Brethren] and a close friend of John Wesley. He was a deeply sincere man with a burden for world evangelization. Zinzendorf said the following concerning the church he served:

To believe against hope is the root of the gift of Miracles, and I owe this testimony to our Beloved Church, that Apostolic powers are there manifested. We have undeniable proofs thereof. In the healing of maladies in themselves incurable, such as Cancer, Consumption, and when the patient was in the agonies of death, all by means of a prayer or word.\textsuperscript{16}

K. John Wesley (A.D. 1703-1791)

John Wesley was a learned man and an Oxford University graduate. He was instrumental in leading a great revival that saved England from moral and civil ruin. He is an incredibly respected figure in history, both in the religious and secular realms. He gave credible and undeniable witness of God’s mighty power to heal. He also testified to the truth that the day of miracles has not passed.

The following excerpts are from John Wesley’s diary:

\textsuperscript{15}Johannis Lukawitz Waldensin Confession, 1431, as quoted in Gordon, 65.  
\textsuperscript{16}A. Bost, History of the United Brethren, 1, 17, as quoted in Gordon, 66-67.
March 19, 1741: “Judith Williams, who was in grievous pain of both body and mind. After a short time of prayer, we left her. But her pain was gone…her body so strengthened that she immediately rose, and the next day went abroad” (II, 437).

Oct. 3, 1756: “My disorder returned as violent as ever; but I regarded it not while I was performing the service at Snowfields in the morning, nor afterwards at Spitalfields; till I went to the Lord’s Table to administer. A thought came into my mind, “Why do I not apply to God in the beginning rather than the end of an illness?’ I did so, and found immediate relief…”

Sept. 2, 1781: “I believe it my duty to relate here what some will esteem a most notable instance of enthusiasm. Be it so or not, I have the plain fact. In an hour after we left Taunton, one of the chaise-horses was on a sudden so lame that he could hardly set his foot to the ground. It being impossible to procure any human help, I knew no remedy but prayer. Immediately the lameness was gone, and he went just as he did before.”

This brief review of history demonstrates that a great array of witnesses have experienced and testified to the healing power of God. Throughout the Old and New Testament, God has shown His desire and ability to heal His people. From the early church fathers throughout every age, God has healed the sick. The Bible, history and innumerable present day miracles bear witness to this truth: Yahweh Rapha is the “Lord that heals.” He is “the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8).

17 Wesley: II, 437; IV, 188; VI, 334.
VII. Divine Healing and the Atonement

As mentioned previously in the study of soteriology, the word “atonement” literally means “covering.” It is an Old Testament word that signifies the covering the Israelites received when they brought to the priests the prescribed offerings for their sins. The blood of Jesus Christ was shed not merely for the covering but the remission of sins (Heb. 10:1-18). Therefore, the word atonement is also used to refer to the entire provision of salvation God made for sinners through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. It is this larger sense that will be addressed in the discussion of divine healing and the atonement.

To understand God’s will with regard to healing, it is important to examine the relationship between divine healing and the atonement. It is clear that Christ did heal and is able to heal those who are sick. The question remains: “Did Christ make special provision for the healing of the body through His atoning sacrifice on Calvary’s cross?” A further study of Scripture demonstrates that healing is part of the atonement. Thomas Holdcroft wrote, “Healing is not so much an end in itself; it may rather be seen as the appropriation of one more vital aspect of the total victory of Jesus Christ.”

A. The correlation in the Bible between healing and the forgiveness of sins

There are other passages in the Old and New Testament that demonstrate a close relationship between healing and forgiveness. The psalmist wrote, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases” (Ps. 103:2-3). James stated, “And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven” (James 5:15). Jesus said, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved…And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name…they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover” (Mark 16:16-18). Notice that the same believing that is attached to the promise of salvation is also joined to the promise of healing.
for the sick. The promise of salvation is for every age; therefore, the signs that “follow those who believe” are available in every age as well. Forgiveness of sins and healing are both available through the atonement of Jesus.

B. Isaiah 53

Isaiah 53 is the great atonement chapter of the Old Testament. It teaches that Christ bore our sicknesses and sins on Calvary. Through the eye of prophecy, Isaiah described the events that were to take place on Calvary hundreds of years after he prophesied. Verse four reads: “Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows…” The word translated “griefs” is the Hebrew kholee, which means “sickness.” Deuteronomy 7:5 states: “And the Lord will take away from you all sickness [kholee]…” Kholee is translated “sickness” throughout the Old Testament (Deut. 28:61; 1 Kings 17:17; 2 Kings 1:2; 8:8; 2 Chron. 16:12; 21:15). The word translated “sorrows” in Isaiah 53:4 is the Hebrew makob, which is translated “pain” in several scriptures (Job 14:22; 33:19; Jer. 51:8).

Therefore a literal translation of Isaiah 53:4 is: “Surely he has borne our sickness and carried our pain.” Rotherham’s translation reads: “Yet surely our sicknesses he carried, and as for our pains he bore the burden of them.” Young’s Literal Translation reads: “Surely our sicknesses he hath borne, and our pains he hath carried them.” The footnotes of the RSV and NASB also give the words “sickness” and “pains” as a possible translation.

It is also important to notice the verbs in Isaiah 53:4. The word “borne” is the Hebrew verb nasa, and the word “carried” is the Hebrew sabal. The verb nasa means to bear in the sense of suffering punishment for something. “If a person sins…he bears [nasa] guilt” (Lev. 5:1). Verse twelve of the Isaiah 53 prophecy states: “And He [Christ] was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore [nasa] the sin of many…” Christ bore the sins of humanity vicariously as a substitute for all humans. In the same way, He also vicariously bore the sickness of humanity. The verb “carried” is sabal, which also means to bear something as a penalty or discipline: “Our fathers sinned and are no more, But we bear [sabal] their iniquities” (Lam. 5:7). Verse eleven of Isaiah 53 states, “He [Christ] shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied…For
He shall bear [sabal] their iniquities.” Christ bore the iniquities of humans vicariously, as a substitute. In the same way, He also bore the pains of humans (Isa. 53:4).

Matthew, through the leading of the Holy Spirit, confirmed this translation and interpretation when he quoted Isaiah 53:4: “When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: ‘He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses’” (Matt. 8:16-17).

Isaiah 53 continues to describe the scene about Calvary in verse five: “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.” The word “stripes” can be literally translated “bruise.” This signifies the entire wounding or bruising of Christ including the stripes that were laid on His back, the buffeting, the plucking out of His beard, the nails driven into His hands and feet, the crown of thorns placed on His brow and the spear that was thrust into His side. All of Christ’s bodily sufferings were for the purpose of bringing forgiveness and healing to all humans. Peter confirmed this in his quote of Isaiah 53:5: “…who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed” (1 Pet. 2:24). Peter was referring to physical healing because he used the Greek verb iaomai, which is always associated with physical healing and physical ailments when used in the New Testament.

C. The Passover and the Lord’s Supper

The Passover and the Lord’s Supper both teach that God has made provision not only for spiritual deliverance but also for bodily health and strength. The blood of a lamb, which was slain on the night of the first Passover in Egypt, was sprinkled on the lintel and the doorposts of every Hebrew house. This was to ensure the sparing of the firstborn son of every household, who ultimately represented the entire family. Each family ate the body of the lamb so that they could receive physical nourishment and strength for the journey that was before
The significance of the Passover is carried on for Christians in the observance of the Lord’s Supper (the communion service). It is interesting to note that in celebrating the Lord’s Supper, Jesus made a distinction between the bread and the cup that signify His body and His blood. It seems He wanted His followers to realize that there was a difference in the provision made by each. As in the Passover observance, the blood is for the forgiveness of sin and the sparing of life, while the body is for the health and strength of the individual.

Paul seemed to have this great truth in mind when he wrote to the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 11:17-30). Paul rebuked the Corinthian church for celebrating their feast of the Lord’s Supper in an unworthy manner. It seems some were consuming all the food and drink and leaving others with nothing. Paul warned them: “For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep” (1 Cor. 11:29-30). Paul believed that many were weak and sick among the Corinthians because they were “not discerning the Lord’s body.” The sacrifice of the Lord’s body has provided physical strength and healing for humanity. Although healing is provided in the atoning work of Jesus Christ, believers must still appropriate by faith what Christ has made available.

**VIII. Why Jesus Healed the Sick**

Theologians have given many explanations for why Jesus healed the sick during His physical ministry on earth. Some of these explanations are scriptural, while others are more philosophical. Certain explanations have scriptural validity, while other explanations are based on human reasoning. Some philosophical reasons have been promoted to erroneously argue against God continuing to heal after the formation of the New Testament. The following section will look at two philosophic reasons and six biblical explanations given for why Jesus healed the sick.
A. Jesus healed the sick to demonstrate His power

Some believe Jesus performed miraculous healings primarily to demonstrate His power. Although Jesus’ miracles were powerful, He did not go around performing miracles just to show that He was able. In fact, Jesus did not do miracles to show His power but to honor the will of the Father. Jesus had all power in heaven and on earth, but He only performed miracles in response to the Father’s leading. Certainly there was a purpose behind each miracle far more important than the mere show of power.

B. Jesus healed to initiate the preaching of the gospel

Some argue that Jesus healed mainly as a way to initiate the preaching of the gospel. These individuals believe the miracles of Jesus were needed only to validate the preaching of the gospel until the New Testament was written. Many with this view believe that after the New Testament era, miracles were no longer needed because Scripture now contains all the truth necessary to understand and follow God. In other words, this theory suggests that miracles have ceased because they are no longer necessary to reveal God’s purposes or validate His gospel. This idea simply has no scriptural support. It is true that performing great miracles did draw multitudes to Jesus. However, it is questionable that Jesus did these mighty works principally to draw crowds or solely to validate His preaching. In fact, on more than one occasion, He commanded the person He had just healed to tell no one about the miracle (Matt. 8:4; 12:15-16; Mark 7:36; 8:26; Luke 8:56). On other occasions, Jesus led the needy out of the town, away from the populace, before He healed them (Mark 7:33; 8:23). Nowhere in Scripture does it say that it is God’s will for miracles of healing to cease.

C. Jesus healed to prove His deity

There is some scriptural basis that Jesus proved His deity through miracles of healing. When the scribes questioned Jesus’ ability to forgive sins, He said to them, “For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise and walk?’ But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins—then He said to the paralytic, ‘Arise, take up your bed,
and go to your house’” (Matt. 9:5-6). This same basic thought is suggested in the interaction between Jesus and the disciples of John the Baptist:

And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them” (Matt. 11:2-5).

This does not seem to be the most important reason Jesus healed the sick. Although Jesus healed many, His miracles only convinced a very few that He was their Messiah, the Son of God. Multitudes cried out while He was hanging on the cross, “If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him...for He said, ‘I am the Son of God’” (Matt. 27:42-43).

D. Jesus healed to fulfill the promises of Scripture

“And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: ‘He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses’” (Matt. 8:16-17).

E. Jesus healed to reveal His will

And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. And He said to the man who had the withered hand, “Step forward”...And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other (Mark 3:1-5; see also Luke 14:1-6).
F. Jesus healed to manifest the works of God

“Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him’” (John 9:3). Before raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it” (John 11:4).

G. Jesus healed because of His compassion

On at least six occasions the Bible records that Jesus healed because He had compassion on those who were afflicted. This was true of vast multitudes (Matt. 9:35-36; 14:14), two blind men (Matt. 20:34), a leper (Mark 1:41), the maniac of Gadara (Mark 5:19) and the widow of Nain whose son Jesus raised from the dead (Luke 7:13). F.F. Bosworth pointed out the following concerning the compassion of Jesus:

Modern theology magnifies the power of God more than it magnifies His compassion…But the Bible reverses this, and magnifies His willingness to use His power more than it does the power itself. In no place does the Bible say that “God is power,” but it does say, that “God is love.” It is not faith in God’s power that secures His blessings, but faith in His love and in His will.¹⁹

It is not what God can do, but what we know He yearns to do, that inspires faith.²⁰

Hundreds needing healing have come or written to us, saying, concerning their need of deliverance, “the Lord is able;” but their teaching, as well as their lack of teaching, have kept them from knowing that the Lord is willing. How much faith does it take to say “the Lord is able?” The

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¹⁹ Bosworth, 63-64.
²⁰ Bosworth, 62.
devil knows God is able, and he knows He is willing; but he has kept the people from knowing this latter fact.\textsuperscript{21}

H. Jesus healed because of the faith of individuals in His ability and willingness to heal

1. The faith of others on behalf of the sick

a) The centurion with faith for his servant’s healing (Matt. 8:5-13): “Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed” (v. 8).

b) The nobleman with faith for his son’s healing (John 4:46-53): “So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, ‘Your son lives!’” (vv. 50-51).

c) The four men with faith for the paralytic’s healing (Mark 2:1-12): “When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven you’” (v. 5).

d) The Syrophoenician woman with faith for her daughter’s healing (Matt. 15:21-28): “Then Jesus answered and said to her, ‘O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.’ And her daughter was healed from that very hour” (v. 28).

They are many additional cases of individuals having faith for the healing of others (Matt. 9:32-33; 12:22-23; Mark 5:35-43; 7:32; 8:22-26; John 5:1-15).

\textsuperscript{21} Bosworth, 64.
2. The faith of individuals who needed their own healing

a) Woman with the issue of blood (Mark 5:25-34): “When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment” (v. 27). In response to her faith Jesus said, “…Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction” (v. 34). It is interesting to note that this woman had no Scripture to guide her to seek healing from Jesus. The idea started within her own heart. The healing came in response to her own faith that Jesus would heal her.

b) Two blind men (Matt. 9:27-31): “And Jesus said to them, ‘Do you believe that I am able to do this?’ They said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord.’ Then He touched their eyes, saying, ‘According to your faith let it be to you’” (vv. 28-29).

c) Leprous man (Matt. 8:2-4)

d) Ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19)

I. Jesus healed for a combination of reasons

In two instances, Scripture mentions that individuals were healed because of the compassion of Jesus and the faith of those seeking healing.

1. Leprous man (Mark 1:40-45): “Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, ‘If You are willing, You can make me clean.’ Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, ‘I am willing; be cleansed’” (vv. 40-41).

2. Two blind men (Matt. 20:29-34): “Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, ‘Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!’ So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, ‘What do you want Me to do for you?’ They said to Him, ‘Lord, that our eyes may be opened.’ So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him” (vv. 31-34).
Scripture gives many examples of Jesus healing individuals who had a definite, positive faith that He would heal them. The Bible also gives many examples of Jesus healing the sick because of His great compassion. There is nothing in the Bible to indicate that the compassion of the Lord has lessened or that God has ceased to respond to the faith of those who come to Him. In some situations, there is no reason given for why Jesus healed (Matt. 8:14-15; 8:28-34; Mark 1:23-27; Luke 7:11-16; 13:10-13). Perhaps these healings were simply the result of the sovereign will of Christ to overcome the work of the devil.

**IX. Why Christians Should Seek Divine Healing**

A. God is the healer of His people

God has expressly declared that He is the healer of His people. This truth should not be viewed with complacency or indifference. God does not show partiality (Acts 10:34). Therefore, all should seek the healing God provides. In fact, all individuals have a solemn responsibility to God to receive all that He has for them. God has declared Himself to be the healer of His people (Exod. 15:26; 23:25; Deut. 30:20; Ps. 103:3). Consequently, believers should trust God first and foremost for their healing.

B. Divine healing brings spiritual blessing

Satan is the ultimate source of disease and sickness. Sickness is not simply a physical condition but the reflection of the spiritual condition of humanity. Satan caused sin, and sin caused sickness. Therefore, individuals should seek a means of deliverance that not only deals with the physical manifestation of sickness but also the spiritual realities associated with sickness.

Whenever a Christian receives healing as a result of God’s supernatural touch, there is always a glorious spiritual blessing that accompanies the healing. James wrote that when praying for the sick: “…the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven” (James 5:15). In other words, every divine healing also
includes a positive spiritual result. If the goal of individuals is simply to get well, they will pursue whatever brings them health. However, if their goal is to gain a deeper spiritual blessing along with their healing, then they will seek the healing touch of God. Divine healing produces both physical health and spiritual victory.

C. Divine healing brings glory to God

Scripture repeatedly demonstrates that divine healing brings glory to God. The following are some examples: the restoration of the paralyzed man let down through the roof (Matt. 9:8), the healing of the multitudes (Matt. 15:31), the raising of the widow’s dead son at Nain (Luke 7:16), the deliverance of the woman bowed over for eighteen years (Luke 13:13) and the healing of the grateful leprous man (Luke 17:15-16). In regard to the sickness of Lazarus, Jesus said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it” (John 11:4). The people gave glory to God after Lazarus was raised from the dead: “Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him” (John 11:45). God is glorified in divine healing. The service of believers becomes richer and their testimony becomes clearer when they have experienced the touch of God upon their bodies. Healing magnifies and lifts up the name of Jesus.

X. Methods of Administering Divine Healing

God works in a variety of ways. His methods should not be stereotyped or oversimplified. This is true in the methods God uses to administer divine healing. The following are six different ways people receive healing from the Lord.

A. Pray for oneself

James wrote the following instructions: “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray” (James 5:13). Therefore, it is scriptural for individuals to pray for themselves when they are sick.
B. Pray for another

James also told believers to “…pray for one another, that you may be healed” (James 5:16). Every Christian can and should pray for the healing of others. There is no ministerial credential or special gift of the Spirit needed to pray for the sick.

C. Call for the elders of the church

Some refer to James 5:14-16 as the New Testament healing covenant:

Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

This should be the regular procedure for those in fellowship with a local church. The promise stipulates, “Is anyone among you sick?” Therefore, the promise is for everyone: “…the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up” (v. 15). In this instance, “the prayer of faith” is the prayer offered by the elders. There is a responsibility resting upon the elders of the church to pray for the sick. The sick exercise their faith when they call for the elders. The elders exercise their faith when they pray for the sick to be healed.

The text does not say that the oil will heal the sick; rather, “the prayer of faith will save the sick.” The oil is a symbol of the anointing of the Holy Spirit who gives life to the mortal bodies of believers (Rom. 8:11). Some associate the oil as the means of healing with Hezekiah’s poultice of figs (2 Kings 20:7). It is not the oil that brings healing but the power of God.
D. Laying on of hands

“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name...they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover” (Mark 16:17-18). This passage does not mention anointing with oil or praying for the sick. It simply states that in the name of Jesus “they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover.” On a number of occasions, the Scripture describes Jesus healing the sick through touching or laying His hand or hands upon them (Matt. 8:15; Mark 6:5; 8:23-25; Luke 4:40; 5:13; 13:13). When believers lay their hands on the sick, in the name of Jesus, it is as though they are touching the sick with the hands of Jesus.

E. Special miracles through handkerchiefs and aprons

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all...to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:7-9; see also 1 Cor. 12:28). This subject will not be dealt with in detail here because it has been covered previously in “Chapter Six: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit.” There are, however, two interesting issues to note. First, healing is the only gift of the Spirit that is listed in the plural. As mentioned previously, this suggests there are either many gifts of healing for different diseases or that each exercise of healing power is a separate gift. Second, it seems that in the
book of Acts, many of the recorded cases of healing occurred not because the apostles prayed for healing but because God had anointed them with power to heal. These expressions of healing were probably “gifts of healing.”

XI. Why Some Are Not Healed

If the Lord is *Yahweh Rapha*, our never changing physician; if healing is provided in the atonement of Jesus Christ; if sickness is the work of the devil, and Jesus destroyed the work of the devil at the cross; if God is all-powerful and full of compassion, then why are not all who are prayed for instantly healed of their diseases? When addressing this question, we should not place unmerited blame upon those who are earnestly seeking healing. Human knowledge is limited in comparison to the perspective of God. Even though we may not always know why people are sick or remain sick, we can still have confidence that the work of God will be revealed in each person through prayer. There are other times when clear hindrances prevent individuals from experiencing the healing of God. The following are some reasons individuals are not healed.

A. Lack of knowledge

Some are not healed because they do not know that God still heals, or they lack the biblical knowledge of how to seek, ask for and receive healing. Many individuals have never seen or experienced a physical healing, while others have been taught against praying for healing. Consequently, there are many individuals who need to be taught through Scripture and testimony that Jesus Christ still heals. During His earthly ministry, Jesus told His disciples to go before Him into every city and “…heal the sick there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you’” (Luke 10:9). The disciples announced, through their presence and the presence of healings, that the kingdom of God was at hand. In preaching the kingdom of God, believers must both announce and demonstrate that God is present to heal. Without this knowledge of God’s healing power, many may not seek His healing grace.
B. Lack of repentance or unconfessed sin

Healing is not a reward for personal holiness. Like all other blessings purchased at the cross, healing comes by the grace of God. However, when believers refuse to confess and repent of their sins, this hinders their faith and ability to receive what the Lord has provided. The psalmist wrote, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear” (Ps. 66:18). When believers confess their sins, they are surrendering their lives to the full work of the cross, welcoming both spiritual and physical restoration. This is why the Scripture admonishes believers to “Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed” (James 5:16).

C. Issues of faith

1. Lack of faith

Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus repeatedly pointed to the faith of those seeking healing as a key reason He answered their requests for healing (Matt. 8:10; 9:2, 22, 29; 15:28; Mark 2:5; 5:34; 10:52; Luke 5:20; 7:9; 8:48; 18:42). For instance, “…a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment…Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, ‘Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well.’ And the woman was made well from that hour” (Matt. 8:20-22; see also Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48). When ministering in Lystra, Paul observed a man who from birth had been unable to stand but “had faith to be healed.” Paul “…said with a loud voice, ‘Stand up straight on your feet!’ And he leaped and walked” (Acts 14:8-10). In the earthly healing ministry of Jesus and the healing ministry of the early church, faith was essential. Jesus commissioned His disciples not only to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel…” but to “lay hands on the sick” expecting that “they will recover” (Mark 16:15-18). James instructed the sick to be prayed for with the assurance that “…the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up” (James 5:15). Faith plays a crucial role in the ministry of healing.
2. Misguided faith

Healing comes from Jesus, not humans or spiritual techniques. While it is true that God uses humans to bring about His marvelous works, it is important that individuals seeking healing look beyond human instruments to the source of healing. Sometimes individuals are not healed because they seek healing through faith in an individual or a technique instead of Jesus. Jesus alone is the great physician. When a lame man at the temple gate asked for alms, Peter told the man to “Look at us” to momentarily get the man’s attention (Acts 3:4). However, once Peter had the lame man’s attention, he immediately directed him to Jesus: “Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk” (Acts 3:6). Healing is rooted in a faith encounter with Jesus.

3. Powerless faith

Some miracles require different amounts of faith or power. The Scripture tells the story of an epileptic boy whom the disciples “could not cure” (Matt. 17:14-16). Jesus rebuked those gathered for being “faithless” and cured the boy by casting a demon out from him (v. 17-18). When the disciples asked why they could not cast out the demon, Jesus answered, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting” (v. 19-21). Jesus’ words and actions demonstrated that some miracles require more power. Therefore, those who minister or seek divine healing must spend time in spiritual preparation for empowerment.

D. God’s timing

Sometimes individuals are not immediately healed because of God’s timing. The story of Zacharias and Elizabeth demonstrates the beauty and mystery of waiting on God’s timing. Scripture states that the priest, Zacharias, and his wife, Elizabeth “…were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in
foundations of pentecostal theology

years” (Luke 1:6-7). While Zacharias was serving in the temple of the Lord, an angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth” (Luke 1:13-14). Zacharias and Elizabeth had prayed and waited most of their lives for Elizabeth’s womb to be healed. God waited to answer their prayers at just the right moment. Consequently, many rejoiced at the birth of their son John, a child who would eventually “make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:17).

Although healing is important, it is not the most important experience that can happen in a person’s life. Salvation, spiritual growth and the advancement of the kingdom of God are far more important than an individual simply experiencing physical health. Therefore, there are undoubtedly times when God gives spiritual purposes precedence over physical blessings. Sometimes individuals must persevere in contending for their healing as they trust in God’s perfect will and timing, knowing that perseverance brings the character of God as well as a hope that “does not disappoint” (Rom. 5:4).

E. To demonstrate God’s power and strength

The Scripture demonstrates that sometimes individuals living with sickness or infirmity reveal the power and strength of God through living by faith in the sufficiency of His grace. Paul mentioned that he pleaded with God three times to remove a “thorn in the flesh” that had caused him great weakness. However, God responded, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9). Scholars disagree as to whether or not Paul’s thorn in the flesh was sickness. Regardless, he makes direct mention in the next verse that God reveals His strength through those who persevere in the midst of infirmities: “Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (v. 9-10). Through faith, the strength of God is made evident in the midst of sickness.
The story of Epaphroditus also demonstrates that individuals reveal the strength and power of God through walking by faith in their sickness. Paul mentioned that Epaphroditus was a fellow brother, worker and soldier in the faith who “was sick almost unto death” because in doing “the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me” (Phil. 2:25-29). Paul pointed out that men like Epaphroditus should be esteemed for their faithfulness and willingness to serve God even at the cost of their own health. Epaphroditus’ body suffered as a result of his ministry assignment. The human body will face sickness as a result of living in a fallen world. Even so, Christians can have confidence that God’s power and strength will be made evident through every believer who lives by faith.

F. God’s sovereignty

The psalmist wrote in praise to God that “My times are in Your hand…” (Ps. 31:15). Job, in the midst of anguish, lamented to God that for man “Since his days are determined, The number of his months is with You; You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass” (Job 14:5). Both verses point to the limits of human understanding in the light of God’s wisdom, will and sovereignty. In other words, there are aspects about our lives that God understands, but we do not understand or fully know. Regardless, we trust that God is good and in control.

Ultimately, until Christ’s return, each human will face death. Every human is born into a fallen world and into a corruptible, perishable body. Although every human in Christ is a new creation, our bodies are still perishable and corruptible. Therefore, “…this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Cor. 15:53). This transformation will occur “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (v. 52). It will be at that moment, “…when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory’” (v. 54). Although death has been defeated at the cross, it will ultimately
disappear with the resurrection of our bodies. Until then, all humans will face some manner of sickness that leads to death.

Every believer should seek the healing power of God. God has demonstrated His healing power throughout the Bible and the history of the church. His desire and ability to heal is present today. All believers should actively exercise the faith God has given them to seek and receive the healing power of Jesus. However, it is important to remember that human understanding is limited in comparison to the vast and infinite wisdom of God. Consequently, there are times when we cannot fully understand or comprehend why someone remains sick or is not healed. Despite our comprehension, we can have confidence that the character of Christ and the good news of the kingdom of God will be revealed through every believer who continues to live for God by faith. Sometimes, we simply do not know why people are not healed. In these moments, we trust the goodness and the sovereignty of God. We also trust the power of the cross, that although our bodies may face death, in Christ we are forever alive.

XII. How to Respond to Divine Healing

Numerous individuals have personally experienced the healing touch of the Lord Jesus. Many who have been healed have dedicated their lives to honoring, worshiping, serving and proclaiming Jesus. Others have experienced healing from God but still refused to serve and live for their healer. In some cases, individuals healed from diseases or sicknesses specifically caused by sinful behaviors have continued to engage in those sinful behaviors after being healed. Sometimes this has led to the sickness returning. Whenever individuals are healed by God, it is always for a higher spiritual purpose than just physical restoration. Therefore, it is important to prayerfully consider how best to respond to any instance of divine healing. The following are positive ways to respond to divine healing.
A. Stop willfully sinning

Individuals who have received the healing touch of Jesus should genuinely desire to stop willfully sinning. When people repent of and turn away from their sins, they are acknowledging that God has healed them not only for health but for spiritual growth and intimacy with God. Soon after healing a man at the Pool of Bethesda, Jesus found him at the Temple and said to him, “See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you” (John 5:14). Apparently, sin played a role in the man’s affliction, and Jesus warned that unrepentant sin would lead to something worse. This certainly does not mean that Christians must live perfect lives to enjoy the blessings or healing of God. It does, however, mean that individuals are not healed by God to live unrepentant lives.

B. Strengthen your faith

Healing is received by faith. Those who are healed should continue to grow in faith. Ultimately, individuals who receive healing should also prayerfully develop an unwavering faith that allows them to stand against their “…adversary the devil…” and “Resist him, steadfast in the faith…” (1 Pet. 5:8-9). One of Satan’s chief occupations is to rob people of their faith: “…then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved” (Luke 8:12). Therefore, it is crucial for anyone who has experienced the healing touch of God to engage in activities and relationships that strengthen their faith. This means participating in a healthy church where individuals can be strengthened by worship, the study of the Word and godly fellowship.

C. Praise the Lord for what He has done

Healing is a grace gift from God. It is not earned or merited. No one has ever deserved the healing they have received. Therefore, when an individual is healed, they should give all glory, gratitude and honor to God. The Bible gives us this example in the story of Jesus healing ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19). After entering a village, Jesus met ten lepers who pleaded for His mercy. Jesus told them to “Go, show yourselves to the priests” and on their journey “they
were cleansed.” Even though ten where healed, only one Samaritan came back to give glory to God. Jesus responded by saying, “‘Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?’ And He said to him, ‘Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well”’ (Luke 17:17-19). When individuals experience the healing touch of God, it is right to praise and glorify God for what He has done.

D. Testify of what God has done

When God heals individuals, it is right for them to testify of God’s goodness and grace, especially since healing is not just for the physical body but for spiritual transformation as well. When individuals are healed, they should tell others of God’s gracious goodness to them. Of course, this must be done with a real sense of humility, understanding that individuals do not receive healing because they are somehow better than others.

Sometimes when individuals are healed, they are reluctant to testify of their healing because they fear they are not fully well, or their sickness may return, and their testimony will become invalid. It is important that healed individuals do not live in fear but are free to testify of God’s healing provision. When the devil brings accusation against a newly healed person that he or she is not healed or should fear becoming sick again, the healed individual must realize that the devil is a liar: “When he [the devil] speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44). Instead of living in fear or doubt, those who have been genuinely healed are free to boldly and confidently proclaim and celebrate that God has healed them. Since healing is a grace gift from God, they should not hesitate to take a firm stand on celebrating God’s unfailing provision.

E. Study God’s word

Although God often uses the prayer of individuals to bring about healing, it is important to remember that any minister of healing is helpless apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. God does the work of healing. When individuals are healed, they should be first and foremost drawn to Jesus. Consequently,
healing should lead to a greater love, appreciation and study of the Scripture: “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). When individuals study the Bible, they become grounded in their faith and confident in their healing. For those who’ve been healed, it is good to meditate upon the healing promises of Scripture such as “I am the LORD who heals you” (Exod. 15:26). Through studying the Word, the newly healed can have confidence that Jesus “…Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses” (Matt. 8:17) giving us assurance that by His “stripes” we “were healed” (1 Pet. 2:24).

F. Follow God’s word

Just as we are saved to serve and obey the Lord, we are also healed to serve and obey the Lord. God’s will is revealed in hearing and obeying His word. Healing is a gift from God that should not be wasted on selfish pursuits. Instead, individuals who have been healed should use their health and strength to do God’s will. This means healed individuals should find places of ministry within God’s church to faithfully serve with their time, money and energy. This means faithfully tithing and working diligently in a local body of believers. It requires bringing others to the Lord. There are multitudes who need God’s saving and healing power. God has healed and imparted life to us so that we can bring that same life to others. Ultimately, every healed believer has been called to live wholly for God and to enjoy the fullness of what God has done in healthy Christian community.

XIII. Divine Life for the Body

When we reach out in faith to claim all of the promises of God, we more clearly see that Christ Jesus has provided a complete salvation that embraces the entire human: spirit, soul and body. “For in Him [Christ] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him…” (Col. 2:9-10). Jesus proclaimed that, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). The life that Jesus has provided includes His life for our physical bodies. Aimee Semple McPherson once wrote: “Divine healing…is not performing a ceremony, it is not wringing a
petition from the heavens by the logic of faith and the force of your will, but it is the inbreathing of the life of God. It is the living touch which none can understand except those whose senses are exercised to know the realities of the world unseen.”¹

Divine healing is the divine life of the Holy Spirit working in the physical body: “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you” (Rom. 8:11). Divine healing and health is part of that life which is “in Christ.” Paul testified to Christ’s life in him when he wrote, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). Moses testified to this experience when he called the children of Israel to “…love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days…” (Deut. 30:20).

In his letters to the New Testament church, Paul explicitly and frequently wrote about the life of Christ in the mortal body. In speaking of trials and hardships Paul wrote that he was “always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh” (2 Cor. 4:10-11). Paul was speaking about more than just spiritual life in our unseen spirit; he was also addressing the life of Jesus in our physical or mortal bodies. In other words, our mortal bodies are benefited through our blessed identification with Christ. Paul was addressing more than just a new kind of living, but an actual new life for every believer: “For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones” (Eph. 5:30). To the Corinthians, Paul wrote, “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?” (1 Cor. 6:15). It is Christ’s life that flows through, strengthens and heals our mortal bodies: “For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ…that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man…filled with all the fullness

¹ Aimee Semple McPherson, from the author’s notes.
of God” (Eph. 3:14-19). Biblically-based faith will not limit the blessings of God to spiritual needs alone. Kenneth MacKenzie described the relationship between the divine life and the body:

Divine Healing is just Divine Life. It is the union of our members with the very body of Christ, and the inflowing life of Christ in our living members. It is as real as His risen and glorified body.

It is as reasonable as the fact that He was raised from the dead, and is a living man with a true body and a rational soul today at God’s right hand. That living Christ belongs to us in all His attributes and power. We are members of His body, of His flesh, and His bones; and if we can only believe it, we may live upon the very life of the Son of God.²

No longer are we in bondage to the old sentiment that the body is a miserable tenement in which we endure our confinement until at last we are released. But it becomes the scene of the sanctifying inworking of the Holy Spirit, which, pressing into every niche of our being, permeates the whole with His Holy energy, and insures the possession and experience of Christ’s very life.³

XIV. Objections to Divine Healing

Throughout this divine healing chapter, most of the objections to the doctrine of divine healing have been anticipated and answered in substance. However, because there is still some strong opposition to the doctrine of divine healing among certain Christians, the following section will answer

² Mackenzie, 56-57.
³ Mackenzie, 59-60.
some of the most common objections to modern day divine healing. It is not that these objections are formidable, but that individuals should be ready and able to give clear answers to every major objection without hesitation or confusion. Ultimately, when Christians learn how to answer these objections, they are more willing to both minister and receive the gift of divine healing. The following are common objections Christians have concerning modern-day, divine healing and clear, biblically-based answers to those objections.

A. The objection that miracles are not rational

Some rationalist Christians believe that miracles, such as healing, will not take place because God has always limited His works to the natural laws of the universe. The problem with this argument is it discounts the miraculous creation of the universe as well as the miraculous foundations of the Christian faith. The creation of the universe, the formation of humans and the natural laws of the universe are miraculous expressions of God’s creative, life-giving power. It is not beyond reason or rationale that the Omnipotent Creator of all life, who spoke life into existence, is also able and willing to presently bring miraculous life to those seeking healing.

Just as the creation of the universe is rooted in the miraculous power of God, so is the foundation of the Christian faith rooted in the miraculous incarnation, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. The life of Jesus is a supernatural expression that makes room for the possibility of miracles in a supposedly natural world. The historical response to the life, resurrection and ascension of Jesus disproves the rationalist’s argument against miracles. Although there was seemingly no earthly benefit to testifying to the resurrection of Jesus, the disciples and New Testament writers proclaimed this truth at the cost of their own lives and the safety of their friends and families. The miracle of Christ’s resurrection and the miracle of creation itself demonstrate that God moves beyond and above the laws of nature. If Jesus rose from the dead, it is also possible for that same miraculous power to heal the bodies of God’s children today (Rom. 8:11).
B. The objection that miracles have ceased

Some Christians believe miracles, including divine healing, have ceased. These individuals believe miracles were confined to an age or dispensation of miracles that eventually ended once God had accomplished specific purposes. They contend that healing was only a sign permitted in the first century to attest to the supernatural character of Christianity. However, they believe healings ceased once the truths of Christianity were confirmed and the Bible was completed. While some of His miracles were used as signs, Jesus healed not only as a sign but because He had compassion upon the people in their painful state (Mark 1:41; Matt. 9:35-38; 14:14; 20:34). Jesus is just as compassionate today and still willing to act upon that compassion when individuals seek His healing touch. Furthermore, it would seem that every new century, even every generation, would also need miraculous signs and confirmations to demonstrate the validity of Christianity’s supernatural origins.

More importantly, nowhere in Scripture does it speak of miracles ceasing. On the contrary, the Bible represents God as being eternally the same (Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8; James 1:17; Ps. 102:27). The author of Acts mentions that in the gospel of Luke he gave an account of what “…Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up…” (Acts 1:1-2). This implies that the miraculous work of Jesus had just begun and certainly not ended at His ascension (see also Mark 16:17). In fact, Acts is a record of the miraculous work of Jesus carried out and continued through the Holy-Spirit-empowered church. The Acts narrative shows an increasing of the miraculous within the church, fulfilling what Jesus had promised: “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father” (John 14:12). As mentioned previously in this chapter, church history is full of testimonies concerning the never ceasing, miraculous healing provision of God. If miracles have actually ceased, then it is important to realize that the possibility of conversion no longer exists because conversion is as miraculous and supernatural as divine healing. The simple truth is every age is an age of miracles for those who have faith in God. For faith says, “All things are possible” (Matt. 19:26).
C. The objection that medical science has replaced the need for divine healing

Some suggest that Jesus healed during Bible times because there was no competent medical science. Now that the field of medicine has advanced, they argue that individuals should use medicine for healing rather than prayer. In responding to this objection, it is important to realize that prayer and medical science are not in competition with each other. Humankind’s ability to prevent and cure sicknesses and diseases through medical science is ultimately the fruit of being wonderfully made by God to examine and solve complex problems (James 1:17). However, even with scientific advancements, there are still two, primary reasons people should earnestly seek healing even while seeking medical interventions.

1. Medical science is limited in its ability to cure sicknesses

Science is currently not able to cure many sicknesses and diseases. Even when modern science can bring healing, there are often complications and side effects due to the medicine or procedures needed to produce that healing. Although there are many amazing advancements in medicine, rarely do these advancements completely restore individuals to the body they had before they became sick. For many others, there is simply no medical cure for their sickness. Their only hope is the healing touch of Jesus.

2. Divine healing provides both physical and spiritual healing

Divine healing provides more than just a physical cure; it also provides a spiritual blessing. When individuals are healed by God, they are transformed both physically and spiritually. It is more than just the removal of sickness; it is ultimately an encounter with the healing presence of God. Even if medical science could cure every sick person on earth, it would not make the need for divine healing unnecessary. When individuals are healed by their loving, heavenly Father, their faith is strengthened as a result of being both physically and spiritually blessed. Natural sciences are good and will always be needed, but advancements in modern medicine should not prevent the sick from seeking the transformative healing that comes through faith in Jesus Christ.
D. The objection that divine healing is only taught by false cults

Some believe divine healing should not be taught because it is only practiced by false cults. This statement is simply not true. As mentioned previously, Wesley, Luther, Zinzendorf and many other respected church leaders throughout history taught and practiced divine healing. Healing has always played a crucial role in the history of the church. Even so, Satan has frequently tried to counterfeit God’s true blessings. Consequently, it is no surprise that false cults and false leaders have tried to counterfeit the true healing that comes through faith in Jesus Christ. Although some false cults teach a kind of healing, their doctrines of healing are very different than the orthodox, biblical doctrine of divine healing. The presence of false teachings and false teachers does not negate the true promise of divine healing revealed throughout Scripture.

E. The objection that divine healing puts more emphasis on the body than the soul

Some object to divine healing because they believe it emphasizes the physical above the spiritual. If this objection is to be admitted, then the same objection must be made of the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of His apostles. As mentioned throughout this chapter, healing played a central role in the ministry of Jesus and His apostles. All four gospels and the book of Acts repeatedly highlight the miraculous healing power of God. For example, healings accompany every revival recorded in the book of Acts (see Acts 8:5-8; 9:36-42; 14:6-10; 16:16-18; 19:11-12; 28:7-9).

The Lord Jesus and His disciples clearly preached and practiced divine healing without fear of over-emphasizing bodily needs over spiritual needs. Salvation for the soul and healing for the body are both part of Christ’s atoning work. Therefore, they should be preached together as aspects of the same message (Isa. 53:4-5; 1 Pet. 2:24). To omit the healing message is to preach part of the good news found in Jesus Christ. It is also important to remember that divine healing is as much spiritual as it is physical. Through divine healing, individuals realize ever more deeply the nearness and providential care of
their personal Savior and Lord; their faith is strengthened and they are made profoundly aware of the great love of God.

Although Christians are called to live by faith in this temporal world, humans have need of God’s material provision and blessing. Just as it is appropriate to pray for financial provision, food, clothing, shelter, protection and other basic material benefits, it is also appropriate to pray for physical well-being. When individuals pray for material provision or physical health, this does not prevent them from growing spiritually as long as they never seek the miraculous provision of God apart from the fundamental truth of God revealed in Scripture.

God is *Yahweh Rapha*, “the LORD our Healer” (Exod. 15:26). Jesus Christ has demonstrated God’s unchanging nature to heal and restore those who seek Him by faith. Throughout the Bible and throughout church history, God has revealed Himself to be our ever-present healer. In Christ, believers have access to the life-giving, healing power of God. Jesus Christ is “…the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8). Therefore, if anyone is sick they should eagerly seek and receive the healing touch of Jesus. Ultimately, healing is a grace gift from God to be received by faith. It is not earned or merited. Although healing is provided as part of the atonement, there is still mystery as to why some are healed and others are not. Regardless, we can trust the goodness of God as we earnestly seek His healing provision, being confident with the apostle Paul “…that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ…” (Phil. 1:6).
Chapter Eight
The Doctrine of the Church

Ecclesiology

INTRODUCTION

Ecclesiology is the study of the nature, ordinances, ministry, mission and government of the church. We must carefully study the doctrine of the church to fully understand the church’s purpose in the world. Spirit-filled worship and ministry is vital in healthy churches. Therefore, every Christian should seek a clear understanding of New Testament Pentecostal church life, ministry and leadership. Since the church is the divinely constituted body through which the gospel is preached and believers are nurtured, a careful study and clear understanding of the church is essential. The best place to begin such a study is with definitions.

I. Definitions of Church

A. Kuriakos

The English word church is derived from the Greek word kuriakos which means “belonging to the Lord.” Kuriakos is never applied to the church in the
New Testament period although it is found twice in the New Testament as an adjective applying to the Lord’s Supper and to the Lord’s Day (1 Cor. 11:20; Rev. 1:10). In post-apostolic times, the Greeks used the term *kuriakos* to designate the church building. However, the only words in the New Testament used to designate a building as a place of worship are temple and assembly (Acts 5:42; James 2:2). *Kuriakos* evolved into the English word church through *kirk*, the Scottish and Northern English form of the word church.

B. *Ekklesia*

In the English New Testament, the word church is used invariably to translate the Greek word *ekklesia* (Matt. 16:18; 18:17; Acts 2:47; 9:31; 13:1; 14:23; 15:22; 16:5; 20:17, 28; Rom. 16:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 5:23-29; Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:4, 11). The word *ekklesia* means “an assembly of people.” The term is derived from two Greek words, *ek* meaning “out from” and *kaleo* meaning “to call.” Originally, “the ones called out” referred to the legislative body of the Greek republic that was led by citizens called out from their communities to serve their country. Today when we refer to a session of a state government as an assembly, we are using the word assembly in the same way the Greeks used the term *ekklesia*.

When Jesus used the word *ekklesia* to designate the body He would build, the word derived meaning from at least two sources: (1) the Jewish Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) where *ekklesia* referred to the congregation of Israel and (2) the Greek use of the word to refer to any assembly of people, whether a constituted body or an unorganized mob. An example of the Jewish use is found in Acts 7:37-38: “This is that Moses…who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us…” The Septuaqint usually used the word *ekklesia* to translate the Hebrew word *quahal*, which was the Old Testament word for the congregation of Israel in the wilderness. Examples of the Greek use of *ekklesia* are found in Acts 19: “Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly [*ekklesia* as mob] was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together” (v. 32); and “But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall
be determined in the lawful assembly [ekklesia as official legislative body]” (v. 39).

It seems clear that Jesus chose the word ekklesia because it had been used to designate God’s people, but the word in the popular mind merely meant assembly. The Septuagint also sometimes translates the Hebrew word quahal using the word synagogue. The word ekklesia may have been used to avoid confusion of the church with the synagogue of Israel. When Jesus said, “and on this rock I will build My church…” (Matt. 16:18), He placed emphasis not on the word church but on the word My. The church is unique, not because it is called the church but because it is the assembly of believers who belong to Jesus, who constitute His body.

**II. Uses of the Term “Church” in the New Testament**

A. The universal body of Christ

The universal church is composed of all Christian believers of all ages, both on earth and in paradise, the total body of Christ. The total universal church will be assembled at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:6-9) following the rapture of the church. There are many scriptures that speak of the universal church: Matt. 16:18; Eph. 3:10-21; 5:23-32; Col. 1:18, 24. The author of Hebrews spoke of the universal church when he wrote, “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect…” (Heb. 12:22-24).

B. The local church

The local church is composed of Christian believers identified with a constituted body worshiping in one locality (Rom. 16:1; Col. 4:16; Gal. 1:2, 22; Acts 14:23). The members of a local church constitute the church even when they are not assembled. This fact is expressed in Acts: “Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had
done with them…” (14:27). All genuine believers are members of the universal body of Christ. However, if possible, all faithful believers are to be identified with a local church where they regularly assemble for worship, fellowship and service (Heb. 10:24-25). Christianity is about more than a person’s individual salvation, for believers are also disciples, brethren and members of a body. This truth is expressed in the Foursquare Declaration of Faith:

We believe that having accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior and King, and having thus been born into the family and invisible body or church of the Lord, it is the sacred duty of the believer, whenever this lieth within his power, to identify himself with, and I labor most earnestly for the upbuilding of God’s kingdom with the visible church of Christ upon earth…(James 5:14; Acts 11:26-30).4

C. The house church

In New Testament times there were no church buildings; believers met for worship wherever facilities were made available to them. Often they met in the homes of fellow believers: “Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house” (1 Cor. 16:19b). When the church in a given community was very large, there were many house churches (see 1 Cor. 14:23). However, the many house churches in that community were collectively still considered one church, and they all came together as often as possible. In small communities, one house church may have accommodated the entire body of believers (see Col. 4:15). One reason churches usually had a plurality of elders was perhaps that there were several house churches within the total body of the community. The apostle Paul called together the elders of the church in Ephesus: “From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church” (Acts 20:17). Although the church in Ephesus was one, the large number of elders (pastors) suggests that the church often met in homes because of the lack of large church buildings.

Even so, all of these house churches in Ephesus were considered to be part of one church: “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). Every local church was considered to be the physical manifestation of the universal church in that community (see also Rom. 16:5-23; 1 Cor. 16:19; Philem. 2).

D. The collective church

There are several New Testament passages that refer to the visible church on earth as one church (1 Cor. 10:32; 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6). In Acts 9:31 the New King James Version uses the plural word “churches” to reference the peace that the collective church experienced after Saul’s conversion. However, in the Greek text, the word for “church” is actually singular rather than plural and is translated that way in other versions: “So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was built up; and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit it was multiplied” (Acts 9:31, RSV). In other passages, the word “church” is used generically, that is, referring to the church generally (see Matt. 18:17; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Cor. 12:28).

E. The churches acting in concert

There are those who contend that local churches were autonomous, subject only to local leadership that was selected by the vote of each local congregation. There is no doubt that local churches had much liberty; they were not ruled rigidly by a central hierarchy, a fact demonstrated by the council on doctrine and practice recorded in Acts Chapter Fifteen. However, a number of Scripture passages make it clear that the churches acted in concert and followed apostolic leadership (see Acts 14:23; Rom. 16:4; 1 Cor. 16:19; 14:33; 2 Cor. 11:28; Titus 1:5). Paul instructed local churches on doctrine, practice and government; he sent greetings on behalf of groups of churches in a region; he appointed elders over churches as well as instructed fellow workers to appoint officers. Paul wrote to Titus ordering: “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you…” (Titus 1:5).
III. Uses of the Word “Church” Not Found in the New Testament

A. Church is not used to describe a building

The Greek word *ekklesia*, which is translated “church,” always refers to people; it never refers to a building. Today, individuals often use the word church to refer to buildings. The Bible used the word church to refer to people. For instance, when the Bible speaks of the church at Ephesus, it is referencing the congregation of Christian believers at Ephesus. Since no church buildings were built until the third century, no words were coined to refer to one. When church buildings were eventually built, the word *kuriake*, meaning “the Lord’s house,” was used to refer to them. It is an understandable natural development that the word church eventually became a description for both congregations and the buildings where congregations meet. Calling the building a church is a figure of speech called a “metonymy.” A metonymy is when a concept or thing is referred to not by its own name but by something associated in meaning with that concept or thing. One kind of metonymy is when something is not mentioned by its name but by its container. For example, in 1 Corinthians 11:26 when Paul wrote, “For as often as you… drink this cup…” he was not telling people to drink the cup, but to drink what is inside the cup. The cup represents both the container and the drink in the same way the word church represents both the building and the congregation. No harm is done in calling the sanctuary a church as long as one keeps in mind the real nature of the church.

