

21CR

21st Century Reformation

Conference Notes

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A Conference by Winkie Pratney

I. GOD HAS A RIGHT ON OUR LIVES

Base For Authority:-"I AM the Lord your God."

Divine Right Vs Human Need

Psalms 24:1 "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof"

Acts 17:30 "God **commands** all men ... to repent"

Ex. 4:11; Ps. 89:11; Mal. 1:6; 1 Cor. 10:26; Eph. 1:10

- Foundational to all true reformation/revival is restoration of this awesome truth: **seeing God as our true King**. He is the rightful Lord of all of His creation.
- This is the message of the whole Bible from start "*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*" to its finish: "Even so, come *Lord Jesus ..Amen*"
- His right of rulership extends to everything; the earth, cultures, countries, people.

HE IS OUR CREATOR

"In the beginning, God CREATED the heavens and the earth" Genesis 1:1

"And God created great whales and every living creature that moves" Genesis 1:26 "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

Genesis 1:27

"I am Jehovah, that makes all things; that stretches forth the heavens alone; that spreads abroad the earth by Myself." Isaiah 44:24 "I have made the earth, and created man upon it; I, even My hands have stretched out the heavens and all their host I have commanded." Isaiah 45:12

Creation apologetics

"That they may see and know and consider and understand together that the hand of the Lord has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has created it." Isaiah 41:20 "Lift up your eyes on high and behold Who has created these things, that brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name. ... Have you not known? Have you not heard, that the Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth faints not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding" Isaiah 40:26,28

All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." John 1:3

"God made the world and all things therein" Acts 17:24a

"For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made even His eternal power and Godhead." Romans 1:20

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork; day to day utters speech, and night to night shows knowledge." Psalms 19:1-2

Everything belongs to God by right

"The Lord has made all things *for Himself ..*" Proverbs 16:4

"You Lord, even You are Lord alone; You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all things that are therein, the seas and all that is therein and you preserve them all; and the host of heaven worships You; You are the Lord ..." Nehemiah 9:6-7a

You are worthy Oh Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You have created all things and for Your pleasure they are and were created" Revelation 4:11

For by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible ... all things were created by Him and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist (hold together)." Colossians 1:16-17

His intrinsic place and power should be honored

"For *of Him* and through Him and to Him are all things; to whom be glory forever. Amen." Romans 11:36 "Thus says God the Lord, He that created the heavens and stretched them out, He that spread forth the earth and that which comes out of it, He that gives breath to the people in it, and spirit to them that walk therein ..." Isaiah 42:5 "Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?" Malachi 2:10

Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth" Eccles. 12:1

"I will praise You; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are Your works, and that my soul knows right well." Psalms 139:14-15 The Lord is good to all; and His tender mercies are over all His works. All Your works shall praise You oh Lord; and Your saints shall bless You." Psalms 145:9-10

Idolatry: Giving false priority to the creation

"God ... has in these last days spoken to us by His Son whom He appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds Hebrews 1:1-2 "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not." John 1:10 "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator" Romans 1:25

OUR GREATEST TRAGEDY: WE ARE NOT SEEKING HIM

The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men,
to see *if there were any that did understand and seek God.* Psalms 14:2

But if from thence you shall seek the LORD your God, you shall find Him, *if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.* Deuteronomy 4:29

Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near: Isaiah 55:6

And after them out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the LORD God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice to the LORD God of their fathers. II Chronicles 11:16

And commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment. II Chronicles 14:4 The LORD [is] with you, while be with him; and if seek him, he will be found of you; but if you forsake him, he will forsake you. II Chronicles 15:2 And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul; II Chronicles 15:12

I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not to the seed of Jacob, Seek me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right. Isaiah 45:19

Listen to me, that follow after righteousness, that seek the LORD: look to the Rock from whence you are hewn, and to the hole of the pit from where you are dug. Isaiah 51:1

For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel, Seek me, and you shall live: Amos 5:4 Seek the LORD, and you shall live; lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour and there be none to quench [it] in Beth-el. Amos 5:6 Seek Him that makes the seven stars and Orion, and turns the shadow of death into the morning, and makes the day dark with night: that calls for the waters of the sea, and pours them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name: Amos 5:8 Seek the LORD, all meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be you shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger Zephaniah 2:3

That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, says the Lord, who does all these things. Acts 15:17 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: Acts 17:27

- We do not need to "make Jesus Lord". He is Lord. Nothing we do changes that.
- We need not urge men to "accept" Him. He is wholly acceptable. We are not.
- We need not call others to "find" Him. He is not lost. He knows where He is.
- We are the ones with the problem. We are the sheep gone astray - turned from Him.