B. Church is not used for a denomination

During New Testament times, no groups of Christians arose with separate name identities similar to modern denominations. Therefore, the word church did not come to be formally appended to the names of leaders, doctrinal tenets or distinct ecclesiastical organizations such as the Lutheran Church or Baptist Church. The ideal condition for the church on earth would most likely have been one of universal unity in doctrine and organization. However, denominations have formed for many reasons. For instance, throughout history whenever ecclesiastical bodies have departed from Scripture in doctrine and
practice, there have been reformations rejected by the parent denomination, forcing the formation of other distinct bodies. Leadership conflicts and divisiveness have also led pastors and churches to leave their theological traditions to form new organizational expressions. Widespread revival has often faced negative reaction from established church leadership. This resistance to revival has lead to the formation of organizations to preserve doctrinal soundness and spiritual life. Sadly, some churches have abandoned their denominations over petty disputes and disagreements.

The ecumenical movement has endeavored to bring denominations to a corporate reunion. This has had mixed results. Sometimes ecumenical unity has been accomplished at the expense of doctrinal and spiritual fullness. Finding a faith and practice acceptable to all sometimes leads to uniting around the “least common denominator.” However, at other times various denominations have been able to unite in meaningful ways around the foundational tenants of the gospel to have a powerful evangelistic impact in the world. The formation of denominations may have been necessary to preserve revival and missionary fervor. Regardless, the members of denominational churches must keep in mind that the church, which is the body of Christ, is composed of all true believers, and all true believers must be united in Christ to carry forward the gospel into the world. It is certainly a biblical truth that local churches should band together whenever possible for mission and fellowship (2 Cor. 8:1-24; Titus 1:5).

**IV. The Officers, Ministers and Leaders of the Church**

The amount of scriptural material relative to the organization and leadership of the apostolic church is not large. The titles used by New Testament church leaders were more descriptive of their ministries than of their office and rank. Since the first members and leaders of the early church were Jews familiar with the synagogue, they patterned church organization somewhat after the synagogue. In fact, in one New Testament passage in the Greek, the Christian assembly is called a synagogue (James 2:2).
That there was organization in the New Testament church is clearly seen from the following scriptures:

(1) When problems arose, leaders were appointed to administer certain ministry activities (Acts 6:1-7).

(2) The disciples met regularly for worship; at first, they met every day; later, they met on the first day of the week (Acts 2:46-47; 5:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2).

(3) Diligence was given to the appointment of proper leadership (Acts 1:23-26; 14:23; Titus 1:5).

(4) Qualifications for elders (bishops) and deacons were set forth in some detail (1 Tim. 3:1-13; 5:1, 17-22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-4; Acts 6:1-7; 20:28-35).

(5) Each church had the authority to discipline or exclude certain members (Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Thess. 3:6-16; 1 Tim. 1:18-20).

(6) Members were admonished to respect and obey church leaders (1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24).

(7) Missionaries were sent forth by the church with official sanction (Acts 13:1-3).

(8) A council was convened in Jerusalem to settle for the whole Christian church a dispute over doctrine and practice (Acts 15:1-35).

It is not easy to classify the various ministers and officers mentioned in the New Testament. Several terms such as pastor, elder and bishop, which we take for titles, are probably different ways of describing the same function. Some terms like minister and deacon are different translations of the same Greek word *diakonos*. Some offices such as apostle and prophet are strictly
by divine appointment of the exercise of a spiritual gift, while other offices are by human election or appointment based upon specified qualifications. Pastors and teachers may be two kinds of ministers, or the terms may simply represent two functions of one office. In spite of the difficulties involved, we will now analyze each New Testament office.

A. Apostles

The first exponents of the Christian gospel were the apostles, who were also God’s first ministry gift to the church. The following are scriptures that speak to the role of apostles in the church:

And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles…(Luke 6:13).

And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem (Acts 16:4).

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ…(Eph. 4:11-12).

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone…(Eph. 2:19-20).

The word apostle is a transliteration of the Greek word *apostolos*, which means “a messenger” or “one sent on a mission.” The original apostles were those Jesus chose to be with Him, personally commissioned and sent forth (Matt. 10:2; Luke 22:14). They were twelve in number. When Judas Iscariot
betrayed the Lord, leaving only eleven, another apostle was chosen to take his place (Acts. 1:15-26). The names of the twelve apostles are written in the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:14).

The requirements for the first apostles were (1) to have been with the Lord (Acts 1:21-22); (2) to have been a witness of the resurrection (Acts 1:22); (3) to have seen the Lord (1 Cor. 9:1), and (4) to have demonstrated signs, wonders and mighty deeds (2 Cor. 12:12). The foundational apostles were a fixed number of twelve.

However, in time others were called apostles, such as (1) Paul, who was given a vision of the Lord and called personally by Jesus to be the apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:13; 1 Cor. 9:1), who twelve times declared himself to be an apostle; (2) James, the brother of Jesus (1 Cor. 15:7); (3) Barnabas (Acts 14:14); (4) certain kinsmen of Paul (Rom. 16:7), and (5) certain unnamed apostles (1 Cor. 15:7). Apparently, the term apostle came to be used in a wider sense for those who seemed to have a special commission to found new churches. The terms apostle and missionary have the same meaning. That the term apostle was used in a wider sense than just referring to the original twelve is obvious from the fact that there were those who falsely claimed to be apostles (2 Cor. 11:13; Rev. 2:2). If only the original twelve had been recognized as apostles, no one else could have made a claim to apostleship. It is important to keep clear the distinction between the original apostles and those who were called apostles in the wider meaning of the term. Closely identified with the original twelve apostles were Paul, Mark, Luke, James, Jude and the writer of Hebrews; all were used by the Spirit to write the New Testament.

Discussion often arises concerning whether or not there could be modern apostles. The answer depends upon the meaning given to the word apostle. Obviously, the church can have only one foundation. After the close of the New Testament Canon, no additional apostolic writers have been commissioned to add to Scripture. However, if the term apostle is used in the wider sense of one commissioned of the Lord to open new mission fields, whose ministry is accompanied with signs and wonders, it would not be an inappropriate use of the word. Even so, it is important to remember that the church
was never authorized to create apostles. Apostles are a gift from God, commissioned by Him and confirmed by the church (Acts 13:2-3).

B. Prophets

Prophet is a transliteration from the Greek *prophetes*, derived from *pro* meaning “before, forth, for or in behalf of,” and *phemi* meaning to “declare or speak.” Therefore, *prophetes* can have the meaning of one who predicts or tells beforehand, one who speaks forth, or one who speak for and in behalf of. The Hebrew word for prophet is *nabi* meaning “to announce, witness or testify.” Prophets in the Old Testament were called to speak to God’s people the words God placed in their mouths (Deut. 18:18). In the New Testament, there are two kinds of prophets: those who occupy the role of a prophet (Eph. 4:11) and those who exercise the gift of prophecy. The message of Pentecost declares that the ability to prophesy is in some manner available to all Spirit-filled believers: “And it shall come to pass in the last days says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy…I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy” (Acts 2:17-18). However, having the gift of prophecy does not necessarily mean someone occupies the ministry office of a prophet.

Scripture says the church is built upon a foundation of apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:20): “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets…” (Eph. 4:11). In the New Testament, prophets not only exercised the gift of prophecy but also occupied a place of ministry leadership along with the apostles and teachers (Acts 11:27; 13:1-3; 15:32; Eph. 2:20; 3:5). Individuals such as Barnabas, Silas, Judas, Agabus and others mentioned in Acts 13:1 all demonstrated leadership in their prophetic roles. Although the prophets had great ministry authority and were next in rank to the apostles, they were still subject to the apostles (1 Cor. 14:37).

Along with valuing the role of the prophet, Paul seemed to give the gift of prophecy the highest priority among the spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 14:1-3). Anyone prophesying is ultimately called to communicate to the people the message or vision they have received from God. The general purpose of prophecy is explained by Paul in the following way: “But he who prophesies speaks
edification and exhortation and comfort to men. He...who prophesies edifies the church” (1 Cor. 14:3-4). This is demonstrated in Acts: “Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words” (15:32). A less frequent function of the prophet and prophecy is that of predicting the future. On two occasions, the prophet Agabus predicted future events (Acts 11:27-29). His prediction of a future famine enabled the church to make preparation to assist the poor in Judaea. Later, Agabus predicted Paul's imprisonment by the Jews in Jerusalem. This prediction came to pass although Paul made no attempt to avoid the trouble (Acts 21:10-15).

Both the role of the prophet and the role of prophecy had a vital function in the New Testament church. Prophecy was crucial in relation to Timothy's enablement for ministry (1 Tim. 4:14). Even the church's awareness of God's plan of salvation was revealed through the ministry of the prophets: “…which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (Eph. 3:5). The role of the prophet and the gift of prophecy remain in effect in the church today. In Pentecostal ministry, the spirit of prophecy has a vital role in revealing the will of God to His people.

C. Evangelists

The evangelist is less easy to identify in the New Testament because almost everyone did the work of evangelism. Philip is the only one actually called an evangelist (Acts 21:8). Judging from Philip's ministry in Samaria, an evangelist is one whose ministry is directed primarily toward winning the unsaved: “Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them” (Acts 8:5). It is noteworthy that his soul winning ministry was accompanied by miracles and signs. Afterward, Philip was called to preach to one man in the desert, the Ethiopian treasurer, whom he led to Christ. It is interesting to note that as much space is taken to tell of the one man's conversion as is taken to narrate the Samaritan revival story. Timothy is not called an evangelist, but Paul admonishes him to do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim. 4:5). In the Greek, the word evangelist is derived from the verb that is translated "to preach the gospel." This means an evangelist is one whose chief goal is to preach the gospel with the object of soul winning.
The ministries of apostle, prophet and evangelist are ministries to the church in general. The ministries that follow are to the local church.

D. Pastors

While the term pastor is only used once in the New Testament to describe the spiritual leader of the local church (Eph. 4:11), it will be examined fully here for two reasons: (1) It is the term most commonly used in the church today, and (2) the pastoral metaphor is employed in several passages (1 Pet. 5:2-4; Acts 20:28-29; John 10:1-16; 21:15-17; Heb. 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25; Mark 6:34; 1 Cor. 9:6-7). The favorite terminology of Jesus to express His relationship to the people was that of shepherd and sheep. It is natural, therefore, that those entrusted with the care of the Lord’s flock should be called pastors.

It is difficult for people of the Western world to understand the close, trusting relationship that existed between the Palestinian shepherd and his sheep. The word pastor expresses the loving care and mutual reliance that should exist between spiritual leaders and the congregations they tend. Other synonyms for the pastoral office are used more frequently in the New Testament, but the title that has persisted in the modern church is that of pastor.

E. Teachers

Teachers are the fifth category of ministry gifts bestowed upon the church by the ascended Lord (Eph. 4:11). It is not absolutely clear whether the term teacher represents a distinct office or merely a function of apostles and pastors (elders). That teacher is a distinct ministry is indicated by the fact that there were prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1) and that teachers are listed along with apostles and prophets as offices God has set in the church (1 Cor. 12:2). On the other hand, in Ephesians 4:11, teacher is not preceded by a definite article as are the other offices; therefore, the term may merely indicate teacher as a function of pastors (pastor-teachers). Teaching is listed as a spiritual gift in Romans 12:6-7; therefore, it might be exercised by any believer who is so gifted. Paul refers to himself as one
“...appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles” (2 Tim. 1:11). Paul admonished Timothy, a pastor, to exercise a teaching ministry (2 Tim. 2:2). The Great Commission strongly implies that teaching is of primary importance in the ongoing work of the church: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19-20). Although teaching was a part of nearly all of the New Testament ministries, there were those whose primary calling was that of teaching the Word of God. Undoubtedly, there are those today whose ministry could be best identified as that of a teacher.

F. Elders (presbyters)

Elder was a title borrowed from the synagogue and from the congregation of Israel. The term is used in the New Testament about 30 times with reference to the elders of Israel. The Hebrew word for elder is _zaquen_, which means “an older man.” The Greek word _presbuteros_ has the same meaning and is the source of our word “presbyter.” When Paul had founded a number of churches in Asia, he appointed elders to be in charge of them (Acts 14:23). The elder was equivalent to the pastor and was the most common title for the person in charge of a local church (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1-4). The elders were supported by their congregations, which were exhorted by the apostle Paul to grant double honor (a suitable level of financial or other forms of material support) to the elders who ruled (governed or directed) well their churches, and especially to those elders who devoted their time to preaching and teaching (1 Tim. 5:17-19).

Since the Greek word elders is usually plural, each church most likely had several elders. This is probably because larger congregations had to meet in many different house churches at the same time (1 Cor. 11:20; 16:15, 19). Consequently, more elders would be needed to lead the various house gatherings. Some have reasoned from 1 Timothy 5:17 that there were both ruling elders and teaching elders. Regardless, the elders were individuals of faith and spiritual power for the sick were directed to seek them out for anointing with oil and the prayer of faith: “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of
the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven” (James 5:14-15).

G. Bishops (overseers)

The New King James Version frequently translates the Greek word *episcopos*, from which is derived our word “episcopal,” with the word “bishop.” A better translation of the word would have been overseer, which is the literal meaning of *episcopos*. The Church of England’s influence can be seen in the choice of the word bishop. In the New Testament, bishop and elder are names for the same office as can be seen clearly by comparing Titus 1:5-6 with 1:7-9 and Acts 20:17 with 20:28. In the Titus passage, *episcopos* is translated bishop, while in the Acts passage it is translated overseer. In both the Titus and Acts passages, bishop, overseers and elders are used interchangeably to describe the same position. In New Testament times, the bishop or overseer was over one church; it was not until the second century that the position of bishop was developed to oversee several churches. After the passing of the original apostles, the rapid growth of the church required more extensive organization (see also 1 Tim. 3:1-9 where the qualifications for the office of the bishop/overseer/elder/pastor are set forth).

H. Deacons

The Bible makes it quite clear that the two set offices of the local church were those of the elder and the deacon. Deacons are mentioned directly in only two passages (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-13). However, rather detailed qualifications for deacons are set forth in the same chapter where the qualifications for overseers are given. The word deacon is from the Greek word *diakonos*, meaning servant. The first deacons were probably the seven individuals who were chosen by the apostles to serve tables and administer the charities to the widows of the Jerusalem church (Acts 6). They are not called deacons in the Acts passage, but the verb form of the word deacon is found in the clause: “…their widows were neglected in the daily distribution *[diakonia]*” (Acts 6:1). The deacons served the church through managing this “daily distribution,” freeing the elders for prayer and the ministry of the word. The scriptures do not delineate the duties of deacons in the New Testament church,
but from the context of Scripture it is assumed that their duties involved the management of the serving ministries, charities and business affairs of the churches. It is important to realize that Philip and Stephen, two of the seven deacons mentioned in Acts, were also preachers, so it should not be assumed that deacons performed only menial tasks.

I. Ministers

The word minister comes from the same Greek word that is translated deacon. However, there are a number of passages where the word diakonos does not refer to the office of the deacon. For instance, Paul, writing to the Corinthians, said: “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers [diakonos] through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?” (1 Cor. 3:5). To the Ephesian church Paul wrote, “…of which I became a minister [diakonos] according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power” (Eph. 3:7). Paul refers to himself as a minister five times and several times refers to his younger workers as ministers. The term apparently emphasizes the servanthood role of the preacher. The goal of the spiritual leaders is that of equipping the saints for ministry (Eph. 4:12). All saints are expected to minister (verb), but the title minister (noun) is in every case used only of those called to spiritual leadership. When the pastor is called the minister, the title is being used in an appropriate, scriptural way.

J. Leaders (rulers)

The words rule and ruler are used several times in the New King James Version to designate church leaders (1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24). The New American Standard Version employs the words lead and leader, which seem more appropriate. “Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you…Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give account…Greet all of your leaders and all the saints” (Heb. 13:7, 17, 24, NASB). There are some who are prone to depreciate leadership in the church. Even so, duly constituted and recognized leadership is a biblical teaching and principle: “And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake” (1 Thess. 5:12-13a).
V. The Mission of the Church

A. Preaching and teaching

The primary mission of the church is declared in the Great Commission, which Jesus gave to the apostles before His ascension. A form of the Great Commission is found in all four Gospels and in the book of Acts with each writer reporting only a selected part of the total commission. Therefore, it will be necessary to examine all five occurrences of Jesus’ charge to the church to grasp the full scope of the commission.

Mark emphasizes the church’s mission to preach the gospel: “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature’” (Mark 16:15). The importance of preaching may be indicated by the fact that the words for preaching are found more than 115 times in the New Testament. There are two principal Greek words translated “to preach”: (1) kerusso which means “to herald” as a royal proclamation and (2) euangelizo which means “to preach the good news.” Both of these words occur more than 50 times in the New Testament. In addition to focusing on preaching as a mission of the church, Mark also focuses on the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised would accompany the preaching of the gospel (Mark 16:17-20).

The part of the Great Commission reported in Luke’s gospel also emphasizes preaching: “…and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:47-49).

Luke’s gospel discloses some of the content of the church’s preaching: “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name” (v. 47). This content can be summarized as follows: (1) unbelievers are called upon to repent of sins, (2) the offer of the gospel is forgiveness of sins, and (3) the church’s preaching is in the name of Jesus because salvation from sin is by virtue of the redeeming work of Jesus. Luke records, both in his gospel and
in Acts, the Lord’s charge regarding the necessary preparation for preaching: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8, see also Luke 24:49). This Holy Spirit empowerment for preaching is also referenced in John 20:21-23.

According to both Luke and Acts, Jesus commissioned the church’s preachers to be His witnesses; they were not to preach the gospel as hearsay but to herald what they first experienced. This is confirmed by the writings of John as well: “…that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3; see also Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8; 10:40-43; 1 Cor. 1:17-24; 9:16).

Matthew’s account of the Great Commission emphasizes the teaching mission of the church:

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” Amen (Matt. 28:18-20).

The church’s dual ministry, preaching and teaching, is evident throughout the book of Acts:

And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ (Acts 5:42).

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching…(Acts 2:42, NASB).
And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch (Acts 11:26; see also Acts 15:35; 18:11; 20:20; 28:31).

Preaching is the recruiting and motivating ministry of the church; teaching is the maturing ministry. Through preaching, new babes are born into God’s family; through teaching, the babes are matured from milk to strong meat. It could be said that the church’s work is twofold: winning and weaning (see 1 Cor. 3:1-2; Heb. 5:12-14).

B. Discipling

The Great Commission in Matthew’s gospel charged the church to go and teach all nations (28:19). The Greek word translated “teach” is matheteuo, from mathetes meaning “disciple.” A central mission of the church is that of discipling all nations. Discipling is more than just teaching. Discipling occurs when truth is not only taught but lived out. It is possible to tell others how to be victorious, but the one who disciples shows others how to live a victorious life by example. Those who merely teach just have pupils, but those who disciple make followers. Jesus demonstrated this truth as did His disciples. Paul wrote about this kind of discipling in his letter to the Thessalonians:

For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe (1 Thess. 1:5-7).

The great strength of the local church is its Christian community life. All learn from one another, draw strength from one another and grow together in Spirit-filled, discipling Christian communities.
C. Fellowship

A mission of the church is to sustain the fellowship of believers. The early church was rich in fellowship: “They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship…” (Acts 2:42). The Greek word for fellowship is 

\[\textit{koinonia}\]

, which means “communion or that which is had in common or shared.” The passage in Acts goes on to define fellowship: “Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common…” (Acts 2:44). Although today the word fellowship is often used to describe church events that include games, dining and social interactions, the word has a much deeper meaning. The following are scriptural uses of 

\[\textit{koinonia}\]:

- \textit{Koinonia} expressed as generosity and charity: “…imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God” (2 Cor. 8:4-5).

- \textit{Koinonia} expressed as acceptance into the body of Christ: “…and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship…” (Gal. 2:9).

- \textit{Koinonia} expressed as participation in the body of Christ: “…that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery…” (Eph. 3:8-9).

- \textit{Koinonia} expressed as participation in salvation: “I thank my God…for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now…” (Phil. 1:3-5).

- \textit{Koinonia} expressed through the Holy Spirit: “Therefore if there is any…fellowship of the Spirit…” (Phil. 2:1).
Perhaps the apostle John summarized the clearest applications of biblical fellowship:

…that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ…If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:3, 6-7).

Fellowship is having a common relationship to the Father and the Son in the body of Christ, where we are united by the Spirit in bonds of love, unity and singleness of purpose. This fellowship of believers extends to all mutual activities that are God-honoring.

D. Worship

Jesus said that the Father seeks the worship of those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23). An important mission of the church is to promote and sustain an atmosphere conducive to worship, prayer and praise: “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light…” (1 Peter 2:9).

In the Old Testament, the worship of God was usually accompanied by the offering of animal sacrifices. The New Testament church offers God the sacrifice of praise: “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name” (Heb. 13:15). Paul wrote that our lives are to be a continual expression of worship: “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship” (Rom. 12:1, NASB).
It is one of the works of the Holy Spirit to assist the believer in prayer, intercession, worship and praise: “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Rom. 8:26). An important aid in worship for Spirit-filled believers is their prayer language, by which they are able to worship God more deeply, fully and completely than they can by the sole means of the human intellect: “For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God...however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries...He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself…” (1 Cor. 14:2-4a). A spirit of worship, prayer and praise, almost without exception, has brought revival, renewal and growth to the church.

E. Missions and evangelism

The Great Commission implies world evangelization. Jesus intended that the gospel should be carried beyond Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria. The gospel is good news for all nations, even “to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). However, it took a devastating persecution to scatter the gospel and the evangelists as far as Antioch (Acts 8:1; 11:19-20). The church has frequently needed special urging to get on with her assigned task. William Carey, one of the early fathers of modern missions, had to overcome strong resistance before he was freed to take the gospel to India. The fact cannot be urged upon the church too strongly that all nations have not yet been discipled and the “end of the earth” has not been reached. Paul, the great missionary, challenged the church with his testimony:

…but in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man’s foundation, but as it is written: “To whom He was not announced, they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand” (Rom. 15:19-21; see also 1 Cor. 10: 14-16; Isa. 52:10).
F. Maturity of the believer

The church has not completed her mission with making converts. A great part of the New Testament pertains to teaching, edifying and maturing the believer. Paul explained very clearly the Lord’s purpose for His body, the church:

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ…(Eph. 4:11-15, NASB).

The Bible speaks of developing growth and maturity through the following means: (1) prayer, Col. 4:12; (2) the Word of God, 1 Peter 2:2; Col. 1:28; (3) the exercise of faith, 1 Thess. 3:10; (4) patience in testing, James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:7; (5) love, 1 Thess. 1:3; Col. 3:14; 1 John 2:5; 4:12; (6) grace, 2 Peter 3:18; (7) Christian works, Heb. 13:21; and (8) spiritual gifts, Rom. 1:11 (see also Heb. 6:1; 1 Cor. 3:1-2; 2 Tim. 2:15).

G. Ministry in the home and family

The mission of the church extends into the home and concerns the life of the family. This truth is demonstrated in the following scriptures:

• Jesus had great concern and love for children (Mark 10:13-16).

• Paul gave special instructions for all members of the Christian family (Eph. 5:33-6:4; Col. 3:18-21).
• The promise of the Holy Spirit was to believers and their children (Acts 2:39).

• When Paul made converts, he followed by witnessing to and baptizing their whole family (Acts 16:15, 34; 18:8).

• Church elders and deacons were required to have well-managed families (1 Tim. 3:4-5, 12; Titus 1:6).

• Many of the early churches were home churches where the gospel influenced the whole family life (Col. 4:15; Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Acts 21:4-5, 8-9).

H. Ministry to material needs

The early church had a sincere concern for the material needs of people, especially those of the Christian family. This social concern arose, no doubt, from the teaching of Jesus (see Matt. 25:34-46; Luke 10:25-37). The church is not charged to preach a “social gospel,” but there are social implications to a biblical gospel. For example, The Foursquare Church, inspired by the works of its founder, has from its beginning maintained a ministry called the “commissary,” which ministered to the material, physical and spiritual needs of millions. That such ministry follows a scriptural precedent is seen in the following passages:

• The church in Jerusalem maintained a food service for widows and in a time of crisis chose special leadership from among the most spiritual men to solve problems (Acts 6:1-7).

• Dorcas was well known in Joppa for her works of charity sewing garments for the poor and widowed (Acts 9:36-42).

• Each disciple in Antioch gave according to their ability to provide relief with a famine in Judea (Acts 11:27-30).
• Paul and his fellow workers took collections in all the Gentile churches for the poor saints in Jerusalem. Much of the book of 2 Corinthians relates to these collections. The passage “…for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7b) refers to giving for material needs (see also 2 Cor. 8-9).

• Paul gave special instructions for the care of widows in his letter to Timothy (1 Tim. 5:3-10).

• Christ’s work of redemption is for the whole person: spirit, soul and body.

The church is the Lord’s instrument for implementing His provided blessing. The church, as well as individual believers, must reflect the compassion of Jesus, a compassion that is often best expressed in sharing with the less fortunate. James wrote:

If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead (James 2:15-17).

VI. The Ordinances of the Church

The ordinances of the local church are outward rites or symbolic observances commanded by Jesus, which set forth essential Christian truths. The term ordinance comes from the Latin word ordo, meaning “row or order,” and by extension, “something commanded and enforced by the proper authority.” The ordinances can be defined as “the outward sign of an inward work,” or “the visible sign of an invisible work of grace.” Although the Roman Catholic Church observes seven “sacraments,” Jesus commanded the church to observe only the two ordinances of water baptism and the Lord’s Supper.
Almost all Protestant churches observe water baptism and the Lord’s Supper as the two ordinances of the church.

A. Water baptism

Jesus established water baptism as an ordinance in the Great Commission: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit…” (Matt. 28:19; see also Mark 16:16). Jesus Himself set an example of the importance of baptism through submitting to baptism by John the Baptist (Matt. 3:13-17). Peter reconfirmed the command to be baptized in his sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38-41). Throughout the book of Acts, the apostles observed the ordinance of baptism, baptizing new converts (Acts 8:12, 36-38; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5-6; 22:16). The spiritual significance of water baptism is also taught in the epistles (Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 10:2; Gal. 3:27).

1. The manner of water baptism

a) Water baptism is by immersion: The Greek word baptizo means “to immerse or submerge.” This also aligns with the manner of Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan River.

b) Water baptism is Trinitarian: The formula for water baptism is clearly stated in the Great Commission as “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19). When Peter told converts to “be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ” and omitted the longer formula, he was most likely emphasizing that Christian baptism was distinct from John’s baptism (Acts 2:38).

2. The significance of water baptism

The following statement from the Foursquare Declaration of Faith affirms the doctrine of water baptism and explains the significance of the ordinance:
We believe that water baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, according to the command of our Lord, is a blessed outward sign of an inward work, a beautiful and solemn emblem reminding us that even as our Lord died upon the cross of Calvary so we reckon ourselves now dead indeed unto sin, and the old nature nailed to the tree with Him; and that even as He was taken down from the tree and buried, so we are buried with Him by baptism into His death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life.\textsuperscript{5}

B. The Lord’s Supper (Holy Communion)

Jesus, at His last Passover, instituted the ordinance of the taking of bread and the fruit of the vine as a memorial of His atoning death: “And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me’” (Luke 22:19). In the book of Acts, the observance of the Lord’s Supper is referred to as “the breaking of bread.” While the disciples frequently broke bread as a love feast of fellowship, the feast was concluded with the Lord’s Supper (Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7, 11; 27:35). The clearest evidence that the church observed the Lord’s Supper as an ordinance is found in the teaching of the apostle Paul:

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes (1 Cor. 11:23-26; see also 10:16-21; 11:20-22, 27-34).

\textsuperscript{5} McPherson, 15.
1. The nature of the Lord’s Supper

   a) The Lord’s Supper is an act of obedience to the Lord’s command. Regardless of the blessings believers derive from observing the ordinance, it is to be kept out of obedience to Christ, the head of the church (1 Cor. 11:23-24).

   b) The Lord’s Supper is a memorial to the atoning death and shed blood of Jesus (1 Cor. 11:24; Luke 22:19).

   c) The Lord’s Supper is a proclamation, an act of confession by the church of faith in the efficacy of Christ’s atoning work. In the Lord’s Supper believers “proclaim the Lord’s death” (1 Cor. 11:26).

   d) The Lord’s Supper is a statement of anticipation of the return of Christ to finalize His redeeming work. When believers partake of the Lord’s Supper, they “proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes” (1 Cor. 11:26).

   e) The Lord’s Supper is an experience of communion with the Lord in which participants receive by faith the strength and blessing of fellowship with the Savior: “The bread which we break, is it not the communion [koinonia] of the body of Christ?” (1 Cor. 10:16).

   f) The Lord’s Supper is a communion (koinonia) of believers at the Lord’s table and a statement of the oneness of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 10:17).

2. Four views of the nature of the elements of the Lord’s Supper

   a) Holy Communion: This view holds that the elements, when received by faith, mediate to the believer the spiritual benefits of Christ’s death. The elements in themselves are only tokens, but when believers receive the Lord’s Supper by faith, they experience real communion with the Lord and the benefits of that communion. Calvin and the majority of the reformers held this perspective of the Lord’s Supper. Scripture also supports this understanding of Holy Communion (see 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:27-29).
b) Remembrance or memorial: This view describes the Lord’s Supper as purely a memorial or symbolic act of remembrance. In this view, communion is beneficial because it reminds believers of what Christ has done through His death on the cross.

c) Transubstantiation: According to this view, the elements, when blessed by a priest, are changed into the actual physical body and blood of Jesus. Transubstantiation is taught by the Roman Catholic Church. This view is contradicted by experience, for testing does not show that the elements physically change when blessed by a priest. Also, logic contradicts the conclusion that the bread and wine actually become Christ’s body and blood, for Jesus was still in His physical body when He instituted the ordinance and said of the bread, “this is My body.”

d) Consubstantiation: According to this view, the elements are unchanged, but the actual body and blood of Jesus are “present with” the elements. Martin Luther believed in the idea of consubstantiation. However, the concept that the body and blood of Jesus are present with the elements is not taught anywhere in Scripture. This understanding of the elements overemphasizes the physical over the spiritual blessings of the Lord’s Supper.

3. Partaking in a worthy manner

When providing instructions about the Lord’s Supper, Paul gave the following warning: “Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord” (1 Cor. 11:27-29). Some believers have misunderstood this warning and abstained from the Lord’s Supper unnecessarily. “Unworthy” is an adverb in this verse modifying the verbs “eats” and “drinks.” Unworthy describes the manner of partaking, not the unworthiness of the persons. Paul’s warning was referring to the greedy and intemperate manner of the Corinthians described in 1 Corinthians 11:20-22. Individuals are not worthy in and of themselves to have communion with Jesus, but we are given the privilege to partake of the Lord’s Supper by virtue of the atoning work of Christ, which the elements represent. However, participants need to examine themselves in relation to their manner of partaking the Lord’s Supper and in their attitude
towards other believers. Participants, furthermore, should be certain to discern the Lord’s body and not partake in an irreverent or frivolous manner. When believers partake in faith, the Lord’s Supper brings great blessings, even spiritual and physical healing (1 Cor. 11:29-30).

The Foursquare Declaration of Faith states the following regarding the Lord’s Supper:

We believe in the commemoration and observing of the Lord’s supper by the sacred use of the broken bread, a precious type of the Bread of Life even Jesus Christ, whose body was broken for us; and by the juice of the vine, a blessed type which should ever remind the participant of the shed blood of the Savior who is the True Vine of which His children are the branches; that this ordinance is a glorious rainbow that spans the gulf of the years between Calvary and the coming of the Lord…

VII. The Church as the Body of Christ

Although Spirit-directed organization helps the church carry out her mission, the church is not by nature an organization but an organism. The church is a living being whose divine life is provided by the indwelling Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9).

A. The church’s vital relationship to the head

The Lord Jesus, after His earthly mission, ascended to the right hand of the Father. However, Christ is still in the world manifesting Himself through His body, the church. Paul expressed this reality in the following way: “And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all” (Eph. 1:22-23).

6 McPherson, 15-16.
The church is Christ’s body by which He fulfills His earthly mission (Christ’s fullness). The last two verses of Mark’s gospel express dramatically the relationship of Christ to the church: “The Lord Jesus therefore, on the one hand, after talking with them was taken up into heaven, and sat down on the right hand of God; they on the other hand, going forth, proclaimed on every side, the Lord coworking, and confirming the Word through closely following signs” (Mark 16:19-20, Rotherham).

Jesus returned to the Father, but just before He left, He promised, “…lo, I am with you always…” (Matt. 28:20). He is with us as a head is with a body. Christ is still working on earth, performing even “greater works” than before (John 14:12); the members of His church are His arms and legs and mouth (see 1 Cor. 12:12-31; Rom. 12:4-5). The church is the extension of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus expressed this relationship through the metaphor of a vine and branches: “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). The branches relate to the vine in the same way the body relates to the head. The branches are the body of the vine. Just as the vine bears fruit through the branches, so the work of Christ is done through the church, His body. Just as the branches can do nothing severed from the vine, so the body (the church) can accomplish nothing without the life and direction of the head (Jesus).

B. The unity of the body

The body metaphor of Scripture emphasizes strongly the unity of the many members of the church. The church (body) of Christ is not merely a collection of individuals who subscribe to a shared theology or philosophy. Instead, the church is an organism of which the members are interrelated parts. Paul described the unity of the church in the following manner:

But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased…But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you”…And if one member
suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it (1 Cor. 12:18, 20-21, 26).

There are many ministries in the church, but they are all coordinated by the Spirit to achieve one purpose: “…the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry…” (Eph. 4:12). There are many gifts of the Spirit, but they are all exercised in harmony to accomplish one end: “…the edifying of the body of Christ…” (Eph. 4:12; 1 Cor. 12:4-7; 14:5, 12, 26). There are many methodologies employed by the church, but they have one goal: “…this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations…” (Matt. 24:14; 28:19-20; Mark 16:15).

C. The importance of each member in the body

Every member of the body of Christ is important and necessary: “And the eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you’; nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you.’ No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary…that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another” (1 Cor. 12:21-22, 25). Dr. F.F. Bruce, commenting on 1 Corinthians 12, remarked: “No member is less a part of the body than any other member: all are necessary. Variety of organs, limbs and functions is of the essence of bodily life. No organ could establish a monopoly in the body by taking over the functions of the others. A body consisting of a single organ would be a monstrosity.”

D. Submission in the body

There are many members of the body of Christ, but there is but one head, the Lord Jesus Christ. The members cannot function properly without full submission to the head who provides direction to the whole body (1 Cor. 12:4-7): “And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head
over all things to the church…” (Eph. 1:22). There are four ways in which Christian believers practice submission:

1. Submission to God and to His Son Jesus (Eph. 5:24; Heb. 2:8; 12:9; James 4:7)

2. Submission to the God-appointed leaders of the church (Heb. 13:17; 1 Cor. 16:16; Phil. 2:12; 1 Thess. 5:12-13)

3. Submission one to another in Christ (Eph. 5:21-6:9; 1 Peter 5:5)

4. Submission to rulers and governing authorities when submission does not disobey the teachings of Scripture (Acts 4:19-20; 5:29; Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17)

E. The body of Christ and the local church

The universal body of Christ consists of the total number of Christian believers of all ages in heaven and on earth. The New Testament scriptures address all earthly believers as functioning members of a local church. Unfortunately, there are many professing Christians who believe a local church relationship is optional or unnecessary. The following arguments demonstrate why a local church relationship is important for every believer:

1. Jesus assumed that His people would be related to a local church. Because the New Testament church’s founding was established after His ascension, Jesus refers to the church by name only twice. The second reference pertained to cases of disagreements between brethren in which Jesus instructed: “And if he refuses to hear them [witnesses], tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector” (Matt. 18:17). It is evident Jesus believed the local church was central to Christian life as it had the power to arbitrate disputes among believers.

2. All the epistles of the New Testament are addressed to local churches or to leaders of local churches.
3. All ministries, which are God’s gifts, are given to local church communities to equip saints for ministry to one another. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers minister with other believers as they assemble together in fellowship (Eph. 4:11-16).

4. Believers are commanded by Jesus to partake of Holy Communion together until He returns (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

5. The Scripture describes the operation of the gifts of the Spirit as functioning in a local body. Paul wrote that when believers exercise the gifts of the Spirit, they should “…let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel” (1 Cor. 14:12).

6. As members of the body of Christ, believers are related not only to Christ, the head, but they are also related one to another: “…so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another” (Rom. 12:5). Any member of the human body cannot exist only connected to the head, in isolation. Each member of the body of Christ needs both a connection with the head and with the rest of the body to properly function (1 Cor. 12:14-20).

7. Scripture states that God places members in the body as it pleases Him (1 Cor. 12:18).

8. For Christians to carry out the commission of Christ, there must be growing fellowship, evangelism and worldwide missions through an active, accountable and visible church (Acts 2:41-47; 11:26-30; 13:1-3).

F. Body ministry

The concept of the church as the body of Christ has led to important insights for worship and ministry. Too often people have viewed ministry as coming exclusively from the pulpit or designated clergy. When ministry is perceived as the act of professionals, the members of congregations become merely spectators. The Bible does not support such a limited view of ministry.
God has placed spiritual leadership in the church to preach and teach, but the object of this preaching, teaching and pastoral care is that of equipping believers to minister one to another and to the world:

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ…(Eph. 4:11-15).

Paul’s teaching concerning body ministry reveals the following truths:

1. The Lord intends that every member of the body of Christ should have a ministry. Every member of the human body contributes to the preservation, growth, health and activity of the body. If a specific member or part of the human body does not function properly, the body will not work properly. Many problems in the church are the result of non-functioning members. To facilitate participation in the ministry of the church, God has provided spiritual leadership to equip and mature believers. God has also given believers the gifts of the Spirit to give them direction and to empower their functioning in the body.

2. Body ministry should equip and edify the whole church (Eph. 4:12). Believers demonstrate the value and validity of their body ministry through the way their spiritual activity edifies and equips the body of Christ. Peter wrote: “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Pet. 4:10). Believers are called to steward the ministry and gifts God has provided. God gives gifts to believers, not just for their own edification but for the edification of the church family.
3. When the whole body ministers in unity and love, the result is spiritual and numeric growth. Paul referenced this growth when he wrote about Christ and the church: “...from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” (Eph. 4:16). Church leaders, pastors, evangelists and missionaries cannot accomplish optimum growth without the entire church ministering.

4. When the church functions as the body of Christ, the adhesive force of love is present. Unless church participation is motivated by and carried out in a spirit of love, the growth accomplished will be transient and the ministry performed will be less than edifying. “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart…” (1 Pet. 1:22; see also 1 Cor. 13; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 3:17-19; 4:2-3, 15-16; Phil. 2:1-5; Col. 3:12-15; 1 Thess. 5:12-13).

VIII. The Church and the Kingdom of God

The phrases “kingdom of heaven” and “kingdom of God” are found more than eighty times in the New Testament. The kingdom of God is an important subject. Several questions arise in relation to the identity and manifestation of the kingdom of God: What does the word kingdom mean? Is the kingdom of God an inner spiritual reality or is it an outwardly visible rule? Who are the subjects of the kingdom? Are the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven identical? What relationship does the church have to the kingdom of God? Is the kingdom of God present or future? The following section will address and answer these and other important questions concerning the church and the kingdom of God.

A. What does the word kingdom mean?

The Greek word *basileia*, from which the word kingdom is derived, has two principle meanings: (1) “a king’s rule, reign, dominion or authority,” and (2) “the territory or people over whom a king reigns.” W.E. Vine defined
basileia as follows: “Basileia is primarily an abstract noun, denoting sovereignty, royal power, dominion, e.g., Rv. 17:18, translated ‘which reigneth,’ lit. ‘hath a kingdom’…then, by metonymy, a concrete noun, denoting the territory or people over whom a king rules, e.g., Mt. 4:8; Mk. 3:24.”8 In the Greek Old Testament, basileia translates the Hebrew word malkut which likewise has the two meanings: (1) “royal reign” (Dan. 1:1), and (2) “king’s domain.” The word kingdom is used most frequently in the New Testament with the meaning of reign or royal power. Regarding the word kingdom, George Eldon Ladd said: “The primary meaning of the New Testament word for kingdom, basileia, is ‘reign’ rather than ‘realm’ or ‘people.’ A great deal of attention in recent years has been devoted by critical scholars to this subject, and there is practically unanimous agreement that ‘regal power, authority’ is more basic to basileia than ‘realm’ or ‘people.’”9

B. Is the kingdom of God present or future?

The kingdom of God is both present and future. The kingdom of God is future in that the realm of God’s people of all dispensations, over which Christ will reign in righteousness, will begin in the future with the second coming of Christ (2 Tim. 4:1; Rev. 11:15). The kingdom of God as the “reign” or “royal power” of God is present in the redeeming work of Jesus who came to destroy the works of the devil. Dr. Ladd stated:

The kingdom has come in that the powers of the future kingdom have already come into history and into human experience through the supernatural ministry of the Messiah which has effected the defeat of Satan. Men may now experience the reality of the reign of God. In the future eschatological kingdom Satan will be utterly destroyed, cast into a lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 20:10) that men may be freed from every influence of evil. However, God’s people need not wait for the coming of

the future kingdom to know what it means to be delivered from Satanic power. The presence of Christ on earth had for its purpose the defeat of Satan, his binding, so that God’s power may be a vital reality in the experience of those who yield to God’s reign by becoming the disciples of Jesus. In Christ, the kingdom, in the form of its power, has come among men.\(^{10}\)

C. Is the kingdom of God an inner spiritual reality or an outwardly visible rule?

The future (eschatological) kingdom will be an outwardly manifested kingdom over which Christ will reign in power and glory. The future kingdom of God will prevail over the whole earth and will fulfill the Old Testament prophecies to the faithful remnant of Israel, concerning Messiah’s reign upon the throne of David (Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1-10; 24:23; 32:13; Dan. 2:44; 7:18-27; Mic. 4:7). The New Testament saints will rule and reign with Christ as kings and priests (Matt. 25:21-23; 1 Tim. 6:14-15; Rev. 5:9-10; 19:14-16; 20:4-6). The thousand-year reign of Christ over the earth is known as His millennial reign. Although the word *millennium* does not occur in the Bible, it is the Latin word for “thousand years” (Rev. 20:4-6).

On the other hand, the present kingdom of Christ is spiritual and invisible, for it consists of the kingship, power and authority of Jesus as savior and destroyer of Satan. The spiritual nature of the kingdom of God is made clear by two statements of Jesus. In the first statement, when answering the Pharisees’ question concerning when the kingdom would come, Jesus said: “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:20b-21). In Jesus’ second statement, when Pilate asked Him if He were a king, “Jesus answered, ‘My Kingdom is not of this world…’” (John 18:36). Jesus went on to say that He was born to be a king over the realm of divine truth and that “Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice” (John 18:37). Jesus said to Nicodemus, “…unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God…unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot

\(^{10}\) Ladd, 91.
enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:3, 5). Those who are born again enter into Jesus’ kingdom: the divine saving truth of the gospel. Jesus’ present kingdom on earth is a kingdom of the gospel and is why the gospel is called the “gospel of the kingdom” (Matt. 4:23-24; 9:15; 24:14; Mark 1:14; Luke 4:43; see also Acts 1:3; 8:12; 19:8; 28:23, 31). Those who accept the gospel of Jesus also accept Him as sovereign Lord and master, entering into His kingdom as citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20).

The gospel is the central message of Jesus’ present kingdom or “kingship.” However, the gospel is not abstract or passive but dynamic, “the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16). Writing to the Thessalonians about the gospel, Paul said: “For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance…” (1 Thess. 1:5). The result of Paul’s preaching to the Thessalonians was they “…turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God…” (1 Thess. 1:9). Scripture clearly declares that at conversion believers immediately enter the kingdom of God: “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love…” (Col. 1:13). Jesus brought the kingdom into this present age through exercising dominion over Satan and his realm of darkness: “But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Luke 11:20). The spiritual nature of the present “reign” of God is affirmed by Paul in Romans: “…for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17).

D. Are the church and the kingdom of God identical?

The final and complete manifestation of the eschatological kingdom of God is yet future. However, the power, authority and message of the kingdom were introduced into the present age and bestowed upon the church by Jesus, who said to His apostles, “…on this rock I will build My church…And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven…” (Matt. 16:18-19). The kingdom of God as the “domain” of God is yet to come, but the kingdom as the “dominion” of God has already broken into the present age, and the church exercises the power of that kingdom. The church is not identical to the kingdom of God, for the kingdom is larger than the church. However,
the church is the present instrument of the kingdom and will inherit the kingdom (James 2:5; 2 Pet. 1:11).

The ultimate kingdom of God will include not only the church but also the Old Testament saints, the future regathered remnant of Israel and the righteous nations that will be part of the millennial reign of Jesus (Matt. 25:32-33; Rev. 20:4; Isa. 66:18-23; Jer. 3:16-18; 23:3-6; 31:10-12; Zech. 14:8-9).

E. Is the kingdom of heaven different from the kingdom of God?

Some Bible scholars (including the Scofield Chain Reference Bible editors, see footnotes in Scofield on Matt. 3:2) teach that the phrase “the kingdom of heaven,” found only in Matthew, usually refers to professing Christendom, while “the kingdom of God,” used by Mark, Luke and John, refers to God’s sovereign reign. In His parables, Jesus sometimes extended the “kingdom” concept to include the sphere of outward profession, such as in the example of the tares and wheat in Matthew 13:24-30. However, a close comparison of the terms “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of heaven,” as they are used in all four Gospels, shows they have the same meaning. For instance, in the Beatitudes, Matthew’s gospel says the poor will inherit the “kingdom of heaven,” while Luke’s gospel says they will inherit the “kingdom of God” (Matt. 5:3; Luke 6:20). In Matthew, the disciples are sent forth to preach that the “kingdom of heaven” is at hand; while in Luke, they announce that the “kingdom of God” is at hand (Matt. 10:6-7; Luke 9:2; see also Matt 4:17; Mark 1:15). In the context where Jesus referred to the parables as teaching the “mysteries of the kingdom,” Matthew’s gospel refers to Jesus’ teachings as mysteries of the “kingdom of heaven” (13:11), while in Mark’s gospel (4:11) they are mysteries of the “kingdom of God.” In one Matthew passage, Jesus used both terms in the same figure of speech with exactly the same meaning (Matt. 19:23-24). In one sentence Jesus stated, “…it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven…” while in the next sentence He mentioned, “And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for the rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” These comparisons clearly demonstrate that the terms “kingdom of heaven” and “kingdom of God” were interchangeable in usage.
IX. Other Metaphors for the Church

Up to this point, we have given special consideration to metaphors for the church such as the “body of Christ” and the church as “a holy nation.” We have examined the church as the body of Christ because of its scriptural prominence and contemporary application, and we have looked at the church as a holy nation or “kingship” to better understand the different interpretations of the word “kingdom.” However, the metaphors applied to the church in Scripture are many because no metaphor can fully express the relationship of believers to Christ, to one another and to the world. The following are twenty-four additional metaphors, each of which adds something to the total concept of the church.

A. The church as the Lord’s family

Jesus introduced us to the family relationship, teaching us to pray “…Our Father in heaven…” (Matt. 6:9; Luke 11:2). God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is also our Father. Jesus prayed using the Aramaic word Abba. According to Romans 8:15, the believer in the spirit of adoption cries “Abba, Father.” If we, together with our Lord Jesus, call God “Father,” then Jesus is also our elder brother in the family of God (Heb. 2:10-11). The author of Hebrews declared that believers are members of God’s family: “But Christ was faithful as a loyal son in the household of the founder, his own Father. And we are members of this household if we maintain our trust and joyful hope steadfast to the end” (Heb. 3:6 Phillips). As families are often proud of the family name, so the church family exults in the Father’s name (Eph. 3:14-15). As families receive inheritances from their fathers, so the church awaits the heavenly Father’s promised inheritance (Rom. 8:17). As good families observe a certain pattern of conduct, so there is a given standard of behavior for God’s household (1 Tim. 3:15). In the Old Testament, the father of each household was, in effect, the priest over his household (Num. 7:2). Jesus has become the High Priest over God’s family, the church (Heb. 10:21-23; 2:17-18).

The idea of the church as God’s family and household is derived from the Old Testament where God’s people are the house (family) of Israel, a nation
grown from the family of Jacob, nurtured through family culture. That the church is called God’s family and household testifies to the basic importance of the family as a societal institution. In the New Testament, especially in Acts, much is made of the effect of the gospel upon entire families: Acts 2:46; 5:42; 12:12; 16:15, 33-34; 21:8-9; 1 Cor. 1:16; 16:15; 2 Tim. 4:19.

The Old Testament speaks primarily of God as the Father of the whole house of Israel (Isa. 5:7; Ps. 98:3), while the New Testament teaches followers that calling God “Father” is the privilege of every believer in Jesus Christ the Son.

B. The church as a fellowship of believers

The Greek word for “fellowship” is *koinonia*, which means “those having something in common.” *Koinonia* came to be applied to “those belonging to a society.” *Koinonia* was used in the church for those having a common salvation through a common faith in God and in His Son Christ Jesus: “…that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3; see also 1 Cor. 1:9). As soon as the church came into being, a strong fellowship of faith, worship and service was established: “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). The metaphor of the “family” stresses the idea of a common “Father,” while the metaphor of the “fellowship of believers” stresses the idea of common mission, purpose, worship and action.

Only a strong sense of unity makes a great society. The church is God’s new society held together by the unity of the Spirit. Luke says about the apostolic church: “Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common [koinos]” (Acts 2:44). The doctrine of the church is most fully developed in the New Testament epistle of Ephesians. Ephesians does not use the word *koinonia*, but it is the only New Testament book to use the term “unity” (Eph. 4:3-6, 13). The church as God’s *koinonia* stresses the idea of a society whose primary characteristics are unity and love. One practical expression of the church’s love was that of sharing with the needy. *Koinonia* is sometimes
translated “communicate,” with the meaning of extending material help to the poor and to those overtaken by misfortune (see Phil. 4:14; 1 Tim. 6:18; Heb. 13:16; Acts 2:45; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:13; Gal. 2:10; Rom. 12:13). The church’s koinonia (also translated “communion”) is celebrated at the Lord’s Supper, which symbolizes our common redemption by Christ’s atoning death on the cross (1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:23-34). John R.W. Stott, in a commentary on Ephesians, wrote the following:

The letter focuses on what God did through the historical work of Jesus Christ and does through His Spirit today, in order to build His new society in the midst of the old. We have been raised from spiritual death, exalted to heaven and seated with Him there. We have also been reconciled to God and to each other. As a result, through Christ, and in Christ, we are nothing less than God’s society, the single new humanity which He is creating and which includes Jews and Gentiles on equal terms. We are the family of God the Father, the body of Jesus Christ His Son, and the temple and dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. Therefore we are to demonstrate plainly and visibly by our new life the reality of this new thing which God has done: first by the unity... of our common life, secondly by the purity and love of our everyday behaviour.¹

C. The church as a team of athletes

Athletic events were as common in the Greek and Roman world as they are today. Paul, who was a keen observer, frequently used the “athletic” metaphor (see 1 Cor. 9:24-26; Gal. 2:2; 5:7; Phil. 2:16; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:5; 4:7; Heb. 12:1). The passage with this type of metaphor that best applies to the church is “…that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel…” (Phil. 1:27). The Greek word translated “striving together” is sunathleo, from athleo (the base word for “athletics”)

meaning to “compete as an athlete,” and *sun* meaning “with” or “together.” Paul wanted to hear from the Philippians that they were in unity, “playing as a team.” The church’s greatest advancement and growth has not been the result of individual efforts but the result of the mutual effort and teamwork of the whole family of God. When Christian believers behave like a team of well-trained athletes, they display such characteristics as dedication, teamwork, cooperation, self-denial, self-control and unity.

D. The church as the Lord’s army

The idea of viewing the church as an army is probably not pleasant for some people. However, the Bible often refers to the church being engaged in a battle against the powers of darkness. Some of our aversion to the military metaphor is removed when we remember that “…the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and…bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ…” (2 Cor. 10:4-5). The believer is further exhorted: “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:11-12). The church is engaged in real warfare, but Christ is our captain, and we are assured of victory. Satan is already a defeated foe (see 1 Cor. 9:7; Eph. 6:10-17; 1 Tim. 1:18; 2 Tim. 2:3-4; 1 Pet. 2:11; Rev. 19:11-21; 20:7). Although the Bible uses militant terms to describe the church on earth, the church in heaven is triumphant.

E. The church as the Lord’s flock

The pastoral metaphor is a very familiar one. A spiritual leader of a local church is often called the pastor, and the congregation he or she serves is sometimes referred to as the “flock.” Jesus taught that He is the good shepherd, and His followers are the sheep of His fold (John 10:1-18). Although the New Testament uses the word pastor only once to designate a spiritual leader, both Paul and Peter give vivid examples of the pastoral metaphor. While ministering to the Ephesian elders, Paul exhorted “…take heed to
yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). Peter urged the elders, “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you…being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away” (1 Pet. 5:2-4). In this admonition, Peter likely remembered the words Jesus spoke and repeated to him three times after the resurrection: “Simon…do you love Me more than these?…Feed My lambs…Tend My sheep…Feed My sheep” (John 21:15-17; see also Ps. 23:1; 80:1; 100:3; 2 Sam. 7:7; Jer. 31:10; Mark 6:34; Eph. 4:11; Heb. 13:20; Rev. 7:17).

F. The church as the Lord’s school

More than fifty times the Scripture refers to Jesus as “master” or “teacher” (both words are from the Greek word *didaskalos* and the verb *didasko* meaning “to teach”) or “Rabbi.” Jesus discipled His followers through teaching. The Great Commission clearly implies that the local church is intended to be a place for teaching: “Having gone, then, disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you; and behold, I am with you all the days until the completion of the age” (Matt. 28:19-20 IGEB; see also NKJV, NIV, NASB, RSV and JB translation). Jesus used two different words for “teach” in His commission: the first is *matheteuo* (v. 19), meaning “to make disciples” and the second *didasko* (v. 20), which is the common word for “to teach.” The emphatic term in the commission is “make disciples.” In the Greek “Go” and “teaching” are participles, and both are subordinate to the main verb “make disciples.” Making disciples involves more than just teaching and preaching but a life lived by example. Our teaching and preaching will fall on deaf ears if the conduct of our lives contradicts the message we proclaim. Anyone who makes disciples must lead his or her followers by word and example to become like Jesus. Ultimately, we are not called to make people our disciples but to make them disciples of Jesus.

Mark’s gospel clearly reveals Jesus’ method of discipling: “And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and
that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons…” (Mark 3:13-15). In this passage, Mark lists three aspects of making disciples: (1) “that they might be with Him” (learning by example), (2) “that He might send them out to preach” (learning to communicate), and (3) “and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons” (learning to minister). None of these aspects can be learned by mere verbal instruction. Pupils must receive the same anointing of the Holy Spirit that enlivens their teachers just as Elisha took upon himself the mantle of Elijah (1 Kings 19:19; 2 Kings 2:14). The word “disciple” was the first name given to the early Christians (Acts 11:26). Love is the crowning virtue that characterizes an individual as a disciple of Jesus (John 13:35; see also: Mark 8:34; Luke 5:11, 27-28; John 1:43; 21:19-22; 1 Thess. 1:6-7; 1 Tim. 1:16; 4:12; Titus 2:7; 1 Pet. 2:21; 5:3).

G. The church as servant or steward

The principal words of church life are servanthood words: “minister” or “ministry” from the Greek diakonos; diakonia meaning “servant, service or one who serves tables” (John 12:26); “servant” from doulos, meaning “slave” (Matt. 24:45; 25:14; Gal. 5:13); and “steward” from oikonomos, “the servant who administered the household” (Luke 12:42; 1 Cor. 4:1-2; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet. 4:10). Two other words translated “minister” are huperetes, which originally meant “a servant who rowed a ship” (Acts 13:5), and leitourgos, meaning a “public servant” who served the community at his own expense (Rom. 15:16).

Words expressing servanthood are used throughout the New Testament. The following examples demonstrate that all Christian officers, ministers, workers and leaders are called to be servants:

(1) Jesus assumed the place of a servant (Matt. 20:27-28; Mark 10:42-45).

(2) The spirit of the world seeks to exploit and dominate others; Jesus taught His followers to serve one another (1 Pet. 5:3; 1 Cor. 9:19; Gal. 5:13; Luke 22:24-28).
(3) Believers will give an account of the stewardship of their service (Matt. 25:14-30). The greatest virtue in stewards is that they be found faithful (1 Cor. 4:1-2; Matt. 25:21).

(4) Believers are to submit to one another and to esteem very highly those who are placed over them in the Lord (Eph. 5:21; 1 Thess. 5:12). Furthermore, leadership and guidance are ministries in themselves (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2-3; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24).

(5) Paul, who had apostolic authority, called himself “a bondservant of Jesus Christ” (Rom. 1:1).

(6) All believers are charged to be equipped “for the work of ministry,” that is, to serve one another (Eph. 4:12).

H. The church as a spiritual building or sanctuary

The metaphor of the church as a spiritual building or sanctuary is suggested in the following passages: 1 Cor. 3:9-16; Eph. 2:19-22; Matt. 16:18; 21:42; 1 Pet. 2:4-7; Luke 6:46-49; Acts 4:11; 17:24; Rom. 15:20; 1 Kings 8:27; Isa. 66:1-2; Ps. 118:22. These passages teach the following principles:

(1) The Lord does not abide in buildings made with hands but in His people as a church (Acts 17:24; 1 Cor. 3:16; 1 Kings 8:27; Isa. 66:1-2).

(2) The church is the Lord’s sanctuary, and He dwells where His people are gathered together in His name (Matt. 18:20).

(3) The physical temple was a sanctuary; a holy, separated building that was dedicated exclusively to the worship and service of God. Likewise, the New Testament church is a temple or sanctuary of the Holy Spirit where the Lord dwells. The members of that sanctuary or church are called “saints” or “holy ones” (1 Cor. 3:17; Eph. 2:21-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-5).

(5) Believers are the building materials or “living stones” (1 Pet. 2:5).

(6) Ministers are said to be builders, Christ being the master builder and architect (Matt 16:18).

(7) There are no isolated stones; all are built into the building (Eph. 2:20-22).

(8) Believers must take heed as to what kinds of materials they are and how they build (1 Cor. 3:9-16).

I. The church as a mystery

One of Paul’s strongest concepts of the church was that of the church as “mystery.” The Bible word mystery has a different meaning from that attached to it in modern English. In modern usage, mystery means something is difficult to understand. In ancient Greece, mysteries referred to the secrets of the mystery religions revealed only to individuals initiated into those religions. The secrets were not mysterious because they were hard to understand but because they were hidden. Once a person was initiated into the mystery religion, that person could clearly comprehend the secrets. In this sense, Paul spoke of the “mystery of Christ” and the revelation of the good news of the gospel for all people. A mystery that “in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets…” (Eph. 3:5). One of the mysteries revealed in Christ is the church, which was not fully understood in the Old Testament. The prophets predicted that God would bless the Gentiles, but they did not fully express how the Gentile believers would share equally with Israel in the body of Christ.
“The Gentiles are fellow heirs, fellow members of the body and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel” (Eph. 3:4-6, NASB; Col. 1:25-27). Paul considered that God had given him a special ministry to declare the doctrine of the church as mystery (Eph. 3:3-4). The wonder of this mystery is the truth and fact of “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).

J. The church as the Lord’s field

The Bible frequently employs agricultural metaphors. Paul wrote to the Corinthian church: “…you are God’s field…” (1 Cor. 3:6-9). In God’s field (the church) there are planters, cultivators and reapers, but God gives the increase. Workers must not quarrel over their relative importance; God calls and places each person in his or her divinely determined office. The workers are indispensible, but the divine “vinedresser” gives the vine life and growth (John 15:1-2). Diligent work in God’s field brings reward. Paul wrote to Timothy: “The hardworking farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops” (2 Tim. 2:6, NASB). The agricultural parables in Matthew Chapter Thirteen speak of the seed (the word), different soils (hearers of the word) and varying degrees of yield: thirty, sixty and one hundred fold (Matt. 13:3-8, 18-23).

K. The church as a royal priesthood

Peter introduced the metaphor of the church as a royal priesthood:

You... are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2:5).

But you are a chosen generation [race], a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Pet. 2:9).
In the Old Testament sense, the church no longer needs priests to offer up animal sacrifices. Christ Jesus made the once-and-for-all perfect, atoning sacrifice of Himself for our redemption. The church, however, still offers up “spiritual sacrifices” of praise, worship and thanksgiving to God (Heb. 13:15). The church also intercedes and prays for rulers and all people (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

One of the great truths of the church is the “priesthood of all believers.” Every believer in Christ has access to the throne of God by the merits of Jesus: “For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father” (Eph. 2:14-18; see also Heb. 4:14-16).

As priests, believers have been given the ministry of reconciliation: “God…has given us the ministry of reconciliation…and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:18-20). In consecration, the believer offers himself to God as a “living sacrifice,” holy and acceptable (Rom. 12:1). Other sacrifices that the believer offers to God are “brotherly love” (Eph. 5:1-2), “good works” (Heb. 13:16), “material possessions” to assist others (Heb. 13:16) and “ministry” for others (Phil. 2:17).

L. The church as the bride of Christ

One of the most attractive metaphors of the community of God is the church as the bride of Christ. This metaphor is used by John the Baptist (John 3:29), the apostle Paul (1 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:21-32) and the apostle John (Rev. 19:7-9). There is a strong relationship between the bride of Christ metaphor and that of the church as the body of Christ. The analogy of the church as Christ’s bride has the following applications:

(1) Viewing the church as the bride of Christ provides a pattern for relationship between husbands and wives.

(2) A wife is to be in submission to her husband as the church is to Christ, and as believers submit one to another (Eph. 5:21-22), not because she is
inferior, less worthy or less capable. A husband is to lovingly bear the responsibility of spiritual leadership with the indispensable support of his wife.

(3) A husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. He is to love his wife as much as he loves himself, even enough to die for her (Eph. 5:25-29). If both wives and husbands comply with the pattern of biblical submission and love, no one is disadvantaged in the marriage relationship.

(4) This figure portrays the great love Christ has for His church as His own bride and the love the church experiences waiting for the coming of the bridegroom.

M. The church as the Lord’s embassy

Paul calls himself the Lord’s ambassador: “…I am an ambassador in chains…” (Eph. 6:20). He also includes believers with himself in this ambassadorship, “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ…” (2 Cor. 5:20). Several observations may be made from this truth. First, we are the ambassadors of our king, who dispatches us on a divine mission of peace. Second, as ambassadors of His sovereign “terms” for peace (Luke 14:31-32), the church announces to the world the terms for reconciling to God: every person must have faith in Christ, and every person must surrender to Him as Lord. The Lord has given to the church the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-21).

N. The church as the pillar and ground of truth

The church supports the truth of the gospel and lifts that truth on high. Paul wrote to Timothy concerning the church: “…but in case I am delayed, I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15, NASB). In the following verse, Paul used what may have been a poetic, doctrinal expression to refer to an aspect of this truth as the “mystery of godliness,” a phrase widely used in the early church (v. 16). The church is to safeguard sound doctrine and to lift truth on high by the proclamation of the gospel and by exemplary conduct.
O. The church as pilgrims

This metaphor defines the church’s relationship to this present world with the following applications: (1) believers are not really “at home” in this world, nor are they to be “conformed to this world” because their true citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20; Rom. 12:2); (2) believers sojourn here as pilgrims and strangers (Heb. 11:13); (3) though they are pilgrims, believers are commissioned to witness to this world and to win from the world citizens for Christ’s kingdom (1 Pet. 2:11-12; Col. 1:12-14; Acts 1:8); (4) every believer’s goal is to live for the coming city of God: “For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come” (Heb. 13:14).

P. The church as the Way

In the book of Acts, the life of the church is called “the Way” and believers are called “those of the Way”: “…and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem” (Acts 9:2). The church as the body of Christ is the Way, for Christ is “the Way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except [by Him]” (John 14:6). The following truths are stated about the Way in the book of Acts: (1) the Way of God was persecuted (22:4); (2) people spoke evil of the Way (19:9); (3) the Way was called a heretical sect (24:14); (4) Paul confessed joyfully to Felix that he was of that Way (24:14); (5) the Way was a disturbing element in a society ruled over by the powers of darkness (19:23).

Q. The church as the Lord’s inheritance

In the first chapter of Ephesians, Paul makes the remarkable statement: “…that you may know what is…the glory of His inheritance in the saints…” (Eph. 1:18). This is often interpreted to refer to our inheritance, but a careful reading shows that the verse refers to the Lord’s inheritance, which is the saints or the church. In verses eleven and fourteen, the same truth is found. Although the New King James Version renders verse eleven: “In Him also we have obtained an inheritance,” the Revised Version reads: “In whom we were made a heritage.” The renowned Greek scholar B.F. Wescott translates
Ephesians 1:11a: “We were also made God's portion.”² The Living Bible renders verse eleven: “Because of what Christ has done we have become gifts to God that He delights in.” F.F. Bruce, commenting on the Revised Version’s translation of verse eleven wrote:

“In whom we were made a heritage”—This is a preferable rendering to that of A.V. “in whom we have obtained an inheritance.” Both statements are true, but the apostle is thinking here of “God's own possession” (v. 14), “His inheritance in the saints” (v. 18). So, in Old Testament days, it was revealed that the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance (Deut. 32:9). In Christ, then, we have been admitted to the ranks of the chosen people, the holy heritage of God³ (see also 1 Pet. 2:9-10; Exod. 19:5-6; Deut. 14:2; 32:9; Ps. 72:2; Mal. 3:17).

R. The church as the Lord’s masterpiece

Since Ephesians is the epistle about the church, many of the metaphors for the church are found in Ephesians. In Ephesians Chapter Two, Paul states, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works…” (Eph. 2:10a). The Greek word translated “workmanship” is poiema, meaning a “piece of workmanship, a creation.” Poiema is the word from which we get the English word “poem.” The church is God’s masterpiece of creation. God created the church for good works. A perfected church portrays Jesus Christ the Lord: “…when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is (1 John 3:2). All the pronouns in Ephesians Chapter Two are plural: “We are God’s workmanship.” The church is God’s masterpiece, a mosaic of all His people in a designed collective work (see Phil. 1:6; 2:13; Eph. 3:10; Col. 1:28-29; Heb. 13:21; 2 Cor. 5:17).

S. The church as the light of the world

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden” (Matt. 5:14). The figure of the church

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as light suggests the following: (1) believers are the children of light and give witness to Christ who is the true light of the world (John 8:12); (2) believers reflect the light of Christ like the light of the moon as Christ shines on us (Eph. 5:14, NIV); (3) the book of Revelation calls local churches “lampstands” (Rev. 1:20); (4) no matter how blessed we are to minister one to another, believers must not forget their primary mission is illuminating the darkness of the world (Matt. 5:16); (5) believers witness through words and works (1 Pet. 2:12).

T. The church as the salt of the earth

What did Jesus mean when He said, “You are the salt of the earth?” (Matt. 5:13). The following applications seem to be indicated:

(1) Salt preserves: the church preserves and reinforces the qualities of goodness, honor, justice and mercy in a society.

(2) Salt inhibits corruption: the church restrains corrupting influences; the good works of the church rebuke evil.

(3) Salt gives zest and flavor: the church gives a zest and distinctive flavor to its surroundings. The church is not told to be the “sugar of the earth” but the salt of the earth, and believers are warned not to lose this savor. Savorless salt is “…good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men” (Matt. 5:13).

(4) The church must maintain its saltiness: the church is not only to “salt” the world but to keep its saltiness to restrain selfish ambition and quarrelsomeness (Mark 9:49-50; Luke 14:33).

(5) Salt is impactful: Paul seems to interpret “salt” to mean “wisdom” or spiritual “zest” in communication, speech that is not dull or insipid (Col. 4:6).

U. The church as fishers of men

Jesus said to His disciples, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men” (Mark 1:17; see Matt 4:18-20). This imagery derives from the
first disciples being fishermen. Jesus employed a ready metaphor and called them to become fishers of men. The church is commissioned to catch people for Christ’s kingdom. In Luke 5:10, the words “catch men” mean literally to “take men alive.” People caught for Christ receive a new quality of life. If the church does not catch people for Christ, Satan will snare them (2 Tim. 2:25-26). The implication of becoming “fishers of men” is that Christians must be intentional in reaching the unsaved with the gospel.

V. The church as a crucible

The life of the church is a life of faith. Genuine faith will be tested. God lets our faith be tested and tried so that He may approve it. God can bless faith that has been proved genuine through testing. In 1 Peter 1:6-7, the phrase “the trial of your faith” is literally “the approval [by trial] of your faith.” The Greek word for “trial” is dokime, a term related to an assayer, a person who tests and approves precious metal. The testing and approval of the believer’s faith is said to be more precious than the testing and approval of gold. Like gold, faith must be put in the crucible to be proved and purged by the fire (1 Pet. 4:12-17; James 1:3).

Many areas of Christian fellowship test the faith of believers such as loving the brethren, walking in faith and obedience, submitting to Christ and to one another and drawing upon the ministry of the word in times of adversity (Prov. 17:3; 27:21). Peter declared that judgment begins at the household of God (1 Pet. 4:17). The Greek words: dokime, dokimazo, dokimos and dokimion (used thirty-nine times in the New Testament) are words describing the work of the assayer with his crucible. In the life of the church, believers are in God’s crucible, being tested and approved (see 1 Thess. 2:4; Rom. 16:10; 1 Cor. 3:13; 2 Cor. 10:18; James 1:12).

W. The church as the wild olive branch

The church as a wild olive branch has been grafted into the tree of God’s redeeming purpose, replacing rebellious Israel. This is not, however, a permanent displacement. When the church has been completed, God will yet deal
with and fulfill His promises to the remnant of national Israel (Rom. 11:16-24; Jer. 11:16-17).

The many metaphors used to describe the church demonstrate the importance of the church in God’s plan for humanity. Ultimately, God has established and ordained the church for Spirit-filled worship; the preaching and teaching of the gospel; the advancement of the Great Commission; and the nurturing of believers. The church is the body of Jesus Christ. Through the church, Christ is still ministering and advancing the kingdom of God. The Bible always refers to the church not as a building, but as a people set apart by God. Each person is called to participate within the church for the glory of God and the edification of the larger body of believers. When individuals embrace a healthy theology of the church, they vibrantly express the individual and community transforming power of the gospel.
Chapter Nine
The Doctrine of Angels

Angelology

INTRODUCTION

There are celestial beings that occupy a position distinct from God and humans. They are far below the Godhead, yet they dwell in an estate above that of fallen humans (Ps. 8:4-5). A.T. Pierson described the state of these beings:

God is the all-presiding, all-pervading, uncreated Spirit. Between Him and man there lies an intermediate realm, inhabited by a higher order of intelligences, neither pure spirit like God, nor so physically constituted as man. They are called angels, because they appear in Scripture as messengers of God to man.⁴

Myer Pearlman explained the nature of angelic beings in this way:

With lightning speed and noiseless movement they pass from place to place. They inhabit the spaces of the air

above us. Some we know to be concerned with our welfare; others are set on our harm. The inspired writers draw aside the curtain and give us a glimpse of this invisible world, in order that we may be both encouraged and warned.\textsuperscript{5}

The only authoritative source individuals have for the existence and activities of angelic beings is the Holy Scripture. Therefore, Christians should learn all that the Bible says about angels but not go beyond what is revealed. The prominence of angels in God’s providential administration is indicated by how frequently they are mentioned in the Bible. The Old Testament refers to them 108 times, while the New Testament mentions them 165 times. Angelology can be used to describe the study of holy angels as well as the study of Satan and demons. Satan was once a great angel, and Scripture implies that demons are fallen angels. Whether they are holy or unholy, the Bible uses the term angel to describe spirit-beings: “And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought…” (Rev. 12:7). Angelic, satanic and demonic activity is mentioned throughout Scripture, yet is greatly misunderstood by many Christians. Consequently, this chapter will develop a biblically-based understanding of Angelology, Demonology (fallen angels) and Satanology (Satan).

\textbf{I. Angelology (Holy Angels)}

A. Definition

The word “angel,” whether derived from the Hebrew \textit{mal’ak} of the Old Testament or from the Greek \textit{angelos} of the New Testament, means “messenger.” Holy angels are messengers of God, while fallen angels are messengers of Satan, “the god of this age” (2 Cor. 4:4).

B. The origin of angels

Angels are created beings; they have not existed eternally. Scripture states that God created the heavenly angelic hosts:

\textsuperscript{5} Myer Pearlman, \textit{Knowing the Doctrines of the Bible} (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1939) 79.
• “You alone are the Lord; You have made heaven, The heaven of heavens, with all their host, The earth and everything on it, The seas and all that is in them, And You preserve them all. The host of heaven worships You” (Neh. 9:6).

• “Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all you stars of light! Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, And you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the Lord, For He commanded and they were created” (Ps. 148:2-5).

• “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him” (Col. 1:16).

Angels are among the “invisible” things God created through Christ Jesus (Col. 1:16). Scripture is not explicit as to when they were created. They may have been created on the first day of creation, immediately after the creation of the heavens. Genesis 1:1 says: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Job 38:4-7 says that “the sons of God shouted for joy” when God laid the foundations of the earth. Therefore, they were present before the earth was created.

C. The nature of angels

1. Angels are not corporeal

a) Angels are spirits. They do not have physical bodies like humans. The psalmist wrote, “Who makes His angels spirits…” (Ps. 104:4). Hebrews states, “Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?” (1:14). In Luke, Jesus said, “…a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have” (24:37-39). Although angels are not corporeal, they are still individual creatures, both finite and spatial. However, they exist in a freer relation to time and space than humans. Many can be present at one time in a very limited space. “Jesus asked him, saying, ‘What is
your name?’ And he said, ‘Legion,’ because many demons had entered him” (Luke 8:30). They are not omnipresent. Each is only in one place at one time.

b) Angels are not to be worshiped. Angels are invisible to human sight, and people are unconscious of their presence except on special occasions when God allows individuals to see them. Some suggest that they are invisible because of the human tendency to worship them. Scripture warns against humans worshiping angels: “Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind…” (Col. 2:18). Humans are called to worship the Creator, not the creature (Rom. 1:25). Angel worship is a practice of the Gnostic heresy that even the angels spoke against:

- “And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, ‘See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy’” (Rev. 19:10).
- “Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me, ‘See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God’” (Rev. 22:8-9).

c) Angels have, on numerous occasions, assumed the form of human bodies. “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels” (Heb. 13:2). This verse clearly implies angels have appeared and can regularly appear in the form of humans. Scripture enumerates many occasions when this became a reality:

- “Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground” (Gen. 19:1).
• “Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary” (Luke 1:26-27).

• “And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain” (John 20:12).

• “Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, “Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza” (Acts 8:26).

• “Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, ‘Arise quickly!’ And his chains fell off his hands. Then the angel said to him, ‘Gird yourself and tie on your sandals’; and so he did. And he said to him, ‘Put on your garment and follow me’” (Acts 12:7-8).

d) Angel of the Lord is a unique expression. The phrase “the Angel of the Lord” is used throughout the Old Testament to represent special significance in relation to the presence of God. A careful study of Scripture seems to indicate that the Angel of the Lord is the second person of the Godhead, Christ Himself, in pre-incarnate presence. These encounters happened throughout the Old Testament.

The Angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar as she was fleeing from the house of Abraham (Gen. 16:7-14). This passage uses the “Angel of the Lord” expression four times. However, verse thirteen states: “Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, ‘Have I also here seen Him who sees me?’” Hagar recognized this “Angel of the Lord” to be God.

The Angel of the Lord appeared to Abraham when he was about to slay his son Isaac (Gen. 22:11-18). God had told Abraham to offer his son. When
Abraham lifted up the knife to do so, “But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham…Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.’” By using the words “from Me” the Angel of the Lord is definitely speaking as God.

He appeared to Moses out of the bush that burned but was not consumed (Exod. 3:2-5). Verse two of this passage states, the “Angel of the Lord” appeared to Moses “in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush.” In verse four this same person is called God: “God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, ‘Moses, Moses!’”

The Angel of the Lord showed himself to Gideon as he was threshing wheat in the winepress, hiding it from the Midianites (Judg. 6:11-23). Verse twelve states, “the Angel of the Lord” appeared to Gideon. Verse fourteen refers to this visitation as from the Lord: “Then the Lord turned to him and said, ‘Go in this might of yours…””

In Judges 13:2-23 Manoah and his wife (parents of Samson) are visited by one who is called “the Angel of the Lord,” “the Angel of God” and “the Man of God.” Twelve times these expressions are used of this One, but verse twenty-two states, “And Manoah said to his wife, ‘We shall surely die, because we have seen God!’”

2. Angels are a limited company, not a propagating race

All the angels were created at one time. They do not die, and they do not propagate; therefore, there is no increase or decrease in their numbers. Jesus made it quite plain that they do not marry.

Jesus answered and said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels
and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection” (Luke 20: 34-36).

Angels are referred to in the masculine gender, which is always used when there is no sexual distinction. Though Scripture includes references to the “sons of God,” the Bible does not mention the “sons of angels” (Luke 20:34-36).

3. Angels are vast in number

Many scriptures speak of the great number of angels. Hebrews states, “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels” (12:22). At His arrest Jesus said, “Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matt. 26:53). Revelation speaks of a mighty chorus of angels around the throne of God: “…and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands...” (5:11). The main thought conveyed by these verses is that within human comprehension, their number is innumerable. God, who knows all things, knows the number of angels.

D. The abode of angels

While angels are often depicted as ministering on God’s behalf to individuals on earth, their main abode is in heaven. “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!’ So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven…” (Luke 2:13-15; see also Matt. 22:30). Jesus told Nathanael “…you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man” (John 1:51). Jesus used the phrase “angels in heaven” (Mark 13:32) and Paul used the words “angel from heaven” (Gal. 1:8). Scripture suggests that angels have a special place to dwell in heaven. Jude addressed the issue of “…the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode…” (Jude 6).
E. The personality of angels

Angels possess every feature of personality. They are individual beings. They are rational beings: “…my lord is wise, according to the wisdom of the angel of God, to know everything that is in the earth” (2 Sam.14:20). They are inquisitive: “things which angels desire to look into” (1 Pet. 1:12). They render intelligent worship: “Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts!” (Ps. 148:2). They possess emotions: “Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:10). They are moral beings created with the ability to know and do right or wrong behavior. They have been rewarded for obedience and punished for disobedience: “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment…” (2 Pet. 2:4). Jude also addresses this punishment: “And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day…” (6). There was a time of probation when the angels could choose to obey or disobey God. Those who disobeyed were cast out of heaven, while those who obeyed were confirmed in their stand for God. There is no scriptural record of any angels falling after the period of probation passed.

F. The knowledge, wisdom and power of angels

The angels are represented in Scripture as having superior knowledge, wisdom and power to humans. “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only” (Matt. 24:36). This scripture implies that angels know more than humans: “…my lord is wise, according to the wisdom of the angel of God, to know everything that is in the earth” (2 Sam. 14:20). The demons are presented in Scripture as often having a better understanding of Christ’s ministry: “Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!” (Luke 4:34). Though the knowledge of angels is great, they are not omniscient (1 Pet. 1:12).

The Scripture says much concerning the power and strength of angels. “Bless the Lord, you His angels, Who excel in strength, who do His word, Heeding the voice of His word” (Ps. 103:20). Angels are powerful but they are not omnipotent. Their strength is derived from God: “They are unable to do those things which are peculiar to Deity–create, act without means, or
search the human heart.” God’s holy angels are powerful but submitted to His will: “…whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord” (2 Pet. 2:11). His angels are mighty: “…and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels” (2 Thess. 1:7). Disciples were delivered from prison by God’s powerful angels: “But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out…” (Acts 5:19). “Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, ‘Arise quickly!’ And his chains fell off his hands” (Acts 12:7). The stone placed in front of the Lord’s tomb could have weighed four tons, yet the Scripture states: “And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it” (Matt. 28:2). In Revelation 20:1-2, John writes: “Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years…” The angels are subservient to Christ: “who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him” (1 Pet. 3:22). They are “His mighty angels” (2 Thess. 1:7). Christ is the head over all holy angels “…and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power” (Col. 2:10).

G. The classifications, organization and variety of angels

1. Good and evil angels

Angels may be classified under two headings: good (holy angels) or evil (demons and Satan). We will address evil angels separately in the Demonology and Satanology sections.

2. Different positions or offices

Comparing the following three verses, it seems there are five different positions or offices of authority among the angels: thrones, dominions,
principalities, authorities and powers. “…far above all principality and power and might and dominion…” (Eph. 1:21); “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers…” (Col. 1:16); “…angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him” (1 Pet. 3:22). Scripture does not clarify what each of these designations indicates. Heavenly organization is not easy for humans to comprehend.

All that we know is, that there is foundation for the main idea—that there is no dull and sating uniformity among the inhabitants of heaven—that order and freedom are not inconsistent with gradation or rank—that there is glory and a higher glory—power and a nobler power—rank and a loftier rank, to be witnessed in the mighty scale. As there are orbs of dazzling radiance amidst the paler and humbler stars of the sky, so there are bright and majestic chieftains among the hosts of God, nearer God in position, and like God in majesty, possessing and reflecting more of the Divine splendour, than their lustrous brethren around them.7

As we consider what these various ranks may signify, the most important point is that Jesus, as the divine, eternal, son of God, is high above them all; He has no equal and no superior (Heb. 1:7-14).

3. Cherubim: Whether this term indicates a special position or an exalted service rendered by those who bear this name is uncertain. Cherubim first appear at the entrance to the garden of Eden: “So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden…to guard the way to the tree of life” (Gen. 3:24). Over the ark of the covenant, in the holy of holies of the tabernacle in the wilderness, two golden cherubim were crafted as part of the mercy seat (Exod. 37:6-9; 2 Kings. 19:15; Ps. 80:1; 99:1). They were also woven into the beautiful inner veil of the tabernacle and temple

(Exod. 26:1). Ezekiel refers to them nineteen different times. They are most likely synonymous with the “living creatures” of Revelation 4:6-5:14. These and other references demonstrate that cherubim are often associated with the righteousness and the majesty of the Throne of God.

4. Seraphim: The word *seraphim* means “the burning ones.” They are mentioned only in Isaiah 6. They are seen by the prophet as standing above the throne of God, each having six wings. They are occupied with praising God, crying one to another, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!” (v. 3). One of the seraphim responded to Isaiah’s confession of having unclean lips, flew with a live coal from off the altar, touched the prophet’s lips and said, “Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged” (vv. 6-7). In this way God prepared Isaiah for his prophetic call. Most importantly, Seraphim continually worship God.

5. Michael and Gabriel: These two are distinct among the angel hosts for they are the only two whose names are mentioned. Michael is mentioned on four different occasions in the Scripture: “At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people…” (Dan. 12:1). The name Michael means “who is like God?” He is spoken of as the one who defends the people of Israel. “But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia” (Dan. 10:13). Daniel 10:21 speaks of “Michael your prince.” If it is true that there are angelic personalities who oversee certain nations, such as the “Prince of Persia” and the “Prince of Greece,” then Michael could be thought of as the “Prince of Israel” (Dan. 10:21). Jude’s epistle states, “Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’” (Jude 9). Here, Michael is called an archangel. He is the only one to whom the Bible applies this designation. If he is the only one, then perhaps he will be the one to speak at the second coming of the Lord: “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God” (1 Thess. 4:16). Revelation 12:7-9 addresses the warring capability of Michael:
And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Gabriel, signifying “the mighty one,” is never designated in the Bible as an archangel. He is mentioned four times in the Scripture and always as the bearer of great tidings concerning God’s purposes. In Daniel 8:15-27, he informed Daniel of events concerning the end times. In Daniel 9:20-27, he revealed to Daniel the meaning of the seventy weeks vision. When Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was burning incense in his priestly role, Gabriel appeared to him and said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John…I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings” (Luke 1:13, 19). Gabriel’s preeminent position is indicated by the words, “who stands in the presence of God.” John was to be the forerunner of the Lord’s coming and the one who would baptize Him in the Jordan. Gabriel’s greatest message was his announcement to Mary that she would conceive and give birth to Jesus: “He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David…and of His kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:32-38).

H. The ministry of angels

1. Angels in relation to God

a) Angels worship and praise God: The principal and possibly most important ministry of angels is that of worshiping and offering unceasing praise to God, for He is worthy:

- “Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them
was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: ‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!’” (Rev. 5:11-12).

• “But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: ‘Let all the angels of God worship Him’” (Heb. 1:6).

• “And one cried to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!’” (Isa. 6:3).

• “Bless the Lord, you His angels, Who excel in strength, who do His word, Heeding the voice of His word. Bless the Lord, all you His hosts, You ministers of His, who do His pleasure” (Ps. 103:20-21).

Angels do not draw attention to themselves but ascribe glory to God. Angels were present at creation and joined together in worship: “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?…When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (Job 38:4-7).

b) Angels brought God’s law to His people: “…who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it” (Acts 7:53). Paul wrote that the law “…was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator” (Gal. 3:19). Hebrews states: “…the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward” (Heb. 2:2).

c) Angels execute God’s judgments upon His enemies: “Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died” (Acts 12:23). When the Assyrian army surrounded the city of Jerusalem, “…it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the Lord went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead” (2 Kings 19:35).
d) Angels will gather together God’s elect at Christ’s second coming: “…and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matt. 24:30-31). Angels will stand before the gates of the New Jerusalem that will have “…a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates…” (Rev. 21:12). Thiessen suggests that “…they will apparently serve as a kind of honorary body of sentinels, as if to guarantee that nothing that is unclean or defiled will ever enter that city.”


e) Angels will assist in administering God’s judgment in the last days: “Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, ‘First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn… The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels” (Matt. 13:30, 39). God’s angels will be the reapers who will separate the believers from the unbelievers. They know the difference between the wheat and the tares. “So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 13:49-50). The Scripture states that Jesus will be “…revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel or our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess. 1:7-8). Between Revelation 7 and Revelation 20, angels are mentioned 57 times as having a part in God’s judgment. They are portrayed as pouring out the bowls of wrath in Revelation 16: “Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, ‘Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth’” (v. 1). God will use the multitude of mighty angels to help bring all people to judgment.

2. Angels in relation to Christ

Angels have shown and continue to show a great interest in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. The fact that Paul includes angels in what seems

to be an early Christian hymn demonstrates the profound importance of the role of angels in the ministry of Jesus: “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory” (1 Tim. 3:16). There are at least fifteen distinct references concerning angels’ involvement in the ministry of Jesus Christ:

- The birth of Jesus’ forerunner, John the Baptist, was announced to John’s father by an angel (Luke 1:11-13).

- Mary was informed by the angel Gabriel that she would be the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26-38).

- Joseph was assured by an angel to “…not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit” (Matt 1:20).


- Joseph was warned by an angel to “take the young Child and His mother” to Egypt to escape Herod (Matt 2:13).

- Joseph, again directed by an angel, was instructed to return to the land of Israel after the death of Herod (Matt. 2:19-20).

- Angels ministered to Jesus after His wilderness temptation (Matt. 4:11).

- Jesus told Nathanael that he would see angels ascending and descending upon Himself (John 1:51).

• Jesus said He had the authority to ask the Father, and He would send more than twelve legions of angels to protect Him if necessary (Matt. 26:53).

• An angel “rolled back the stone from the door” and spoke to the women who came to Jesus’ empty tomb (Matt. 28:2-7).

• Angels were present at Christ’s ascension (Acts 1:11).

• In Jesus’ glorified position, angels have “been made subject to Him” (1 Pet. 3:22).

• Angels will accompany Jesus when He comes the second time (Matt. 16:27; 25:31).

3. Angels in relation to believers

Believers should clearly understand the ministry of angels on their behalf, so that their faith might be encouraged regarding this gracious provision from God. Some commentators believe the ministry of angels to humans ceased at the ascension of Christ and will not resume until His return to earth. This argument is difficult to justify in light of Hebrews 1:14: “Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?” The context of these words clearly implies angels are still ministering today. The following are some of the many ministries angels have performed on behalf of God’s people in the Old and New Testament. This work most assuredly continues.

a) Angels protect and guard humans from harm: “For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone” (Ps. 91:11-12). Jesus referenced this angelic care when He warned against harming children: “Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 18:10). Angels were instrumental in delivering Lot from disaster and harm.
When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, “Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city.” And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife’s hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city (Gen. 19:15-16).

b) Angels deliver humans from their enemies: “The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them” (Ps. 34:7). Elisha and his servant experienced this blessing of deliverance:

And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?” So he answered, “Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” And Elisha prayed, and said, “Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.” Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha (2 Kings 6:15-17).

Daniel spoke of angelic protection to king Darius: “My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you” (Dan. 6:22). Peter attributed his deliverance to the help of an angel: “Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people” (Acts 12:11).

c) Angels encourage individuals in extreme trials: When Elijah was fleeing from the threats of Jezebel “…he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat” (1 Kings 19:5). Jacob was encouraged while fleeing from the wrath of his brother Esau:
Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it and said: “I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants” (Gen. 28:12-13).

Twenty years later, as Jacob was returning to meet his brother Esau, he was filled with fear in anticipation of the reception he might receive from Esau. The Scripture states a host of angels met him, no doubt to greatly encourage him: “So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. When Jacob saw them, he said, ‘This is God’s camp.’ And he called the name of that place Mahanaim [meaning two hosts, or two bands]” (Gen. 32:1-2). Paul, in the midst of a storm at sea that threatened the lives of all on board, cheered his fellow sailors with these words:

And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, “Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you” (Acts 27:22-24).

d) Angels grant wisdom and guidance: Joseph was perplexed when he learned that Mary was pregnant and he resolved to divorce her secretly (Matt. 1:18-19). “But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit’” (Matt. 1:20; see also Matt. 2:13,19-20). Philip was directed to lead an Ethiopian eunuch to the Lord: “Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, ‘Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza’” (Acts 8:26). The Roman centurion, Cornelius, was praying and “…saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, ‘Cornelius!…Your prayers and your alms have
come up for a memorial before God. Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter” (Acts 10:3-5).

e) Angels escort the soul at death: “So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried” (Luke 16:22). Many Christians have testified in regards to near death experiences that at the moment of their departure from this life, they were conscious of the presence of heavenly beings around them.

f) Angels rejoice in the salvation of humans: “Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:10). The fact that angels rejoice in the repentance of each sinner demonstrates the vital interest angels have in believers. No doubt angels also rejoice as Jesus confesses in their presence the faith of new believers: “Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God” (Luke 12:8).

g) Angels learn from the church: Though they are extremely wise, they are not omniscient. Therefore, it is likely that they are continually learning, especially with regard to God. For ages the angels have been worshiping and praising God for His holiness and the greatness of His power in creation. Through the gospel, God has revealed a whole new sphere of His greatness, character, infinite love and marvelous grace. The angels desire to know more of this marvelous salvation:

Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into (1 Pet. 1:10-12).
Furthermore, God’s dealings with the church have provided a revelation to the angels of His manifold wisdom: “...to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by [or through] the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places” (Eph. 3:10). The angels will assuredly enjoy the prospects revealed in Ephesians 2:7 “…that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

h) Welcoming the ministry of angels: We are not to pray to angels or to request their help. Their ministry is directed on our behalf by the Lord Himself. Therefore, to experience the benefits and blessings of these “ministering spirits,” believers must keep close to God. The great promise of Psalm 91 that “…He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways” (v. 11), is given to those who dwell “in the secret place of the Most High,” and “abide under the shadow of the Almighty” (v. 1). Followers are instructed by God’s promise that “The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them” (Ps. 34:7). Remember the angels are “…ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation…” (Heb. 1:14).

II. Demonology (Evil Angels)

The knowledge that God’s great guardian angels watch over and minister to the redeemed children of the Lord should inspire and encourage every believer. However, believers must also recognize in this area of spiritual warfare the vast host of enemy spirits whose purposes are to thwart all spiritual progress. The subject of demonology occupies a substantial place in the revelations of Scripture. Demon comes from the Greek words daimonion and daimon, which are sometimes translated “devil” or “devils,” but which are more accurately translated “demon” or “demons.” There is only one devil (diabolos), but there are multitudes of demons. One of the fundamental tactics of warfare is to study the enemy. We would be unwise if we did not study the enemy in the area of spiritual conflict. With this idea in mind, we shall carefully study the subject of demonology (evil angels).
A. The classification of demons

Some differentiate between evil (fallen) angels and demons; however, the majority of Bible scholars believe evil angels are demons. We recognize the Bible is not explicit with regard to this point. Even so, we believe the scriptural evidence best supports that demons are evil (fallen) angels. The Bible contrasts demons with those angels who have continued to do the will of God: “And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day…” (Jude 6). Peter wrote “…God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment” (2 Peter 2:4). Angels are depicted in service to the fallen angel, Satan: “…Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41). Revelation also supports the idea that demons are evil angels that were cast out from heaven along with the devil: “And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought…and his angels were cast out with him” (Rev. 12:7-9).

B. The reality of demons

Jesus recognized the reality of demons. He announced that He cast out demons by the Holy Spirit: “And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matt. 12:27-28). He commissioned His disciples to do the same: “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give” (Matt. 10:8). Jesus proclaimed, “…these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues” (Mark 16:17). The disciples Jesus commissioned also believed in the reality of demons: “Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name’” (Luke 10:17).

The apostle Paul recognized the reality of demons: “Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons” (1 Cor. 10:20).
Paul believed people could be deceived by demonic activity: “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons…” (1 Tim. 4:1).

C. The origin of demons

God did not create demons sinful. God created all things, and Scripture clearly states, “…God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good” (Gen. 1:31). If demons were once angels “…who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode…” (Jude 6), and “God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell…” (2 Pet. 2:4), then we can assume they were once perfect, sinless beings. The cause of their fall and the nature of how they became demons has been the subject of much conjecture. We will address the issues with the greatest scriptural support.

As mentioned previously, we believe the scriptural evidence best supports that demons are evil (fallen) angels. The view that demons are fallen angels comes from the fact that a number of scriptures refer to a great host of spirits who are variously designated as under the authority of Satan: “Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons” (Matt. 12:24), “the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41) and “the dragon and his angels” (Rev. 12:7-9). These spirit beings were not created evil by God but must have fallen from their created, perfect condition, possibly at the time of Lucifer’s revolt. Keeping with the fact that Satan in his unfallen position was called “the star of the morning” (Isa. 14:12, NASB), many believe that no fewer than one third of the angels followed in Lucifer’s fall and now are the demon hosts (Rev. 12:4). Some of the angels who “did not keep their proper domain” (Jude 6), have been “cast down to hell [Tartarus]” and are kept in “chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment” (2 Pet. 2:4). The reason some fallen angels are bound while others are free to cooperate with Satan in his opposition to God is not made clear in Scripture. Some have tried to answer this question theorizing that demons are a separate class of angelic beings: either the offspring of angels and antediluvian (pre-flood) women (Gen. 6:1-4) or the disembodied spirits of the inhabitants of a pre-Adamic earth. These theories simply do not have scriptural support.
In examining the entire subject of the origin of demons, we must avoid conjecture and stay within the revelation of Scripture. God has not chosen to clearly reveal detailed explanations concerning the origin of demons. Regardless, the fact that the Bible makes their existence very clear is sufficient reason for us to examine their evil nature, design and methods, as well as to formulate our defense against them. Let us concentrate on what we know about them while not giving them more prominence than their positions merit.

D. The nature of demons

Many observations about the nature of good angels are true of demons in that demons appear to be fallen angels. Demons are spirit personalities and are incorporeal. It would seem they desire to indwell humans and if not permitted will even choose to enter swine (Matt. 8:31).

1. The strength of demons

Demons are strong. They are no match for Jesus, but they are stronger than humans.

And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him (Mark 5:2-4).

2. The knowledge of demons

Though demons are far from omniscient, at times their awareness is cunning and shrewd. They know much concerning the authority and deity of Christ and of their own eternal doom. When confronted by Jesus, demons “cried out, saying ‘What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God?"
Have You come here to torment us before the time?’” (Matt. 8:29). Demons often instantly recognized and called out the authority of Jesus:

Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught...Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, saying, “Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!” (Mark 1:21-24).

After Christ’s ascension demons were still able to recognize the authority of Jesus: “And the evil spirit answered and said, ‘Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?’” (Acts 19:15). James addressed demonic knowledge when he wrote, “You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!” (James 2:19).