In the Parables of "Lost" things in Luke 15

- the sheep is lost in the wilderness through a carefree attitude
- the coin is lost in the house through carelessness
- the son is lost in the world through his own deliberate choice
- The shepherd goes out to look for the sheep
- The woman takes a light and searches for the coin
- The father is out on the road seeking for his prodigal son

In each case of restoration, there is great joy and a party

The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever. Psalms 22:26 The young lions lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not lack any good [thing]. Psalms 34:10 Let all those that seek you rejoice and be glad in you: let such as love your salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified. Psalms 40:16

2. GOD'S RIGHT is Founded in HIS VALUE

Basis Of **Obligation**: "... if I be lifted up, I will draw all men to Me" (John 12:32)
God's Intrinsic Beauty and Worth revealed vs Legalistic Control
Matt. 13:44-46 "Treasure ... for joy sells all"

- God's right to rule our lives is not founded in His eternal power, creation priority or ability to save, gift or love us. It is founded in *Who He is*, not what He does.
- We are called not just to seek His hand (His works) but His heart – (His ways).
- God's laws are *descriptions*, not primarily *motivation*. They are not inventions and can neither be arbitrarily changed or wisely ignored.
- What is **true** is also right and wise and real. God is out to save us from selfishness, stupidity and unreality.
- The Kingdom of Heaven is *rooted and founded in love and trust*, not its rules.

One [thing] have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to *behold the beauty of the LORD*, and to inquire in his temple. Psalms 27:4 Give unto the LORD the glory due to his name; worship the LORD in the *beauty of holiness*. Psalms 29:2 O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth. Psalms 96:9 Give unto the LORD the glory [due] to his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. I Chronicles 16:29 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers to the LORD, that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy [endures] for ever. II Chronicles 20:21 And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish the work of our hands upon us ... Psalms 90:17

Yours, O LORD, [is] the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all in the heaven and in the earth is yours; Yours the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head above all. I Chronicles 29:11 Honor and majesty before Him: strength and beauty in his sanctuary. Psalms 96:6 I will speak of the glorious honor of Your majesty, and of Your wondrous works. Psalms 145:5

The LORD reigns, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is established, that it *cannot* be moved. Psalms 93:1

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. Luke 2:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we *beheld his glory*, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14 This *beginning of miracles* did Jesus in Caana of Galilee, and *manifested forth his glory* and his disciples believed on him. John 2:11 These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory, and spoke of him. John 12:41 And now, O Father, glorify me with your own self *with the glory which I had with you before the world was*. And the glory which You gave me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one John 17:5,22 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. Matthew 6:13

- History is rife with many good men doing bad things in God's name. Some of our world's *worst evils* are religious. *What can save from a threat and bribe religion?*
- Salvation is a restored and redeemed ongoing genuine *friendship with God*.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus *has made me free from the law of sin and death*. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Romans 8:2-4

For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. (Dearest Daddy) The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: Romans 8:15-16

And he that sees *Me* sees *Him that sent me*. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believes on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I *came not to judge the world, but to save the world*. He that rejects me, and receives not my words, has one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that *his commandment is life everlasting*: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said to me, so I speak. John 12:45-50

**TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS -
LOOK FULL IN HIS WONDERFUL FACE
AND THE THINGS OF EARTH WILL GROW STRANGELY DIM
IN THE LIGHT OF HIS GLORY AND GRACE**

The **Greatest Enemy** of the Church is not Atheism but *False Religion*.
The first commandment is not to believe in God but Trust the True God
Counterfeit Conversion may take three main forms

Religion of **Hope and Fear** – *Legal*: False faith rooted in mere fear of punishment and hope of reward.

For I say to you, That *except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Matthew 5:20 (Can be *religiously lost*)
Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuses you, even Moses, in whom you trust. For had you believed Moses, you would have believed Me: *for he wrote of me.* But if you believe not his writings, how shall you believe My words? John 5:45-47 (**All true law is fulfilled in Christ**)

But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for you neither go in yourselves, neither allow them that are entering to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Matthew 23:13,23 (**Can miss the basics in religious legalities**)

And when they found him ... they said to him, Rabbi, when did you come here? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say to you, You seek me, not because you saw the miracles, but because *you did eat of the loaves, and were filled.* Labor not for the meat which perishes, but for that meat which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give to you: for him has God the Father sealed. Then said they to him, What shall we do, that we *might work the works of God* ? Jesus answered and said to them, *This is the work of God, that you believe on him whom he has sent.* John 6:25-29

And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which sees the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. John 6:40 (Work of God=Trust Christ)