3. The character of demons

Demons are wicked, unclean and vicious: “When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way” (Matt. 8:28). The Scripture refers to demons as “unclean spirits”: “And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits…” (Matt 10:1).

There even seems to be degrees of wickedness among demons:

“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and
the last state of that man is worse than the first” (Matt. 12:43-45).

E. The purpose of demons

The overall purpose of demons seems to be twofold: they seek to hinder the purposes of God and to extend the power of Satan. Satan’s desire to rule and to be “like the Most High” has not changed from its initial expression in Isaiah 14:13-14. His wilderness temptation of Jesus is evidence of this unchanging, arrogant spirit as he even sought to influence Christ to worship him (Matt. 4:9). Under Satan’s control, the hosts of demons are interested in fostering this very plan.

F. The activities of demons

1. Demons oppose believers

Demons constantly oppose Christians and their endeavors to live godly lives and to serve the Lord. “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12). Through demons, Satan opposes the work of the church: “Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us” (1 Thess. 2:18). Since Satan is not omnipresent, many of his activities must be carried out by demons.

2. Demons encourage false doctrine and induce believers to depart from the faith

Paul warned Timothy that demons encourage false doctrines such as asceticism:

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and
doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

3. Demons are behind all idol worship

What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons (1 Cor. 10:19-21).

Discussing the question of eating meat offered to idols, Paul said “…we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one” (1 Cor. 8:4). However, he warned the church that demons are behind the worship of idols. If the Corinthian Christians ate meat offered to idols, they were in danger of having fellowship with demons. If demons were not behind the worship of idols, it would be difficult to understand why people find spiritual satisfaction in bowing down and pledging allegiance to objects made by human hands. But in reality, demon spirits and demonic spiritual communion are behind idol worship that deceives the multitudes. Revelation 9:20 points out this association between demons and idolatry: “But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk.”

4. Demons can cause various physical afflictions

Demons have the power to cause human ailments, such as muteness (Matt. 9:32-33), blindness (Matt. 12:22), irrational behavior (Luke 8:26-35), deformities, defects (Luke 13:11-17) and convulsions (Mark 9:18-22).
5. Demons are sometimes used by God to accomplish His purposes

Unger explained that God sometimes even uses demons to carry out His sovereign plan:

Demons are the instruments for executing God’s plans for punishing the ungodly (Ps. 78:49). Wicked Ahab was punished for his crimes by a “lying spirit” which Jehovah put in the mouth of all his prophets to lead them to disaster at Ramoth Gilead (1 Kings 22:23). Demons lure the God-resisting armies of Armageddon to similar catastrophe (Rev. 16:13-16). Satan and his ministers also effect God’s plans for chastening the godly. Satan’s sifting but accomplished the Lord’s winnowing, as in the case of Peter (Luke 22:31). Job is brought through Satanic testing to a place of spiritual enlargement and refinement (Job 42:5-6). The incestuous believer at Corinth is delivered “unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 5:5). Hymenaeus and Alexander are “delivered unto Satan, that they may be taught not to blaspheme” (1 Tim. 1:20).9

Demons do not serve God. However, God is still able to sovereignly carry out His purposes in all situations. Paul mentioned that since humans “…did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice” (Rom. 1:28-29, ESV). Sometimes God has carried out His discipline and wrath on rebellious people through handing them over to the demonic activity of Satan.

9 Unger, 70.
G. Demon possession

1. The reality of demon possession

Although many in the modern world do not believe in the concept of demon possession, the Bible teaches that humans have been and can be possessed by demons.

a) Demon possession and the ministry of Jesus

Jesus ministered to the demon-possessed people who confronted Him or who were brought to Him, by casting out their demons. “When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word…” (Matt. 8:16). Jesus freed a tormented man possessed by a legion of demons, who wandered among the tombs, naked, in shackles and chains: “And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit…Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea” (Mark 5:2-13). The people brought to Jesus, “…a man, mute and demon-possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, ‘It was never seen like this in Israel!’” (Matt. 9:32-33).

Jesus used the casting out of demons as proof of His divine mission. When the Pharisees accused Him of casting out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, Jesus showed them the foolishness of such a claim: “If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matt. 12:26-28). Jesus believed that demons were real and that He was casting them out of possessed individuals. He even warned those who criticized Him for this work that they were bordering on an unpardonable sin.
b) Demon possession and the ministry of the early church

Jesus’ commission to the apostles also testifies to the reality of demon possession: “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature…And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons…” (Mark 16:15-17).

(1) The early apostles cast out demons: “Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed” (Acts 5:16).

(2) Philip the evangelist freed those who were possessed: “And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed” (Acts 8:6-7).

(3) The apostle Paul commanded demons to come out of people:

Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.” And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour (Acts 16:16-18).

(4) Demonic encounters were common in the early church. The dramatic events recorded in Acts 19:13-16 clearly evidence the reality of demon possession. Seven professional traveling exorcists tried to copy Paul by using the name of Jesus to cast out demons. They suffered at the hands of the possessed man, departing naked and wounded.
c) Demon possession and the redeeming work of Christ

Demonic activity seemed to increase during the life and ministry of Jesus on earth. This might have happened because of Satan’s opposition to the Seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15). John succinctly summarized the reason for demonic opposition against Jesus: “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). There will be a similar increase in demonic activity in the world at the close of this age and into the great tribulation: “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons…” (1 Tim. 4:1).

d) Demon possession contrasted with demon influence

Not all demon activity results in demon possession. There is a vast difference between demon possession and demon influence. In demon possession, demons enter, dominate and in some manner control the human body. In demon influence, demons carry out warfare, from without, through suggestion, temptation and confusion. External demonic harassment or warfare is what Paul was most likely referring to when he mentioned “the fiery darts of the wicked one” (Eph. 6:16).

e) Demon possession and sickness

The Scripture is clear that sickness, though originally the result of sin and Satan, is not usually an indication that someone is possessed. The Bible repeatedly distinguishes between sickness and demon possession both in cause and in method of deliverance. Although some sickness is caused by demonic possession, Scripture predominantly deals with sickness and demon possession in two separate categories. Thus the practice of some, who in ministering to the sick always try to cast out a demon, is not biblical procedure. In Jesus’ ministry: “…He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick…” (Matt. 8:16). Jesus made this distinction of two categories in His message to Herod, “And He said to them, ‘Go, tell that fox, “Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures…”’” (Luke 13:32). Jesus laid hands on the sick but rebuked the demons: “When the sun was setting, all those who
had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them. And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of God!’ And He, rebuking them, did not allow them to speak…” (Luke 4:40-41). Again, the distinction between healing and demon possession is clear in His commissioning of the disciples: “Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases” (Luke 9:1). Demons are expelled; diseases are healed. There is a difference between healing and exorcism.

2. Demon possession today

The Bible does not say that demonic activity will cease after the New Testament era. Therefore, we should assume the devil is as active today as he was in biblical times. Dr. John C. Nevius, a Presbyterian missionary to China from 1854 to 1892, made a careful study of demon phenomena in Shantung Province and presented evidence of widespread demon possession in modern China. Unger refers to the findings of Dr. Nevius in the following paragraph:

What is striking in the accounts given by Dr. Nevius is their close correspondence with the cases of demon possession as recorded in the New Testament. For example, the subject at the time of possession passes into an abnormal state (cf. Mark 9:18). During the transition he is frequently thrown into a violent paroxysm, falling senseless on the ground or foaming at the mouth (cf. Mark 9:18; Luke 9:39-42). During the attack he evidences another personality, his normal personality for the time being wholly or partially dormant (cf. Mark 5:7). The new personality presents traits of character utterly foreign to those characteristic of the demonized in his normal condition, and this change of character is practically always in the direction of moral impurity (cf. Luke 8:27). Many people while being demon possessed display a superhuman knowledge. Frequently they appear to know the Lord Jesus as a divine person and show a fear of him (cf. Luke 8:31).
They sometimes converse in foreign languages, of which in their normal condition they are totally ignorant.\(^\text{10}\)

Missionaries throughout the world have expressed similar testimonies.

Some ask why demonic manifestations are not seen more often in the United States. It appears that demons are wise and able to adapt to their cultural environment in both the age and places they abide. It seems in some communities and cultures they do not reveal the grosser aspects of their manifestations. A demon is able to not only reveal himself as a “roaring lion” (1 Peter 5:8) but also as “an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14). In other words, demons deceptively manifest themselves in different cultural contexts. Their presence may be unsuspected by many, but their purpose in opposing God can be accomplished even in people who externally appear to be living moral or exemplary lives. Consequently, even highly educated individuals, who appear to oppose God’s word with sophisticated rationalism, can also be used as tools for demonic activity. Many times only the spiritual gift of “discerning of spirits” (1 Cor. 12:10) can detect the presence of demons in the life of a seemingly well-adjusted individual.

3. Casting out demons

Christians should have a clear understanding of how to deliver those who are demon possessed. To address the topic of casting out demons, we will draw heavily from an excellent chapter in Pentecostal Doctrine (edited and published in England by Rev. Percy Brewster) written by George Canty, an evangelist in the Elim Pentecostal Church.\(^\text{11}\)

a) Demons are cast out as part of the gospel commission

The casting out of demons will accompany the proclamation of the gospel: “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons”

\(^{10}\) Dr. John C. Nevius, Demon Possession and Allied Themes, 5th edition, 9-94, as quoted in Unger, 87.
(Matt. 10:8; see also Mark 16:15-20; Luke 9:1-2; 10:1-17). George Canty wrote, “Jesus insists that casting out demons is part of the gospel commission…”  

Although the casting out of demons is not mentioned in the gospel of John or the apostolic letters, Canty pointed out that these writings still “frequently urge the preaching of the gospel as a continuation of Christ’s own work. He was ‘manifested to destroy the works of the devil’ (1 John 3:8), and ‘went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil’ (Acts 10:38)…” The casting out of demons is an essential part of gospel ministry.

b) Signs of demonic possession

To cast out demons, Christians should develop discernment concerning demonic activity. Canty observed the importance of Christians recognizing the signs of demonic possession:

This work, in recent years, has been called for by the increased interest in the occult, spiritism, Satanism and experiments in magic. The effects upon people have been typical. People become aware of “presences” near them in an unpleasant sense, with unnerving apparitions, nightmares, supernatural hauntings, voices, impulses that cannot be refused, depressions, tendencies to suicide, constant fear, inner urges to commit violence or murder, fits, unendurable tensions, sexual obsessions, hysteria, and so on. Sheer madness or death can be the ultimate result. That there is a call to care for those who are in this distressed state is obvious, and there should be a special alertness to discern such needs.

Although not every act of evil is a sign of demonic possession, believers must prayerfully discern demonic influence in various individuals and situations.

12 Canty, 252.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid., 253.
c) Demons are cast out in the name of Jesus

The Bible does not provide detailed instructions on how to cast out demons. However, there are biblical examples in how Christ and the apostles cast out demons that should serve as a guide for our conduct. The Scripture demonstrates that the primary method for casting out demons is in the name of Jesus. There is power in Jesus’ name. Canty observed that the Bible has multiple examples of demons being cast out in the name of Jesus:

The name of Jesus is the primary secret...Christ’s great commission said, “In my name shall they cast out devils” (Mark 16:17). Paul rebuked a spirit in the words: “I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her” (Acts 16:18), just as Peter, when healing the lame man, said, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk” (Acts 3:6, cf. 3:16; 4:10).\(^\text{15}\)

Although demons are cast out in Jesus’ name, Canty warned it is dangerous for people to use Jesus’ name as a magical formula in a manner similar to the sons of Sceva (Acts 19:11-20). Canty wrote, “The vital element is not the formula, but the presence of Jesus in the life of the person casting demons out. He himself should be a true representative of Christ, a person ‘in Christ,’ accepting the Lord’s authority.”\(^\text{16}\) In other words, to cast out demons in Jesus’ name is to walk in the authority of Jesus, not just proclaim the name of Jesus. Canty ultimately believed that a Christian’s authority to cast out demons goes far beyond words:

In that case, the formula is not perhaps so important. The pronunciation of the name over the possessed person was partly a testimony to those who observed what was happening. The sons of Israel cast out spirits by various names, so, when the lame man was healed, the authorities at once

\(^\text{15}\) Ibid.
\(^\text{16}\) Ibid.
were curious as to which name was used (Acts 4:7). The fact is that demons left people when the name of Jesus was not uttered (Acts 5:15-16; 19:11-12). Peter raised Dorcas from the dead without mentioning Jesus (Acts 9:40), just as Paul brought blindness on Elymas the sorcerer without invoking the name (Acts 13:9-11), and in the same way healed the cripple at Lystra (Acts 14:9-10). Christ has given us a certain “power of attorney,” to act in His behalf, or “in His name,” without necessarily quoting the name constantly. Indeed we are told, “Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” Obviously, this does not mean that we must be constantly repeating His name for every act. We act for Him, on His behalf—“Ye serve the Lord Christ.”  

The work of the cross has given every Christian authority to cast out demons. Canty suggested that when Christians understand their authority in Christ, they confront demonic powers in less formulaic ways:

The casting out of demons does not require a barrage of words with voluminous repetitions of the word “Jesus” or “Christ.” We have authority, and can use it, as “ambassadors” (2 Cor. 5:20), but we must avoid treating it as a “magic” incantation, like a piece of abracadabra or spell. When we utter “Lord Jesus Christ” it indicates that he is the Lord of the one who speaks, otherwise we are like the sons of Sceva, unknown to the spirits.

17 Ibid., 253-254.
18 Ibid., 254.
d) Practices for casting out demons with limited or no biblical support

(1) Casting out demons through the laying on of hands

There are no examples in Scripture of individuals laying hands on the possessed to cast out demons. Although the Bible has examples of people being healed (Luke 4:40), gifted for ministry (1 Tim. 4:14), blessed (Mark 10:16) or baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17) through the laying on of hands, there is no scriptural record of demons being cast out in this manner.

(2) Casting out demons by name

There is one example in Scripture of Jesus asking demons for their name (Mark 5:9). In this encounter, the demons responded that, “My name is Legion; for we are many.” Some have used this story to suggest that individuals must know the name of demons or cast out demons by name to be effective. This does not seem necessary as demons are not spoken to by name in the Bible in any other instance where they are cast out. Most likely, in the story of Legion, Jesus made the demons reveal their name to demonstrate His power and to help the people understand why a herd of swine were about to drown in the sea (Mark 5:13). Canty also suggested there is another problem with asking demons their names; “One wonders what is the use if the spirits are lying spirits? They could lie about their identities for the sake of putting us off.”

(3) Conversing with demons

Jesus spoke with demons. Some use Jesus’ example as reason to also converse with the demonic realm. Canty warned that Christians should not engage in conversing with demonic forces:

Nor are we given any encouragement to hold conversations with demons. Once they are known to be there, they should be told to leave. Jesus “suffered not the devils to

19 Ibid.
speak, because they know Him” and He charged unclean spirits “that they should not make him known” (Mark 1:34; 3:11-12). Certainly, spirits suffer from egotism and nothing pleases them better than to be the center of interest.20

(4) Casting out demons through manifestations

Just as demonic possession can have drastic effects on the human body, so can the casting out of demons. For instance, in the story of the boy with a mute spirit, the Bible speaks of a demon that caused a boy to go mute and foam at the mouth (Luke 9:17-18, 20). When Jesus cast out the demon from the boy, “…the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, ‘He is dead.’ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose” (Luke 9:26-27). Some mistakenly believe certain demonic expressions such as convulsions and foaming at the mouth need to be present when a demon is cast out. Others even believe that there must be signs of demons being physically expelled through the body when they are cast out of an individual. However, there are no examples in Scripture of individuals coughing up or spitting up demons. More importantly, it is the authority of Jesus that frees individuals from demonic possession, not external manifestation.

e) The ministry of casting out demons is available to all believers

The Bible states the ministry of casting out demons is for all believers. Canty wrote, “In this connection, nobody was ever given a special gift for ‘exorcism,’ only for discernment, as part of the protection of the Church, chiefly against false teachers with lying and deceitful doctrines of demons.”21 In other words, no one is called to engage in ministry that deals with demons only. Canty observed that any ministry that exclusively dealt with demons “…would draw attention more to Satan than to Christ. Preoccupation with this sphere of things is a kind of tribute to the power of Satan.”22 The casting

20 Ibid., 254-255.
21 Ibid., 255.
22 Ibid.
out of demons accompanies the proclamation of the gospel. However, the good news of Jesus should be the ultimate focus of every believer.

f) The role of repentance and faith in the ministry of casting out demons

To find true freedom, individuals need more than their demons cast out; they need to truly repent and accept Jesus as their Savior. Canty spoke of some of the deep spiritual issues that must be addressed along with freeing individuals from demonic possession:

They need deeper help, in fact. Life situations, strong temptations, affecting the willingness of a person to give up their sin, cannot be ignored. Unless sin is forsaken, then, as Jesus said, the last state of that man may be worse than the first, for the devil will return with several more. It is the will of a man which makes a way in for the devil, and therefore repentance is required as well as exorcism. Patient pastoral interest may have to be taken to get down to the roots of a man's trouble, of which demon possession is not the cause but the result or symptom. It is wrong to assume that a particular evil in a man's life is the result of demon control. It is more likely that the evil was there first, permitting the entry of Satanic power.  

Most importantly, we must be mindful that the goal of ministry is not the casting out of demons but the proclamation of the good news of Jesus. When the gospel is advanced, demons will manifest themselves. There is transformative power when people repent of their sins and surrender to Jesus. When individuals become new creations in Christ, demons will flee. Canty stated this truth well:

The preaching of the gospel is deliverance — it is the power of God in itself “unto salvation” (deliverance). It could well be that great conversions are sometimes straightforward

23 Ibid.
cases of the Word of God overcoming Satan in a man’s life. It would be absurd to think of a great conversion of a man leaving him with demons still in his heart. Can a man be saved through faith in the gospel and then need a second experience to save him from Satan? From what was he saved in the first instance? “The anointing breaks the yoke.”

In our pursuit to free individuals from the power of Satan, let us always be mindful to first and foremost proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

g) False notions of demonic possession

When conducting deliverance ministry, discernment is essential. Some psychological disorders lead individuals into confusion about their spiritual wellbeing. Canty pointed out that for the highly suggestible or psychologically troubled: “Where there is a ministry to the demon-troubled, it automatically suggests to some that they also have such a condition. Their very fear of it can bring on pseudo-symptoms, especially if they are told that they may be possessed.” In instances such as this, ministers should help individuals find the appropriate mental health support, pray for their healing and clearly assure them that they are not demon possessed.

4. The occult and demon possession

The “occult” means “hidden things,” and particularly deals with magic, fortune-telling and spiritism. According to Michael Green, Rector of St. Aldate’s, Oxford: “Magic is the attempt to bring the spirit world under one’s knowledge and control. It is the precise opposite of religion, which seeks surrender to the divine, not control over it, and operates by faith not knowledge.” Further, occult practices are an endeavor to “conjure up spirits of the universe that are alien to God Almighty.” The occult employs such methods

24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., 256.
27 Green, 118.
as telepathy, clairvoyance, clairaudience, ESP, automatic writing, charms and magic healing. Fortune-telling uses palmistry, tarot cards, crystal gazing, psychometry (the practice of gaining knowledge through holding objects) and astrology. Spiritism, falsely called “spiritualism” and identical with ancient necromancy, centers on individuals attempting to communicate with the spirits of the dead.

All of these practices are severely condemned in the Bible: “Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them…” (Lev. 19:31). God opposes those who engage in such behavior: “And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people” (Lev. 20:6). The Bible states that there is no life in consulting the dead: “And when they say to you, ‘Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,’ should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living?” (Isa. 8:19). The occult is an abomination to God:

There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you (Deut. 18:10-12).

Believers are warned against having anything to do with all such practices, even though some of them appear outwardly to be quite innocent. Although there is much trickery in the occult, individuals must also realize that demon spirits will attempt to deceive and enslave those who give themselves to such practices. For instance, “familiar spirits” are most likely demons who are familiar with a person and able to impersonate departed friends or loved ones in the unholy atmosphere of a séance. It is not by accident that sorcery and immorality are often mentioned in the same verses: “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness,
lewdness, idolatry, sorcery…” Revelation states, “And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts” (9:21). Spiritism is so evil that it was a capital offence in Israel: “You shall not permit a sorceress to live” (Exod. 22:18).

5. The Christian and demon possession

Scholars have spoken and written much about the possibility of Christians becoming demon possessed. While individuals should not be ignorant of Satan’s devices (2 Cor. 2:11) or blind to the presence and power of demonic forces in the world, believers must not underestimate the powerful salvation and deliverance God has provided for every person in Christ Jesus. All believers must ever encourage and strengthen themselves in the fact that Christ “disarmed principalities and powers” and “made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it” (Col. 2:15). Christ is stronger than every demonic power. Jesus is the stronger one mentioned in Luke 11:21-22: “When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils.”

When the Lord called Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, He sent him to both Jew and Gentile, “to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God…” (Acts 26:18). Paul described the effect of the gospel: “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love” (Col. 1:13). John said that if a man has been born of God, “the wicked one does not touch him (1 John 5:18). Jesus said, “Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you” (Luke 10:19).

Paul asked: “And what accord has Christ with Belial?…And what agreement has the temple of God with idols?” (2 Cor. 6:15-16a). Then he assured the church: “For you are the temple of the living God…” (v. 16b). Paul stated that the believer is God’s temple. Therefore, God will not allow anyone who is His, in whom He dwells, to be occupied by demons of Satan. The Christian’s body is “the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you” (1 Cor. 6:19). A demon
and the Holy Spirit cannot dwell in the same house. God will not allow it! Christ has provided a great deliverance for us from demonic possession. In cases where Scripture mentions sicknesses were caused by demons (Matt. 4:24; 9:32-33; 10:1; Mark 1:32; 3:15; Luke 6:17-18; 9:1), there is no indication these individuals were in right relation with God.

Although Christians cannot be demon possessed, this does not mean that the children of God are totally immune to Satan’s power. Believers have deliverance from demonic influence as long as they live in Christ’s victory over Satan. Christians live in Christ’s victory by faith and obedience. When Jesus told Peter, “…Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat,” He did not pray that Peter would not be allowed to be sifted, but that Peter’s faith would not fail (Luke 22:31-32). Disobedience and persistent waywardness provide the enemy grounds from which he can attack and influence Christians. Scripture admonishes believers, “do not give the devil a foothold” (Eph. 4:27, NIV). Ananias and Sapphira are solemn examples of those who permitted Satan to fill their hearts and “to lie to the Holy Spirit” (Acts 5:3).

Jesus is fully acquainted with the constant wrestling in which Christians are engaged, and He has provided the necessary armor for the constant victory of all believers (Eph. 6:12-18). Notably, the armor is of God’s provision, and believers are admonished to “take” the armor, not to “make” it. The Scripture does not indicate that these spiritual conflicts which Christians have with the enemy are the result of demon possession. Rather, Satan and his cohorts are external foes who dwell in the atmosphere around believers (Eph. 2:2) and look for opportunities to attack them.

The different uses of the word “spirit” in the Bible have led some to wrongly interpret and misunderstand its meaning. A statement adopted by the General Presbytery of the Assemblies of God accurately addressed this confusion:

Some, for example, teach that since the Bible speaks of a spirit of cowardly fear, any deliverance from fear must be by the casting out of an evil spirit or demon of fear. But an examination of the same passage (2 Timothy 1:7)
shows it speaks also of a spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind or self-control. If people interpret fear to be an evil spirit needing to be cast out, to be consistent they would need to beseech three good spirits to come in. The fallacy of this reasoning is obvious. Love and self-control are fruits of the Holy Spirit in our lives. By a spirit of love and of self-control is meant the attitudes that result from our cooperation with the Holy Spirit. Actually, the word “spirit” in many cases means an attitude or a disposition. David spoke of a broken spirit (Psalm 51:17); Solomon of a humble spirit (Proverbs 16:19); Paul wanted to come to Corinth, not with a rod, but with love and a meek or gentle spirit (1 Corinthians 4:21). Peter spoke of the adorning of the heart with the imperishable gift of a meek and quiet spirit (1 Peter 3:4), actually meaning a quiet disposition. This is in line with the frequent use of the word “spirit” for one’s own spirit and its expressions (Haggai 1:14; Acts 17:16; 1 Corinthians 2:11, etc.). Thus, unless the context shows that an independent spirit-being is meant, it seems best to take most phrases such as a haughty spirit, a hasty spirit, a spirit of slumber, a spirit of jealousy, etc., to be sins of the disposition or lusts of the flesh (Galatians 6), and not demons. A serious danger in considering all these sins of the disposition to be demons is that the individual may feel no responsibility for the actions and feel that the necessity for repentance is removed. Actually, the Bible calls men to repent of these things and to put off these attitudes. The great conflict within us is not between the Holy Spirit and demons, but between the indwelling Holy Spirit and the flesh (that is, all the sensory apparatus that tends toward sin).  

In concluding this Demonology section, let it be noted that demons thrive on publicity. Like their leader Satan, they are proud and selfish and seem to

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28Taken from a pamphlet published by the Gospel Publishing House, Springfield, MO, called “Can Born-Again Believers Be Demon Possessed?” This is the statement approved as the official statement of the Assemblies of God by the General Presbytery in May, 1972 (see pp.9-10).
delight in receiving attention. The wise servant of God will not publicize the activity of demons or seek to instill fear in the hearts of Christians concerning them. There is no need for the children of God, who are walking in the light of His word, rejoicing in His victory over Satan and believing in His promises of triumph over evil, to fear demons. Demons are spirits of darkness, and believers are children of light. There is not enough darkness in the world to put out even the smallest expression of the light of Christ. Let us “…walk in the light as He is in the light…” (1 John 1:7). There are almost three hundred references to angels in the Scripture and only approximately eighty to devils and demons. In other words, there are more than three times as many references to angels in the Bible than there are to demons. Unfortunately, some people spend three times as much time talking about demons as they do about angels. Angels are our friends. Let us think and talk about them rather than our enemies the demons. Demons are unclean and impure, not worthy of our primary focus. Paul admonished us: “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things” (Phil. 4:8).

III. Satanology

A. Importance of Satanology

Though believers should never give Satan undue prominence, they should realize the important place Satan has in Scripture. Except for the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, no other being is given more attention in the Bible, from beginning to end, as Satan (the devil). Of no one else are we so minutely informed concerning his origin, fall, character, work, influence, future judgment and ultimate destiny. We can be deeply thankful for the Scripture’s revelation concerning Satan and his host of demons. Many individuals and cultures have been enveloped in oppressive darkness, wicked superstitions and harmful practices because they have lacked clear, biblical teaching concerning Satan. We need not be “ignorant of his devices” (2 Cor. 2:11).
B. The reality of Satan’s existence

1. Scriptural record of Satan’s existence

Satan is specifically mentioned or addressed on five occasions in the Old Testament. Although not mentioned by name, Satan is first revealed in Scripture in the guise of the serpent who tempted Adam and Eve and caused the first sin on earth (Gen. 3:1-15; see Rev. 12:9; 20:2). The first appearance in the Bible of the Hebrew word for Satan is in 1 Chronicles 21:1: “Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.” He appears next on two occasions in the story of Job and his trials “…when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them” (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7). The final place Satan is mentioned in the Old Testament is in Zechariah 3:1-2:

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. And the Lord said to Satan, “The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?”

In the New Testament “Satan” or the “devil” is mentioned about 72 times. The apparent discrepancy between the number of times Satan is mentioned in the Old and the New Testaments can probably be accounted for by Genesis 3:15: “And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.” When Christ, the “Seed” of the woman, was born of the flesh and came to accomplish His great victory over Satan, the manifest activity of the devil increased. The New Testament also mentions the devil more frequently to most assuredly testify of Christ’s power over Satan: “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8).
2. The problem with a metaphorical Satan

Some speak of Satan as a mere figure of speech, a metaphorical personification of evil or even a delusion of an unsound mind. Interestingly, these errant views of Satan are most found in lands where the name of Christ is most known. When Satan’s presence is denied, he is enabled to more subtly work in deceiving humanity and disarming those he oppresses. The Scripture speaks of Satan as a real being with a real presence and agenda in the world. Chafer wrote of the biblical problem of viewing Satan as merely a spiritual concept or idea:

It may be observed that figures of speech are not created angels who sin and serve in realms of darkness and are doomed to a final and dreadful judgment at the hand of God. A metaphor would hardly enter a herd of swine and precipitate their instant destruction. Nor would a metaphor offer the kingdoms of this world to the Lord of glory, asserting that those kingdoms were delivered unto it and that it gave them to whomsoever it would.29

C. Satan’s personality

The Bible speaks of the personality of Satan as fully as any other person in Scripture. Indeed, Scripture speaks of the personality of Satan in the same manner it speaks of the personality of the Lord Jesus. To reject the personality of Satan, one would have to reject the authority of Scripture. Scripture uses the characteristics of personality to describe Satan. He is constantly referred to as a personal being. The Bible uses personal pronouns when referring to Satan (Job 1:8, 12; 2:2-3, 6; Zech. 3:2; Matt. 4:10; John 8:44). Scripture ascribes personal attributes to Satan: will (Isa. 14:13-14), knowledge (Job 1:9-10) and personal activity (Job 1:9-11; Matt. 4:1-11; John 8:44; 1 John 3:8; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7-10).

D. Satan’s origin

Much of the scriptural teaching regarding Satan’s origin is covered in “Chapter Four: The Doctrine of Sin / Harmartiology” and should be studied.

29 Chafer, II, 34.
along with this section. As noted previously in the Angelology section, Satan and the other angels were created by God: “Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts...Let them praise the name of the Lord, for He commanded and they were created” (Ps. 148:2-5).

God did not create the devil as we know him today. Everything God made was good (Gen 1:31). Ezekiel 28:12-19 gives a detailed picture of Satan’s original beauty and wisdom. This passage speaks of him as: “Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty...Every precious stone was your covering...You were the anointed cherub who covers...You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created.” Isaiah 14:12-17 gives us Satan’s name before he fell. He was called “Lucifer,” which means “the morning star” or literally “light-bearer.” He is pictured to us as a powerful angel of God’s creation. The mystery is how such a wise and beautiful being could have fallen to such depths as to now be the vilest being in the universe.

Isaiah 14 tells of Satan’s fall and the reason for it. The devil’s fall began when Lucifer lifted his will above that of God almighty: “...I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High” (vv. 13-14). Heaven had been Heaven because only God reigned and none thought to oppose His will. Therefore, harmony and peace prevailed. Then came the moment of rebellion, and five times this beautiful, anointed cherub voiced his will in opposition to God. Chafer said: “Feeble indeed is the power of the human imagination to picture the crisis in this universe at the moment when the first repudiation of God took place in heaven.”30 What caused such an unthinkable happening? Pride and selfish ambition.

Paul, when writing to Timothy concerning the qualifications for officers in the early church, insisted that such a person must not be a novice, “…lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil” (1 Tim. 3:6). Lucifer, in his selfish pride, sought to rise above the sphere in which he was created, above the purpose and service assigned to him. As a

30 Chafer, II, 47.
result of his rebellion, Lucifer was cast out of the heavenly realm and the office he held: “Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit” (Isa. 14:15). Therefore, the prophet Isaiah cried out, “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations!” (Isa. 14:12).

Jesus said, “…I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18). Some commentators believe these words are prophetic and refer to the event recorded in Revelation 12:9: “So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” Others believe these words of Jesus look back to the historic judgment of Lucifer when he was expelled from Heaven and became Satan.

There are two scriptures that point to Satan having some sort of access to Heaven. First, Job states, “…when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. And the Lord said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’ So Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it’” (Job 1:6-7). This passage seems to imply that Satan and the sons of God were standing before the Lord in heaven. The second passage that demonstrates Satan’s possible access to heaven is found in Revelation 12:10 where the devil is portrayed as bringing accusation against the brethren, “before our God day and night.” Regardless of Satan’s possible access to Heaven, after he was expelled for his wicked pride and rebellion, he never held his former position of honor and influence.

One might ask how a holy being in a holy place could originate the first sin and suffer such a great fall. The answer is the devil’s condition is the result of his own sin and willful rebellion: “For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend…I will exalt…I will be like the Most High” (Isa. 14:13-14). The devil is self-condemned.

E. Satan’s character

One of Satan’s greatest devices in opposing the work of the Lord is his deceptiveness. Through the centuries he has posed in roles that have caused
people to think of him in many ways other than his true character. This has made it easier for Satan to lead people away from God. F.C. Jennings wrote about how false notions of Satan have led people to reject any belief in Satan:

In considering the person of Satan, it may be well first to look at the common, vulgar, popular idea, such as is still held by the masses of Christendom, and such as is made the basis, or one of the bases, for the rejection of his very existence by many of the “learned” of the day. The lowest possible, and yet the most widespread conception we have is in what one may term the stage idea, as we constantly see it on the posters in our streets. A human form, with leering face, characterized by a grin of low cunning, horns, hoofs, and forked tail; utterly obscene, and provoking nothing but contempt, ridicule, and disgust.¹

The Bible certainly does not present such a picture of Satan. If he came in such a guise, no one would follow him. Contrary to the popular notion, Satan’s dominant purpose is not to be unlike God or the opposite of God. Rather, his transcendent objective is to be like God, to “be like the most High” (Isa. 14:14). Scripture gives a great number of different names and descriptive titles for Satan. We will examine Satan’s names and titles to recognize his various approaches and to reveal his true character.

F. Names and titles given to Satan

1. Lucifer

The King James Version and the New King James Version both use the word *Lucifer* from the Latin Vulgate to translate the Hebrew word *Heylel* in Isaiah 14:12. *Heylel* literally means “a shining one.” The Latin Vulgate word *Lucifer* means “light-bearer” or “morning-star.” The name Lucifer seems to refer to Satan’s position in Heaven before his rebellion and fall: “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning?” (Isa. 14:12). The Bible indicates

that Satan occupied an exalted position in the heavens. Individuals should be mindful of the devil’s former position, for although he is now wicked, he has not lost all of the qualities or attributes he had when he was first created. Satan does not come to us as a hideous creature out of hell but as one who formerly occupied the heights. Therefore, his appeals will sometimes seem to be high and lofty.

2. Satan

“Satan” is a Hebrew word that means adversary or one who opposes. A transliteration of the Hebrew word Satan is also used in the New Testament. Satan is used 55 times in the Old and New Testaments. The term Satan illustrates his malicious and persistent attempts to hinder God’s program. As the enemy, he is opposed to everything and every person that is good. He is the adversary of both God and all humans. Peter warned the church of “…your adversary the devil…” (1 Peter 5:8). Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church and told the saints there: “Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us” (1 Thess. 2:18).

3. Devil

Devil is one of the four names for Satan used in Revelation 20:2: “He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan…” The name “devil” particularly signifies slanderer and accuser. Satan accuses both God and humans. The devil accused God, through the serpent, when tempting Eve: “Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil’” (Gen. 3:4-5). Satan also makes accusations about humans to God. In Revelation 12:10 we read of Satan as “…the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night…” but “…has been cast down.” The use of “devil” to refer to Satan occurs thirty-five times in the New Testament.

4. Serpent

Satan is first seen in his activity on earth as a serpent (Gen. 3:1-15). Paul wrote, “But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness,
so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Cor. 11:3). The serpent mentioned in Genesis 3 should not be viewed in the same manner as the slithering, crawling serpents we know today. The present condition of serpents came only as a result of the curse upon them when God said to the serpent, “…Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life” (Gen. 3:14). Prior to the curse, the serpent most likely walked upright and was a most beautiful creature. More importantly, individuals should realize that in the temptation of Eve, the serpent was not acting as a mere animal, for the Scripture portrays the serpent as speaking, arguing and reasoning. Therefore, we conclude that Satan spoke through the serpent. Revelation 12:9 and 20:2 both speak of Satan as “that serpent of old.” The name serpent denotes crookedness, deceitfulness and guile.

5. Dragon

In Revelation 20:2 Satan is specifically identified as “…the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan.” Also, in Revelation 12:9 we read, “So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” Verse seven of the same chapter tells us: “And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought…” The word “dragon” is literally “sea monster.” The name dragon refers to Satan’s great power. This is clearly seen in Revelation 13:2: “Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.”

6. Beelzebub or Beelzebul

The name Beelzebub means “Lord of flies.” As Beelzebub, Satan is particularly seen as “the ruler of the demons” (Matt. 12:24; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15). The Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out demons through the authority of Beelzebub: “Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, ‘This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the
demons’” (Matt. 12:24). Jesus warned His disciples that just as He was called Beelzebub, they too would be vilified: “If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household?” (Matt. 10:25). Beelzebub is used in the context of Satan being the ultimate leader over a vast host of demons.

7. Belial

Belial is a Hebrew word meaning “worthless.” It is used in the Old Testament to designate corrupt, rebellious and wicked men (Deut. 13:13; Judg. 20:13; 1 Sam. 10:27; 30:22). Belial is used once in the New Testament to represent Satan: “And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?” (2 Cor. 6:15). The name implies that Satan is “the worthless one” who does not give or add value to anything or anyone.

8. Tempter

As tempter, Satan constantly incites people to sin. Satan desires to destroy the faith of believers through temptation: “For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain” (1 Thess. 3:5). Satan used temptation when trying to prevent Jesus from pursuing His calling: “Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, ‘If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread’” (Matt. 4:3). Whereas God tests individuals for their good so that they may learn and become stronger (James 1:2-3), Satan tempts people for the purpose of destroying their faith, calling and lives.

9. Wicked one or evil one

Though Satan’s ways may be varied and deceiving, they are always for wicked and evil purposes: “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one” (1 John 5:19). Jesus frequently referred to Satan as the wicked one or evil one: “…then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart” (Matt. 13:19). Jesus said, “The
field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one” (Matt. 13:38). Jesus taught His followers to pray “And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one” (Luke 11:4). John twice declared that he was writing to “fathers” and “young men” because they had “…overcome the wicked one” (1 John 2:13-14). Paul declared, “But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one” (2 Thess. 3:3).

10. Ruler of this world

Jesus referred to Satan as “the ruler of this world” three times: “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out” (John 12:31); “I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me” (John 14:30); “…of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged” (John 16:11). This title speaks of Satan’s rule and influence over governments, world politics, businesses, institutions and societies who do not serve God. Satan has a domain where he exercises his authority, and he has a throne from where he attempts to rule: “I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is” (Rev. 2:13). During Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness, when the devil offered Him “the kingdoms of the world and their glory,” Jesus did not deny Satan’s power to make such an offer. God gave Adam and Eve dominion over the earth (Gen. 1:26). However, because Adam and Eve disobeyed the word of the Lord and followed Satan, they yielded their dominion to the devil. Whenever and wherever individuals yield their lives to Satan’s authority, he becomes the ruler of their world. Although Satan is referred to as “the ruler of this world,” he is still under the dominion of God and must recognize the One who reigns supreme above him.

11. Prince of the power of the air

Paul referred to Satan as the “…the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience…” (Eph. 2:2). This title suggests Satan’s rulership over those spirit-beings who share his rebellion or sin against God: “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age,
against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12; see also Matt. 12:24; 25:41; Rev. 12:7).

12. God of this age

Writing to the Corinthian church, Paul stated, “But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them” (2 Cor. 4:3-4). The title “god of this age” points to Satan’s desire to spiritually lead God’s creation. In seeking to be like the Most High, Satan desired spiritual leadership. He desired others to follow, worship and praise him. Satan’s attempt to be the “god of this age” is his most devastating attack against God. The Scripture gives many examples of how Satan operates as god of this age: he attends religious gatherings (Job 1); he has religious teachings, “doctrines of demons” (1 Tim. 4:1); he has meeting places, “synagogue of Satan” (Rev. 2:9); people provide him sacrifices, “…the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God…” (1 Cor. 10:20); and he has his own ministers, “Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works” (2 Cor. 11:15). These “ministers” of Satan sponsor all kinds of materialistic and humanistic religions and cults.

F.C. Jennings aptly spoke to this theme:

In this present system of things looked at morally and away from God, he (Satan) so arranges not merely the politics of earth, or its immoralities, but its religion—for this is necessarily the force of this title “God” as in contrast with “prince”—as to suit his own ends. He so weaves the course of this age: its religious forms, ceremonies, external decencies, respectabilities, and conventionalities to form a thick veil, that entirely hides “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,” which consists in righteous mercy to penitent sinners only. This veil is not formed by evil-living, depravity, or any form of what passes as evil amongst
men; but by cold formality, heartless decency, proud self-complacency, highly esteemed external respectability, and we must add, church-membership—all without Christ. It is the most fatal of all delusions, the thickest of all veils, and the most common. It is the way that, because it is religious, respectable, decent “seems right unto a man but the end thereof is death”; for there is no Christ, no Lamb of God, no Blood of Atonement in it.  

13. Deceiver

If there is any name appropriate for the arch-enemy of God it is this: the deceiver. Revelation repeatedly refers to Satan as the deceiver: “The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire…” (Rev. 20:10); “So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth…” (Rev. 12:9); “He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished” (Rev. 20:2-3). Having learned nothing from his one thousand year incarceration in the “bottomless pit,” Satan immediately goes “…out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea” (Rev. 20:8). This is his last great attempt to deceive the nations into thinking they can triumph over God, and that it will be to their advantage to follow the “ruler of this world.” Satan must deceive individuals to influence them to forsake God and to follow him. Only those who are deceived would reject the love of God and march under Satan’s banner.

14. Accuser

Satan is the accuser: “…for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night” (Rev. 12:10). Not satisfied with only

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2 Jennings, 29-30.
directing his energies and forces against the saints, he also unceasingly accuses believers before God. Imagine the arrogance of one who would accuse, in the presence of God, those who have been redeemed through the precious blood of God’s own Son. The classic example of Satan as the accuser is when Satan dared to say that Job would curse God to His face if God lifted His hedge of protection and allowed Satan to touch Job’s possessions (Job 1:10-11). Regardless of Satan’s accusations, Christians can trust God’s hand of protection. Notice the triumphant notes of victory that accompany this great proclamation of the accuser’s downfall: “Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down’” (Rev. 12:10).

15. Angel of Light

Satan can transform into an angel of light:

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

This is perhaps the greatest deceptive role Satan plays; He poses as a spiritual helper to lead those who need help out of their darkness. Yet his only purpose is to guide them into ever-increasing darkness, deceiving them under the impression that they are coming more and more into the light. How true are the words of Jesus, “If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matt. 6:23).

16. Murderer

When addressing His enemies, Jesus called Satan a murderer, “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was
a murderer from the beginning…” (John 8:44). Jesus clearly contrasted the murdering purposes of Satan. He proclaimed: “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). Satan has been a murderer from the beginning, for he is the originator of sin, and sin brings death. Through tempting humans to sin, Satan is promoting death.

17. Father of lies

In John 8:44 Jesus also described the devil as the father of lies: “He…does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.” Lying is a chief characteristic of Satan. He is a deceiver, and lies are his favorite devices. Satan specializes in all forms of lies: from the most apparent falsehood to lies with just enough truth in them to trick the unwary. There was a measure of truth in what he said to Eve. Adam and Eve did come to know good and evil, but they did not become more like God; they suffered death and dreadful consequences (Gen. 3:4-5). Satan will even use Scripture as he did with Jesus (Matt. 4:6), but he will always misquote or misapply it. Satan communicates to lie and to deceive. He does not speak truth.

18. Roaring lion

Satan is depicted as a roaring lion: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). Satan is pictured as a serpent to denote his subtlety but as a lion to express his fierceness and strength. The word translated “roaring” is used especially of the cries of wild beasts when they are ravenous with hunger. Believers are told to “Resist him, steadfast in the faith…” (1 Pet. 5:9).

19. Destroyer

“And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon” (Rev. 9:11; 1 Cor. 10:10). Both of these names, Abaddon or Apollyon, mean “destroyer” or “one who brings to ruin.”
G. Satan’s defeat

Though currently allowed to continue his activities in the earth, Satan is a defeated foe. He has already suffered much under the hand of God whom he dared to oppose. It is very helpful for Christians in their daily conflicts with the devil to be aware of and rejoice in Satan’s defeat.

1. Satan lost his exalted position in Heaven

Immediately after his five bold “I will” assertions are recorded in Isaiah 14:12-14, the Scripture announces Satan’s fall: “Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit” (Isa. 14:15). Jesus may have been referring to this event when He said, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18). Although Scripture indicates Satan has some access to the presence of God when he accuses the brethren (Rev. 12:10), he never regained the lofty position he once held.

2. Satan was cursed in the Garden of Eden

So the Lord God said to the serpent: “Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel (Gen. 3:14-15).

Though this curse is directed against all serpents, the reference to the enmity certainly goes beyond the serpent to Satan himself. This curse is between Satan and humanity as well as between Satan and the Seed of Eve, Jesus Christ. This curse against the devil will never be lifted. In spite of all his boldness, Satan surely realizes that he carries the weight of the curse upon him at all times.
3. Satan failed to turn Christ aside from His mission

Three times Satan sought to turn Christ aside from His divine mission here on earth, and three times Jesus unsheathed the “sword of the Spirit,” the Word of God, and declared, “It is written” (Matt. 4:3-10). Christ never departed from the purposes of God as expressed in His Word. The result was “Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him” (Matt. 4:11).

4. Satan was judged at the cross of Calvary

Just prior to His condemnation and crucifixion, Jesus said, “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out” (John 12:31). Referring to this same event on Calvary, Jesus prophesied that the Holy Spirit would convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment: “of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged” (John 16:11). Through His death on the cross, Jesus destroyed “…him who had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14). Paul speaks in glowing terms of the victory over Satan at the cross: “Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it” (Col. 2:15).

If Satan’s defeat was so triumphant at Calvary, then why is he still allowed to harass the church of Jesus Christ? Even after the cross, Satan is still called “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2), and “the god of this age” (2 Cor. 4:4). There is a vast difference between a judgment gained and the carrying out of the penalty. There is no doubt of the judgment rendered against Satan at the cross; but for good reasons, best known to God, Satan is still allowed a degree of freedom. Certainly, God does not lack the power to destroy the devil. He has set the time for Satan’s final defeat (Rev. 20:10).

H. Satan’s destiny

1. Satan will be finally cast out of heaven

And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels
fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him (Rev. 12:7-9).

From that time on, his wickedness will be confined to this earth.

2. Satan will be confined to the bottomless pit

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while (Rev. 20:1-3).

At the beginning of the Millennial reign of Christ, Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit, literally “the abyss.” It seems logical to presume that the demon hosts will be there with him. They are cast out of heaven with him (Rev. 12:9), so it would seem they would be bound with him in the abyss. After the thousand years is finished, he is to be loosed for a little while at which time he will conduct his last campaign of deceit. The rebellious army he gathers will be destroyed with fire from God out of heaven (Rev. 20:7-9).

3. Satan will be consigned to the lake of fire

“The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Rev. 20:10). After the last group of humans has been tested, and Satan has ended his work, the devil will be consigned by God to the lake of fire where he will be tormented forever.
I. The believer’s course of action regarding Satan

1. Recognize Satan’s limitations

Humans should never underestimate the devil. He is a sly and skillful foe. He has had thousands of years of experience dealing with humankind. However, humans should also not overestimate Satan’s abilities. He has certain definitive limitations. These should be fully known so that no one will be overwhelmed by him.

a) Satan is not omnipotent. He has great power, more than any person. Only our God is all-powerful, and Satan is no match for Him.

b) Satan is not omniscient. He has a very keen intellect and from experience knows many things, far more than humans. However, only God is all-knowing.

c) Satan is not omnipresent. Satan has an individual personality and is only in one place at one time. Because of the great number of the demons under his control, it seems as if the devil is everywhere at the same time. Many so-called attacks by the devil are the activity of one of his assisting demons. Only God is always everywhere.

d) The devil cannot bestow life or raise anyone from the dead. Jesus said, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy…” (John 10:10).

2. Realize that Satan’s power is limited by the will of God

This is clearly seen in the story of Satan, God and Job (Job 1:10). “Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side?” Satan could touch none of Job’s possessions or his person until God gave him permission (see also Job 2:4-6). Jesus said to Peter, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you
The implication is Satan could not have Peter for this purpose without the Lord’s permission.

3. Realize that Satan has been conquered

The Scripture states that Satan has been conquered: “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). Satan is a conquered foe, overcome by our Lord Jesus Christ. Nowhere are Christians told to fight the devil. Jesus fought Satan once and for all on the cross. Our part is to claim, by faith, and stand in His victory. Believers are not commanded to fight the devil but to “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). First Peter 5:9 explains how believers are to resist Satan: “Resist him, steadfast in the faith.” Faith in the account of Christ’s victory over the devil and in God’s promises is the secret of victory for believers. Jesus made Satan’s tactics quite clear in the parable of the Sower and the Seed. Jesus said some of the seed fell by the wayside, and the birds of the air devoured it. Jesus explained: “Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved” (Luke 8:12). The devil knew that if the Word were allowed to remain in the hearts of the hearers, it would bring forth faith: “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Faith in God’s Word is the secret to the believer’s daily triumph. F.C. Jennings summed up this truth:

This then suggests very clearly the root-aim of his attacks: it is always to destroy faith in God; and our side of the conflict is to maintain that faith in spite of everything he can bring against it. So the apostle Peter says “whom resist steadfast in the faith;” and our apostle’s (Paul’s) joyful swan-song is: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:7); and he passes back the word to us “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12).³

³ Jennings, 140.
4. Remember that Jesus intercedes on behalf of the believer

This is beautifully illustrated in the following verse: “And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail…’” (Luke 22:31-32; see also Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34).

5. Practice unceasing vigilance

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). Believers, knowing Satan’s malice, cunning and power, will make it their supreme concern to be watchful.

6. Deny Satan any foothold

Paul warned believers not to “…give place to the devil” (Eph. 4:27). Believers must not give the devil any place within their lives where he might gain a place or opportunity for attack. There was no place in Jesus where Satan could get a foothold. Jesus could say, “for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me” (John 14:30).

7. Put on the whole armor of God

Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to
this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints (Eph. 6:13-18).

The Lord has provided a complete set of armor to protect Christians from every fiery dart of the wicked one. But believers must put on this armor, all of it. The omission of any one part may be fatal to their Christian life and testimony.
Chapter Ten
The Doctrine of Last Things

Eschatology

INTRODUCTION

The term “Eschatology” comes from the Greek words eschatos meaning “last” and logos meaning “idea, word, speech, discussion, reason or study.” Therefore, Eschatology is the doctrinal study of the last events of sacred history, including the final events of this present age as well as all that is beyond this life and this age. Although this chapter will primarily focus on future events, we will also address some of the present implications of living in the eschatological age.

I. The Eschatological Age

The life, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ ushered in the eschatological age. The Old Testament prophets spoke of a future time or eschatological age when Messiah would come and establish a new covenant and a new way of abiding with God's people:
Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah...I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more (Jer. 31:31-34).

Hebrews begins by acknowledging that Christ ushered in the last days: “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son…” (Heb. 1:1-2). On the day of Pentecost, Peter announced that the church received the promise of the Holy Spirit as a fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh…” (Acts 2:17; see also Acts 2:16-21; Joel 2:28-32). Peter understood that Spirit-filled believers and a Spirit-filled church are both expressions of God’s work in the last days. Consequently, in this present day or last days, the church already enjoys certain aspects of the kingdom of God and “…the powers of the age to come…” (Heb. 6:5; see also Luke 17:21; Matt. 16:19).

Pentecostal believers should take great confidence in recognizing that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy concerning the victorious work of God in the last days. Scripture states that there will be spiritual battles in the last days: “Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour” (1 John 2:18). Even so, Spirit-filled believers can confidently face the challenges of this age knowing they have been empowered to faithfully minister the gospel as they eagerly anticipate the ultimate eschatological fulfillment of the coming of the Lord (Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 1:7; Luke 12:35-36; 1 Thess. 1:10). Recognizing that this is the “eschatological” age we will now look at two aspects of our current age: the present state of the dead and the latter time signs of the Lord’s coming.
II. Death

The Scripture speaks of three kinds of death: physical death, spiritual death and the second or eternal death.

A. Physical death

Physical death is the separation of the spirit from the body and constitutes the transition from the visible world to the invisible. For believers, physical death marks their entrance into Paradise and into the presence of Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:1-8; Phil. 1:23). For unbelievers, physical death is their entrance into Hades (Luke 16:22-23; Matt. 10:28; Rev. 20:13). Physical death is not the end of existence but only a change in the state of existence. Physical death is the ultimate effect of sin on the human body and the last effect of sin on the human body to be canceled by Christ’s redeeming work (Rom. 5:12-15; 1 Cor. 15:26). Although all humans die physically, the atoning death and resurrection of Christ has robbed death of its sting for believers (1 Cor. 15:54-57; 2 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:9, 14-15; 9:15). In fact, Christians can triumphantly declare, “…to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21).

B. Spiritual death

Spiritual death is separation from God both in this world and in the world to come. For example, Adam and Eve “died” as a result of their disobedience in accordance with the warning of God: “…for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Gen 2:17). Adam and Eve did not immediately physically die when they disobeyed God. Though they became mortal, their deaths (represented by exclusion from the garden) were first, spiritual deaths. When Jesus said, “…let the dead bury their own dead” (Matt. 8:22), He meant “let the spiritually dead bury the physically dead.” In these words Jesus demonstrated that the spiritual death of unbelief is even worse than physical death.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians, “And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins…” (Eph. 2:1). As sinners, they existed in spiritual “death”;

when they came to Christ, they were made alive. When individuals come into fellowship with God through faith in Christ, they pass from “death to life” (1 John 3:14). At the final “Great White Throne Judgment” of unbelievers, which takes place after the thousand years (millennium), the wicked dead will still exist and stand before God in judgment. Although they will be able to stand judgment, their state is called “death” because they are alienated from God (Rev. 20:13-15; see also Rev. 3:1; 1 Tim. 5:6).

C. Eternal Death

When those who are spiritually dead die physically without repenting of their sin and confessing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, they enter into the state of eternal death. James referred to this death and how it may be averted: “…let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death…” (James 5:20). Eternal death is not cessation of existence; it is an everlasting punishment. Paul warned of this eventuality in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9:

…the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power…

At the final “Great White Throne Judgment” all the wicked dead will be cast into the “lake of fire” which is called the “second death” (Rev. 20:13-15). The eternal death is described in Scripture as “eternal fire” or “everlasting fire” (Jude 7; Matt. 18:8, 25:41), “everlasting punishment” (Matt. 25:46), “eternal judgment” (Heb. 6:2), “everlasting destruction” (2 Thess. 1:9) and “eternal condemnation” (Mark 3:29). Both “everlasting” and “eternal” are derived from the same Greek word *aionios* which means “age-abiding, eternal and without end” but signifies “without beginning or end” when applied to God.
III. The Intermediate State

The intermediate state is that state of the human spirit between physical death and the resurrection. For the believer, the resurrection will occur at Christ’s coming: for the unbeliever, it will not occur until after the millennium at the final judgment.

A. Terms for the destination of the dead

1. Sheol and Hades

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word sheol is used to describe the destination of the dead. Depending upon the context, Sheol can refer to the underworld, the place of the dead, the grave, the pit or even the depths of the earth. Although the King James and New King James Version sometimes translate Sheol as hell, most modern translations leave the word as Sheol. In the New Testament, the Greek word hades is used instead of sheol. The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament used during the time of Jesus, translated sheol with the Greek word hades. Depending upon the context, Hades can refer to the place of the dead, the grave or the place where unbelievers live in torment.

2. Gehenna, “lake of fire”

Gehenna is a Greek word that comes from the Hebrew Gehinnom, which literally means “Valley of Hinnom.” Gehenna is a figurative term, translated as hell because of the fires that burned refuse in the Valley of Hinnom near Jerusalem. Gehenna is the “lake of fire” where unbelievers face their final eternal punishment (Mark 9:43; Rev. 20:14-15).

B. Intermediate state of the wicked

When unbelievers die they go at once to Hades, which is the abode of the wicked dead (Luke 16:22-31). Since the wicked do not go to their final perdition until after the last judgment when they are cast into the lake of fire,
the word “hell” should not be used to describe the present state of the wicked dead. No one is at present in hell, which is the lake of fire. The wicked dead are in Hades awaiting their resurrection and final judgment. Hades is still a place of suffering as is seen in the account of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:23).

C. Intermediate state of the righteous

The Old Testament proclaims that those who have faith in the promises of God will not be abandoned to the grave. The psalmist wrote: “But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave [Sheol], For He shall receive me” (Ps. 49:15). Jesus taught in the story of the rich man and Lazarus that the righteous are “carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom” (Luke 16:22-23). To be carried to Abraham’s bosom is to be with Abraham and share with Abraham in the blessings he has received. When comforting the repentant thief on the cross, Jesus said, “…Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43).

When the righteous die, they go immediately to be in the presence of Christ Jesus. Paul spoke of “…having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better” (Phil. 1:23). Paul expected that after death he would immediately be in the Lord’s presence: “We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8). When Lazarus died, Jesus said that he went immediately to “Abraham’s bosom” where he was conscious and “comforted.” The rich man “being in torments in Hades” wanted Abraham to send Lazarus to witness to his living brothers, showing that both the just and unjust dead are in a state of conscious activity. Perhaps no thought is more comforting to believers than to know that at death they will go to be with Jesus. Paul spoke the following words of hope: “For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us that…we should live together with Him. Therefore comfort each other and edify one another” (1 Thess. 5:9-11).

D. Christ’s death and His intermediate state

Scripture clearly teaches that Christ died for the sins of humanity. Abraham was saved by faith, and so is every believer (Eph. 2:8-9). Christ’s
death and resurrection provide all believers the forgiveness of their sins and eternal life with God. Although many scriptures speak clearly of the atoning work of Christ’s death and resurrection, few address what happened between the time of Christ’s death and resurrection. Some scholars, based on their interpretation of Ephesians 4:8-10 and 1 Peter 3:19-20, believe Christ personally descended into Sheol, “into the lower parts of the earth” and “led captivity captive” (Eph. 4:8-10). The Apostles’ Creed and the Athanasian Creed both use the phrase “descended into hell [Hades]” to describe the activity of Christ after the crucifixion and before the resurrection. Many who follow this theory also believe there were two places in Sheol separated by an impassable gulf (Luke 16:22-31). They believe that when Jesus went to Sheol or Hades, He did not go into the abode of the wicked but to the part known as “Abraham’s bosom.” Jesus emptied Sheol of the righteous, taking them with Him to paradise.

Some scholars argue that Abraham’s bosom is not in Sheol or Hades and that Scripture does not teach that Jesus descended into Sheol or Hades to release the righteous dead. For instance, when Jesus told the story of the beggar named Lazarus being carried to Abraham’s bosom, Jesus disclosed the location of the rich man but not the location of Abraham’s bosom: “And being in torments in Hades, he [the rich man] lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom” (Luke 16:23). The Scripture doesn’t clearly describe where Abraham’s bosom is located. Proponents of this theory believe Jesus was simply teaching that the righteous were with Abraham receiving the full promises that Abraham received by faith. Those with this view interpret the verse “For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption” as referring to Hades as simply the grave (Acts 2:27, 31).

E. False views of the intermediate state

There are several widely held false views of the intermediate state of the dead. Some of these views have no scriptural basis; others are based upon incorrect interpretations of Scripture. Three popular, false views are purgatory, soul sleeping and spiritism.
1. Purgatory

The Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches teach that members who have lived imperfect lives must spend some time in purgatory for their sins and imperfections to be purged. Depending upon the seriousness of their offenses, the length of time spent in purgatory may last hours or centuries terminated only by the last judgment. According to the Catholic Church, time in purgatory may be shortened by gifts or services rendered to the church or by prayers or masses sponsored by relatives. The doctrine of purgatory is not supported by Scripture. The doctrine is based upon a passage taken from the Apocrypha, found in 2 Maccabees 12:41-46. The Apocryphal books are not part of the canon of Scripture. They are included in Catholic Bibles perhaps because they support doctrines not supported by the canonical Scriptures. Scripture does not mention purgatorial sufferings. Furthermore, the concept of purgatory violates the foundational teachings of Scripture of the sufficiency of the blood of Christ to cleanse all sin and salvation by grace through faith (Heb. 10:10-23; Eph. 2:8-10; Rom. 3:24-28; 5:1-2, 9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 10:8-11; 1 John 2:1-2; 3:1-2).

2. Soul sleeping

Soul sleeping is the belief that after death the soul rests in an unconscious state until the resurrection. This doctrine is held by Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah’s Witnesses and several smaller groups. Arguments for soul sleeping frequently include that (1) the Bible often refers to death as sleep (1 Thess. 4:13-14; John 11:11-14), (2) a belief that the soul cannot function apart from the body and will not awaken until joined with the body at the resurrection and (3) a conviction that it would be inappropriate for the righteous to enjoy heavenly bliss, or the unrighteous to suffer torment until after the final judgment (Heb. 9:27).

The arguments for soul sleeping stated above will be answered in the same order:

a) The Bible uses the term “sleep” to describe death in a figurative and euphemistic way to emphasize that the deceased person still lives. W.E. Vine explained:
The metaphorical use of the word “sleep” is appropriate, because of the similarity in appearance of a sleeping body and a dead body; restfulness and peace normally characterize both. The object of the metaphor is to suggest that, as the sleeper does not cease to exist while his body sleeps, so the dead person continues to exist despite his absence from the region in which those who remain can communicate with him.4

Furthermore, Jesus’ account of the state of the rich man and Lazarus immediately after death demonstrates clearly that their souls were not sleeping in unconsciousness (Luke 16:22-31). Paul confirmed that believers are immediately with Christ after death with his statement to the Philippians: “…having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better” (Phil. 1:23).

b) Paul’s treatise on death in 2 Corinthians argues that the spirit of a person can function apart from his or her body:

So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him (2 Cor. 5:6-9).

Paul stated that “to be present with the Lord” meant “to be absent from the body.” Furthermore, Paul’s “aim” was “to be well pleasing” to the Lord, whether in the body or absent from it. If being absent from the body meant “soul sleep,” why would he be concerned about being pleasing to the Lord after death? A sleeper could hardly be unpleasing to God. Since Paul expected to be conscious after death, he expected to please the Lord by praising Him (Rev. 7:9-10; see also Heb. 12:23; Rev. 6:9-11; Eccles. 12:7).

c) Answering the assumption that humans must await the final judgment before enjoying bliss or suffering punishment, Louis Berkhof remarked: “The day of judgment is not necessary to reach a decision respecting the reward or punishment of each man, but only for the solemn announcement of the sentence, and for the revelation of the justice of God in the presence of men and angels.”\(^5\) Jesus said, “He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18, NASB). There will be a believer’s judgment concerning rewards for service but not concerning salvation. Salvation is based only on faith in Jesus (2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 3:12-15).

3. Spiritism

Spiritism teaches that the living may communicate with the dead and the dead with the living usually through the agency of a “medium.” There is no evidence in the Bible to suggest that there can be legitimate communication, interaction or influence between the living and the dead. In fact, the Scripture unequivocally forbids any attempt to have communication or interaction with the dead (Lev. 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deut. 18:9-12; Isa. 8:19-20; 1 Chron. 10:13-14). There are two main explanations for spiritist phenomena: (1) they are produced by deceptive manipulations or (2) they are produced by “lying spirits” (1 Kings 22:22-23; 1 Tim 4:1). In Acts 16, Paul delivered a girl from a spirit of divination (python) by which she was able to bring great gain to her exploiters (Acts 16:16-19). Certainly, evil spirits have the power to deceive people who consult mediums by imitating the voice or appearance of deceased loved ones.

Seeking biblical support, spiritists often cite the case of the witch of Endor bringing up the spirit of Samuel (1 Sam. 28:7-20). However, that case does not encourage spiritism, for Saul was punished with death for disobeying the Lord by consulting a familiar spirit (1 Chron. 10:13-14). Some scholars believe that Samuel actually appeared to Saul. However, if Samuel actually appeared to Saul, it was by a rare special permission of the Lord to pronounce judgment upon Saul for his disobedience. Moses and Elijah

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also appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration but again, by a rare special permission to represent the Law and the Prophets and to confirm that Christ Jesus was the goal of Old Testament law and prophecy. “Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem” (Luke 9:30-31, NIV). The Greek word for “departure” is *exodon*, our “exodus.” Just as Moses, by the exodus from Egypt, delivered Israel from bondage, so Christ, by the exodus of the cross and resurrection, delivered mankind from the bondage of sin. The appearance of Moses and Elijah was a token of Messianic fulfillment (Matt. 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8). The Bible does not encourage individuals to consult with the dead. Christ is the “Lord both of the dead and the living” (Rom. 14:9). If He ever permits the dead to appear, it will be to signal some strategic event of sacred history. When we need comfort or guidance, we have the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

**IV. The Second Coming of Christ**

The subject of the second coming of Christ is an important doctrine. The Foursquare *Declaration of Faith* addresses the significance of the second coming:

We believe that the second coming of Christ is personal and imminent; that He will descend from Heaven in the clouds of glory...and at this hour, which no man knows beforehand, the dead in Christ shall rise, then the redeemed that are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and that so shall they ever be with the Lord; that also seeing that a thousand years is as a day with the Lord, and that no man knows the hour of His appearance, which we believe to be at hand, each day should be lived as though He were expected to appear at even, yet that in obedience to His explicit command, “Occupy till I come,” the work of spreading the gospel, the sending forth of missionaries, and the general duties for upbuilding the church should
be carried on as diligently, and thoroughly, as though nei-
ther ours nor the next generation should live in the flesh
to see that glorious day.\(^6\)

A. The importance of Christ’s second coming

The Bible frequently references the second coming of Christ, demon-
strating that the subject is of primary importance. Christ’s second coming
is mentioned more than 300 times in the New Testament. In Paul’s epistles
there are more than 50 references to the second coming. The second coming
is a primary theme in many books and chapters of the Bible. Jesus often
referred to His second coming and urged His followers to watch and to be
ready. New Testament believers are repeatedly urged to be ready for the Lord
to come again. Several New Testament passages admonish believers to wait
for the coming of the Lord: “…wait for His Son from heaven, whom He
\([\text{God}]\) raised from the dead…” (1 Thess. 1:10; see also Rom. 8:23-25; 1 Cor.
1:7; Gal. 5:5; James 5:7-8). Jesus connected the hope of His second coming
with the two ordinances of the church: baptism and communion. The apos-
tles were commanded to “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy
Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and
lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:19-20). Paul
quoted Jesus, giving the apostolic pattern for the observance of the Lord’s
Supper: “For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim
the Lord’s death till He comes” (1 Cor. 11:26; see also Matt. 26:26-29; Luke

The hope of the second coming provides believers with motivation for
practical Christian living: (1) for brotherly love (1 Thess. 3:12-13), (2) for
holiness (Rom. 13:12-14; 1 Thess. 3:13; 5:23; 1 John 3:3; Titus 2:11-13), (3)
for faithfully meeting together for worship (Heb. 10:25), (4) for faithfulness
in Christian service (1 Tim. 4:13-16; 2 Tim. 4:1-2; 1 Pet. 5:2-4), (5) for a
continued passion for souls (1 Thess. 1:9-10; 2:11-12, 19-20) and (6) for

\(^6\)Aimee Semple McPherson, \textit{Declaration of Faith} (Los Angeles, CA: International Church of the Foursquare
comfort in times of bereavement (1 Thess. 4:14-18). The second coming is so important to the church, the bride of Christ, that the Bible refers to this event as the blessed hope: “…looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ…” (Titus 2:13).

B. The nature of Christ's second coming

How are we to understand the term “second coming?” In what manner will Christ come the second time? To answer these questions, we will look at what Scripture clearly teaches about Christ's second coming and also discuss several false explanations.

1. The nature of Christ's second coming explained

   a) The second coming of Christ is a literal coming or return. Since the coming is a second one, it will be as literal as the first coming. There is no evidence in Scripture that Christ's return, which He promised, would be a figurative one. The Old Testament has more references to Christ's second coming than to His first. Prophecies of Christ's first coming were fulfilled literally; therefore, there is no doubt that the prophecies concerning His second coming will also be fulfilled literally.

   b) The Lord's second coming will be a personal return. “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:2-3). Christ's coming cannot be a figurative reference to some other being or to some spiritual experience of the believer because the angels said to the disciples when Christ ascended to Heaven, “This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

   c) The Lord's coming will be a visible, bodily second coming. At Christ's ascension, the angel said that Christ would return “…in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). The disciples saw Him ascend in a glorified yet visible and tangible body. Christ will return in the same manner: “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him…” (Rev. 1:7).
2. False explanations of the nature of Christ’s second coming

a) The second coming is not the death of the believer. Christ’s coming is at our resurrection, not at our death (1 Thess. 4:16-17). Death is the believer’s departure to be with Christ, not Christ’s coming for the believer (Phil. 1:23). Christ’s coming is the defeat of death, not the occurrence of death (1 Cor. 15:51-54). Death is an enemy (1 Cor. 15:26); the Lord’s coming is our blessed hope (Titus 2:13).

b) Christ’s second coming is not the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Jesus promised to send another “Helper” (John 14:16); therefore, Jesus’ coming and the Helper’s coming could not be identical. Furthermore, most references to Christ’s coming were written after Pentecost and indicate a future event (Acts 3:19-21). None of the phenomena prophesied to accompany Christ’s Parousia (His second coming) happened on the day of Pentecost.

c) Christ’s second coming was not the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus may have been referred to as a type of latter day event during the tribulation, but the Lord did not come and catch up His church simultaneously with this event (see Matt. 24:15-23; Luke 21:24-28). Titus’ destruction of Jerusalem scattered Israel; Christ’s coming will mark the gathering of Israel (Joel 3:16-18).

d) Christ’s second coming is not conversion. If Christ’s second coming was at conversion, His coming would not be a second one but one of millions of comings. Scripture states “…Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation” (Heb. 9:28). According to Paul, the believer waits for the Lord’s coming after conversion, not before it (1 Thess. 1:9-10).

C. The time of Christ’s second coming

Jesus said regarding the time of His return, “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only” (Matt. 24:36). Some scholars contend that Jesus and His disciples expected His coming to
be within the first generation after His ascension. However, in the parable of
the talents Jesus said, “After a long time the lord of those servants came…”
(Matt. 25:19). Since the parable was about the coming of the kingdom, the
term “long time” seems to hint of a considerable delay in the coming. Peter
could not have expected an immediate coming for he said:

...knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last
days...saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For
since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they
were from the beginning of creation.”...But, beloved, do
not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as
a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The
Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count
slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that
any should perish but that all should come to repentance
(2 Pet. 3:3-9).

Jesus also said, “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all
the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matt.
24:14). When the Thessalonian church became upset by the belief that the
great tribulation had already begun, Paul exhorted them “not to be soon
shaken in mind or troubled...for that Day will not come unless the fall-
ing away comes first...” (2 Thess. 2:1-3). On the other hand, Jesus warned,
“Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming”
(Matt. 24:42). Even though there were clear indications that the Lord’s return
would not occur until after an extended period of evangelization, the church
was taught to be ready for an any-moment appearance of the heavenly bride-
groom (Matt. 24:44, 48, 50; 25:13; Mark 13:35-37; Titus 2:12-13; John
3:3). The apostle Peter, who sat at the feet of Jesus, strongly urged the recipi-
ents of his second epistle to look for Christ’s return: “Therefore, since all
these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in
holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day
of God” (2 Pet. 3:11-12). Peter adds the thought that we may actually hasten
the coming day. The church certainly is not to sit by passively waiting for a
set day that will end this dispensation. The church is working together with
the Lord to accomplish His work which must be done before He returns in
glory. Michael Green commented on how believers should respond to these verses from 2 Peter:

Christians are expected to look for the coming of the Lord; had not Jesus Himself told them to watch? But this does not mean pious inactivity. It means action. For wonderful as it may seem, we can actually “hasten it on” (NEB) (not “hasting unto” as in AV). In other words, the timing of the advent is to some extent dependent upon the state of the church and of society. What a wonderfully positive conception of the significance of our time on earth. It is no barren waiting for “finis” to be written. It is intended to be a time of active cooperation with God in the redemption of society…

Is it possible that God sees time in the terms of tasks accomplished rather than earthly calendars? In any case, looking for the Lord does not mean folding our arms but rather putting our hands to the plow and to the sickle.

D. The signs of His second coming

While no one knows the time of Christ’s second coming, the Bible explains there are signs that will accompany Christ’s return. Jesus revealed a number of signs concerning coming events when answering the questions of His disciples (Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21). Some of the events Jesus described happened in the first century; some have come progressively up to the present age; others will happen just before and during His second coming in power and glory. The time sequence of the “sign events” for Christ’s second coming is revealed in Christ’s Olivet discourse recorded in all three synoptic gospels. In the epistles a number of passages describe prevailing latter days conditions (1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 1 Thess. 5:1-3; 2 Thess. 2:1-12; James 5:1-8; 2 Pet. 3:1-10). Latter day signs are of two kinds: primary signs and secondary signs. Primary signs are those that the Bible declares explicitly to be evidences of the near approach of the day of the Lord. Secondary

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signs are inferential; that is, they are events or conditions that would have to precede the explicitly stated biblical signs in order for them to happen. For instance, Revelation states that the beast out of the earth (the Antichrist) will cause everyone to receive a “mark” or “number” without which no one can buy or sell. In order for the Antichrist to exercise such control over humanity, some believe there will need to exist a mechanism by which total control can be expedited. With half the world’s peoples ruled by totalitarian governments and with most of society subject to “number” identification and computerized records of financial transactions, the environment now exists for the beast’s appearance. Although every generation has had the potential to serve the spirit of the Antichrist, many students of prophecy view modern developments, scientific advancements, military capabilities and international alignments as legitimate last day indicators. The following are some of the world conditions prophetic scholars highlight as signs of the latter days.

1. The regathering of Israel in Palestine

As far back as the time of Moses, God proclaimed that Israel, if disobedient, would be scattered throughout all the nations (Deut. 28:64). God also declared that He would regather His people out of all the nations, bringing them back into their land (Deut. 30:3; Isa. 11:11-16; Ezek. 36:8-24; 37:11-12; 38:8). In the Old Testament, there are prophecies concerning two regatherings. Israel would be regathered from Babylonia after seventy years of captivity (Jer. 25:11-12), but in this first captivity they were not scattered throughout all the nations, and their return was not complete or permanent. The Deuteronomy, Isaiah and Ezekiel passages cited above refer to a complete and permanent regathering of Israel ending in a rule of peace and righteousness. The second scattering of Israel into all nations is prophesied by Jesus: “And they [Israel] will fall by the edge of the sword [A.D. 70] and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (Luke 21:24). The phrase “times of the Gentiles” refers to the period symbolized by the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar in a dream interpreted by Daniel (Dan. 2:24-45). This is a period during which a succession of Gentile rulers dominate Europe and the Middle East, including Palestine. Daniel himself had a dream in which he saw these same Gentile rulers represented by four beasts, the last
of which ruled “until the Ancient of Days came...and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom” (Dan. 7:22). Paul seems to refer to the term “times of the Gentiles” in his letter to the Romans:

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins” (Rom. 11:25-27).

On May 14, 1948, regathered Jews declared a portion of Palestine to be the independent state of Israel. This act did not fulfill specifically the proph-ecies concerning Israel’s regathering, for this regathering has been in unbelief. However, after nearly two thousand years of exclusion from their land, Israel’s existence as a state may very well set the stage for the final act.

2. Perilous times

Paul described the social conditions of the “last days”:

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slander-ers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (2 Tim. 3:1-7).
Of course the people Paul described have always existed; however, when the depravity he described characterizes a whole society, such a condition signals the approach of the end of this age. Many view today’s prevailing conditions of selfishness, sexual perversion, crime, violence, lack of conscience and rebellion against biblical morality as signs that we are a “doomsday” society.

3. Modern weapons and war potential

Just before Jesus returns with His saints to claim His kingdom, the earth will be the scene of the greatest war of all time called “Armageddon” (Rev. 16:16; 19:17-21). This war will be the final conflict of this dispensation. At the turn of the twentieth century a war of the proportion of Armageddon was difficult to conceive. Now, with the development of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, another world war would undoubtedly be the last war and would bring about the destruction of humankind. In this sense, the modern war potential is a latter day sign because only the second coming of Jesus can prevent total destruction.

4. Progress in transportation and science

The last chapter of Daniel’s prophecy records this word of the Lord: “But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase” (Dan. 12:4). This prophecy seems to indicate that in the end times there will be a notable acceleration in travel and in the acquisition of knowledge. Many who write about latter day signs point to Daniel’s prophecy as a sign that the end is approaching.

Until the nineteenth century, there was very little change in the way people traveled. Abraham could get from one place to another about as rapidly as Shakespeare could. Until the turn of the twentieth century, the average person traveled in a vehicle drawn by animals. Today, individuals span continents through air travel in a matter of hours.

The increase in knowledge has been equally spectacular. Until the invention of the printing press and the discovery of the new world, the sum of
human knowledge was not appreciably greater than it was in the Golden Age of Greece and Rome. The Renaissance was primarily a rediscovery of the cultures of ancient Greece, Egypt, Arabia and China. Buckminster Fuller observed that before 1900 human knowledge doubled almost every century. However, Fuller noted by the conclusion of World War II knowledge was doubling at least every 25 years. IBM has predicted that internet technology will eventually lead to the “doubling of knowledge every 12 hours.”

This atmosphere of exploding knowledge and rapid scientific advancement in a world of declining morality, increased unethical behavior and selfish individualism will most assuredly lead to the return of Jesus to rule and to save us from ourselves.

These general, inferential signs and conditions in society are to be looked for before the rapture of the church. However, the explicit signs are prophesied in the Bible to happen during the tribulation and in connection with the Lord’s return in judgment. Believers should be aware that no specific sign must happen before the Bridegroom comes for the bride. Christ’s appearing, as in the parable of the ten virgins, should be expected at all times (Matt. 25:1-13).

E. The rapture of the church

A number of events are associated with the end of the age. Jesus promised His disciples, “...I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:3). Paul wrote: “…And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thess. 4:16-17). Jesus spoke also of great tribulation, “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matt. 24:21). This great tribulation is described in detail in Revelation 6-19 (see also Dan. 12:1). The tribulation will be caused by Satan through the agency of one called variously “a beast” (Rev. 13:1), the “antichrist” (1 John 2:18), the “man of sin...son of

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8David Russell Schilling, “Knowledge Doubling Every 12 Months, Soon to be Every 12 Hours” Industry Tap. April 19, 2013. http://www.industrytap.com/knowledge-doubling-every-12-months-soon-to-be-every-12-hours/3950
perdition” (2 Thess. 2:3) and “another horn, a little one” (Dan. 7:8). The great tribulation will be concluded by the battle of Armageddon and the revelation of Jesus as king of kings, who will come with His armies of saints to bring judgment upon the “beast” and his followers (Rev. 19:11-21). The great tribulation is followed by the millennial reign of Christ, the final judgment and the eternal state (Rev. 20-22).

The New Testament, especially in Paul’s writings, is clear about a “rapture” of the living believers at Christ’s coming. Most evangelicals agree that a rapture will occur, but they are not in agreement about when the rapture will occur in relation to the tribulation period described in the book of Revelation. Which of the rapture events will happen first? Will it be the coming of Jesus or the revelation of the Antichrist? Will Christians face the final tribulation, or will they be raptured before the tribulation occurs? While this book identifies with the pre-tribulation rapture position, the authors refrain from radical dogmatism in the presentation of this position recognizing that godly and scholarly teachers take other positions.

1. The pre-tribulation rapture theory

Pre-tribulation proponents believe the church will be raptured before the final tribulation. They believe the “blessed hope” mentioned in Titus 2:13 is the pre-tribulation rapture of the church:

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words (1 Thess. 4:15-18).
The apostle Paul was given a special revelation from the Lord Himself regarding the details of the rapture and its relationship to the resurrection. In 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 Paul again spoke of the rapture of the church together with the bodily resurrection of deceased believers: “Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” When the Lord comes for His church, not only will the living saints be raptured, but their bodies will also be changed into glorified, imperishable bodies. The believer, body and spirit, will become like Jesus (1 John 3:2-3). Another reference by Paul to the rapture is found in 2 Thessalonians 2:1: “Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him…” There is probably an additional reference to the rapture in the same passage: “…for that day will not come unless the falling away comes first…” (v. 3). The Greek word translated “falling away,” may also have the meaning “departure” (see 2 Cor. 12:8, “depart”). The word in Greek has the definite article; therefore, it refers to an event known by the recipients. Since the whole subject is about the “rapture” and the concern of the Thessalonians that they were already in the tribulation, the rendering “departure” is a reasonable one.

Those who hold to the pre-tribulation rapture theory believe the tribulation period will occur when “the fullness of the Gentiles has come in” (Rom. 11:12, 25-27). Therefore, the tribulation is not a church period but is the final or seventieth week of Daniel’s vision regarding God’s dealing with unbelieving Israel: “Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness…” (Dan. 9:24; see also vv. 25-27). It is a time of God dealing with unbelieving Israel and of “the wrath of the Lamb” (Rev. 6:15-17). The tribulation period is called by Jeremiah “Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:4-7). Paul declared regarding the church: “For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our

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9 See Roy Hicks, *Another Look at the Rapture* (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1982), where an extended treatment is made of Paul’s special insight into the rapture.

Lord Jesus Christ…” (1 Thess. 5:9). Proponents of the pre-tribulation theory believe the church has suffered and will suffer many trials and tribulations but not the final tribulation, which will include “the wrath of the Lamb!” (Rev. 6:16). They believe the Lord has promised the faithful that they will be kept from that hour of wrath: “Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth” (Rev. 3:10; see also 2 Pet. 2:9; Luke 21:34-36).

Pre-tribulation rapture proponents point out that in the book of Revelation after Chapter Four the word “church” is not specifically mentioned until Revelation 19, where the church is seen in heaven as the bride of Christ. Some scholars identify the church with the four and twenty elders who are in heaven throughout the apocalypse. The four and twenty elders are arrayed in white with crowns of victory on their heads, symbols of the redeemed. These scholars believe the tribulation saints (those who are saved during the tribulation and martyred) are seen as a group only in heaven. They believe the righteous who are seen on earth are the 144,000 who are said to be Jews (Rev. 7:1-8; 14:1-5).

One of the strongest arguments for a pre-tribulation rapture is the fact that throughout the New Testament believers are exhorted to look for and wait for the coming of Jesus (Matt. 24:42-43; 25:13; Mark 13:35; 1 Thess. 5:6; Titus 2:13; 1 John 3:3; Heb. 9:28). Jesus promised, “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:3). Here Jesus’ second coming is for the purpose of receiving the church to Himself and taking her to a place in the Father’s house. The blessed hope of an imminent coming of Jesus is one of the strongest incentives to practical godliness and diligent service (Titus 2:12-14; 1 John 3:3). If the tribulation must come first with the manifestation of the Antichrist before the rapture, individuals might not urgently look for a coming of Jesus until many of the events of the apocalypse have transpired. The parable of the faithful and unfaithful servants recorded in Matthew 24 teaches the tragic result of saying, “My master is delaying his coming” (24:44-51).

The principal proponents of the pre-tribulation position are Dr. C.I. Scofield, *Scofield Study Bible*, footnotes, (Oxford University Press, 1967); Dr.
2. The post-tribulation rapture theory

Those with the post-tribulation rapture theory claim believers will go through the tribulation and that the rapture will occur simultaneously with or immediately before the Lord’s coming in judgment. They hold that the rapture of the church and Christ’s return to rule are simply different aspects of a single event that will happen at the end of the great tribulation, immediately before the defeat of the beast and his followers and the beginning of the millennium. They believe the Bible describes the second coming of Christ as one event, not two events separated by a seven or three and a half year interval of tribulation. They point to Jesus warning His disciples and followers to be prepared for unequaled tribulation that would precede His second coming (Matt. 24:3-22; John 15:18-19; 16:33). They note that the resurrection of the dead and the rapture are closely associated in Scripture, with Revelation 20:4-6 placing the “first resurrection” after Christ’s return to rule, just before the millennium. This suggests that the rapture will occur after the tribulation at the moment of Christ’s second coming (see also Dan. 12:1-2). Some of the best advocates of the post-tribulation rapture are Dr. George E. Ladd, in *The Blessed Hope* (Eerdmans, 1957); *A Theology of the New Testament* (Zondervan, 1977) and J. Barton Payne, in *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* (Harper & Row, 1973).

3. The mid-tribulation rapture theory

As the term “mid-tribulation” reveals, those who profess the mid-tribulation rapture theory believe the church will be raptured after the first half of Daniel’s seventieth week, in the middle of the tribulation period (Dan. 9:27).
However, most who hold this view claim to be pre-tribulation rapturists because they do not interpret the first half of the seven-year tribulation period to be a time of great tribulation or wrath. Those who believe in a mid-tribulation rapture identify the last trumpet, mentioned in connection with the rapture in 1 Corinthians 15:52, to be identical to the seventh trumpet sounded in Revelations 11:15, which occurs in the middle of the tribulation (Rev. 11:2-3). If these two trumpets are identical, then this places the rapture at the middle of the tribulation. Mid-tribulation rapture theory states that the great tribulation is only the last half of Daniel’s seventieth week (Dan. 9:27; Rev. 11:2-3; 12:6, 14). Since the church is raptured before the “great tribulation” (the last three and one half years), the church escapes the “wrath” mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 5:9 and the “hour of temptation” spoken of in Revelation 3:10. Those who promote a mid-tribulation rapture theory view the resurrection of the two witnesses in Revelation 11:11-12 as a reference to the rapture and resurrection of the church that happens mid-tribulation simultaneously with the rapture.\footnote{See J. Oliver Buswell, \textit{A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion} (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1963) II, 456.}

Those who argue against this theory believe that the trumpets in 1 Corinthians 15 and Revelation 11 are not the same. Paul’s “trump of God” is a trumpet call of victory over death; John’s seventh trumpet is the seventh in a series of announcements of judgment upon the wicked and final triumph over Satan’s reign. They also point out that Scripture seems to state that God’s wrath is poured out in both the first and second halves of the tribulation period (Rev. 6:12-17; see also 1 Thess. 5:9; Rev. 3:10; 2 Pet. 2:9).

4. The partial rapture theory

The partial rapture theory is a primary example of various, non-gospel-centered, errant rapture theories. Those who hold to a partial rapture theory base their belief on misinterpreting or misapplying passages such as Hebrews 9:28, Luke 21:36, 1 John 2:28 and Matthew 25:1-13. They interpret these passages to mean that believers who do not “eagerly wait for Him,” who are not “counted worthy,” who have something in their lives that
might make them “ashamed before Him at His coming” or who do not have oil (the fullness of the Spirit) will be left behind to go through the tribulation. Advocates of this theory believe that only those believers who are fully worthy will go up in the rapture.

The partial rapture theory is simply not supported by Scripture and contradicts the basic principles of the gospel. First Thessalonians 4:16 says, “…the dead in Christ will rise first.” If all who have died in Christ will be resurrected, certainly all who are alive “in Christ” will be raptured. Most assuredly the Lord will not wait until His coming to make a new distinction between believers who are “worthy” and those who are not. All believers are equally worthy through the cross. Who can claim worthiness in himself or herself? Our standing with God is based on the righteousness of Christ, not our righteousness which is “filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6). Although every believer should be filled with the Spirit, the purpose of that fullness is not to save believers or make them worthy. Believers in the partial rapture theory wrongly interpret the “oil” in the parable of the ten virgins to be symbolic of the “fullness of the Spirit.” The text clearly shows this is not the case as the wise and unwise all had oil at the beginning of the parable. Scripture simply does not teach that a partial rapture will occur based on how much Christians yield to the Holy Spirit or pursue the will of God.

F. Christ’s return to rule: the revelation

At the rapture, Christ comes for His saints. At His revelation, Christ comes with His saints. At the rapture, Christ comes in the air. At His revelation, Christ comes to earth to rule in power and glory. The rapture is followed by the believers’ judgment of rewards and the marriage supper of the lamb. The revelation is followed by the defeat of the Antichrist and the wicked nations and the establishment of Christ’s millennial kingdom (Rev. 19-20). “Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints…” (Jude 14; see also Dan. 7:9-10, 21-22; Isa. 11:1-4; 63:1-3). According to Revelation 19-20, these are the steps in Christ’s return to rule:
1. Heaven is opened, and Christ appears riding on a white horse with a crown on His head and with garments dipped in blood. His name is announced to be “The Word of God” (Rev. 19:11-13; see also John 1:1).

2. He is accompanied by armies of saints also riding on white horses. A sharp sword issues from His mouth to smite the wicked nations. His title is revealed to be “KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19:14-16).

3. An angel announces His readiness for battle against the beast, and Satan's armies gather to oppose the Lord. The beast’s armies are crushed; the beast, the false prophet and all those who have taken the mark of the beast or worshiped his image are cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:19-21; see also Dan. 8:25).

4. An angel from heaven casts Satan, called “the old serpent,” the “dragon” and the “devil,” into the bottomless pit where he is imprisoned for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-3).

5. The tribulation saints are raised. Together with the church saints, they reign with Christ for a thousand years (Rev. 20:4; Matt. 25:21; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 5:9-10).

V. The Tribulation

A. The word “tribulation” in Scripture

The Bible uses the word “tribulation” in at least three different ways:

1. Tribulation describes the trials and persecutions Christians will suffer in the world as a result of their identification with Christ: “In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). John explained why we suffer with Christ in this world: “Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him” (1 John 3:1; see also 2 Tim. 3:12; 2 Thess. 1:4; Acts 14:22; Rom. 12:12; Eph. 3:13; 2 Cor. 7:4).
2. Tribulation refers to the final tribulation that will occur before the millennial reign of Christ. Those who hold to a post-tribulation rapture theory believe the church will go through this final tribulation. Those who maintain a pre-tribulation rapture position believe this time refers to a special period where God will deal with unbelieving Israel as prophesied by Daniel (Dan. 9:24-27). They believe Jeremiah also made reference to the same period calling it “Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7-9). They point to Jesus describing the “great tribulation” (Matt. 24:15-28) and confirming the tribulation’s application to Israel by using terms such as “Judea,” “Sabbath” and “abomination of desolation” (Dan. 9:27) which refers to the desecration of the altar of the Jewish temple by the Antichrist.

3. Tribulation applies to God’s final wrath upon the Antichrist and the Gentile nations that follow him (Rev. 6:12-17). This tribulation is called the “great day of His wrath.”

Individuals should clearly distinguish between the different applications and uses of the word tribulation. The fact that all believers must be ready to suffer trials and tribulations (Acts 14:22) does not necessarily mean that Christians will go through the “great tribulation” or the final hour of “God’s wrath.” Although respected scholars disagree, it is the pre-tribulation rapture position of this book that God has promised to keep the church saints “from” (Greek ek, “out of”) the tribulation period (Rev. 3:10; 1 Thess. 5:9). Furthermore, we believe the “great tribulation,” which is Daniel’s “seventieth week” of the period determined for dealing with Israel (Dan. 9:24-27; 12:8-13), is not a part of the church age. We believe when the “fullness of the Gentiles” comes, as Paul explained in Romans 11:25, the church will be raptured, and God will turn again to effect the salvation of national Israel (Rom. 11:24, 26; Rev. 7:4-8; Rev. 11-12).

B. Daniel’s dream and vision

Daniel also prophesied about times of world domination by Gentile nations in the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s image (Dan. 2:31-44) and in Daniel’s dream of the four beasts (Dan. 7:1-14). The four parts of Nebuchadnezzar’s image and the four beasts in Daniel’s dream represented
four, successive Gentile empires; the last was to be the Roman Empire. According to the dream of the image, the Roman Empire would be revived in the form of ten kingdoms represented by the ten toes of the image. According to the vision of the four beasts, the fourth beast would have ten horns from which “another horn, a little one,” symbolizing the Antichrist, would come forth. In both the dream and the vision the Son of Man will come in the time of the fourth empire to punish the nations and to set up His everlasting kingdom (Dan. 2:31-35; 7:8-14; 12:1-3). In Matthew 24 and in Luke 21 Jesus implied that the great tribulation will include Daniel's seventieth week of God's dealing with Israel and His final wrath against Satan and the wicked Gentile nations that serve him (see also Zech. 14:1-4; Rev. 14:17-20; 16:14-16; 19:19-20).

C. Principal events of the tribulation:

1. The church and the restrainer of evil are removed (2 Thess. 2:1, 7-8).

2. The daily sacrifice is restored in a rebuilt temple by covenant with the Antichrist (Dan. 9:27).

3. Judgments are poured out from the opening of the seven seals (Rev. 6:1-8:1).

4. Judgments are poured out from the sounding of the seven trumpets (Rev. 8:6-11:15).

5. The daily sacrifice is taken away by the Antichrist, and the abomination of desolation is set up (Dan. 9:27; 12:10-11; Matt. 24:15).

This will happen in the middle of the seven years which are divided into two parts of three and one half years each (Rev. 11:2-3; 12:14; Dan. 9:27; 12:11). The latter half of this period is considered to be the “great tribulation.”

6. Israel faces increased persecution (Rev. 12); 144,000 Jews from the 12 tribes are sealed (Rev. 7:1-8); an innumerable company of tribulation saints
from all nations, converted during the tribulation, are taken to heaven (Rev. 7:9-17).

7. Power and great authority is given to the beast and the false prophet; the mark of the beast and his number are introduced with compulsory worship of the beast’s image (Rev. 13).

8. Judgments result from the outpouring of the seven vials of wrath (Rev. 15-16).


Organized religion “…having a form of godliness but denying its power” (2 Tim. 3:5) will become increasingly corrupt, even aligning with the beast’s government.

10. The kings of the east and the armies of the Antichrist (beast) will gather to make war with the remnant of Israel resulting in the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 12:17; 16:12-16).

11. The marriage supper of the Lamb is celebrated (Rev. 19:6-9).

12. Christ returns with His armies of saints to confront the beast and his armies, and the beast’s armies are destroyed by the brightness of Christ’s coming (Rev. 19:14-21; 2 Thess. 2:8).

13. The beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20).

14. Satan is cast into the bottomless pit (the abyss) for one thousand years (Rev. 20:1-3).
VI. The Antichrist

A. The word “antichrist” in Scripture

The word “antichrist” comes from two Greek words: christos meaning “Christ” or “anointed one” and anti meaning “against.” Therefore, antichrist means “the one against Christ, God’s anointed.” The word antichrist is found only in John’s epistles (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7) where antichrist is described as one coming in the last time and one whose spirit is already present in the world. The spirit of antichrist will be embodied in the “beast” described in Revelation 11:7 and 13:1. The first prophetic reference to the Antichrist is probably found in Genesis 3:15: “And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed…” Christ is the “Seed” of the woman. Antichrist is the “seed” of Satan or the devil, whose name means “slanderer,” who speaks against Christ and against His redeemed.

B. The identity of the Antichrist

The spirit of antichrist has possessed many enemies of God through the ages such as “the kings of Babylon,” a type of Satan (Isa. 14:4-17). The “great harlot” is given the name “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS” in Revelation 17:5 for she is the embodiment of anti-God religion. Throughout history many anti-Christian rulers and evil men of power such as Nero, Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm, Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin have been identified as the Antichrist. Some of these men were clearly motivated by the spirit of antichrist, but the Antichrist is yet to come. The spirit of antichrist will continue to possess any person yielded to Satan.

C. The titles of the Antichrist

1. The beast (Rev. 13:1-4, 12-18; 15:2; 16:2; 17:8; 19:19; 20:4, 10)

2. The little horn (Dan. 7:8; 8:9)

He shall rise up from among rulers of the revived Roman Empire. The “little horn” of Daniel 8:9 is Antiochus Epiphanes (170 B.C.), the Syrian ruler...
who persecuted the Jews and defiled the temple in the time of the Maccabees (1 Macc. 1:10-47); therefore, he is a type of antichrist.

3. The man of sin (2 Thess. 2:3)

He will be history’s vilest embodiment of sin and rebellion.

4. The son of perdition (2 Thess. 2:3)

This is another title of the man of sin. The Antichrist is Satan’s tool to seduce humans and consign them to the realm of the lost.

5. The lawless one (2 Thess. 2:8)

He totally opposes every law of God.

6. The willful king (Dan. 11:36-45)

Jesus prayed, “…not My will, but Yours, be done” (Luke 22:42). The Antichrist will oppose God’s will and do his own will; he is the inspirer of all those who “do their own thing.”

7. The foolish shepherd (Zech. 11:15-17)

Jesus is the “good shepherd” (John 10:11-18) who preserves. The Antichrist is the worthless shepherd who devours.

D. The works of the Antichrist

1. He is the last ruler of the revived Roman Empire (Dan. 7:8; Rev. 13:1).

2. He will appear on the scene as a proponent of peace who is tolerant of religion (Dan. 9:27; Rev. 6:2; 1 Thess. 5:3).
3. He will arise at the beginning of the seventieth week of Daniel and usher in the great tribulation when God sets His hand to deal again with national Israel. He will make a covenant with unbelieving Jews to restore the daily sacrifice (Dan. 9:24-27).

4. After three and one half years in the middle of the tribulation, he will cast off all pretense of toleration, break his covenant with the Jews, cause the daily sacrifice to cease and begin his persecution of Israel (Rev. 13:6-8).