And said, Verily I say to you, Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 18:3-4 (The **essential Gospel is simple & uncomplicated**)

People-Pleasers – *Social*. Religious hope resting on attempts to **please others or acceptance from culture.**

But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose *praise is not of men, but of God.* Romans 2:29

For if you love them which love you, what reward have you? do not even the publicans the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more [than others]? do not even the publicans so? Be therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. Matthew 5:44-48

Take heed that you do not your alms before men, *to be seen of them*: otherwise you have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when you do alms, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that *they may have glory of men.* Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. Matthew 6:1-4 And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say to you, *They have their reward.* ... when you fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that *they may appear to men* to fast. Verily I say to you, They have their reward. But you when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face; That you appear not to men to fast, but to your Father which is in secret: and your Father, which sees in secret, shall reward you openly. Matthew 6:5-8; 6:16-18

Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For *they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.* John 12:42-43 I am come in my Father's name, and you receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive. *How can you believe,* which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that comes from God only? John 5:43-44

“Carnal” Christian – *Carnal*. Counterfeit conversion allowing an antinomian hope in a sinful life-style.

You shall call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people *from their sins* Matt 1:21

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I *am not come to destroy, but to fulfill*. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:17-19

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you are like to whitened sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, you make him *twofold more the child of hell than yourselves*. Matthew 23:25,27,15

It is the spirit that quickens; flesh profits nothing: the words that I speak to you, they are spirit, and they are life. John 6:63

From that time many of his disciples went back, and *walked no more* with him. Then said Jesus to the twelve, Will you also go away? Simon Peter answered him, Lord, *to whom shall we go?* You have the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that You are that Christ, the Son of the living God. John 6:66-69

3. SALVATION = HIS LORDSHIP

Basis of Transformation: *No salvation without surrender; no half-way commitments or covenant
Real vs Counterfeit Conversion; Legal, Social or Carnal
Rom 10:9,10: Phil 2:11 "Confess .. Jesus as Lord"*

- We are not called to just trust in Christ's offices or works but in *Christ Himself*.
- He is not only Savior of all who believe, He already is the *Lord of all things*.
- We do not come to a divided Christ; we cannot receive only one part of Him.
- Learning is analog & linear but commitment is digital; *either true or false*.
- Christian *growth* is daily & progressive; a Christian's *life* is *Jesus Himself*.
- Salvation is not just a gift of eternal life distinct from Christ; it *is* Christ.
- There is no Biblical basis for an *optional surrender* after an initial salvation.

"And this is the record that God has given us eternal life; and *this life is in His Son*. He that is having the son of God *is having the life*; he that is not having the Son is not having the life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (I John 5:11-12: Lit translation)

True Christianity is **ongoing friendship** with the Triune God, from the free gift of grace of the Father through the redemptive mercy work of the Son and by the ministering agency of the gracious Holy Spirit. How can anyone claim this gift without a true growing loving relationship with the *One who is the gift?*

The *Lord* is mentioned 7,836 times in Scripture, in over 6,668 verses. He is called the **Lord God** in 1,594 of these. Whenever He speaks, even in the Old Testament about sending a Savior, it is *always as the Lord*:

And the LORD gave Israel a Savior, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians:... (II Kings 13:5)

And it shall be for a sign and for a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors, and He shall send them a savior, and a great one, and he shall deliver them. (Isaiah 19:20) For I [am] the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior: I gave Egypt your ransom ... (Isaiah 43:3) I, [even] I, [am] the LORD; and *beside me [there is] no savior*. (Isaiah 43:11) Tell and bring [them] near; yes, let them take counsel together: who has declared this from ancient time? [who] has told it from that time? [have] not I the LORD? and no *God else beside me; a just God and a Savior*; none beside me. (Isa 45:21) and *all flesh shall know that I the LORD [am] your Savior and your Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob* (Isaiah 49:26) and *you shall know that I the LORD [am] your Savior and your Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob*. (Isaiah 60:16) Yet I [am] the LORD your God from the land of Egypt, and you shall know no god but me: for [there is] *no savior beside me*. (Hosea 13:4)

There is no salvation in the Old Testament without acknowledging & declaring He is Lord.

In the NT, whenever Jesus is specifically called Savior (11 times) almost always He is *first* called Lord. *Even in all three exceptions** to this order, His Lordship as God is *implicit or explicit* in the context.