5. One of his heads will receive a deadly wound then be miraculously healed causing the world to marvel, follow and worship him (Rev. 13:3-4).

6. As the man of sin and the lawless one, he will blaspheme God and require “All who dwell on the earth” to “worship him” or face death (Rev. 13:7-8).

7. The third member of the satanic trinity (the dragon, the beast and the false prophet) will arise. The false prophet will exercise miraculous power to deceive, cause people to worship the beast, create an image of the beast to which he gives life and require all humans to take a mark or number of the beast to buy or sell (Rev. 13:11-18).

8. During the tribulation the beast will sponsor the great harlot who represents apostate religion, but finally the beast, together with the ten kings who rule with the beast, will utterly destroy the scarlet woman (Rev. 17).

The woman is said to be “that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth” (Rev. 17:18). The city is situated on “seven mountains” (Rev. 17:9). Scholars are divided as to whether the city is Rome or Babylon.

9. The beast will gather his subject nations together to make war with the Lamb at the battle of Armageddon, where he will be utterly defeated and cast, together with the false prophet, into the lake of fire (Rev. 16:16; 17:14; 19:19-20).
VII. The Resurrection

Almost all religions teach the immortality of the soul, but the Bible teaches the redemption of and the survival of the total person: spirit, soul and body. The ancient Greeks believed in life after death for the soul, but since they believed the body was the source of all evil, they thought it was necessary for the soul to be released from the body. A heretical Christian sect called “Gnostics” shared this concept derived from Greek philosophy. The Bible does not teach that the physical body is the source of evil. When Paul instructed the church not to live “according to the flesh” (kata sarka), but “according to the Spirit” (kata pneuma), he was not saying that the body is the source of all evil (Rom. 8:1-17). Instead, he was pointing out that although sin manifests itself through the actions of the body, evil behavior is derived from a “carnal mind” (Rom. 8:6-7). Moreover, Christ, through His incarnation, death and resurrection, took our human body and “condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3). He has redeemed the total person who is in Christ giving every believer a hope of a bodily resurrection that will occur at the rapture of the church: “For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming” (1 Cor. 15:21-23).

A. The fact of the resurrection

The fact of the resurrection is taught in both the Old and the New Testaments:

1. In the Old Testament

   a) By affirmation: “For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God…” (Job 19:25-26). The psalmist proclaimed, “As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness” (Ps. 17:15; see also Ps. 16:9-11; Dan. 12:2).

   b) By prophecy: “Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew is like the
dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead” (Isa. 26:19; see also Hosea 13:14).

c) By typology: Events such as Joseph’s deliverance from the pit are typical of death and resurrection (Gen. 37:20-36), as is Isaac’s return from the altar of sacrifice (Gen. 22:5-14) and Jonah’s deliverance from the great fish (Jon. 2; Matt. 12:40).

d) By example: The Old Testament contains several examples of persons who were raised from the dead (1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:32-35; 13:20-21). While these are cases of resuscitation rather than resurrection (for those who were raised died natural deaths later), they demonstrate God’s power and disposition to restore dead bodies to life.

2. In the New Testament

a) By affirmation: “So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power” (1 Cor. 15:42-43; see also Matt. 22:30-32; John 5:21; Acts 23:6-8; 26:8-23; 2 Tim. 1:10; 1 Pet. 1:3).

b) By prophecy: “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:28-29; see also John 6:39-40, 44, 54; Luke 14:13-14; 20:35-36; 1 Cor. 15; Phil. 3:11, 21; 1 Thess. 4:14-16; Rev. 20:4-6, 13-15).

c) By example: The New Testament also contains examples of persons raised from the dead. These were not resurrections such as will occur at the second coming and at the last judgment, for these individuals later died and will experience the final resurrection. However, these stories of individuals being raised from the dead are prefigures of the final resurrection (see John 11:41-44, Lazarus;

The resurrection of Jesus is the true and ideal resurrection. When Jesus rose from the dead, He became “…the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor. 15:20). His resurrection is the guarantee of the resurrection of all believers: “But God... raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus…” (Eph. 2:4-6).

B. The nature of the resurrection

The resurrection of humans will be universal. Not all humans will have eternal life, but all will have eternal existence. All persons will be resurrected: the just to eternal life, the unjust to eternal condemnation. All humans will be raised from the dead but not all at the same time (John 5:28-29).

1. The resurrection of believers (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:50-57; Rev. 20:4-6)

The resurrection of the church will occur at the second coming of Jesus (1 Thess. 4:16). The believers’ resurrection is called the “first resurrection”: “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power…” (Rev. 20:6). Some teach there will be one general resurrection of the dead and one judgment when the just and unjust are judged. Jesus sometimes mentioned the two resurrections and judgments in the same passage, but a careful reading will reveal that Jesus was not speaking of one general resurrection: “and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:29). Notice that one is a resurrection of life while the other is a resurrection of condemnation. They are not the same, nor do they occur at the same time as Paul and John both elucidated.

It is normal for prophetic passages to present several, related future events as if they were one event. For example, the first and second coming of Jesus are merged in the same passage in Old Testament prophecy (Isa. 9:6-7; 61:1-3; Dan. 12:2). Both Paul and John made it clear that the resurrection of
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the saints will take place at Christ’s second coming before the millennial reign (1 Cor. 15:51-52; Rev. 20:4-6; Dan. 12:1-2).

   a) The resurrection of humans will be a literal, bodily resurrection. This truth is demonstrated by the resurrection of Jesus. His resurrected body still bore the prints of the nails and the wound of the sword (John 20:26-28). After His resurrection, Jesus had a body of “flesh and bones” and even took food to eat (Luke 24:36-43). On the other hand, the body of Jesus was sufficiently glorified that His disciples did not always recognize Him at once. His appearances show that His body was not subject to normal physical limitations (John 20:19, 26). Although our resurrection will be literal, this does not mean that all the same molecules of our dead bodies will be recovered. In fact, our body cells are replaced many times throughout our lifespan without our losing personal identity. Of this we may be certain: God will form our resurrected bodies with a definite relationship to our earthly bodies, but they will be transformed and fashioned to our new environment (Phil. 3:21).

   Paul spoke of death as a sowing of the body as a farmer sows seed. The seed dies, but it contains a life principle by which nature brings forth a new plant of the same genus, species and variety as the original seed. At the resurrection, cemeteries will turn into harvest fields (1 Cor. 15:42-44). Out of planted earthly bodies, the Lord will raise up resurrection bodies that are identified with their earthly body but transformed with a likeness to Christ’s resurrection body. Believers’ bodies will be changed (1 Cor. 15:52), but each will have a relationship to their earthly body. The resurrection body will not merely be the earthly body resuscitated, but the likeness of the earthly body glorified. Jesus’ state after His resurrection demonstrates that our resurrection bodies will retain their personal identity.

   b) The resurrection body will be God-given: “But God gives it a body as He pleases…” (1 Cor. 15:38). This is the answer to the hypothetical questions “…How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?” (1 Cor. 15:35). How a dead body can be raised and glorified cannot be conceived by human intellect. Christ’s resurrection is one of the great miracles of our gospel. We do not explain it. We accept it as divine revelation. In the same manner, we accept bodily resurrection as a miracle of divine power and wisdom. If we
accept Christ’s resurrection (which is one of the best attested events of history), we should have no problem accepting our final resurrection, for we will be raised up to life by the same omnipotent God who raised Jesus from the dead.

c) The believer’s resurrection body will be immortal and incorruptible (1 Cor. 15:42). The Scripture never speaks of the immortality of the soul only, separate from the body. Believers now have eternal life but dwell in mortal bodies. All humans have an eternal existence. Only believers, who shall experience “the first resurrection,” will receive immortal and incorruptible bodies (1 Cor. 15:42).

d) The resurrection body will be a celestial or heavenly body (1 Cor. 15:40). Our earthly bodies are suited to this present, earthly environment. The resurrection body will be suited to our new, heavenly environment. Our resurrected bodies will be equally suited to both the new heavens and the new earth as well as to the millennial earth. Like the body of Jesus, it will be able to come and go between heaven and the earth.

e) The resurrection body will be a powerful body: “…It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power” (1 Cor. 15:43). The contrast here indicates that the new capacities of the resurrection body will be inconceivably and inexpressibly greater than those of any earthly, human body.

f) The resurrection body will be a glorious body: “It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory” (1 Cor. 15:43). Jesus promised, “Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matt. 13:43). Jesus’ words suggest that the resurrected saints will have the same glory that He manifested on the Mount of Transfiguration: “…and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light” (Matt. 17:2). Jesus prayed for us, “And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one…” (John 17:22). After speaking of the resurrection, Daniel said, “Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever” (Dan. 12:3).
2. The resurrection of unbelievers (Rev. 20:5,12-14; John 5:28-29; Dan. 12:2; Acts 24:15)

The Bible does not reveal specifically the state or nature of the resurrection bodies of the unrighteous; however, we may assume that they will be bodies subject to continuous ruin. Jesus said, “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy [apollumi, “to ruin utterly”] both soul and body in hell [gehenna]” (Matt. 10:28). The bodies of the unrighteous dead will not be annihilated but they will suffer “utter ruin” eternally (see 2 Thess. 1:8-9). The unrighteous are not resurrected at the time of Christ’s second coming but after the millennial reign of Christ (Rev. 20:5).

C. The time of the resurrection

The order of resurrections is as follows:


3. The resurrection of the church saints at the rapture (John 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:52)

4. The resurrection of the two witnesses of Revelation 11:12

5. The resurrection of the saints of Israel and of the tribulation saints who are witnesses for Christ and who do not worship the beast (Rev. 20:4-6; Dan. 12:1-2)

6. The resurrection of the unrighteous

The resurrection of the unrighteous will occur after the millennial reign of Christ. They will be resurrected to stand before the great white throne (Rev. 20:5, 11-14).
VIII. The Millennium

The word “millennium” is not found in the Bible; however, the thousand-year period of Christ’s rule over the earth is mentioned six times in Revelation 20. The word millennium is derived from Latin, meaning “thousand years.” The millennium is a period when Satan will be bound in the abyss: “He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years…” (Rev. 20:2). The binding of Satan will prepare the earth for the millennial reign of Christ, who will come to earth, as described in Revelation 19:16, as “KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.” The resurrected church saints, together with the tribulation saints, will reign with Christ in His millennial kingdom: “And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years” (Rev. 20:4; see also Rev. 20:6).

A. The relation of the millennium to the second coming

There are three theories about the time relationship of the millennium to the second coming of Christ:

1. Post-millennialism

Post-millennialism puts the millennium before the second coming of Jesus. According to this theory, based on an interpretation of the parables of the “leaven” and the “mustard seed,” the church will gradually, through the preaching of the gospel and the promotion of social justice, overcome war and evil in the world, after which Christ will come. Post-millennialists believe universal peace and righteousness will be accomplished gradually by the church rather than by the second coming of Christ in power. World wars, consistent crime and perpetual violence argue against this optimistic theory.

2. Amillennialism

Amillennialists do not believe Jesus will literally, physically reign on the earth for a thousand years. They spiritualize all references relative to Christ’s
thousand-year reign and apply them to His spiritual rule over the hearts of believers. They view Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ’s ruling on the throne of David to be addressing Christ’s general relationship with the church. They view all promises to Israel as fulfilled through Christ blessing the church, inasmuch as the church is the spiritual Israel. According to amillennial theory, national Israel has no further destiny than the destiny of other nations. Paul’s teaching about the natural and wild branches of the olive tree in Romans 11 seems to refute this spiritual or figurative interpretation of Israel.

3. Pre-millennialism

Pre-millennialists interpret Scripture literally, or more aptly, naturally. Differences in the method of interpretation of prophecy lead to differences in theory. When individuals depart from a natural interpretation of Bible prophecy, they can only speculate. If everything is interpreted as a symbol rather than a real event, the symbols can be made to mean anything the interpreter wants them to mean. Taking the book of Revelation and the kingdom prophecies naturally, the pre-millennialists believe that when Christ comes again, He will then, and only then, establish His reign of peace and righteousness over the earth. Pre-millennialists believe in a literal rule of Christ on the promised throne of David, when Jesus, together with the redeemed, will reign over the regathered and saved remnant of Israel and the righteous Gentile nations. Pre-millennialists do not confuse scriptural references to Israel with references to the church; nor do they confuse the church age with the millennial age. As a result most pre-millennialists hold to the following order for future prophetic events:

a) The tribulation with a pre-, mid- or post-tribulation rapture

b) The final second coming of Christ as king

c) The millennial reign of Christ on earth

d) The final judgment with the wicked thrown into the lake of fire
e) The eternal state of a new heaven and a new earth for the redeemed

B. The relation of the millennium to Israel

Among the millennial family of nations, the nation of Israel will occupy the central place:

> When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, When He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples According to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord’s portion is His people; Jacob is the place of His inheritance. “He found him in a desert land And in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye” (Deut. 32:8-10).

The angel Gabriel revealed to Mary that Jesus was destined, as the promised Messiah, to reign upon the throne of David: “He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:32-33). It is true that the church has entered into the spiritual blessings first given to Israel (Eph. 1:18, 3:6; 1 Pet. 2:9-10); however, this fact does not change God's purpose for national Israel (Isa. 61:1-62:4; 66:7-24; Rom. 11:13-28). It appears that Israel will be the ministers and missionaries to all the nations during the millennium directing the Gentile inhabitants of the earth to serve and worship the Lord (Isa. 61:4-11). Israel will have preeminence among the nations during the millennial reign of Christ, while the glorified church, composed of both Jews and Gentiles, will reign over the earth with Christ (Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:29-30; 2 Tim 2:12).

C. The relation of the millennium to the nations

At the coming of Christ to reign, there will be a judgment of Gentile nations referred to in Matthew as the “sheep” and “goat” nations (Matt. 25:31-46). The sheep nations are judged for kingdom blessing on the basis
of their treatment of the Lord’s “brethren” (Israel). Scripture clearly reveals there will be Gentile nations on the millennial earth (see Rev. 20:7-8; Isa. 2:1-5; 11:5-10; 60:1-5; Zech. 14:16-21). Daniel received revelation in a vision that the Christ would have dominion over a kingdom that would include all nations:

I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away…(Dan. 7:13-14).

D. The relation of the millennium to the church

The church will bear a different relationship to the millennial kingdom than either the restored nation of Israel or the Gentile nations. These latter believers will be earthly peoples. Even though they will live under the ideal conditions of an earth freed from the curse, they will have mortal bodies and they will pursue normal, earthly occupations. There will be universal peace, justice and holiness because of the sovereign rule of Christ; however, there will not be absolute perfection in the earthly inhabitants (see Isa. 11:4; 65:20; Zech. 14:17-19). On the other hand, the church and all saints who have had part in the first resurrection will rule and reign with Christ (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:9-10; 20:6). They will not be confined to the earth, for they have glorified bodies, and they will have access to heaven and earth (Rev. 19:6-14; Matt. 22:30-31; Luke 20:35-36). Jesus said to His disciples, “In My Father’s house are many mansions…I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:2-3). Paul spoke of his hope of a better place than this earth: “…having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better” (Phil. 1:23). When Paul said for me “to die is gain,” he meant “gain” over life at its best, not at its worst, for he had just declared, “for to me to live is Christ” (Phil 1:21). Even now, the believer is seated together with Christ in heavenly places (Eph. 2:6). Therefore, in our resurrected state we
will always occupy heavenly places even while we are sharing rule over the earth with Christ (Matt. 25:21; Luke 19:17-19). Three important arguments suggest that the church saints will be equipped for both heavenly and earthly environments: (1) The saints in their resurrected state will be like the angels (Luke 20:35-38), and angels often ministered to humans on earth; (2) Jesus, after His resurrection, appeared to His followers on earth for forty days and (3) at the resurrection of Jesus, “many bodies of the saints” arose from their graves and “appeared to many” (Matt. 27:52-53).

E. Life and conditions on the millennial earth

1. Christ’s millennial reign will be characterized by universal justice and righteousness (Jer. 23:5-6; Isa. 11:3-5; 52:1-16; Ps. 72:1-8).

2. All the earth will be under the righteous discipline of King Jesus, and all who disobey will be disciplined (Zech. 14:16-21).

3. There will be peace among all the nations during the millennial rule of Christ (Ps. 72; Isa. 2:4; 9:5-6; 32:1,17-18; Mic. 5:4-5).

4. There will be happiness and joy in Christ’s kingdom (Isa. 9:2-4; 25:6-9; 35:10).

5. In Christ’s kingdom, the people of the nation of Israel will enjoy health and longevity (Isa. 35:5-6; 65:20-22).

6. On the millennial earth there will be great material prosperity (Ps. 72:15-16; Amos 9:13-15; Zech. 3:10; 8:12).

7. Under Christ’s reign, the earth will be freed from the curse (Rom. 8:19-22; Isa. 55:13; 41:18-19). With the removal of the curse, wild animals will lose their ferocity (Isa. 11:6-9; 65:25; Ezek. 34:25-28; Hosea 2:18).
IX. The Judgments

All humans will stand before the judgment of God in order that His righteousness may be vindicated: “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment…” (Heb. 9:27). The psalmist declared: “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne…” (Ps. 89:14). God’s holiness and justice require that all sin be punished and that all right be upheld: “Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Gen. 18:25). The conscience of every human witnesses to the fact that all good and evil are known by God and recorded in His indelible record. Paul wrote that Gentiles “…show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them…in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel” (Rom. 2:15-16). All humans have sinned (Rom. 3:10-23); therefore, all are deserving of condemnation. The clearest picture of the demands of God’s holiness and justice is seen in the cross. God is love; but to bestow His mercy on sinners, He judged and punished the sins of humanity through the crucifixion of His redeemer Son. The infinite Savior bore the guilt of sinners so that those who have faith in Jesus might be freed from condemnation (Rom. 8:1).

Some have the erroneous idea that there will be one general day of reckoning when all humans just or unjust will be judged. The Bible speaks of a number of judgments. The Scofield Bible (Oxford University Press, 1967), in the footnotes for Revelation 20:12, lists seven, separate judgments. In the following section these judgments will be treated under four categories: (1) the judgment of the believer, (2) the judgment of the nations, (3) the judgment of the wicked dead and (4) the judgment of Satan and the fallen angels.

A. The judgment of the believers

There are three aspects to the believer’s judgment. The believer’s first judgment took place at the cross: “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth,
will draw all peoples to Myself” (John 12:31-32). In reality, the cross is the judgment of all sin and of all sinners, including Satan. At the cross believers plead guilty, confess their sin and identify themselves with Jesus, their substitute and savior: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Having been judged at the cross, the faithful will not stand judgment relative to their salvation, only relative to their rewards for service (John 3:18; 5:24; Rom. 8:1-33; 1 Thess. 5:9). The second aspect of the believer’s judgment is their continuing self-judgment. Paul wrote: “For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world” (1 Cor. 11:31-32). This chastening is part of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life (see Rom. 15:16; 1 Thess. 5:14-23; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 John 1:7-2:2).

The third aspect of the believer’s judgment is before the judgment seat of Christ. This is not a judgment of condemnation but a determination of the believer’s awards. This judgment of awards will take place at the second coming of Christ (1 Cor. 4:5). Paul gave details concerning the believer’s judgment in his letters to the Corinthian church:

Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire (1 Cor. 3:12-15).

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad [worthless] (2 Cor. 5:10).

In their life and service, all believers are building upon the foundation of Christ Jesus. All believers must answer before Christ’s tribunal (the bema
judgment) to have their individual works tested as a basis for recompense. The judgment seat of Christ will reveal the service of believers to be gold, silver and precious stones or hay, wood and stubble. The latter will not stand the test in the crucible of Christ’s glory. Believers who have built “worthless” works on the foundation of Christ Jesus will still be saved because salvation is by faith, not by works. However, they will not receive awards or crowns: “Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward” (2 John 8; see also 1 John 2:28; Rev. 3:11). If believers build “good” works on the foundation of Christ, they will receive from the Lord reward and the proclamation of “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matt. 25:21).

The believer’s special rewards are called crowns. They are four in number:

1. The crown of rejoicing

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy” (1 Thess. 2:19-20). Paul considered his converts his crown of rejoicing. Note that he expected to receive his crown at the second coming of Jesus. The crown of rejoicing is the soul winner’s crown.

2. The crown of righteousness

This crown Paul expected to receive as a reward for his “good fight,” his “faith kept” and “course finished” (2 Tim. 4:7-8). The crown of righteousness is the winner’s crown from the athletic metaphor:

And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified (1 Cor. 9:25-27).
3. The crown of life

The crown of life is the martyr’s crown for it is promised to those who are faithful until death:

Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life (Rev. 2:10).

The crown of life is promised to those who live their lives prepared to endure temptation, trials and death for their witness: “Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him” (James 1:12).

4. The crown of glory

The crown of glory is for faithful pastors and elders. Peter mentioned this crown while instructing the pastors and elders of the church: “…and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away” (1 Pet. 5:4). The Greek word for “crown” is *stephanos*, which is the name of the crown that was awarded at Greek games. The Greeks made their athletic crowns out of olive or laurel that soon faded. The crown of glory, which the Lord will give to His undershepherds, will outlast the ages.

B. The judgment of the nations

In Matthew 25, Jesus declares that He will gather all nations before Him to be judged at the time of his coming (Matt. 25:31-46). At the end of the tribulation, before He begins His millennial reign, Jesus will separate the nations as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. It seems from the context the basis of judgment will be the treatment rendered to His “brethren,” the righteous remnant of Israel, who will be Christ’s witnesses during the tribulation (Rev. 7:11:1-12). These will be the Gentiles who survive the tribulation and do not bow to the
beast. They will become the nations that the Old Testament prophets predicted would inhabit the earth during the kingdom age (Isa. 11:10).

C. The judgment of the wicked dead

The judgment of the wicked dead is known as the “Great White Throne Judgment” (Rev. 20:11). This judgment will not take place until after the millennial reign of Christ:

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who 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, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death (Rev. 20:11-14).

The judge of the wicked dead will be Christ Jesus to whom God has assigned all judgment (Acts 17:31). Those judged will be the wicked dead who did not have part in the first resurrection, which will take place at the time of the rapture of the saints (1 Thess. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:52). This judgment will be on the basis of works. There will be a difference in the severity of judgment (Matt. 10:15; Luke 10:12). However, the mildest degree of judgment will still include the dreadful fate of being lost. These wicked persons will have spurned every offer of God’s mercy in Christ Jesus. Therefore, their names are not found written in the Book of Life.

D. The judgment of Satan and the fallen angels

At the end of Christ’s thousand-year reign, Satan will be released from his prison for a brief season. He will go forth to deceive the nations. Satan’s
rebellion, his last, will end with the fiery destruction of the rebels, and Satan will be cast into the lake of fire forever (Rev. 20:10). Several Bible passages refer to a final judgment of fallen angels (Isa. 24:21-22; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). The judgment of fallen angels seems to occur at the same time Satan is judged. According to Paul, the saints will participate in the judgment of angels (1 Cor. 6:3).

X. The Final Destinies

Scripture is clear that there is a final destiny for all humans beyond this present life on earth: “And these go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (Matt. 25:46). Jesus said of those who hear His voice and follow Him, “…I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish…” (John 10:28). Paul wrote “…those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power…” (2 Thess. 1:8-9). The Bible states that the righteous will enjoy everlasting life and bliss in the presence of the Lord, while the unrighteous will suffer everlasting punishment and separation from the Lord. The future abode of the righteous will be heaven (2 Cor. 5:1, 1 Pet. 1:4). The future abode of the unrighteous will be hell, gehenna (Mark 9:43-44; Rev. 20:14).

A. The future destiny of the unrighteous

As mentioned previously, the King James and New King James versions often use the term “hell” to translate the Hebrew word sheol and the Greek word hades. Other translations leave the words sheol and hades untranslated because both words can have different meanings based on usage. Both sheol and hades are sometimes used to designate the place of departed spirits or the intermediate state where the dead abide. In the New Testament “hell” is translated from the Greek gehenna. Gehenna was the refuse dump in the Valley of Hinnom where fires burned unendingly. This became symbolic of the final, eternal perdition where the fires of hell burn unendingly (Mark 9:43; Rev. 20). The wicked are kept in hades until the final judgment when they are cast
into the lake of fire. Hell is also used to translate *tartaroo*, used once in the New Testament to describe the place where wicked angels were cast (2 Pet. 2:4). After the millennium all the wicked dead are resurrected. They will then face the Great White Throne Judgment and be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20; 20:10-14, 15; 21:7-8). The Bible uses various descriptions to represent the final condition of the wicked:


2. Outer darkness (Matt. 22:13; 2 Pet. 2:4-17; Jude 6-13)

3. Eternal, everlasting, unquenchable fire (Matt. 18:8; Mark 9:43,45,48; 2 Pet. 3:7; Jude 7)

4. Everlasting contempt (Dan. 12:2)

5. Everlasting torment (Rev. 14:10-11)

6. Everlasting punishment (Matt. 25:46)

7. Everlasting destruction or perdition (2 Thess. 1:8-9; Phil. 3:18-19; Matt. 7:13; Rom. 9:22; 2 Pet. 3:7)

8. Where the worm does not die (Mark 9:44)

9. The wrath of God (Rom. 2:5,8,9; 1 Thess. 1:10)

10. Retribution; punishment proportionate to the evil (2 Cor. 11:14-15; 2 Tim. 4:14; Rev. 18:6; 22:12)

11. The second death (Rev. 20:14; 21:8)
B. Theories that deny the unending punishment of the wicked

1. Annihilationism

According to the theory of annihilationism, the wicked are punished for an age and then are annihilated. Annihilationists contend that the Greek word \textit{aionios} derived from \textit{aion}, meaning “age,” has the meaning of “age long” rather than “everlasting.” Therefore, they believe there is a period of torment for the wicked that will come to an end. However, \textit{aionios} is the strongest word in the Greek language to express the idea of endlessness. Furthermore, \textit{aionios} is the word used to express the “eternity” of God, of the Holy Spirit and of the life of the believer. Following the reasoning of the annihilationist, if punishment of the wicked is only an age long, then the life of God and of the believer is only an age long. In Matthew 25:46, the punishment of the unrighteous and the life of the righteous are expressed by the same word, \textit{aionios}. At the beginning of the thousand years, the beast and false prophet are cast into the lake of fire. At the end of the thousand years, Satan is cast into the same lake of fire: “… where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever [literally into the ages of the ages]” (Rev. 20:10). After the beast and false prophet spend the millennial age in perdition, they will share Satan’s doom “into the ages of the ages.” This passage demonstrates that their punishment is obviously more than an “age long.”

2. Universalism

Universalists believe that all people will be saved. Some universalists even believe that Satan and the fallen angels will be saved. According to various universalist theories, either the punishment or the love of God will bring about a change of heart on the part of the wicked, and all will receive the salvation of Christ. Scripture does not teach this doctrine. Scripture states that after a millennium in the abyss, Satan will be released and immediately lead a rebellion against God and His saints. A thousand years of imprisonment does not change or turn the Deceiver to God. The beast and false prophet do not change after a millennium in the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20, 20:10). The rich man in Hades found a great gulf fixed between himself and Abraham’s bosom. He pleaded for a messenger from the realms of the dead to warn his
brothers of the dangers of hell; however, he was told that if they have rejected the law and the prophets, no messenger from the dead will be able to avert their same destruction (Luke 16:22-31).

However frightening the prospect of eternal perdition may seem, we may be certain that God’s righteous judgment will be vindicated. We know that God’s judgment will be right and just because of the great extent to which God demonstrated His love by sending His Son to die for us. The grace and love of God are beyond measure. If there had been a way for humans to be saved without the ordeal of the cross, God would not have subjected His Son to crucifixion. The cross demonstrates not only the love and mercy of God but also the sinfulness of sin. The wicked are consigned to hell only after a judgment in which the books are opened and just sentences are pronounced. The severity of perdition will not be the same for all. The punishments of the wicked will vary in severity, just as the rewards of the righteous will differ in glory (Luke 12:47-48; 1 Cor. 3:12-15). In the light of eternity, every person’s conscience will witness to the “rightness” of God’s final judgments.

C. The final destiny of Satan, the fallen angels and the Antichrist

The final destiny of Satan, the wicked angels and the Antichrist has already been treated under the sections on their judgment and the final destiny of the wicked. Ultimately, they will be cast into the lake of fire where “…they will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Rev. 20:10; see also Matt. 25:41; Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4; Rev. 19:20; 20:1-3, 10; Isa. 14:14-15; 24:21).

D. The future state of the righteous

The eternal state of the believer is life through and with the Lord Jesus Christ: “And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life” (1 John 5:11-12). Eternal life is not merely eternal existence. All humans, righteous and unrighteous, will exist eternally. Eternal “life” refers not merely to the duration of life but to the quality of life. Believers have Christ’s life (Gal. 2:20) because they have Christ within them (Col. 1:27). Life in Christ is the present possession of believers as well as their future hope. Life
in Christ is spoken of as the future state of the believer only in the sense that when Christ comes, eternal life is beyond forfeiture (1 John 3:2; Rev. 2:10).

Whether in Paradise, reigning with Christ in His millennial kingdom or inhabiting the New Jerusalem, the believer will abide in the presence of Jesus in His Father’s house. Life in the Father’s house is assured by the promise of Christ to prepare a place for us there (John 14:2-3). The preparation that made a place for us in the Father’s house is the atoning work of Christ on the cross of Calvary. The eternal abode of the believer is a home in heaven with God. The Scripture uses many glorious words to describe the place Jesus has prepared for us:

1. Heaven is the place where Jesus our Savior abides (John 14:2-3; Acts 7:56; Luke 1:2; 2 Cor. 5:2; Phil. 1:23).

2. Heaven is an ample place: “In My Father’s house are many mansions [abiding places]” (John 14:2-3).

3. Heaven is a better place (Heb. 10:34; 11:16).

4. Heaven is a perfect place: “Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10).

5. Heaven is a place of inheritance where believers will receive an inheritance because they are joint heirs with Christ (1 Pet. 1:4; Rom. 8:17).

6. Heaven is a place of reward (Matt. 5:12; 6:20; 19:21; Luke 12:33; Col. 1:5; 2 Tim. 4:8).

7. Heaven is a place of praise (Rev. 19:1).

8. Heaven is a place of beauty, splendor and glory (Rev. 21, 22).

10. Heaven is a place of personal identity.

After death, the rich man and Lazarus retained their personal identities. Moses and Elijah were still identifiable when they appeared to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:2-3). After the resurrection, Jesus was recognized by His followers. Our names are written in the Book of Life, and names signify identity and personality (Phil. 4:3). The fact that believers will have their resurrected bodies in heaven demonstrates that God’s redeeming work extends to the total person. We will not lose personal identity in heaven; on the contrary, our personalities will be raised to the highest level of personal being. The best of earth’s relationships in the body of Christ will endure in heavenly life.

“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you these things in the churches.

I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”

And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!”

And let him who hears say, “Come!”
And let him who thirsts come.

Whosoever desires, let him take the water of life freely…

He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.”

Amen.
Even so, come, Lord Jesus! (Rev. 22:16-17, 20).
Study Guide

Foundations of Pentecostal Theology
Revised & Updated
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Introduction

The questions contained in this section are designed to assist students in their study of the revised and updated version of Foundations of Pentecostal Theology. This textbook introduces its readers to a broad array of the important beliefs of the Christian church. It lays a strong foundation of faith for those who desire to grow in their knowledge of God, as well as those who desire to prepare themselves for ministry.

You will find here a series of questions designed to guide the reader toward many, but certainly not all, of the most important ideas presented by Drs. Duffield and Van Cleave. The questions follow the structure of the book, chapter by chapter and section by section, so that students can place the book beside them while reading and teachers can refer to the questions during discussion in the classroom. Page numbers are noted beside each question to direct the student to the answer. Hopefully, these questions will stimulate much discussion and provoke further research on topics of special interest.

One of the greatest needs in the Christian church around the world is for a deeper understanding of the great doctrines of our faith. Far too many people are introduced to Christ but never taught the essential truths of the Bible. Foundations of Pentecostal Theology can introduce new believers to these truths or serve as part of the curriculum for systematic theology courses in Bible colleges or seminaries. It is, therefore, with the prayer that this classic textbook will continue to disciple many and provide disciple makers with a useful tool to fulfill their ministry, we offer this study guide.

—The Editors
Chapter One
The Doctrine of the Scripture

Bibliology

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2. What is the greatest way God revealed His will and purposes (John 1:1-14)? (p.1)
3. Where did God preserve His revelations about Himself? (p.2)
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I. The Names of the Scripture
5. Where did our English word “Bible” come from? (p.2)
6. What does the word “biblos” mean? (p.2)

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7. The word “testament” was originally translated by what English word? (p.3)
8. How many books are in the Old Testament? In the New Testament? (p.3)
9. Explain the divisions of the Hebrew Old Testament. (pp.3,4)
10. What terms did Jesus use to describe the divisions of the Old Testament (Luke 24:44)? (p.4)
11. List four categories into which the New Testament books can be divided. (p.4)
12. When was the New Testament first published with verse divisions? Who produced this edition? (p.5)

13. Which Bible was first published with the text divided entirely into verses? When was it published? (p.5)

14. What important fact must a student remember when using these verse divisions? (p.5)

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16. Which books of the Bible are authored by unknown authors? (p.6)

17. What did all the known authors of the Bible except Luke have in common? (p.6)

18. What varied significantly between these authors? (pp.6,7)

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19. What does the word “canon” mean? What does it signify? (p.7)

20. What part did the ecclesiastical councils have in establishing canonicity? (p.7)

21. When did the Old Testament canon first begin to take book form? (p.8,9)

22. How do we know the Old Testament was in existence during the time of Jesus? (pp.9,10)

23. Why is there a different number of books between the Jewish Bible and the Christian Old Testament? (pp.10,11)

24. When were the books of the New Testament written? (p.11)
25. What event in A.D.140 prompted church leaders to consider defining an agreed upon New Testament canon? (p.12)

26. Which church council settled on the final form of the New Testament canon? What was the date of that council? (p.12)

27. What five tests have biblical scholars used to determine canonicity? (pp.12,13)

28. What does the word “apocrypha” mean? To which group of books does this term apply? (p.13)

29. How many books are contained in the Old Testament Apocrypha? List two of the most popular books considered to be part of the New Testament Apocrypha. (pp.13,14)

30. Which leaders were largely responsible for the removal of the apocrypha from the Bible? Why? (p.14)

31. To what group of writings does the term “pseudoepigrapha” apply? (p.14)

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33. What is the problem with the view of Scripture called “limited inerrancy”? (pp.14,15)

34. What does the Bible itself claim about the source of its inspiration (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21)? (p.15)

35. How many times did the writers of the Old Testament claim they were speaking the words of God? (p.15)

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43. Describe the activity of the Holy Spirit in the composition of the Bible. (pp.18,19)

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46. What is the greatest problem with the liberal view of inspiration? (p.20)

47. What is the consequence of the liberal view of inspiration? How does it change the way people relate to the Bible? (p.20)

48. What is meant by Barth’s “existential experience” or “crisis encounter”? (p.20)

49. What is meant by the “demythologizing” interpretation of the Bible as taught by Rudolf Bultmann and Reinhold Neibuhr? (pp.20,21)

50. Define the Verbal Dictation Theory of inspiration. What is a notable weakness of this theory? (pp.21,22)
51. Define the Inspired Concept Theory. (p.22)

52. Define the Verbal Plenary Inspiration view. (p.22)

53. What two sides of inspiration does the Verbal Plenary Inspiration view emphasize? (p.22)

VII. The Symbols of the Scripture

54. List (with Scripture references) the most apparent symbols the Bible uses to represent itself. (p.23)

VIII. The Holy Spirit and the Scripture

55. Why are the Holy Spirit and the written Word always in agreement? (p.24)

56. What is the “court of appeal” by which all manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit are to be judged (2 Peter 1:19)? (pp.24,25)

IX. How the Scripture Came to Us

57. What were the original manuscripts of the Bible called? (p.25)

58. List six ancient writing materials used in the composition of the Bible. (pp.25,26)

59. In what three languages was the Bible originally written? (p.27)

60. Define the word “manuscript.” How many manuscripts of the New Testament have been found at this time? (p.28)

61. What are “uncials”? What are “cursives”? (p.28)

62. Define a “lectionary.” Why are lectionaries considered valuable? (p.28)

63. What is the approximate dating for the Sinaitic Manuscript (Codex Aleph)? (p.29)

64. Describe the discovery of the Codex Aleph. (p.29)
65. What is the special value of the Codex Aleph? (p.29)

66. Why is the Codex Vaticanus famous? (p.29)

67. What is a “palimpsest” manuscript? (p.30)

68. What is unique about the Beza Manuscript (Codex D)? (pp.30,31)

69. Define the term “version” as it applies to a manuscript. (p.31)

70. What is the Septuagint? When was it written? Why are the Roman numerals LXX used to represent it? Who translated this document? (p.31)

71. When was the Samaritan Pentateuch written? (p.32)

72. In what language was the Syriac version written? (p.32)

73. What influence did Jerome’s Vulgate translation have on our modern Bible translations? (p.33)

74. Define the term “higher criticism.” What is another term for this approach to studying the books of the Bible. (p.34)

75. Define “lower criticism.” (p.34)

76. What three main sources can be used to determine which words in a passage of Scripture are closest to the original manuscript? (p.34)

77. Who were the Church Fathers? (p.34)

78. Name two Church Fathers from each of the following time periods: (p.34)

   A.D. 96-150:

   A.D. 150-325:

   A.D. 325 and later:

79. Why is it important that the Church Fathers testified to the authenticity of the Bible? (p.35)
80. Who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls? How complete are they? How do they confirm the accuracy of the text of the Old Testament? (p.35)

81. Why are the Egyptian papyri so valuable to biblical scholars? (p.36)

82. Papyrus Bodmer II dates to A.D. 200. Why is this significant? (p.36)

83. What is the conclusion stated by Wescott and others concerning the purity of the New Testament text? (p.36)

**X. The Scripture in English**

84. When were the Scriptures first translated into English? Who did this? (p.37)

85. When did John Wycliffe and his students translate the entire Bible into English? On what work did he base his translation? (p.37)

86. Who is called the “true father of the English Bible”? (p.37)

87. When did Erasmus publish his New Testament in Greek? (p.37)

88. What is distinctive about the Coverdale Bible printed in 1535? (p.38)

89. Which Bible was the first revision of Tyndale’s work? (p.38)

90. When was the Great Bible published? Why was it called the first authorized Bible? (pp.38,39)

91. Which was the first Bible to be divided entirely into verses? (p.39)

92. From which version was the Rheims-Douai Bible translated? (p.39)

93. When was the King James Version published? (p.39)

94. List three of the recent translations of the English Bible. (pp.40,41)
Personal Response

A. Conduct a comparison of four modern translations of a verse(s) of your choosing. What grammar and vocabulary is common between them? What is different? What are the relative strengths and weaknesses of the translations? Do these differences affect the meaning and theology of the verse(s)?

B. What role do prayer, reading Scripture and meditative reflection play in your devotional life? How can you use these tools to improve your personal relationship with God?

C. Name two resources you could use to discover the meaning of a particular word in the Bible. What resource would you use to find the location of a particular place mentioned in the Bible? What steps would you take to discover the meaning of a passage of Scripture?
Chapter Two
The Doctrine of God

Introduction
1. Why do the authors feel the study of God is of great importance? (p.43)

2. What are the two Greek words from which our English word “theology” comes? (p.43)

3. List and define the three categories of theology. (p.43,44)

I. The Knowability of God
4. In what sense is God incomprehensible? (p.44)

5. How is possible for God to be “indefinitely greater than human comprehension” and yet “intimately knowable”? (pp.44,45)

II. The Existence of God
6. What is the weakness of “natural theology”? (p.45)

7. Why does the Bible dedicate little or no space to arguing for the presence of a creator? (p.45)

8. List three possible explanations for the existence of matter and motion? Give a scientific fact about the universe that argues for the existence of God? (p.46)

9. What phenomenon has been discovered in almost every people group around the world? (p.46)
10. How does nature argue for God’s existence? (pp.46,47)

11. What does the “argument from history” rest upon? How does the record of human history prove the existence of God? (p.47)

12. What arguments for the existence of God can be observed in the way humans express God’s likeness? (p.48)

13. How does the moral nature of humans reflect God’s image? How does a person’s conflicted conscience suggest the existence of God? (pp.48,49)

14. What is the result when an individual succeeds in searing his or her conscience or quiets it through self-deception? (pp.48,49)

15. What does the Bible claim concerning itself in 2 Timothy 3:16? Name another verse that makes this same claim. (p.49)

16. What does an Atheist believe about God? (p.50)

17. How does an Atheist believe creation came into being? (p.50)

18. What are the two kinds of Atheists? (p.50)

19. How does the Agnostic view God? (p.50)

20. How does a Materialist view reality? (p.50)

21. What does a Materialist worldview say about morality? (p.50)

22. How does Pantheism view God? (pp.50,51)

23. How does Polytheism view God? (p.51)

24. How does Deism view God? (p.51)

25. What does Dualism teach about good and evil? Who first advanced this idea? (p.51)

26. How does the Bible oppose Dualism? (p.51)
III. The Nature of God

27. What is the historical definition of God? (p.52)

28. List four aspects of God’s nature? (p.52)

29. According to Jesus, how does a person enter the Kingdom of God (John 3:5)? (p.52)

30. Define the term “anthropomorphism.” Give a biblical example of one which is familiar and significant to you. Why does the Bible use “anthropomorphisms”? (pp.52,53)

31. What is a “theophany”? Give a biblical example of a “theophany.” (p.53)

32. What does Scripture mean when it says God is “perfect”? (p.54)

33. Define the meaning of the term “personal being.” (p.54)

34. What Hebrew name of God is derived from the verb “to be”? (p.54)

35. How does a personal God differ from an “impersonal soul of the universe”? (p.54)

36. Read aloud Deuteronomy 6:4. Why is this declaration significant? (pp.55,56)

IV. The Names of God

37. How were names viewed in Jewish culture? (p.56)

38. What name for God is used most often in the Old Testament? What is the actual Hebrew form of that word? (p.57)

39. What does the name Yahweh tell us about God’s nature? (p.57)

40. What occurs when the name of God is paired with other terms? (p.57)

41. When did Jesus identify Himself with that name? (p.57)
42. Define the phrase “Yahweh Jireh.” How was it used in Genesis 22:14? (p.57)

43. What personal relationship between God and His people is revealed by the name “Yahweh Rapha”? (p.58)

44. What does the divine name “Yahweh Nissi” mean? (p.58)

45. What does the phrase “Yahweh Shalom” mean? What does the word “Shalom” really imply? (p.58)

46. What does the phrase “Yahweh Raah” mean? Why was this name a comfort to the people of Israel? (Psalm 23) (p.58)

47. Define the phrase “Yahweh Sabaoth.” What did Elisha discover in 2 Kings 6:13-17? (p.59)

48. Define the phrase “Yahweh Shammah.” (p.59)

49. What is the first word used in Scripture to designate God? How many times is it used in the Old Testament? What is its probable root meaning? (p.59)

50. To what else may the word “Elohim” refer? (p.59)

51. In the Bible, to what does the Hebrew word “El” usually refer? (p.59)

52. Define the Hebrew phrase “El Elyon.” In what passage is this phrase repeated three times? (pp.59,60)

53. Define the Hebrew phrase “El Olam.” What thought is conveyed by this name? (p.60)

54. Define the Hebrew phrase “El Shaddai.” Where does this word first occur? (p.60)

55. Define the Hebrew word “Adonai” or “Adon.” (p.60)

56. What does the Bible mean when it calls God “The Rock”? (p.61)

57. Define the Greek New Testament word “Theos.” (p.61)
58. Define the Greek word “Kurios.” What Old Testament name for God is usually translated by this Greek name? (p.61)

59. Define the New Testament word “Pater.” (p.61)

60. What is the Aramaic word for “Father”? (p.61)

V. The Attributes of God

61. Why does God reveal to us His nature? Give three reasons. (p.62)

62. Define the difference between the absolute attributes of God and the moral attributes of God. (p.62)

63. What do we mean when we say God is self-existent? (pp.62,63)


65. Quote one Scripture which attests to the eternal nature of God. (p.63)

66. Read Revelation 1:8. Why does Jesus call Himself the “Alpha and the Omega”? (p.63)

67. What does the word “omnipresent” mean in reference to God? (p.63)

68. What two aspects of God’s “omniscience” are emphasized in Scripture? (pp.63,64)

69. What does the word “omnipotence” mean in reference to God (Jeremiah 32:17)? (p.64)

70. Explain how God’s power is in perfect harmony with His character. (p.64)

71. List the four areas where we can see evidence that God is omnipotent. (pp.64,65)
72. What verse in Ephesians can be misunderstood to imply that each person’s salvation is predetermined by the will of God? What is a more appropriate interpretation of that passage in light of Revelation 22:17? (p.65)

73. What does the Bible say is the relationship between God’s sovereignty and human free will? (pp.65,66)

74. Why are we unable to theologically explain God’s sovereignty? (p.66)

75. What is the Hebrew word for “holy”? How is it defined in Old Testament Word Studies? (p.66)

76. What is the Greek word for “holy”? How is it defined in the Greek Lexicon? (p.66)

77. When applied to God, what is the basic idea of holiness as seen in Isaiah 6:13? (p.66)

78. How does the term “holiness” apply to humans? (p.66)

79. How does the emphasis on holiness shift in the New Testament? (pp.66,67)

80. Define the Hebrew word “tsedek.” (p.67)

81. What does the Bible mean when it says that God is “righteous”? (p.67)

82. What did Jesus do to make it possible for humans to become righteous before God? (pp.67,68)

83. All of God’s moral attributes may be encompassed by what two qualities? How are these two qualities expressed through Christ? (p.68)

84. Define the New Testament Greek word “agape.” Where does Scripture provide a great example of this love? (p.68)

85. How does the fact that truth is a part of God’s holy nature reassure us? List three ways. (pp.68,69)
VI. The Works of God

86. What does Scripture declare about God’s divine purpose when it confronts willful human rebellion? (p.69)

87. Does the Bible say why God permitted sin, evil or human choice? Is God the author of sin? What is the “foreknowledge of God”? (p.70)

88. How does the Bible represent the original creation in Genesis 1:1? (p.70)

89. How did God create the physical universe? (p.70)

90. What existed before Genesis 1:1? (p.70)

91. How does Strong’s Concordance define God’s preservation of creation? (p.71)

92. List the seven areas of God’s providential care. (pp.71-73)

VII. The Trinity (Triunity) of God

93. Why do we study the doctrine of the Trinity? (p.73)

94. Define the two separatist groups in the second century that denied the doctrine of the Trinity. Name two modern expressions of these heresies. (pp.73,74)

95. What truth was confirmed by the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325)? (p.74)

96. Why was it absolutely essential that the “unity of God” be clearly revealed in the Old Testament? (p.75)

97. List five ways the Old Testament reveals the triune nature of God. (pp.75,76)

98. List the four major proofs of the Trinity in the New Testament. (pp.77,78)
VIII. God The Father

99. What is not meant by the phrase “God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”? (p.78)

IX. God The Son

100. What are the four theological implications of Jesus’ virgin birth? (p.79)

101. How does the wording in Matthew 1:16 and Galatians 4:4 support the fact of Jesus’ virgin birth? (p.80)

102. Quote an Old Testament prophecy and its New Testament fulfillment regarding the virgin birth. (pp.80,81)

103. How does the Westminster Catechism define the doctrine of the virgin birth? (p.81)

104. What words from the Apostles’ Creed sum up the belief of the Early Church concerning the virgin birth? (p.81)

105. What heresy did the apostle John warn the church about in 1 John 4:1-3? (p.82)

106. List ten proofs of Jesus’ human nature. (pp.82,83)

107. List eight evidences of Jesus’ divinity. (pp.83-85)

108. Name two groups that denied the deity of Christ during the first few centuries of the existence of the church. (p.85)

109. What five functions usually characterize the office of prophet? Show by Scripture references how Jesus fulfilled all five of these functions. (pp.86-88)

110. What three characteristics of a priest did Jesus Christ fulfill to become our High Priest? (pp.89,90)

111. What was the nature of Melchizedek’s priesthood? Where is the historical account of Melchizedek found? (p.90)
112. How does the priesthood of Melchizedek typify the priesthood of Christ (Hebrews, Chapter 7)? List six ways the priesthood of Melchizedek is superior to the Levitical priesthood. (p.90,91)

113. What are the three aspects of Christ’s kingly work? (pp.92,93)

**X. God The Holy Spirit**

114. How did Jesus indicate the separate identity of the Holy Spirit? (p.93)

115. What was the teaching of the ancient heresy called Sabellianism? (p.94)

116. Give the three scriptural proofs for the deity of the Holy Spirit. (pp.94-96)

117. List five proofs from Scripture for the personhood and separate identity of the Holy Spirit. (pp.97,98)

118. How many passages in Scripture make reference to the Holy Spirit? List thirteen of His names as given in the Scripture. (p.99)

119. List five symbols of the Holy Spirit. (p.100)

**Personal Response**

A. Have you had a personal experience of God? If so, describe the event and its impact on your faith and life.

B. Have you ever struggled with one of the false teachings about God mentioned in this chapter? How did you come to accept the truth?

C. How would you share the gospel with someone who embraces one of these false teachings? Pick one and give an example.
Chapter Three
The Doctrine of Humankind

Anthropology

Introduction

1. To what question is Scripture alone able to give a satisfying answer? (p.101)

2. Define the word “anthropology.” What is “biblical anthropology”? (p.102)

I. Created by God

3. To what does the Bible attribute the origin of humans? (p.102)

4. What amazing fact does Dr. Paul Brand teach us about the genetic chemical code called DNA? (p.103)

5. What do Theistic Evolutionists believe? (p.105)

6. What is required of a person in order to accept the Scriptural account of divine creation? (p.105)

7. List and define the three Hebrew words used in Genesis 1 and 2 to describe human creation. (p.106)

8. Explain how these three words were used to describe the creation of humans in Genesis 1:26-27 and 2:7? (p.106)

9. Give three other references to God’s creation of humans in other books besides Genesis. (p.107)
II. The Result of God’s Purpose

10. How does the creation of human beings differ from the way God created animals? (p.107)

11. According to Isaiah 43:7, what is God’s purpose for creating humanity? (p.107)

12. Why does H. C. Leupold feel the phrase “Let us make” in Genesis 1:26 refers to the Trinity rather than God speaking to angelic hosts? (p.108)

13. What five facts does the Bible establish concerning the creation of humans? (pp.108,109)

III. Created in God’s Image

14. Write out the phrase “Image of God” in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. (p.109)

15. Why does the phrase “image of God” not refer to a human being’s physical nature? (p.109)

16. How are humans unique from all other earthly creatures? (p.110)

17. What do the authors mean by the statement “human beings are moral beings”? (p.111)

18. How does Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary define the word “conscience”? (p.111)


20. What does Scripture teach about the conscience? Is the human conscience always correct, or can it be damaged? (p.111)

21. Why did God make humans in His “social image”? (p.112)
IV. Created as Living Souls

22. List the two gifts God gave humans at creation. (p.112)

23. What did the Gnostic heresy teach about the human body? What was the apostle John’s warning concerning the Gnostic heresy? (p.112)

24. List the ten facts from Scripture concerning the human body. (pp.113-116)

25. List nine different terms Scripture uses to refer to the immaterial element in humans. (p.117)

26. What two words are used most frequently in the Bible to identify the immaterial self? What Hebrew and Greek words are translated by the English word “soul”? What Hebrew and Greek words are translated by the English word “spirit”? What literal meaning underlies all of these words? (p.118)

27. Define the three classical schools of thought regarding the composition of man. (pp.118,119)

28. Provide a Scripture reference that may support the idea that human beings are composed of three parts (“trichotomy”). (p.119)

29. Provide a Scripture reference that may support “dichotomy.” (pp.119,120)

30. How does W.E. Vine answer the trichotomists’ argument of Hebrews 4:12? (pp.120,121)

31. How does “monism” differ from the biblical view of human personhood? (p.121)

32. What does Paul say happens to the human soul (spirit) when it separates from the body at death (2 Corinthians 5:14)? (p.122)

33. What did the Greeks think happened to the soul in the afterlife? How does that view differ from what Christians believe will happen to them after they die (Romans 8:23)? (p.122)
34. What is lost when we divide humans into component parts? How does Mark 12:30 correct that problem? (pp.122,123)

35. Define the “pre-existence” theory of the origin of the human soul. What groups hold this view? Does that belief have any scriptural foundation? (pp.123,124)

36. Define the “creationism” theory of the origin of the human soul. Who holds this view? What scripture verses are used to defend this theory? What are the weaknesses of this theory? (p.124)

37. Define the “traducian” theory of the origin of the human soul. Who holds this view? What Scripture verses are used to defend this theory? What are the weaknesses of this theory? (p124)

38. How does the traducianist explain the origin of all new souls? (p.124)

39. What arguments are presented in favor of the traducian theory? (pp.124,125)

V. The Original State of Humans

40. What did Adam need to know in order to name the animals? (p.125)

41. In primitive times, what significance did names have? (pp.125,126)

42. What was the condition of Adam and Eve’s character before the Fall? (p.126)

43. List five basic instincts (needs, drives or impulses) Adam had before the Fall. (pp.126,127)

44. What was Adam’s “social state” before the Fall? (p.127)

45. What was Adam’s “occupational state” before the Fall? (p.127)

46. What was Adam’s life expectancy before the Fall? (p.127)
VI. The Fall

47. What did Adam and Eve do that caused them to “fall into a state of perishing”? (pp.128,129)

48. What was the result of Adam’s sin? (p.129)

49. Why did God give Adam and Eve the opportunity to disobey Him in the Garden of Eden? (p.129)

50. What was the probation of Adam and Eve based upon? (p.129)

51. What were the two parts of the law of works? (p.129)

52. What is the difference between holy character and holy nature? (p.129)

53. Why is free will necessary for holy character? (p.129)

54. What was the character of the probationary commandment given to Adam and Eve? What did Adam and Eve do that resulted in the Fall? (pp.129,130)

55. List three reasons the testing of Adam and Eve was necessary? (p.130,131)

56. Who was the agent of man’s temptation (Genesis 3:1; 2 Corinthians 11:3)? (p.131)

57. At what three basic human desires did Satan aim his attack when he tempted Eve? (p.132)

58. When does desire become lust? (p.132)

59. Define the terms “world” and “flesh” according I John 2:16,17. (p.132)

60. Where did Satan begin in his temptation of Eve? (p.132)

61. What does Genesis 3 describe? What is portrayed in Genesis 4-11? (p.133)
62. List six facts that argue for a literal interpretation of the Fall. (pp. 133, 134)

63. What four judgments resulted from the Fall? (pp. 134, 135)

64. What was the immediate consequence of the Fall? (p. 135)

65. What was the most disastrous consequence of the Fall (Genesis 2:17b)? (p. 135)

66. What are the three categories of death identified by the Bible? Define each. (pp. 136, 137)

VII. The State of Grace

67. What did Paul mean when he commanded us to “put on the new man” (Ephesians 4:21-24)? (p. 137)

68. What are the eight characteristics that describe believers in a state of grace? (pp. 137-139)

69. What is the result of Christ’s incarnation and identification with the human nature (1 Corinthians 15:45-49)? (pp. 137, 138)

70. What does Peter mean by the word “promises” in 2 Peter 1:4? (p. 138)

71. What part of a believer is being renewed day by day (2 Corinthians 4:16; Romans 12:2)? (p. 138)

72. According to Romans 6:8, 12, 14, what is the victory that believers have in Christ? (p. 139)

Personal Response

A. Refer again to the eight characteristics that describe believers in a state of grace. Where have you seen these elements expressed in your own life? How can you incorporate your experience of grace into a testimony for others?
Chapter Four
The Doctrine of Sin
Hamartiology

Introduction
1. Define “hamartiology.” (p.141)

2. How does Scripture speak of the reality of sin (Romans 3:23)? (p.141)

I. The Problem of Sin
3. Is God the author of sin? (p.142)

4. Why is it impossible for God to sin? (p.142)

5. What is meant by the expression “a free moral agent”? (p.142)

6. Why did God, in His infinite wisdom and power, allow sin to enter the universe? (pp.142,143)

7. List Lewis Sperry Chafer’s seven reasons for the divine permission of sin. (pp.143,144)

II. The Origin of Sin
8. Who was responsible for the first sin in the universe (Ezekiel 28:11-17)? (pp.145,146)

9. List and define the five times Lucifer set his will against the will of God in Isaiah 14:12-14. (pp.146,147)

10. What theory about human development is directly contradicted by the story of the Fall of the human race in Genesis 3? (p.147)
11. Would humans stop sinning if we did not live in a sinful environment or have a polluted heredity from Adam and Eve? How can you prove your answer? (p.147)

12. What opportunity did God give Adam and Eve in Chapter 3 of Genesis? (p.147)

13. What is required for temptation to become sin? (p.148)

14. What is the difference between man’s fall and Satan’s fall? (p.148)

III. The First Human Sin

15. Define character. How is it attained? (p.149)

16. List and define the three areas of temptation mentioned in John 2:16. (p.149)

17. How did Satan tempt Eve? (p.149)

18. What was the intent of Satan’s question “has God indeed said”? (p.149)

19. Eve changed the wording of God’s original commandment. What was the effect of those changes? (p.150)

20. What was Satan really saying when he said: “You will be like God”? (p.150)

21. How did Adam and Eve’s attitude toward themselves change after they sinned? (p.151)

22. Why did Adam and Eve cover themselves with fig leaves after they sinned? (p.151)

23. How did Adam and Eve’s attitude toward God change after they sinned? (pp.151,152)

24. How did Adam and Eve’s attitude toward each other change after they sinned (Genesis 3:6,12)? (p.152)

25. What was God’s response to these changes? (p.152)
26. What curse was placed on the serpent after the Fall (Genesis 3:14)? (pp.152,153)

27. What curse was placed on the woman after the Fall (Genesis 3:16-19)? (p.153)

28. What curse was placed on the man after the Fall (Genesis 3:17-19)? (p.153)


30. What curse was placed on the ground in Genesis 3:17-18? (p.153)

IV. The Nature of Sin

31. How does the Westminster Larger Catechism define sin? (p.153)

32. What does Romans 7:12 tell us about the nature of God’s law? (p.154)

33. Why do the authors say the law of God is not arbitrary? (p.154)

34. List three reasons God gave the Law to humans. (p.155)

35. How does the Law help a person find Christ? (p.155)

36. Give the nine scriptural expressions for sin with scripture references for each. (p.156)

37. Define “sin.” (p.156)

38. What is true of sinners before they become sinners by practice? (p.157)

39. When does temptation become sin? (p.157)

40. Define a sin of omission. (p.158)

41. Does ignorance of God’s Law excuse a person from the penalty of sin? (pp.158,159)

42. How many sins must a person commit to be guilty of the whole Law? (p.159)
V. Universality of Sin
43. What does Scripture say about the sinfulness of humanity? Provide an example. (p.159)

VI. Imputation of Sin
44. Define “imputation.” (p.159)
45. The Bible describes three separate instances of imputation. List these. (p.159)
46. How was Adam’s sin imputed to his descendants? (p.160)
47. What “reigned” before the Law was given to Moses? (p.160)
48. Is there a contradiction between Exodus 20:5 and Ezekiel 18:20? Explain your answer. (p.161)

VII. Original Sin and Depravity
49. Define “depravity.” List four characteristics of depraved individuals. (pp.161,162)
50. What did people do that caused God to give them over to a “debased mind”? (see Romans 1:21) (p.162)

VIII. The Guilt from Sin
51. Name two of God’s just punishments for sin. (p.163)
52. List three ways the Bible differentiates between degrees of guilt. (pp.163,164)

IX. The Penalty of Sin
53. What is the difference between the penalty of sin and the natural consequences of sin? (pp.164,165)
54. What is the difference between “chastisement” and “punishment”? (p.165)
55. List the three types of death that Scripture designates as part of the total penalty of sin? Define each. (pp.165,166)

Personal Response

A. Write a definition of sin which includes both the Law of God and the character of God.

B. When God gave humans the Law, did He actually expect us to obey all of its rules? Explain your answer as if you were speaking to a sincerely curious unbeliever.

C. How does the Law of God continue to help us after we believe in Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 3:16,17)?
Chapter Five
The Doctrine of Salvation
Soteriology

Introduction

1. From what Greek word is “soteriology” derived? What is “soteriology”? (p.169)

2. Upon what office and function is God’s plan of salvation centered? Define this term. (p.170)

3. The Old Testament and New Testament both describe a mediator between God and mankind. Who is this mediator? (p.170)

4. How did Jesus Christ make salvation possible? (p.170)

I. Salvation and the Death of Christ

5. How is Christianity unlike all other religions? (p.171)

6. Give six examples of “types” in the Old Testament which point to the death of Christ. (pp.171,172)

7. List five Old Testament prophecies that foresaw the death of Christ. (pp.172,173)

8. Into which subject did the Old Testament prophets inquire and search diligently (I Peter 1:10-11)? (p.173)

9. Name three truths Paul emphasized when he preached the gospel (I Corinthians 15:1-4). (p.174)

10. What one word is used in the following scriptures to emphasize the absolute necessity of Christ’s death (John 3:14; Matt. 16:21; Luke 17:25; Luke 24:7; Acts 17:3)? (p.174)
11. What was the only basis on which a Holy God could forgive sin? (p.174)

12. “Propitiation” means to appease the anger of God (or the gods). In the Christian faith, God provides His own “propitiation.” Why did He do that? How did He do that? (p.175)

13. What is meant when we say the death of Christ was “vicarious” (Isaiah 53:6)? (p.176)

14. How would you answer the person who believes it was immoral for God to punish an innocent person (Christ) to pay the penalty for those who are guilty? (p.176)

15. How can we be sure that Jesus bore our sins on the cross? (pp.176,177)

16. How did the Apostle Paul express the idea of the vicarious death of Christ in 2 Corinthians 5:21? (p.176)

17. What is the literal meaning of the Hebrew word which is translated into English as “atonement”? (p.177)

18. Name two ways in which the work of Christ has addressed our sin beyond atonement? (p.177)

19. Define the word “propitiation.” What did Jesus do that makes Him our propitiation? (p.177)

20. What is one of the greatest blessings of personal salvation? (p.178)

21. What is magnified by our restored relationship with God? (p.178)

22. What does the term “redemption” signify? (p.179)

23. What is the double significance of the word “redemption”? (p.179)

24. The New Testament tells believers we have redemption from four things. List them (with Scripture references). (pp.179,180)

25. According to the theory of “limited atonement,” for whom did Christ die? (p.180)
26. According to Ephesians 5:25-26, for whom did Christ die? (p.180)

27. According to John the Baptist (in John 1:29), for whom did Christ die? (p.180)

28. What is perhaps the strongest verse against the doctrine of a limited atonement? Why? (p.181)

29. How does the fact that Jesus Christ died for every man, woman and child change the way believers treat non-believers? (p.181)

30. If Christ died for all, why are not all saved? (p.181)

31. According to Jesus (John 8:23), what step must a person take in order to receive the benefits of His death? (p.181)

32. What Old Testament event illustrates the need for each individual to apply Christ’s sacrifice to his or her own life? (p.181)

33. According to Jesus (John 16:8,9), what is the ultimate basis upon which all adults will be judged? (p.182)

34. At what age do children become accountable for their sin? Is that age a specific number or the condition of the child’s heart? (p.182)

35. Describe the “accident theory” of the death of Christ. (p.182)

36. How is the accident theory refuted by Scripture? (p.182)

37. Describe the “martyr theory” of the death of Christ. (p.183)

38. What does the martyr theory completely ignore? (p.183)

39. Define the “moral influence/love of God theory” of Christ’s death. (p.183)

40. What do John 3:16 and Romans 5:8 teach us about the love of God? (p.183)

41. Define the “governmental theory” of Christ’s death. (p.183)

42. What is the main objection to the governmental theory? (p.184)
II. Salvation and the Resurrection of Christ

43. Why were both the death and resurrection of Jesus required for the salvation of humankind? (pp.184)

44. What did the resurrection of Christ demonstrate? (p.184)

45. In 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 Paul listed five things that would not be true if Christ did not rise from the dead. List all five along with the verse where that truth is found. (pp.185,186)

46. All three persons of the Trinity participated in the resurrection of Jesus. Pick one of the verses listed, read it aloud and explain how it proves the Father raised Jesus from the dead. (p.186)

47. How was Jesus Christ, the Son of God, directly involved in His own resurrection (John 10:18)? (p.186)

48. How was God, the Holy Spirit, actively involved in the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:11)? (p.186)

49. List six scriptures which prove that Jesus died physically. (pp.186,187)


51. The Bible does not explain why Jesus’ resurrected body still had scars on it, but why do you think those scars were there? Will they still be visible when He comes again? (p.188)

52. List the eight incidents in scripture of human bodies being raised from the dead. (pp.188,189)

53. What are three great proofs of Christ’s resurrection? (pp.189,190)

54. List six results of Christ’s resurrection? (pp.190-192)

III. Salvation and Christ’s Ascension and Glorification

55. Define the “ascension” of Christ. (p.192)
56. Define the “exaltation” of Christ. (p.193)

57. List six results of Christ’s exaltation. (pp.193,194)

58. What are the five practical effects of the doctrines of the “ascension and glorification” of Christ? (pp.194,195)

IV. Salvation and the Sovereignty of God

59. Explain these two terms as clearly as you can: “sovereignty” and “free will.” (p.196)

60. Why has there been great confusion concerning these two concepts? (p.196)

61. The doctrine of election ultimately revolves around passages that use certain words. List four of these words. What is the key issue of contention over election? (p.196)

62. What is the difference between “foreknowledge” and “foreordaining”? (p.197)

V. Salvation and the Necessity of Repentance and Faith

63. What is the meaning of “repentance”? What are its three aspects? (pp.198,199)

64. What takes place in the human will when an individual repents? List four results of repentance. (pp.199,200)

65. What will happen to a person who fails to repent over the course of his or her lifetime? Which Scripture describes what will happen to that person? (p.200)

66. What is the true source of repentance (Acts 11:18)? (p.201)

67. Explain how repentance and faith are intertwined. (p.202)

68. Why is faith necessary for salvation? List seven verses of Scripture which prove the importance of faith. (pp.202,203)

69. What does the word “substance” mean in Hebrews 11:1? (p.203)
70. True faith includes an intellectual, emotional and volition aspect. Define each of these. (pp.204,205)

71. Saving faith is based entirely upon what truth? (p.206)

**VI. Salvation and the Process of Justification**

72. Define “justification.” (p.206)

73. Explain the difference between “regeneration” and “justification.” (p.206)

74. How does justification make it possible for God to declare an individual righteous? (pp.206,207)

75. List two ways in which it is not possible to be justified before God. (pp.207,208)

76. By what three means has God provided for our justification? Define the term “substitutionary sacrifice.” (pp.208,209)

77. How does the death of Jesus satisfy the strict requirements of justice? (p.208)

78. List the three elements involved in justification. (pp.210,211)

**VII. Salvation and the Process of Regeneration**

79. What is imparted to the believer when the “new birth” takes place? (p.212)

80. From what does the new birth cleanse a believer? (p.212)

81. What is created in the new birth? (p.212)

82. What three reasons do the authors give for the necessity of the new birth? (pp.213,214)

83. Who is the agent of the new birth? (p.215)

84. What must humans believe to receive the new birth? (p.215)
85. When do believers become children of God? (pp.215,216)

86. List three results of the new birth. (p.216)

**VIII. Salvation and Adoption**

87. What is the literal meaning of the word “adoption”? (p.217)

88. When does adoption occur in a believer’s life? (p.217)

89. When will the full realization and enjoyment of our adoption through Christ take place? (p.217)

90. What are the four results of adoption? (pp.217-219)

**IX. Salvation and the Process of Sanctification**

91. What is the primary meaning of “sanctification” in Scripture? (p.220)

92. What is the secondary meaning of sanctification? (p.220)

93. Explain the difference between “positional sanctification” and “practical sanctification.” (pp.220,221)

94. How does a believer participate in “progressive sanctification”? (pp.221,222)

95. What is the significance of the Greek present tense used in I John 3:9? (p.222)

96. How do believers change through the process of sanctification? (p.222)

97. What is the result of complete and final sanctification? (pp.222,223)

98. Explain how the Father, Son and Holy Spirit each participate in our sanctification. (pp.223,224)

99. What means has God placed at our disposal to aid in our sanctification? List four. (pp.224,225)
X. Salvation and Assurance

100. Define “assurance.” (p.225)

101. Read Romans 8:16. What does this verse promise? (p.226)

102. List five ways we have an assurance of salvation. (pp.226,227)

103. What are the results of assurance in a believer’s daily life? List three. (pp.227,228)

XI. Salvation and the Security of the Believer

104. The term “security of the believer” deals with what important question? What two truths must be held in tension to properly answer this question? (p.228)

105. Name two scriptures which speak of God’s power to keep a person saved. (pp.228,229)

106. What is the believer’s responsibility in his union with Christ? (p.229)

107. List four scriptures which warn a believer to continue in the keeping power of God. (p.229,230)

Personal Response

A. When in life have you needed assurance of your faith? How have you found that assurance through the witness of the Spirit, Scripture and the love of God?

B. Define the terms “vicarious,” “atonement,” “propitiation,” “reconciliation” and “redemption” in your own words.
Chapter Six
The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit
Pneumatology

I. The Work of the Holy Spirit

1. What is “pneumatology”? (p.233)

2. What truth is central to Pentecostal theology? (p.233)

3. As a general principal, what are the different roles performed by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in all divine workings? (p.234)

4. According to Genesis 1:1-27, what three great kingdoms did God create out of nothing? List one scripture with each kingdom which states that the Holy Spirit was active in the creation of that kingdom. (pp.234,235)

5. How does the Holy Spirit make Christ known? (p.235)

6. According to John 16:9, what is the greatest of all sins? (p.235)

7. To whose righteousness does the Holy Spirit witness according to John 16:10? (p.235)

8. By what act did the Father validate Christ’s righteousness? (pp.235,236)

9. What do the authors call “the greatest demonstration of judgment” (John 16:11)? (p.236)

10. List five ways in which the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin. (p.236)

11. Who sent Christ into the world (Isaiah 48:16)? (p.237)

13. What change took place in Christ when He was conceived in Mary by the Holy Spirit? What did not change? (p.237)

14. What did the Holy Spirit promise to Simeon (Luke 2:26)? When was this fulfilled? (p.237)

15. Jesus grew and developed as a normal child except for one thing. How was He different from every other human child? (p.238)

16. To whom was Jesus’ development credited (Isaiah 11:1,2)? As He grew, the Spirit of the Lord rested on Jesus. List six qualities Isaiah 11:1,2 says the Holy Spirit would develop in Him. (p.238)

17. Who led Jesus into the wilderness in Luke 4:1-2? Why was this necessary? (p.238)

18. How did experiencing temptation help to prepare Jesus to be our high priest (Hebrews 4:15)? (p.238)

19. Why did the Holy Spirit descend on Jesus at His baptism? (p.239)

20. How did the Holy Spirit help Christ offer an acceptable sacrifice to God? (p.239)

21. What part did the Holy Spirit play in Christ’s resurrection (Romans 8:11)? (p.240)

22. How does Jesus speak to and lead the church today? (p.240)

23. Who gives the baptism with the Holy Spirit according to Matthew 3:11? (p.241)

24. What is the mark of every true Christian (John 3:5-6)? (pp.241,242)

25. How do the authors define the “baptism with the Holy Spirit”? (p.242)
26. How is a believer assured that he/she is saved (Romans 8:16)? (p.242)

27. What is the difference between the baptism of believers into the body of Christ and the baptism with the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:12-13)? (pp.242,243)

28. Why does Holy Spirit “seal” the believer according to Ephesians 1:13,14? (p.243)

29. List seven ways the Holy Spirit continues to be the active agent of transformation in the progressive walk of a child of God. (pp.244-247)

30. What does the word “carnal” mean? What does Paul mean when he warns against being “carnally minded” (Romans 8:5-13)? (p.244)

31. What is the purpose of the Holy Spirit’s ministry of revelation (Ephesians 3:19)? (p.246)

32. List two verses of scripture which promise that the Holy Spirit will guide the sons and daughters of God. (p.246)

33. List four passages in the gospel of John which describe the Holy Spirit as the “Helper.” (p.246)

34. List two passages where the “fruit of the Spirit” is described. (p.247)

35. What instruction did Jesus give His disciples in Luke 24:49? Why did He say this? (p.247)

36. What is the purpose of the baptism with the Holy Spirit? (p.247)

37. What are we told about the ministry of the Spirit in Romans 8:26-27? (p.248)

38. What does Spirit-empowered prayer do for the believer? (p.249)

39. What happens when the Holy Spirit anoints believers to pray? (p.249)
40. Why is the anointing of the Holy Spirit crucial for believers to effectively preach the gospel? (p.249)

41. Why do miracles accompany the preaching of the gospel (Mark 16:20)? (p.249)

42. What is the primary purpose for which the Holy Spirit has been poured out on the church? (p.250)

43. What does the resurrection of Christ teach believers about our own resurrection? (p.250)

44. How does the Holy Spirit give humans a foretaste of the “resurrection life” to come? (p.251)

II. The Ministry of the Holy Spirit as the Helper

45. What is the meaning of the Greek word “paraclete”? (p.251)

46. What is the significance of the word “another” in John 14:16? (p.251)

47. Why did Jesus give His disciples the Holy Spirit? (p.252)

48. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would “abide with you forever” (John 14:16). Because of that promise, what should the expectation of the church be in every age? (p.252)

49. How is the word “paraclete” translated in I John 2:1? Why? (pp.252,253)

50. How is the word “paraclete” used in Romans 12:1? (p.253)

51. What four phases of the Holy Spirit’s ministry are described in John 14:16-18; 14:26; 15:26; and 16:7-15? (pp.253,254)

52. Before the infilling of the Holy Spirit, what did the disciples lack? (p.255)

53. In what ways does the Holy Spirit reveal God’s words and desires? (pp.255,256)
54. The Holy Spirit will tell believers things that are yet to come (John 16:13). Name three ways the Spirit does this. (pp.256,257)

55. List three ways the Holy Spirit reminds believers of the Word of God. When does the He do this? (p.257)

56. The Holy Spirit provides a three-fold revelation of Jesus Christ. List and explain each one. (pp.258,259)

**III. The Fruit of the Spirit**

57. In Galatians 5:22,23 Paul lists nine “fruit of the Spirit” write down all nine and try to explain each. (pp.259-262)

58. Define the term “fruit of the Spirit.” (p.260)

59. What do education and human effort fail to produce? (p.260)

60. Explain how believers actively partner with the Holy Spirit to produce this “fruit.” (p.261)

61. Where are the “works of the flesh” listed? (p.262)

62. What is the difference between “works” and “fruit”? (pp.262,263)

63. Jesus says that in order to bear fruit we must “abide” in Him (John 15:4-5). How does a person abide in Him? (p.264)

64. What is the warning for Christians in John 15:2? (p.264)

65. Explain the process of pruning suggested in John 15:2 and Hebrews 12:11. (p.265)

66. What steps must a Christian take in order to maintain unbroken fellowship with Christ? Name three. (p.266)

67. Distinguish between the “gifts of the Spirit” and the “fruit of the Spirit.” (p.266)

68. Can a believer choose which gifts of the Spirit he or she desires to be manifested? Why not? How does God determine which gifts to give a person? (p.267)
69. What is the definite, vital relationship between the gifts and the fruit of the Spirit (I Corinthians 13:1-2)? (p.268)

70. What is the “outer evidence” that a person has been born of God (John 4:7-8)? (p.269)

71. How does love bind together the fruit of the spirit? (p.269)

72. Define “joy.” (pp.269,270)

73. Define “peace.” (p.270)

74. How do virtually all modern translators render the word “long-suffering”? How is longsuffering related to love? (p.271)

75. What truth enables believers to be more patient with others? (p.271)

76. Define “kindness.” (p.271)

77. Define “goodness.” (p.272)

78. What causes Christians to do good? (p.272)

79. Explain the difference between “trustworthiness” and “trustfulness.” (pp.272,273)

80. Define the scriptural concept of “gentleness.” The knowledge of what biblical truth produces gentleness? (p.273)

81. What do the authors mean by the term “true self-control”? How is self-control related to leadership? (pp.273,274)

82. How can the word ‘Christness’ describe the life of a believer? (p.275)

IV. The Baptism with the Holy Spirit

83. According to the Pew Forum on Religious and Public Life, what percentage of Christians are Pentecostal? (p.276)

84. What is the principal work of the Holy Spirit? (p.276)
85. Why is the baptism with the Holy Spirit of utmost importance? (p.276)

86. Define three incorrect terms for the baptism with the Holy Spirit. (pp.277,278)

87. What is the baptism with Holy Spirit? (p.278)

88. What scriptural facts prove that the baptism with Holy Spirit is not the new birth? List four. (pp.279,280)

89. How does Acts 2:38 demonstrate that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is not a reward for service? (p.281)

90. Why is it incorrect to teach that the Holy Spirit was limited to a one-time event on the Day of Pentecost? What truth do we learn from Joel’s prophecy (Joel 2:29)? (pp.281,282)

91. What is the distinctive result of being filled with the Holy Spirit? (p.282)

92. How did baptism with the Holy Spirit transform the disciples at Pentecost? (p.283)

93. The baptism with the Holy Spirit enables believers to discern the prophetic will of God. Give an example of this from the book of Acts. (pp.283,284)

94. What purpose for the baptism with the Holy Spirit is taught in Ephesians 6:12? (p.284)

95. What is the “ultimate blessing” that believers can bring to others? (p.285)

96. Power from on high brings God-given ability. The authors give nine examples of God-given abilities. List these. (pp.285,286)

97. What did Peter say in Acts 2:38-39 that shows that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is for every Christian in every age? (p.286)
98. How do we know the baptism with the Holy Spirit is not simply for ministers, missionaries, and those in special service for the Lord (I Corinthians 12:21-25)? (p.287)

99. What did Peter learn about the baptism with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:34-35; 44-48; 11:15-18)? (p.287)

100. Give three examples from Scripture that demonstrate that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is available to new believers. (p.288)

101. Based on Peter’s response to the multitude on the Day of Pentecost, what is the first step to experiencing the baptism with the Holy Spirit? (p.288)

102. Why is saving faith necessary for a person to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit (see: Definition, p.278)? (pp.288,289)

103. Why is water baptism an important step toward receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit? (p.289)

104. Why must a person who is seeking the baptism with the Holy Spirit first surrender their self-will? Does that surrender cause their human will to disappear? (p.290)

105. As a general principle, what is the first step toward receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit? (pp.290,291)

106. What is often the most difficult condition to fulfill in receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit? (p.293)

107. What is a believer never asked to surrender when yielding to the Holy Spirit? (p.294)

108. What two verses were used in the early days of the twentieth century as a scriptural foundation for the idea of “tarrying”? (pp.294,295)

109. Is it necessary for the believers today to “tarry” in order to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit? Why or why not? (pp.295-297)
110. What conditions can delay receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit? List four. Define each. (pp.296,297)

111. The New Testament church received the baptism with the Holy Spirit a variety of ways. List five and give a scriptural reference for each. (pp.297,298)

112. What “immediate evidence” usually occurs when a person is baptized with the Holy Spirit? (p.298)

113. What did the listening crowd hear when the disciples received the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Ac 2:4)? What does Acts 10:46 literally say? What was it that amazed those who accompanied Peter? (pp.299,300)

114. Where does the theory break down which says that speaking with other tongues was only given when a new racial group accepted the gospel? (p.300)

115. Why are tongues not always mentioned in the Bible in connection with the baptism with the Holy Spirit? (pp.300,301)

116. Why is speaking in tongues a unique sign of the Holy Spirit’s infilling? How is that gift, along with the interpretation of tongues, different from the other gifts of the Spirit? (p.302)

117. What nine “permanent evidences” result when one is baptized with the Holy Spirit? (pp.303,304)

118. What four additional fillings with the Spirit were received by disciples in the book of Acts after the Day of Pentecost? (pp.304-306)

V. Offenses Against the Holy Spirit

119. What offenses against the Holy Spirit can be committed by an unbeliever? List three. (pp.306,307)

120. What does it mean to “blaspheme the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 12:22-30)? Why is important to understand the context of Jesus’ warning? (p.307)
121. What offenses against the Holy Spirit can be committed by a believer? List three. (pp.307,308)

VI. The Gifts of the Spirit

122. How many chapters of the New Testament are devoted exclusively to the gifts of the Spirit? Approximately how many references are there to the gifts of the Spirit? (p.308)

123. What did Jesus promise His disciples when He gave them the Great Commission in Luke 24:47-49? (p.309)

124. What is the church’s mission? (p.310)

125. What is meant in I Corinthians 12:1 by the word “pneumatika”? (p.311)

126. What Greek word is translated as “gifts” in I Corinthians 12:4? What does this tell us about spiritual gifts? (p.311)

127. What Greek word is used to describe the application of the various gifts of the Spirit? I Corinthians 12:5 says there are differences of ministries. Explain. (p.311)

128. In what sense are the spiritual gifts “activities” of the Spirit? What is the Greek word for “activity”? What does it mean? (pp.311,312)

129. Define the word “manifestation.” (p.312)

130. What is the idea behind the word “diversity”? (p.312)

131. What is the purpose of spiritual gifts (I Corinthians 14:12)? (p.312)

132. What are the three effects of the gift of prophecy (I Corinthians 14:3)? Define each. (p.313)

133. How does August Hermann Cremer define “charismata”? (pp.314,315)

134. How is “word” defined in the expression “word of wisdom”? (p.315)
135. How does a “word of wisdom” differ from a “word of knowledge”? (pp.315,316)

136. How does the “gift of faith” differ from “saving faith” or “daily faith?” (pp.316,317)

137. What is suggested by the words “gifts” and “healings” being plural in the phrase “the gifts of healings”? (p.317)

138. What is the most effective way of building up someone’s faith so that he or she can have faith to be healed? (p.318)

139. How is the phrase “working of miracles” literally rendered? (p.318)

140. Define a miracle. (p.318)

141. What is the literal meaning of the Greek words which are translated as “miracles, wonders and signs”? (pp.318,319)

142. Define the word “prophet.” (pp.319,320)

143. Qualifications for a prophet and tests of their authenticity are given in Deuteronomy 13 and 18. List five and give a Scripture reference for each. (p.320)

144. The New Testament describes two kinds of prophets. What are they? What is the difference between them? (p.321)

145. What does the Greek word “diakriseis” mean? (p.322)

146. How is the “gift of discernment” defined? (p.322)

147. Explain the term “kinds of tongues.” (p.323)

148. In the New Testament “speaking in tongues” is used in discernably different ways. List four. (pp.323,324)

149. Define the spiritual gift of “interpretation of tongues.” (pp.324,325)

150. Define the spiritual gift of “helps.” (pp.325,326)
151. Define the spiritual gift called “administrations.” To what activity does the Greek word refer in the New Testament? (p.326)

152. What problem was occurring in the public meetings in Corinth that caused Paul to write First Corinthians Chapter 14? What had the Corinthian believers overlooked? (pp.326,327)

153. What is the most prevalent use of tongues? What benefit does a person receive from this? (pp.327,328)

154. What scriptural limitation is placed upon tongues and prophesying? (pp.328,329)

155. Why should we never consider the gifts of the Spirit to be infallible when expressed through a human being? (p.329)

156. Which spiritual gift is the only one listed in both Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12? (p.330)

157. What proves that a person is really a teacher? (pp.330,331)

158. Paul frequently used a Greek verb which is translated “to exhort”? What is the meaning of that word? What is the work of the “exhorter”? (p.331)

159. Define the spiritual gift of “giving.” (pp.331,332)

160. How should a leader operate according to Romans 12:8? (p.333)

161. Define the Greek word for “have mercy.” (pp.333,334)

162. What remarkable truth is revealed in Ephesians 4:7-12? (p.334)

163. What is the basic meaning of the Greek word which is translated as “apostle”? (pp.335,336)

164. List eight names of people, beyond the Twelve, who the New Testament identifies as “apostles.” (p.336)

165. List six ways the gift of prophecy operates in and through those who exercise it. (pp.338-340)
166. What do we learn about the way we are to respond to the gift of prophecy from the way Paul responded to a prophecy from Agabus (Acts 21:10-14)? (p.340)

167. Define the term “evangelist.” How often is this word used in the New Testament? Who was the only person specifically called an evangelist? (p.341)


169. Which verse of Scripture attests to the fact that there cannot be pastors who are not teachers? Why is teaching so important? (pp.343,344)

170. How do the authors distinguish between a “prophet” and a “teacher”? (p.344)

171. Name several ways the spiritual gift of “hospitality” can be expressed. (p.344)

172. Define “witnessing.” What two passages of Scripture declare witnessing to be a special work of the Spirit? (p.345)

173. What Old Testament passage describes a spiritual gift being given to a certain individual for a special task? What gift was it? (pp.345,346)

174. Why is the “love chapter” of the Bible (I Corinthians 13) positioned between the two great “gift chapters” (I Corinthians 12 and 14)? (pp.346,347)

**Personal Response:**

A. Describe an occasion in which a gift of the Spirit was expressed through you. Which gift was it? What effect did it have on you? What effect did it have on fellow believers or unbelievers?

B. Have you been baptized with the Holy Spirit? When did that happen? What changes took place in you?
Chapter Seven
The Doctrine of Divine Healing

Introduction

1. How does the Declaration of Faith of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel define divine healing? (p.1)

I. The Reasonableness of Divine Healing

2. What principle is set forth in 1 Corinthians 6:13-20 concerning divine healing? (pp.350, 351)

3. How does Genesis 9:6 show the depth of God’s concern for the human body? (p.351)

4. What does the incarnation of Jesus teach us about the spiritual capacity of the human body? (p.351)

5. According to 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, why does the physical body of a Christian belong to God? (p.351)

6. What does 1 Corinthians 6:15 tell us about God’s concern for our bodies? (p.351)

7. What does the Tabernacle in the wilderness and the Temple in Jerusalem teach us about our bodies? (p.352)

8. In Daniel 3:28 how did Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego show their dedication to God? (p.352)

9. Why does the resurrection of humans prove the importance of the human body to God? (p.352)

10. How does the condition of the body affect the soul? How does the condition of the soul affect the body? (p.353)
11. Humans have two distinct natures. What are they? How does Christ’s redemption apply to each of these? (p.353)

II. The Origin of Sickness

12. What is the ultimate cause of sickness? (pp.353, 354)

13. How is death related to sickness? (p.354)

14. Who was the source of Job’s affliction? Who was the source of his healing? (p.354)

15. What does Acts 10:38 tell us about the source behind human sickness? (p.354)


17. Who was the source of Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” (1 Corinthians 12:7)? (p.355)

18. Scripture seems to reveal that there will be no sickness during the Millennial reign of Christ. What reason does Revelation 20:2-3 give us? (p.355)

19. Explain the relationship between sin and sickness. Should we assume that every time a person becomes sick, he/she has sinned? (pp.355, 356)

20. Where in the Bible do we find an example of sickness being the result of specific sins? (p.356)

21. What sort of behaviors tend to lead to health problems? (pp.356, 357)

22. Scripture suggests that God may sometimes remove His protective hand to demonstrate His displeasure with a sinful activity. What is His ultimate purpose in doing this? (p.357)

23. Paul said God disciplined the Corinthian church for a particular sin. What was this sin? Why did God discipline them? (p.358)
III. The Spiritual Nature of Sickness

24. Explain this statement: “If sickness has a spiritual cause, then there must also be a spiritual cure.” (pp. 358, 359)

25. Provide a verse of Scripture that shows the interrelationship between the blessing of forgiveness of sins and the ministry of healing. (p. 359)

IV. Healing and the Will of God

26. What is the central issue a person must face concerning healing and the will of God? Give an example of how a person might pray if he/she has a poor understanding of God’s will. (p. 360)

27. Kenneth MacKenzie warns us about the danger of assuming that it is God’s will that brought sickness to us. How does he say that assumption damages our faith? (pp. 360, 361)

28. Explain F.F. Bosworth’s statement: “...the power of God can be claimed only where the will of God is known...” (p. 361)

29. What do we learn about God’s will from Jesus’ answer to the leper in Luke 5:12-13? (p. 361)

30. What healing did Jesus perform that demonstrates that it is not necessary to pray “if it be Thy will” when seeking healing? What statement did Jesus make in Mark 9:23 that teaches us about God’s will? (pp. 361, 362)

31. How does Hebrews 13:8 apply to healing? (p. 362)

32. What does the apostle John tell us about God in 3 John 1:2? (p. 362)

V. Scriptural Support of Divine Healing

33. What is the first recorded case of divine healing in the Bible? (p. 363)

34. Was the Old Testament covenant of divine healing a permanent covenant? What passage of Scripture describes that covenant? (p. 363)
35. What redemptive name of God communicates His desire to heal us? (p.363)

36. What does the name “I AM” in Exodus 15:26 teach us about the nature of God? (p.363)

37. What did Jesus declare about Himself in John 8:58 that astonished the religious leaders to whom He was speaking? (p.364)

38. How does the author of Hebrews express the eternal, unchanging nature of Jesus (Hebrews 13:8)? (p.364)

39. What brought disease upon Miriam in Numbers 12:1-10? (p.364)

40. List five Old Testament Scriptures that show God’s willingness to heal the sick. (p.365)

41. List five Old Testament examples of healing. (p.366)

42. What does the name “YAHWEH” tell us about the nature of God? (p.366)

43. There are seven, compound, redemptive names of Yahweh. Write out all seven and explain the meaning of each. Why are these names still important to us today? (pp.366, 367)

44. Name two ways in which Jesus is the same as the Yahweh of the Old Testament. (p.367)

45. For each of the seven, compound, redemptive names of Yahweh list a New Testament Scripture that attributes that same truth to Jesus. (p.368)

46. How does Jesus’ ministry teach us about God’s will concerning healing? (p.369)

47. How many individual miracles of healing are credited to Jesus in the Scriptures? (p.369)

48. In what three ways did Jesus minister to physical needs? (p.369)
49. In how many instances of healing did Jesus cast out demons? (p.369)

50. Give an example of an occasion when Jesus healed many people at one time. Give an example of when He healed “all who were sick.” (p.371)

51. Did Jesus ever turn anyone away and refuse to heal that person? Did He ever tell an individual that it was not the Father’s will to heal him/her? What truth should we conclude from this? (p.372)

52. Jesus extended His ministry of healing to His disciples. List two occasions when Jesus did this. (pp.372, 373)

53. Does the power that Jesus promised to His church include the power for healing (John 14:16-17; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8)? (p.373)

54. What does the book of Acts teach us about healing the sick after Jesus ascended into heaven? (p.374)

55. Who actually healed the lame man who stood before Peter and John at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple (Acts 3:1-6)? (p.374)

56. List five examples of healing performed through the Apostles in the book of Acts. (pp.374, 375)

VI. Divine Healing Through the Church Age

57. According to Dr. Gerhard Uhlhorn for how many centuries did the miraculous powers of the apostolic age continue to operate? (pp.375, 376)

58. What important comment did Dr. A.J. Gordon make about Dr. Uhlhorn's statement? (p.376)

59. Does healing by the direct power of God actually continue up until the present time? (p.376)

60. List seven church fathers who testified that healing was still taking place during years in which they lived. (pp.377-379)
61. Why did John Wesley feel the miraculous gifts declined during the period after Constantine? (p.379)

62. During the Dark Ages (6th through the 14th centuries) there were still people who believed in and made room for God’s miraculous power. The authors mention someone who lived during this period of time who believed in praying for the sick with the anointing with oil. Who was that person? What was the name of the movement he founded? (pp.379, 380)

63. Did John Wesley believe in divine healing? What proof is there of his attitude that the day of miracles had not passed? (pp.380, 381)

VII. Divine Healing and the Atonement

64. The total victory of Jesus Christ on the cross releases all of God's resources to those who believe. Explain how that truth applies to healing. (p.382)

65. Name an Old Testament passage that shows the relationship between the atonement for our sins and healing. (p.382)

66. What powerful statement is made in Isaiah 53 that connects healing to Christ’s atonement? (p.383)

67. What do the words “griefs” and “sorrows” in Isaiah 53:4 mean? (p.383)

68. What do the verbs “borne” and “carried” in Isaiah 53:4 mean? (p.383)

69. In his gospel, Matthew clearly states that Isaiah 53:4 includes physical healing. What did Matthew say and where is that statement found in his gospel? (p.384)

70. What is the literal meaning of the word “stripes” in Isaiah 53:5? (p.384)

71. What is the relationship between the Passover meal (Exodus 12:1-14) and the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 5:7)? (pp.384, 385)
72. Why did Jesus make a distinction between the bread and the cup at the Lord’s Supper? What is the meaning of each of these elements? (p.385)

VIII. Why Jesus Healed the Sick

73. Some theologians have tried to argue that Jesus only healed the sick as a way of validating His ministry while He was here on earth, and therefore, God stopped doing such miracles after Jesus ascended into heaven. What are the two, false, philosophic arguments the authors list? (pp.385, 386)

74. List six explanations given in Scripture for Jesus performing miracles of healing and give one Scripture reference for each. (pp.386-390)

IX. Why Christians Should Seek Divine Healing

75. Why must believers refuse to be indifferent or complacent about healing? Give two reasons. (p.391)

76. Why is healing a form of spiritual warfare against Satan? (pp.391-392)

77. Scripture repeatedly demonstrates that divine healing causes people to glorify God. The authors mention seven examples of people responding that way. Pick one and write out the verse that speaks of God receiving glory. (p.392)

X. Methods of Administering Divine Healing

78. List six ways people can receive healing from the Lord and give a Scripture reference for each. (pp.392-395)

79. Is every Christian capable of praying for healing or does a person need a ministerial credential or a special gift of the Spirit to do so? What verse of the Scripture answers this question? (p.393)

80. What responsibility rests upon the elders of a church to pray for the sick? What New Testament passage makes this clear? (p.393)
81. What does oil represent when it is used to anoint someone who is sick? (p.393)

82. When believers lay their hands on someone who is sick what are they symbolizing? (p.394)

83. What is the wrong attitude to have when using a “prayer cloth”? What is the right attitude? (p.394)

84. What do we learn from the fact that the statement about “gifts of healings” is in the plural in 1 Corinthians 12:28? (pp.394, 395)

**XI. Why Some Are Not Healed**

85. Since the Bible presents such a strong case for healing, what danger arises when someone is prayed for and is not instantly healed? (p.395)

86. The authors give five reasons why a person may be prevented from receiving healing. Write down these reasons. (pp.395-400)

87. Why does a lack of repentance or unconfessed sin prevent some individuals from being healed? (p.396)

88. Write out a statement by Jesus that connects faith and healing. (p.396)

89. What did Paul see in the lame man in Lystra that caused him to minister healing to him? (p.396)

90. The authors warn us not to focus our faith on a human minister or a technique when seeking healing. Where should our faith be focused? (p.397)

91. Do some miracles require more faith than others? Give an example from Scripture that supports your answer. (p.397)

92. Sometimes God has a right timing for a healing to take place, and we need to persevere until that moment arrives. Give an example from Scripture that shows God’s timing at work. (pp.397, 398)
93. It’s possible for a believer, while waiting for healing, to reveal the power and strength of God by the way they draw on God’s strength to persevere in faith. How did Paul respond to his “thorn in the flesh”? (p.398)

94. Until Christ’s return every human will face death. What miracle will bring sickness and death to an end? (pp.399, 400)

95. There are times when we simply do not know why someone is not healed. In those moments where should we place our trust? (p.400)

**XII. How to Respond to Divine Healing**

96. The authors list six positive ways to respond to divine healing. Write down each of these six responses and then write a brief statement after each one explaining why we should respond that way. (pp.401-403)

**XIII. Divine Life for the Body**

97. Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). What insight does that statement give us about divine healing? (pp.403, 404)

98. In Romans 8:11 Paul teaches that the Holy Spirit who dwells in us will give life to our mortal (dying) bodies. What insight does that statement give us about divine healing? (p.404)

99. Our mortal, physical bodies are blessed by our spiritual union with Christ. Write down two Scripture references that teach that truth of our blessed identification with Christ. (pp.404, 405)

100. Explain Kenneth MacKenzie’s statement, “Divine Healing is just Divine Life.” How does this truth affect our physical bodies? (p.406)

**XIV. Objections to Divine Healing**

101. The common objection to modern day Divine Healing is from “rationalist Christians.” What is the rationalist argument against
miracles? What truth do the authors use to disprove their argument? (p.406)

102. Some Christians believe healings ceased once the truths of Christianity and the Bible were completed. The authors provide two arguments against that false theory. Name two reasons divine healing has not ceased. (p.407)

103. Is there any place in the Bible that states that miracles will cease? What does the book of Acts teach us to expect concerning miracles? (p.407)

104. Give two reasons why medical science has not replaced the need for divine healing. (p.408)

105. Some opponents of Divine Healing claim that true Christians should not pray for the sick because divine healing is only practiced by false cults. Name three, highly respected Christian leaders from church history who taught and practiced divine healing. (p.4-9)

106. Some people object to divine healing because they believe it emphasizes the physical body over the soul of a person. What is the best argument against this false theory? (p.61)

107. What does divine healing do for the spiritual life of a person who is healed? (pp.409, 410)

108. The authors call healing “a grace gift from God.” What do they mean by that statement? How does that truth change the way we seek and receive healing? (p.410)

**Personal Response**

A. Have you, or someone close to you, been healed by God? What effect did that have on you? How did it change the way you think about God? What effect did that healing have on family members and friends?
B. In one of the most remarkable passages in the Bible the prophet Isaiah looked seven centuries into the future and saw the cross of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 52:13-53:12). He said that in His suffering Jesus would bear our grieves and sorrows, be pierced and crushed for our sins, and be scourged for our healing (Isaiah 53:4-5). That means we can bring to Jesus not only our sins but our sorrows and our sickness as well (Matthew 8:14-17). How would you minister this wonderful truth in the community where you live? How does this promise apply to you today?