For to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:11)

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: (Philippians 3:20)

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Savior; and Lord Jesus Christ, our hope; (I Tim. 1:1) But is now made manifest by the appearing of our *Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (II Timothy 1:10) and To **Titus**, [my] own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior. (Titus 1:4)

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our *Savior Jesus Christ; (Titus 3:6) Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our "Savior; (Titus 2:13)

Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ: (II Peter 1:1) "...and for so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (II Peter 1:11) For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. (II Peter 2:20)

But grow in grace, and [in] the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him [be] glory both now and for ever. Amen. (II Peter 3:18)

There is likewise no salvation in the NT without confessing and trusting Him as Lord.

GODS REQUIREMENT IS WHOLE-HEARTED LOVING OBEDIENCE

And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to *love him*, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul? Deut 10:12 Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, always.

And it shall come to pass, if you shall listen diligently to my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, For if you shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave to him; Deut. 11:1,13,22

He has shown you, O man, what [is] good; and what does the LORD require of you, but to *do justly*, and to *love mercy*, and to *walk humbly* with your God? Micah 6:8

And it shall be to you for a fringe, that may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and *do them*; and *that you seek not after your own heart and your own eyes*, after which you use to go a whoring: Numbers 15:39

And you, Solomon my son, *know the God of your father*, and *serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind*: for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts: if you seek him, he will be found of you ; but if you forsake him, he will cast you off for ever

And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, **The first of all the commandments is**, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And *you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength*: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. **There is none other commandment greater than these.** And the scribe said to him, Well, Master, you have said the truth: for *there is one God; and there is none other but he*: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love [his] neighbor as himself, *is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.* And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said to him, You are not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that dared ask him [any question]. (Mark 12:28-34)

- While justification by faith is freely *imputed*, it is also really *imparted*.
- There is no “theoretical” salvation without practical surrender,
- no gift of eternal life distinct from *Christ Himself*,
- no optional discipleship for “advanced” Christians.

4. The CHIEF END of MAN is to GLORIFY GOD

Basis Of **Living**: *God-centered vs. Humanistic*
(*man-centred in motive, manner and message*)
Rev. 7:9-12 "Great multitude saying ... Blessing & glory"

- "The chief end of mankind is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever."
- Until and unless He becomes the whole *given goal* and practical purpose of our lives, our reason for life, studies - and even religious commitment will be in vain.
- As His Divinity defines real Christianity, true theology attempts to describe Him.
- This call, while infinite in possibility, open-ended in personal growth and limitless in potential is practical in daily reality. *His yoke is easy*, and His burden is light.
- All spheres of both human employment and enjoyment are His to govern and guide.
- The ultimate deception is an *independent spirit*. The ultimate loss is of His honor.

IT IS THE FUNDAMENTAL REQUIREMENT

Deuteronomy 10:12 And now, Israel, *what does the LORD your God require of you*, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul"

Micah 6:8 He has shown you, O man, what [is] good; and *what does the LORD require of you*, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? (Inscription Library of Congress: Religion)

Deuteronomy 4:29 But if from thence you shall seek the LORD your God, you shall find [him], if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Psalms 27:4 *One [thing] have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after*; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to *behold the beauty of the LORD*, and to inquire in his temple.

I Chronicles 28:9 And you, Solomon my son, *know the God of your father*, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts: *if you seek him, he will be found of you* ; but if you forsake him, he will cast you off for ever

SEEKING GOD CONTINUALLY

I Chronicles 16:11 *Seek the LORD* and his strength, *seek his face continually*. Isaiah 55:6: Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near: Psalms 105:4: Seek the LORD, and His strength: *seek His face evermore*. Psalms 14:2 The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to *see if there were any that did understand, [and] seek God*. Amos 5:8 [Seek him] that makes the seven stars and Orion, and turns the shadow of death into the morning, and makes the day dark with night: that calls for the waters of the sea, and pours them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD [is] his name:

SECRET OF TRUE SATISFACTION & JOY

Psalms 22:26 The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall *praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever*. Psalms 34:10 The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: *but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good [thing]*. Psalms 40:16 Let all those that seek You rejoice and be glad in You: let such as love your salvation say continually The LORD be magnified. Psalms 105:3 Glory in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD. I Chronicles 16:10

GOD IS JEALOUS FOR OUR EXCLUSIVE AFFECTION

Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for [it is] time to seek the LORD, till He come and rain righteousness upon you. Hosea 10:12

That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: Acts 17:27 Seek the LORD, all meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be you shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger. Zephaniah 2:3

For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel, Seek me, and you shall live: Amos 5:4

You shall worship NO other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. Exodus 34:14