C. How would you comfort someone who has prayed for healing but not received it yet? What questions would you ask? What Scripture verses would you encourage them to believe?

D. What truth did you learn while reading this chapter that changed the way you think about healing?
Chapter Eight
The Doctrine of the Church

Ecclesiology

Introduction
1. “Ecclesiology” is the study of what subject? (p.411)

2. The authors say the church is a divinely constituted body which God intends to perform two functions. What are those two functions? (p.411)

I. Definitions of the Church
3. From what Greek word is the English word “church” derived? What does it mean? What did the word come to mean in postapostolic times? (pp.411, 412)

4. What are the only words used in the New Testament to designate a building as a place of worship? (p.412)

5. What does the word *ekklesia* mean? (p.412)

6. Jesus used the word *ekklesia* to designate the spiritual community that He would build (Matthew 16:18). At that time the word derived its meaning from at least two sources. What are those sources? (p.412)

II. Uses of the Term “Church” in the New Testament
7. Who composes the universal church? (p.413)

8. Who composes the local church? (p.413)
9. Since there were no church buildings, where did believers meet for worship during New Testament times? (p.414)

10. When the number of believers in a given community was very large where did people gather? (p.414)

11. When there were many house churches in a community, did they think of themselves as one church or many churches? (p.414)

12. The authors suggest an explanation as to why there was often a plurality of elders in a particular community. What reason did they give? (p.414)

13. Write out a verse of Scripture that refers to the visible church on earth as one church. (p.415)

14. In New Testament times local churches had much liberty, but there are Scripture passages that make it clear that they still acted in concert and followed apostolic leadership. Write out a verse that shows this sense of unity and cooperation. (p.415)

III. Uses of the Word “Church” Not Found in the New Testament

15. To whom does the Greek word _ekklesia_ always refer? To what does it never refer? (p.416)

16. Did denominations exist in New Testament times? What is the ideal condition for the church on earth? (p.416)

17. The authors list four reasons denominations have been formed, and not all of the reasons are negative. Pick a positive reason and write it down. (pp.416, 417)

18. What is the goal of the “ecumenical movement?” What is the main problem that can occur when denominations try to unite? What is the main benefit that is produced when denominations are able to unite around the gospel? (p.417)

19. Why is it important for local churches to seek to band together for mission and fellowship? (p.417)
IV. The Offices, Ministers and Leaders of the Church

20. Because the first members and leaders of the early church were Jews, what pattern did they use to organize the church? (p.417)

21. List eight reasons we know there were structure and organization in the New Testament church. (p.418)

22. Do the titles pastor, elder, and bishop describe three different offices in the early church or one? (p.418)

23. What was God’s first ministry gift to the early church? (p.419)

24. What does the Greek word Apostolos mean? Who were the first apostles? (p.419)

25. List four requirements for the first apostles. (p.420)

26. In time others were called apostles. List three names that are found in the New Testament. (p.420)

27. What is the main assignment that God gives to an apostle? (p.72)

28. Does God still raise up apostles for the church today? If the answer is “yes,” what important distinction about the meaning of the word must be made? (p.420)

29. The word “prophet” is a transliteration of what Greek word? What does the word mean? (p.421)

30. What changed concerning the role of the prophet at Pentecost? (p.421)

31. Paul defines the general purpose of prophecy using three specific terms. What are they? Give a brief definition of each one (use a dictionary if needed). (pp.421, 422)

32. What was a less frequent function of the prophet? (p.422)

33. What vital role does the gift of prophecy serve in the church today? (p.422)
34. Why is the evangelist less easy to identify in the New Testament than apostles or prophets? (p.422)

35. Who was the only person who was actually called an “evangelist” in the New Testament (Acts 21:8)? (p.422)

36. What is the meaning of the Greek word from which the English word “evangelist” is derived? (p.422)

37. The term “pastor” is used only once in the New Testament to describe the spiritual leader of a local church. Where is that reference found? (p.423)

38. What was Jesus’ favorite terminology to express His relationship to the people? (p.423)

39. How is the spiritual gift of “teacher” as used in Acts 13:1 and 1 Corinthians 12:2 different from the way it is used in Ephesians 4:11? (p.423)

40. What role does teaching play in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20)? (p.424)

41. What is the role of an “elder” in the early church? What title would we likely give that person today? (p.424)

42. What does the term “double honor” (1 Timothy 5:17) mean? (p.424)

43. According to James 5:14-15, what was one of the ministries elders were expected to perform? (pp.424, 425)

44. What is the literal meaning of the Greek word episcopos? (p.425)

45. Where in the New Testament are the qualifications for the office of bishop/overseer/elder/pastor set forth? (p.425)

46. From what Greek word is the word “deacon” derived? What does it mean? (p.425)

47. Who were probably the first deacons mentioned in the New Testament? What did they do? (p.425)
48. How would you define the role of a deacon in a local church? (pp. 425, 426)

49. What does the term “minister” apparently emphasize? (p.426)

50. How does God want members of a local church to treat faithful leaders? (p.426)

V. The Mission of the Church

51. What is the “Great Commission?” How many times is it found in the New Testament? Why do we need to study each one carefully? (p.427)

52. What does the Greek word *kerusso* mean? What does *evangelizo* mean? (p.427)


54. When Jesus commissioned His disciples to be His “witnesses,” what did He want them to do? (p.428)

55. What does Matthew’s account of the Great Commission emphasize? (p.428)

56. Explain the difference between “preaching” and “teaching.” (p.429)

57. What is the main goal of someone who disciples others? (p.429)

58. How does the communal life of the local church affect the process of discipling? (p.429)

59. Why is worship an important part of the mission of the local church? (p.431)

60. What is an important aid in worship for the Spirit-filled believer? (p.432)

61. Though Jesus commanded His church to carry the gospel “to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8), we have often resisted that
assignment. What must take place before that assignment has been completely fulfilled? (p.432)

62. The authors list eight ways the Bible says growth and maturity can be developed in a believer. List all eight and explain how one of them has produced growth and maturity in your own life. (p.433)

63. Give three examples from the book of Acts that show the sincere concern the early church had for the material needs of people. (p.434)

64. Give two examples from Paul’s ministry of his concern for the material needs of believers. (p.435)

65. James, the Lord’s brother, said individual believers must reflect the compassion of Jesus by sharing with the less fortunate (James 2:15-17). What need did he give as an example? What did he say must accompany our faith? (p.435)

VI. The Ordinances of the Church

66. What is an “ordinance” of the local church? (p.435)

67. From what Latin word does the English word “ordinance” come? What does the Latin word mean? (p.435)

68. Though some churches observe as many as seven “sacraments,” Jesus commanded the church to observe only two ordinances. What are they? (pp.435, 436)

69. Did Jesus command His church to baptize disciples (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16)? Was Jesus Himself baptized in water (Matthew 3:13-17)? Did Peter reconfirm Jesus’ command (Acts 2:38-41)? In the book of Acts, did the apostles baptize new converts? Is the spiritual significance of water baptism taught in the epistles (Romans 6:3; 1 Corinthians 10:2; Galatians 3:27)? Can there be any doubt that believers should be baptized? (p.88)

70. What is the meaning of the Greek word μπατιζω? (p.436)
71. Explain the significance of water baptism. What is being symbolized by immersing someone in water? (pp.436, 437)

72. When did Jesus first institute the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper (Holy Communion)? (p.437)

73. Where in Paul’s writings do we find clear evidence that the early church observed the Lord’s Supper? (p.437)

74. Give six reasons why believers should regularly observe the Lord’s Supper. (p.438)

75. How should we understand the elements of the Lord’s Supper (the bread and cup)? What happens when we receive those elements by faith? (p.438)

76. Explain the view of those who consider the Lord’s Supper as a remembrance or memorial. (p.439)

77. Define the word “transubstantiation.” Where is this view of the elements primarily taught? How does Jesus Himself contradict this view? (p.439)

78. Define the word “consubstantiation.” What famous leader from church history taught this view of the elements? Is this view taught anywhere in Scripture? (p.439)

79. What did Paul mean when he spoke about eating and drinking the communion elements in an “unworthy” manner? (pp.439, 440)

VII. The Church as the Body of Christ

80. Is Jesus still present in the world performing His ministry? How is that possible? (p.440)

81. Why is the church called the “Body of Christ?” (pp.440, 441)

82. Jesus used the example of a grapevine and its branches to describe His relationship to believers. What lessons was He teaching us by that example? (p.441)
83. By comparing the church to a human body Paul is teaching us several important lessons about how the church is to function. List at least three such truths. (pp.441, 442)

84. Why is every member of the church necessary to the success of the church in its ministry? (p.442)

85. Write down four relationships in which Christian believers are to practice submission. (pp.442, 443)

86. List eight reasons every believer should seek to be in relationship with a local church. Which one do you find to be the most convincing? (pp.443, 444)

87. What do the authors mean by the term “body ministry”? (p.444)

88. What is the main goal of preaching and teaching in the church? (p.445)

89. What happens when the whole body ministers in unity and love? (p.446)

VIII. The Church and the Kingdom of God

90. What does the word *basileia* mean? What are its two principle meanings? (p.446)

91. When does the future dimension of the kingdom of God begin? Where do we see the kingdom of God at work in the present? (p.447)

92. According to Dr. George Ladd the powers of the future kingdom of God have already broken into human history through the Person of Jesus, the Messiah. How has Jesus changed our relationship to Satan? (pp.447, 448)

93. Describe the future (eschatological) kingdom. (p.448)

94. Describe the present kingdom of Christ. (p.448)
95. How does a person enter into the present kingdom of Christ? (pp.448, 449)

96. Are the church and kingdom of God identical? Why or why not? (pp.449, 450)

97. Who will be present in the ultimate kingdom of God? (p.450)

98. Is there a difference between the terms “kingdom of heaven” and “kingdom of God”? (p.450)

IX. Other Metaphors for the Church

99. Why are there so many metaphors used to describe the church? (p.451)

100. How does Jesus introduce us to the idea of the church as the Lord’s family? (p.451)

101. What spiritual responsibility did the father of a family have for his family in the Old Testament? (p.451)

102. Where did the idea of the church as God’s family begin? (pp.451, 452)

103. What does the Greek word koinonia mean? What does the word mean when it is applied to the church? (p.452)

104. What idea is emphasized by the metaphor of the church as a family? What idea is emphasized by the metaphor of the “fellowship of believers”? (p.452)

105. In what book of the New Testament is the doctrine of the church most fully developed? (p.452)

106. John R.W. Stott says, as the church we should plainly and visibly demonstrate our new life in Christ in two ways. What are these two ways? (p.453)

107. In what ways should the church function as a team of athletes? (pp.453, 454)
108. The Bible pictures the church as being engaged in a spiritual battle. Who is our enemy? What weapons has God given us? Who is our captain? (p. 454)

109. In what passage of John’s gospel does Jesus teach us that He is the Shepherd? Where did Paul apply this pastoral metaphor to spiritual leaders? Where did Peter do the same thing? (pp. 454, 455)

110. What does the Greek word *matheteuo* mean? What does *didasko* mean? (p. 455)

111. In Mark 3:13-15, Mark lists three aspects of making disciples. What are they? (pp. 455, 456)

112. What was the first name given to the early Christians? (p. 456)

113. The New Testament instructs all Christian officers, ministers, workers and leaders to think of themselves as servants. The authors provide many examples of such passages. Pick one and explain why it speaks deeply to you. (pp. 456, 457)

114. The church is often described as a spiritual building or sanctuary. The authors list eight principles we can learn from this metaphor. Briefly summarize each of these eight truths. (pp. 457, 458)

115. What does the word “mystery” mean in modern usage? What did the word mean in ancient Greece? What does Paul mean when he speaks of “the mystery of Christ”? (p. 458)

116. One of the great truths of the church is the “priesthood of all believers.” What does this truth tell us about a believer’s access to God? What does it tell us about every believer’s ability to minister to others? (p. 460)

117. What does Paul mean when he says every believer has been given the “ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18-20)? What does God want to communicate through us to the world? (p. 460)

118. What four applications can we draw from the analogy of the church as the bride of Christ? Write out four, brief summaries of each one. (pp. 460, 461)
119. In 1 Timothy 3:15 (NASB), Paul states that the church is the “pillar and support of the truth.” What does that statement mean? What responsibility has God placed on the church? (p.461)

120. What is the relationship of the church to this present world when believers are viewed as “pilgrims”? Give two Scripture references that use this metaphor for the church. (p.462)

121. What image comes to mind when the Christian life is called “the Way”? What was Jesus telling us about Himself when He said He is “the Way” (John 14:6)? (p.462)

122. What does Paul mean in Ephesians 1:18 when he says the church has become Christ’s inheritance? (pp. 462, 463)

123. What did Jesus mean when He said to His followers, “You are the light of the world…” (Matthew 5:14)? (pp.463, 464)

124. List five applications we can draw from the metaphor of the church as “the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13). (p.464)

125. What did Jesus mean when He said His followers would become “fishers of men” (Mark 1:17; Matthew 4:18-20)? (pp.464, 465)

126. Why does God let our faith be tested? What does the phrase “the trial of your faith” (1 Peter 1:6-7) mean? (p.465)

127. A “crucible” is a clay pot in which metal is heated over a fire until it melts, and its impurities can be removed. What do the authors mean when they say that the local church can be like a crucible for believers? (p.465)

128. In Romans 11:17 Paul compares Gentiles who believe in Jesus to the branches of a wild olive tree. He says they are grafted into the rich root of a cultivated olive tree (Romans 11:24). What is the cultivated olive tree? When did that cultivated tree begin (Genesis 12:1-3)? What must a person do to become part of God’s “olive tree” (Romans 11:19-23)? (pp.465, 466)
Personal Response

A. How would you answer someone who said to you, “I’m a Christian, but I feel no need to go to church”? Why do believers need the church? Why does the church need each believer?

B. Name three areas of ministry that are more effective when believers work together than alone. Explain why.

C. No local church is perfect. All have strengths and weaknesses, but some seem healthier than others. Think of one where the congregation is ministering effectively. What attitudes do you notice in the people who attend that church? How does that church serve its community?

D. How would you describe your role in the Body of Christ? How do you minister to others? What gifts has God given you?

E. What truth did you learn from this chapter that changed the way you think about the local church?
Chapter Nine
The Doctrine of Angels

Angelology

Introduction

1. How does A.T. Pierson describe angels? (p.467)

2. How many times are angels mentioned in the Old Testament? How many times are angels mentioned in the New Testament? (p.468)

I. Angelology (Holy Angels)

3. Both the Hebrew and Greek words for “angel” mean the same thing. What do they mean? So how do the authors define holy angels? How do they define fallen angels? (p.468)

4. What is the origin of angels? (pp.468, 469)

5. How are angels different from humans? How are they similar? (pp.469, 470)

6. Why is it wrong to worship angels? List four Scripture verses that forbid the worship of angels. (p.470)

7. Can angels take on human form? Write down a verse of Scripture that proves your answer. (pp.470, 471)

8. The phrase “Angel of the Lord” is used in the Old Testament to describe a person who is quite different from the other angels. A careful study of Scripture indicates he is not truly an angel but is someone much greater. The authors present a series of passages that involve this person. After reading each one carefully, write
down who you believe he is. How does this truth help us understand John 1:18? (pp.471, 472)

9. List three verses of Scripture that indicate there is a vast number of angels. (p.473)

10. Where is the main abode of angels? (p.473)

11. The authors identify at least six features of personality that angels possess. List all six. How does this understanding affect the way we think about angels? (p.474)

12. How do we know angels are moral beings? (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6) (p.474)

13. Write down a Scripture reference that shows that angels have superior knowledge to humans. Write down a reference that shows they have greater power and strength than humans. Write down a reference that shows they are not omniscient like God. Write down a reference that shows the holy angels are completely submitted to Christ. (pp.474, 475)

14. What term do we usually use for evil angels? (p.475)

15. It seems from statements made in Scripture that there are five different positions or offices of authority among the angels. List these. Name three verses of Scripture that mention these levels of angelic authority. (pp.475, 476)

16. When thinking about angels, what is the most important truth we must remember? (p.476)

17. Where in Scripture do Cherubim first appear? Where in the design of the tabernacle in the wilderness did God order images of Cherubim to be placed? (pp.476, 477)

18. How many times does Ezekiel refer to the Cherubim? (p.477)

19. What does the Hebrew word “Seraphim” mean? Where is the one place they are mentioned in the Bible? What do they continually do? (p.477)
20. The Bible reveals the names of only two angels. Who are they? What do their names mean? What special assignment has God given to each one? (pp.477, 478)

21. What is the main ministry of angels? Give one Scripture reference that shows they’re doing that ministry. (pp.478, 479)

22. Explain why this statement is so important: “Angels do not draw attention to themselves but ascribe glory to God.” How does this truth protects us from deception? (p.479)

23. Give an example from Scripture of angels bringing God’s judgments upon His enemies. (p.479)

24. What ministry to believers will angels perform at Christ’s second coming? (p.480)

25. What role will angels have in administering God’s judgment in the last days? (p.480)

26. Angels played an important role in the ministry of Jesus Christ. How many distinct references are there in the gospels that show there were angels involved in His ministry? (pp.481, 482)

27. Why is it helpful for believers to understand that there are angels who minister on their behalf? What New Testament verse confirms that angels are still ministering today? (p.482)

28. The authors provide a list of eight ways angels are in relationship with God’s people. The list is compiled from both the Old and New Testaments. Write down a brief statement to summarize each of those eight ways. (pp.482-486)

29. Why should a believer never pray to an angel or request their help directly? Who alone is in control of the angels? (p.486)

II. Demonology (Evil Angels)

30. Explain this statement: “There is only one devil (diabolo), but there are multitudes of demons.” (pp.486, 487)
31. Why do believers need to study demonology? (p.486)

32. What is the origin of demons? (p.487)

33. List four Scripture verses where Jesus recognized the reality of demons. List two Scriptures where Paul recognized the reality of demons. (pp.487, 488)

34. Did God create evil spirits? If not, then how did they become evil? (p.488)

35. What was Satan’s name before he rebelled against God? (p.488)

36. What do we learn from this truth: Demons are stronger than humans but are no match for Jesus? How should this insight guide the way we deal with demons? (p.489)

37. Are demons impersonal forces or spirit personalities? Where do they want to dwell? (p.489)

38. Give a scriptural example where demons recognized the authority of Jesus. (pp.489, 490)

39. Do demons still recognize Jesus’ authority even after He ascended into heaven? Give a Scripture verse to support your answer. (p.490)

40. Demons seek to accomplish two purposes. What are they? (p.491)

41. What is Satan’s ultimate desire? Where do we find his desire described in Scripture? (p.491)

42. Since Satan is not omnipresent (everywhere at once), how does he carry out his evil work? (p.491)

43. Demons encourage false doctrine. Why do they want to do that? (pp.491, 492)

44. How are demons involved in idol worship? What insight does Paul give us in 1 Corinthians 10:19-21? (p.492)

45. Demons have the power to cause various physical afflictions. The authors list six. What are they? Though most illness is not caused
by direct demonic activity, how does this insight help us as we are seeking healing? (p.492)

46. Does God ever discipline rebellious people by handing them over to demonic activity? Give an example from Scripture to support your answer. (p.493)

47. Jesus believed that demons were real and that He was casting them out of possessed individuals. List four examples from the gospels that support this statement. (p.494)

48. Did Jesus expect all believers to be engaged in casting out demons (Mark 16:15-17)? (p.495)

49. Give three examples from the book of Acts of believers casting out demons. (p.495)

50. The apostle John explains why there was so much demonic opposition to Jesus (1 John 3:8). What reason does he give us? (p.496)

51. What is the difference between demon possession and demon influence? To which one was Paul referring when he mentioned “the fiery darts of the wicked one” (Ephesians 6:16)? (p.496)

52. “Demons are expelled; diseases are healed. There is a difference between healing and exorcism.” Explain how a believer should minister when the cause of an affliction is demonic. Explain how someone should minister when the cause is simply a physical disease or injury. Did Jesus make a distinction between the two? (pp.496, 497)

53. Can we still expect to encounter demonic activity and demonic possession today? What spiritual gift will help us detect the presence of demons in someone (1 Corinthians 12:10)? (pp.497, 498)

54. George Canty says the casting out of demons is an essential part of proclaiming the gospel. What scriptural support does he offer to support that claim? Is he right? If so, how would that affect the way we proclaim the gospel today? (pp.498, 499)
55. George Canty also provides us with a list of some signs of demonic activity. Are you aware of people who have or continue to experience such things? How should a Christian respond? (p.499)

56. After reading this section on how to cast out demons, based on the observations by George Canty, write down at least four important principles we should remember when engaging this ministry. (pp.500, 501)

57. Is there a scriptural example of demons being cast out by laying hands on someone? (p.502) Must we know the name of a demon in order to cast it out? (p.502)

58. Should we engage in conversation with demonic forces when seeking to cast them out? (pp.502, 503)

59. Must physical manifestations take place (convulsions, foaming at the mouth, etc.) when a demon is cast out? What is the actual source of power that frees individuals from demons? (p.503)

60. Are there individuals who are called to engage in demon exorcism? What warning does George Canty give us in this matter? What should be the ultimate focus of every believer? (pp.503, 504)

61. Will the casting out of a demon bring true freedom to an individual if there is not also repentance and salvation? If not, why not? (p.504)

62. Is it possible for demons to remain in a person’s heart after truly being converted? If not, why not? (p.504, 505)

63. Sometimes psychological disorders can wrongly be assumed to be demonic activity. This can lead to confusion and make someone worse. There are those who assume they have demons when they don’t. What spiritual gift is essential if we are to avoid these dangers? (p.505)

64. What does the word “occult” mean? What sorts of activities are often involved? List some of the methods people in the occult employ. (pp.505, 506)
65. List five, Old Testament Scripture passages that condemn occult practices. (pp.506, 507)

66. Are Christians totally immune to Satan’s power? Can they be demon possessed? Can they be attacked and influenced by demons? What behaviors give the enemy grounds to attack us? Provide a verse of Scripture to support each of your answers. (pp.507, 508)

67. What protection has God provided for believers to ensure their victory over Satan and his demons? (p.508)

68. What is the danger in Christians blaming their bad attitudes and weaknesses on demons? (p.509)

69. What is the true source of most of the inner struggles that Christians experience as they seek to bring their lives into obedience to Christ? (p.509)

70. Why is it unwise for a believer to spend much time talking about demons? Where does Paul say we should focus our thoughts and conversation? (pp.509, 510)

III. Satanology

71. Why should we be grateful that Scripture has revealed so much information about Satan? (p.510)

72. How many times is Satan expressly mentioned in the Old Testament? List them. (p.511)

73. How many times is Satan mentioned in the New Testament? What reasons do the authors give for there being so many more references to Satan in the New Testament? (p.511)

74. What is the danger in denying that Satan is a literal person? How does the Scripture view him? (p.512)

75. List four ways the Bible indicates that Satan is a person with a personality? (p.512)
76. What is the origin of Satan? Was he originally good or evil? Give Scripture references to support your answers. (pp.512, 513)

77. What does the name *Lucifer* mean? (p.513)

78. What chapter in the Bible tells of Lucifer’s fall and the reason for it? (p.513)

79. What caused Lucifer to fall? What happened to him after he fell? When did his name change? (pp.513, 514)

80. Does Satan still have access to heaven? What does he do when he’s there? (p.514)

81. What is one of the most effective ways that Satan opposes the work of the Lord? What popular misconception causes many people to reject any belief in him? (pp.514, 515)

82. What is the Hebrew word that we usually translate as *Lucifer*? What is the literal meaning of the Hebrew word? What warning does that name give us about how he may appear to us? (pp.515, 516)

83. What does the Hebrew word *Satan* mean? What does that tell us about what he is attempting to do? (p.516)

84. What does the title *Devil* tell us about Satan’s actions? Give a Scripture reference that describes him doing what this title reveals about him. (p.516)

85. Where in the Bible is Satan first pictured as a serpent? Did that serpent literally look like the serpents we know today? If not, when did their appearance change? (pp.516, 517)

86. Where in the book of Revelation is Satan referred to as a serpent? (p.517)

87. Is the name *Dragon* another title for Satan? List two verses of Scripture that prove your answer. What is the literal meaning of the word *dragon*? (p.517)
88. What does the name Beelzebub mean? What does that name, when applied to Satan, tell us about him and those he leads? (pp.517, 518)

89. What does the Hebrew word Belial mean? How is it used in the Old Testament? Why does Paul apply that name to Satan (2 Corinthians 6:15)? (p.518)

90. What is Satan’s role as Tempter? Why does Satan tempt believers? (p.518)

91. What is the difference between God “testing” individuals and Satan tempting them? (p.518)

92. Jesus referred to Satan as “the ruler of this world” three times. What does this title tell us about Satan? (p.519)

93. To whom did God originally give dominion over the earth? Did God ever give dominion of this world to Satan? What must happen for him to gain authority over humans? (p.519)

94. What does the title “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2) tell us about those whom Satan rules? (pp.519, 520)

95. What does the title “god of this age” tell us about Satan’s ultimate desire? Why does this title point to his most devastating attack against God? (p.520)

96. Why does Satan loves religious activities? (p.520)

97. F.C. Jennings warns us that Satan can use religion, even the Christian religion, to hide from people “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” What kind of religion actually prevents people from coming to Christ? (pp.520, 521)

98. “The deceiver” is one of the most appropriate names for Satan. Why must Satan use deception? (p.521)

99. Does Satan still try to accuse Christians before God? What verse of Scripture proves your answer? (pp.521, 522)
100. When will Satan’s accusations finally stop? (p.522)

101. When Satan poses as an angel of light promising to lead someone out of darkness where is really leading them? (p.522)

102. What title does Jesus give Satan in John 8:44? Why does He call him that? (pp.522, 523)

103. As “the father of lies” Satan will even use Scripture, but he always misquotes or misapplies it. Explain how he did that in Genesis 3:4-5 and Matthew 4:5-7. (p.523)

104. Why does the Bible picture Satan as a serpent? Why does it picture him as a lion? (p.523)

105. *Abaddon* is a Hebrew word and *Apollyon* is a Greek word. What do both these words mean? Why does the Bible give Satan these names? (p.523)

106. What four, great events in the Bible show that Satan is a defeated foe? List all four and give a Scripture reference for each one. (pp.524, 525)

107. If Satan was defeated at the cross, then why is he still allowed to harass the church of Jesus Christ? (p.525)

108. The Bible teaches us three facts about Satan’s final destiny. List all three and give a Scripture reference for each one. (pp.525, 526)

109. A believer should not overestimate Satan’s abilities. He has definite limitations. The authors list four. Write out a simple statement of each truth and be able to explain why that truth is important to us. (p.527)

110. What is the secret to the believer’s daily triumph? (p.528)

111. According to F.C. Jennings, what is the root aim of Satan’s attacks? What is a believer’s proper response to this attack? (p.528)
112. What do the following verses teach us about Jesus: Luke 22:31-32; Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34; 1 John 2:1. In light of all we have learned about Satan, why is this truth so important? (p.529)

113. According to 1 Peter 5:8, why do Christians need to remain watchful concerning Satan? What sorts of attitudes or actions allow Satan to get a foothold in a believer’s life? (p.529)

114. Write out the list of equipment that Paul calls “the whole armor of God” (Ephesians 6:13-18). Can you explain why each item would be a form of protection for us? Why would the omission of any one part put a believer in danger? Why does Paul end this description of armor with an admonition to pray for other believers? (pp.529, 530)

**Personal Response**

A. Explain this statement: “Big God, little devil.” How does truth help us keep a proper perspective when facing spiritual warfare?

B. Give an example of a time when God protected you from a spiritual attack.

C. What danger arises when people focus too much on the devil and demons? What danger arises when people are ignorant of the devil and demons, and uniformed about how to deal with them? What is the right balance?

D. If you found yourself in a situation in which you felt the need for God to send His angels to help you, how would you pray? What would you say to someone who wants to talk to angels and learn their names?
Chapter Ten
The Doctrine of Last Things

Eschatology

Introduction

1. The term *eschatology* comes from two Greek words. What are they? What does each one mean? (p.531)

2. When we use the word “eschatology,” what period of human history are we talking about? Does this word also include events that will take place after this present age ends? (p.531)

I. The Eschatological Age

3. The Old Testament prophets spoke of a future time when the Messiah would come and establish a new covenant with God’s people. After reading Jeremiah 31:31-34, write down four changes that God said would take place when the new covenant arrived. Then explain where you have seen each truth in your own life. (pp.531, 532)

4. Even though we are living in this dying age of human history, the Bible tells us that Jesus Christ has already given to His Church certain aspects of the future, eschatological age. Write down two passages where this truth is stated clearly. (p.532)

II. Death

5. Scripture speaks of the three kinds of death. What are they? (p.533)
6. Define “physical death.” What does physical death mean for a person who believes in Jesus Christ? Write down two Scripture references that support your answers. (p.533)

7. What does physical death mean for an unbeliever? Write down three Scripture references that support your answer. (p.533)

8. Define “Spiritual death.” Why is spiritual death worse than physical death? (p.533)

9. According to 1 John 3:14, what happens to an individual who comes to faith in Christ? (p.534)

10. Do unbelievers cease to exist when they die? Write down a verse of Scripture that supports your answer. (p.534)

11. When does the “Great White Throne Judgment” take place? Who will stand before God at the judgment? (p.534)

12. The authors list five terms found in Scripture that describe eternal death. Write them out and provide reference where each is found. As painful as this picture is, why is it important for us to face this terrible reality? (p.534)

III. The Intermediate State

13. Define the term intermediate state. (p.535)

14. At what point in history will believers be resurrected? When will unbelievers be resurrected? (p.535)

15. What Hebrew word is used to describe the destination of the dead? Most modern translations do not translate this word as Hell. Looking at the list the authors provide, what terms would be more accurate? (p.535)

16. What Greek work is used in the New Testament to refer to the destination of the dead? Depending on its context, to what sort of places does this Greek word refer? (p.535)
17. Why is the Greek word *Gehenna* often used in the gospels to refer to hell? (p.535)

18. Where do unbelievers initially go when they die? Why should the word “hell” not be used to describe the present state of the dead? (pp.535, 536)

19. When the righteous die, where does their spirit immediately go? List three passages of Scripture that support your answer. (p.536)

20. There are few Scriptures that address what happened between the time of Christ’s death and His resurrection. Ephesians 4:8-10 and 1 Peter 3:18-20 are the two that appear to speak to this question most directly. Neither passage says anything about Jesus descending into hell or suffering there in any way. Both picture Him as victorious and powerful. The authors suggest one possible explanation for Jesus descending into Sheol or Hades. Briefly summarize this possibility. (p.537)

21. The authors list three false views of the intermediate state of the dead that are popular today. What are they? (p.537)

22. Define what is meant by the term *purgatory*. What religious groups teach this view? This view is not found in Scripture but is based on a passage in a book that is not part of the Canon of Scripture. Where is that passage found? (p.538)

23. What foundational truth of Scripture does the concept of purgatory violate? Write down one Scripture that declares that foundational truth. (p.538)

24. Define what is meant by *soul sleep*. What religious groups teach this view? Write down the three arguments most frequently used for soul sleep. (p.538)

25. For what reason does the Bible use the metaphor of sleep to describe death according to W.E. Vine? (pp.538, 539)

26. What does Jesus’ account of the rich man and Lazarus teach us about the consciousness of those who have died (Luke 16:22-31)?
What does Paul’s statement to the Philippians teach us about the condition of a believer (Philippians 1:21-23)? (p.539)

27. What does Paul confidently expect will happen to believers immediately after they die (2 Corinthians 5:6-9)? (p.539)

28. Who will be judged at the final judgment (Revelation 20:11-13)? What will happen when believers are judged (2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 3:12-15)? (p.540)

29. What does spiritism teach? What does the Bible teach about the living trying to communicate with the dead? Give a Scripture reference to support your answer. (p.540)

30. What are the two main explanations for spiritist phenomena? Can evil spirits imitate the voice or appearance of someone who is deceased? (p.540)

31. What was Saul’s punishment for consulting the witch of Endor (1 Corinthians 10:13-14)? (p.540)

32. Why were Moses and Elijah given special permission by God to physically appear to Jesus and three of His disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration (Luke 9:28-33)? What did Moses represent? What did Elijah represent? (p.540, 541)

IV. The Second Coming of Christ

33. How many times is Christ’s second coming mentioned in the New Testament? Why is it mentioned so many times? How many times did Paul refer to Jesus’ second coming? (p.542)

34. How did Jesus connect the observance of communion (the bread and cup) with His second coming (Matthew 26:26-29; Like 22:14-20)? How did Paul connect the observance of communion with Jesus’ second coming (1 Corinthians 11:26)? (p.542)

35. List six areas of Christian living which are motivated by the hope of Jesus’ second coming. Give one Scripture reference in support of each one. (pp.542, 543)
36. In what manner will Christ come the second time? This question can be answered in three words. (p.543)

37. The authors list four false explanations of the nature of Christ’s second coming. Write down four, brief statements that finish this sentence: “The second coming is not __________________.” (p.544)

38. When it comes to the Lord’s return, there are passages in the Bible that indicate it will not occur until all the nations have been evangelized and other passages that say He might appear at any moment. Give a verse of Scripture that supports each understanding. How does Peter (2 Peter 3:11-12) tell us to respond while we are waiting? (p.545)

39. The time sequence of the sign events for Christ’s second coming was revealed by Jesus on what occasion? Jesus’ teaching on that day is recorded in the three synoptic gospels. Write down where each passage is found. (p.546)

40. Explain the difference between primary signs of Christ’s coming and secondary signs. Give an example of each type. (pp.546, 547)

41. Where in Scripture did God proclaim that if Israel was disobedient, He would scatter them throughout all the nations? Where does He declare that He will also regather them and bring them back to their own land? (p.547)

42. In the Old Testament there are prophesies concerning two regatherings of Israel. Describe these two regatherings and give a Scripture verse to support your answer. Which regathering has already happened? Which one is happening now? (pp.547, 548)

43. What significant event took place on May 14, 1948? (p.548)

44. In 2 Timothy 3:1-7, Paul lists many, ungodly characteristics that are present in people during the last days. Since there are always people like this in any society, how would we know that what we are seeing around us are actually signs that we are approaching the end of the age? (pp.548, 549)
45. Why is the development of weapons of mass destruction a sign that we may be in the latter days? (p.549)

46. Why is the development of modern forms of transportation a sign that we may be in the latter days? (p.549)

47. Daniel 12:4 seems to indicate that in the end times there will be a rapid expansion in human knowledge. Is that expansion happening now? If so, what would you point to as proof? (pp.549,550)

48. What does the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) teach us about the timing of the Lord’s return? (p.550)

49. What is the cause of the Great Tribulation? What event will bring the Great Tribulation to an end? Name three major events that will occur after the Great Tribulation. (pp.550, 551)

50. What event does the word *rapture* describe (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18)? (p.551)

51. Define the pre-tribulation rapture theory. When will the rapture happen? Who will be raptured? What miraculous change will take place? (pp.551, 552)

52. As you review the arguments for the pre-tribulation theory presented by the authors, which one do you believe is the strongest? (pp.551-553)

53. According to this theory who will suffer during the Great Tribulation? Where is the church during this period of time? (pp.552, 553)

54. Who are the principle proponents of the pre-tribulation position? Write out the names you recognize from this list. If none, pick a name and research that person, write a brief description noting when that person lived, with what denomination he was associated, and where he taught if he was a teacher. (pp.553, 554)

55. Define the post-tribulation rapture theory. When will it happen? Who will be raptured? How is that event connected to the second coming of Christ? (p.554)
56. List three passages in the gospels which proponents point to in support of the post-tribulation rapture theory. (p.554)

57. Read Daniel 12:1-2; what order of events does this passage seem to teach? (p.554)

58. Define the mid-tribulation rapture theory. When will it happen? Who will be raptured? (p.554)

59. What connection do the proponents of the mid-tribulation theory make between the “last trumpeter” mentioned by Paul (1 Corinthians 15:52) and the “seventh trumpet” mentioned by John (Revelation 11:15)? How does that connection affect the timing of the rapture? (p.555)

60. According to this theory how many years of tribulation will be left before the return of Christ? (p.555)

61. What are the principle arguments against the mid-tribulation rapture theory? (p.555)

62. The partial rapture theory is a false teaching based on a misinterpretation of certain Scripture passages. What does the partial rapture theory teach? How does this idea violate the basic principles of the gospel? (pp.555, 556)

63. The authors make a distinction between the “rapture” and the “revelation of Christ.” What is that distinction? (p.556)

64. According to Revelation 19-20 there are five steps involved in Christ’s return to rule. List these steps. Simplify and summarize each one so you can remember the order of them. (pp.556, 557)

V. The Tribulation

65. The Bible uses the word *tribulation* in three different ways. What are those three ways? Give a Scripture reference for each one. (pp.557, 558)

66. Why is it important for the pre-tribulation rapture position to distinguish between the different applications and uses of the
word *tribulation*? What sort of confusion might arise about the Great Tribulation if this distinction is not made? (p.558)

67. God gave Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, a dream of a great statue. It was made up of four different materials. Look up the passages in Daniel to answer the following: What empire did the gold head represent (Daniel 2:38)? What empire did the breast and arms of silver represent (Daniel 2:39; 5:28)? What empire did the belly and thighs of bronze represent (Daniel 8:21; 11:2)? What empire did the legs of iron and feet of iron and clay represent (Daniel 2:40-43)? What did God say would take place during the fourth empire (Daniel 2:34-35, 44-45)? (pp.558, 559)

68. God Gave Daniel a vision of four beasts (Daniel 7:1-12). These beasts represent the same Gentile empires identified in Nebuchadnezzar’s statue. Look up the Scriptures to answer the following: What empire did the lion represent (Daniel 7:4)? What empire did the bear represent (Daniel 7:5)? What empire did the leopard represent (Daniel 7:6)? Who destroyed the fourth beast in Daniel’s dream (Daniel 7:9-14)? To what future event does the destruction of the fourth beast point (Matthew 24:30; Revelation 19:11-16)? (pp.558, 559)

69. The authors speak of a future season entitled “Daniel’s seventieth week.” This prophecy is found in Daniel 9:24-27. It describes the final, seven-year period of tribulation that precedes the return of Christ. What is the latter half of the seven-year period called? Why? (pp.559, 560)

**VI. The Antichrist**

70. What does the word *antichrist* mean? What two, Greek words are used to form it? What do they mean? (p.561)

71. The name “antichrist” is only used four times in the Scripture. List the verses where it is found. (p.561)
72. Where is the first prophetic reference to the antichrist in the Bible? What part of that prophecy represents him? What will He do? (p.561)

73. How does the “spirit of antichrist” express itself in human history? Give three examples. What kind of human does this spirit possess? (p.561)

74. The Bible uses other titles for the antichrist. List seven. Give a Scripture reference for each. (pp.561, 562)

75. Who is Antiochus Epiphanes? Why is he thought to be connected to the antichrist of the last days? (pp.561, 562)

76. The authors list nine works of the antichrist at the end of the age. What covenant does he make with Israel? What action does he take after three-and-a-half years? (pp.562, 563)

77. List four things the “false prophet” will do. (p.563)

78. What does the great harlot represent? Who will destroy the great harlot? (p.563)

79. What is the battle of Armageddon? (p.563)

VII. The Resurrection

80. What does the Bible teach about life after death that other religions do not? What did the ancient Greeks believe? (p.564)

81. In what four ways is the resurrection taught in the Old Testament? Give two Scripture references for each one. (pp.564, 565)

82. In what three ways is the resurrection taught in the New Testament? List all the Scripture references provided for each one. (pp.565, 566)

83. What is the nature of the resurrection? Will the unjust be resurrected? (p.566)
84. When will the resurrection of believers take place? What does Revelation 20:6 call this resurrection? (p.566)

85. Some prophetic passages present several, related, future events as if they were one event. Give two examples and a Scripture reference for each example. (pp.566, 567)

86. What proof do we have that the resurrection of humans will be a literal, bodily resurrection? When we are resurrected, will the molecules of our dead bodies be recovered? What similarities will there be between our present, physical body and our resurrected body? (p.567)

87. Paul compared death to a farmer sowing a seed. How is the burying of a body like the sowing of a seed? What do we learn about the resurrection from this example? (p.567)

88. Paul says our resurrection body will be a celestial or heavenly body (1 Corinthians 15:40). What does that mean? (p.568)

89. Paul says our resurrection body will be glorious (1 Corinthians 15:43). What does that mean? (p.568)

90. The Bible does not specifically reveal the nature of the bodies of the unrighteous after they are resurrected. What do the authors say we can assume about those bodies? When will the resurrection of the unrighteous take place (Revelation 20:5)? (p.569)

91. The Bible describes at least six occasions when resurrection has or will take place. Write out those six resurrections in order and give a Scripture reference for each one. (p.569)

VIII. The Millennium

92. What does the word *millennium* mean? Is that word used in the Bible? List three important events that will take place during the millennium. (p.570)
93. Explain *post-millennialism*. What must happen before Jesus comes again? What parables are used to teach this theory? Why are those parables used? (p.570)

94. Explain *amillennialism*. How do those that believe this theory explain the Scripture references that speak of Christ’s return and reign? (pp.570, 571)

95. How do amillennialists interpret Old Testament prophecies to Israel? What is a good Scripture passage to refute this view of Israel’s destiny? (p.571)

96. Explain *premillennialism*. How do premillennialists interpret prophecies about the return of Christ? What do they believe will happen when He returns? (p.571)

97. Premillennialists believe there will be five, major, future, prophetic events. Write out these events in order. (pp.571, 572)

98. What does Deuteronomy 32:8-10 tell us about the place of Israel in the millennium? (p.572)

99. What is God’s purpose for the nation of Israel during the millennium? (p.572)

100. Will Gentile nations still exist on the earth during the millennium? Give a Scripture passage that supports your answer. (pp.572, 573)

101. There will be both mortal and immortal people living on the earth during the millennium. Who are the mortals? Who are the immortals? What role will be assigned to the immortals during that time? (pp.573, 574)

102. List the important arguments that suggest that believers will be equipped for both heaven and earth during the millennium. (p.574)

103. In seven statements the authors describe major changes that will occur during the millennium. Using only a word or two to summarize each statement list these seven conditions. (p.574)
IX. The Judgments

104. List three ways believers experience judgment. (pp. 575, 576)

105. What happens at the “judgment seat of Christ”? (p. 576)

106. When will the *judgment of awards* take place? According to 1 Corinthians 4:5, what will the Lord examine to determine a person’s rewards? (p. 576)

107. Paul describes the believer’s judgment in 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 and 2 Corinthians 5:10. What will happen to believers whose works Christ determines to be “worthless”? What happens to believers whose works He determines to be “good”? (pp. 576, 577)

108. What four crowns are promised as special rewards to believers who have served the Lord faithfully? Give a verse of Scripture that mentions each one. (pp. 577, 578)

109. Before the millennium begins Jesus will judge all the nations of the earth. Based on Matthew 25:40 what will be the basis of His judgment? Based on Matthew 12:50 (also Mark 9:41, Luke 8:21) who are His brothers and sisters? (p. 578)

110. What is the name of the judgment where the wicked dead will be judged (Revelation 20:11)? When will it take place? (p. 579)

111. Who will judge the wicked dead? What will be the basis for this judgment? Will the severity of judgment differ from person to person (Matthew 10:15; Luke 10:12)? What causes a person to be lost? (p. 579)

112. What will happen to Satan at the end of Christ’s thousand-year reign? What will he do? How does he end? When will fallen angels be judged? (pp. 579, 580)

X. The Final Destinies

113. What English word is used to translate the Greek word *Gehenna*? What was Gehenna? (p. 580)
114. What is *tartaroo*? Where is that word found in the New Testament? (p.581)

115. The Bible uses various descriptions to represent the final condition of the wicked. The authors list eleven such descriptions. Write out these eleven descriptions and the verse of Scripture where each is found. (p.581)

116. “Annihilationism” is a false theory that denies the unending punishment of the wicked. What does this theory teach? (p.582)

117. What do “universalists” believe? What do they believe will change the heart of the wicked? (pp.582)

118. It is hard to think about the prospect of eternal perdition for anyone, but we can take comfort in the fact that God’s judgment will be just and that He has done all that He can to save as many as He can. Above all that He has done, what shows us the depth of God’s love? (p.583)

119. Jesus promised to prepare a place for us in His Father’s house (John 14:2-3). What did He do to fulfill that promise? (p.584)

120. List four facts from the New Testament that prove that we will not lose our personal identity when we go to heaven. What will happen to our personalities when we enter that new level of existence? (p.585)

121. At the end of the book of Revelation (22:16-17, 20), who does Jesus invite to come to Him? What does He offer that person? (p.585)

**Personal Response**

A. Why is it important for believers to know what the Bible teaches about “last things”?

B. What would you say to a believer who asks, “Where will I go when I die?”
C. Do you see signs that the Lord’s return is drawing near? What do you see?

D. What hope would you give someone who is mourning the death of a loved one who was a believer? What Scripture passages would you quote?

E. Name one truth that you read in this chapter that motivates you to tell those who don’t know Jesus about your Savior.
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About the Authors

Guy P. Duffield (1909-2000)

Prior to co-authoring *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, Dr. Duffield served for more than fifty years as a pastor and teacher, so he brought to his writing a lifetime of experience and ministry in the full stream of the Pentecostal movement.

His years as a teacher prepared him to explain complex truths in plain, understandable language, and this skill is evident. Even the “doctrinally uninformed” will find here much to strengthen his or her faith.

In addition to writing numerous articles, booklets and college syllabi, Dr. Duffield authored two other books: *Pentecostal Preaching* and *Handbook of Bible Lands*. 
Dr. Van Cleave’s life was marked by a broad range of ministry. He was a teacher, pastor, missionary, theologian and an excellent expository preacher. He devoted himself to preaching and teaching God’s Word for over fifty years.

As a young man he was fortunate to have his life intercepted by many preachers from the first generation of the Pentecostal outpouring in North America. His work is filled with practical understanding of Pentecostal theology. A lifetime of experience combined with a deep commitment to exegeting Scripture produced a man who was both wise and trustworthy. His role as a co-author of this work was invaluable.

Dr. Van Cleave’s *Handbook of Preaching* has been reprinted numerous times and translated for use in many training centers around the world.
To order additional copies, visit foursquareshop.org
FOUNDATIONS OF PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY

This textbook is an introduction to the Christian faith from a Pentecostal perspective. In its pages you’ll find thorough studies of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian church presented not as theory, but as teachings to be believed and practiced. Doctrines such as divine healing, the baptism with the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts are given extensive treatment.

Foundations of Pentecostal Theology has served as a primary doctrine book for numerous denominations, Bible colleges, mission schools, churches and pastors since its publication in 1983. In 2011, a thoughtful and prayerful revision and updating was undertaken to clarify the language of the original text. The goal was not to alter its doctrinal truths but rather to highlight, bolster and expand upon those truths. There was also a sincere desire to give Doctors Duffield and Van Cleave a fresh voice to speak to a new generation.

This book provides an unmatched resource for all who seek to know sound doctrine and desire to see that doctrine worked out in the realities of life and ministry.

GUY P. DUFFIELD

Prior to co-authoring Foundations of Pentecostal Theology, Dr. Duffield served for more than fifty years as a pastor and teacher, so he brought to his writing a lifetime of experience and ministry in the full stream of the Pentecostal movement.

NATHANIEL M. VAN CLEAVE

Dr. Van Cleave’s life was marked by a broad range of ministry. He was a teacher, pastor, missionary, theologian and an excellent expository preacher. He devoted himself to preaching and teaching God’s Word for over fifty years.