THE DEVELOPMENT OF DECEPTION

STEPS OF SPIRITUAL DECEPTION	SATANIC PATTERN (Isaiah 14:12-15)
(1) INDEPENDENT SPIRIT	Failure to have a Servants' Heart
(Deviation From Christ) Root sin of PRIDE	<i>"I will mount up into the heavens"</i>
Attitude of disloyalty to God; denial of our need for Him; "vaunts self" (Jude 14; I Cor. 13:4)	Aspiration to be <i>like God in an ungodly way</i> ; responsible to no-one but self
(2) SELFISH CHOICES	Exalts ones' own importance
(Desire For Power) - Pharisee	<i>"I will exalt my throne above¹ the stars of God"</i>
Legalistic motivations for religious achievement; fear/hope, punishment/reward,	Takes false position of dignity and authority to <i>rule over God's servants</i> ; status-seeking vs honor
(3) SEARED CONSCIENCE.	Re-interprets Scripture & suppresses the dealings of the Holy Spirit
(Denial Of Absolutes) - Sadducee	<i>"I will sit on the mount of the congregation² in the recesses of the north³"</i>
Claims authority forbidden by Christ while questions any other authority	Takes the place of God <i>in judgment of others</i> according to own ideas
(4) INTELLECTUAL DECEPTION	Religious Rationalization
(Deception of self and others) - False Prophet	<i>"I will ascend above the clouds.."</i>
Falsely applies Scripture to self or to places/events with which he is connected	Begins to build "castles in the air", indulge in fantasy over self, or retreat from reality
(5) EMOTIONAL PERVERSION	Justifies Lusts
(Drive For Possession) - False Apostle	<i>"I will be like the most High⁴"</i>
Becomes <i>covetous</i> for economic, political, religious or sexual control	Begins to try to live out own fantasies; act as if he "possesses the earth"
(6) PERSONAL, SOCIAL & SPIRITUAL DISRUPTION OR DESTRUCTION	Divine Judgment
(Division of Disciples) - Justice of God	<i>"But you will be brought down to Hell ... to the sides of the pit"</i>
Denies <i>judgment</i> or punishment - <i>annihilationism</i> or <i>restorationism</i>	Destruction of power, credibility, reputation or control over others, loses those under bondage

Throne - Position of authority, dignity & rulership; 2. **mount of the congregation:** phrase used to describe the place of God's judgment 3. **recesses of the north:** the place from where God rules;
4. **Most High** - "Elyon" - used of God as the one Who "possesses the earth and the heavens"

5. LOVE is a CHOICE, not a FEELING

Basis of **Faithfulness**: vs. "The Ultimate Vibe"
Agape - Unselfish choice for the highest good according to real, related values"
Jn 14:23; 1 Cor 13; 1 John 3:14

When you love someone, you will be loyal to them no matter what the cost. You will always believe in them, always expect the best of them and always stand your ground in defending them" (1 Co. 13:7 - The Living Bible)

There are three great absolute statements about God in the N.T.: "**God is SPIRIT**" (John 4:24) "**God is LIGHT**" (1 Jn. 1:5) and "**God is LOVE**." Each reflects a fundamental facet of His nature; His essential Being, His wisdom, and His goodness. Combined they give us the word describing His essential personality: **God is HOLY** (1 Pet. 1:16; Rev. 4:8). We focus here on just one of these great attributes that comprehends all the affection and goodwill of His nature. It is the word Jesus gave as our fundamental model "on which hangs all the law and the prophets"; the word which describes the essence of the Divine character in action towards mankind. That word is "love".

BIBLE STUDY WORDS ON LOVE

HEBREW

chashaq (khaw-shak); a prim. root; to cling, i.e. to join, (fig.) to love, delight in. (Strongs 2836)
"Hashaq emphasizes that which attaches to something or someone; in the case of emotions it is love which is already bound to its object. God describes His love for Israel (Deut. 10:15) as this deep inner attachment. "He was bound to them of His own volition (love) and not because of anything good or desirable in them. (Deut. 7:7) It is to God's attachment (love) Hezekiah attributes his deliverance (Is. 38:17) This is the love that will not let go." (TWOT. 332)

ahab (ah-hab) Strongs 157 a prim. root; to have affection for (sexually or otherwise): *ahab* means affection in a good or bad sense - love. (Strongs 158) Its meaning varies in intensity from "God's infinite affection for His people to the carnal appetites of a glutton." God commands men to love Him (Deut 6:5) and the Psalms contain testimonies of obedience to that commandment (116:1; 145:20) Conversely God loves men, especially His people Israel (Deut. 4:37; Is. 43:4; Mal. 1:2) (TWOT p.14)

cheded or *hesedh* (*kheh-sed*) from 2616 kindness; by impl. (towards God) piety rarely (by opp) reproof or (subject.) beauty: favor, good deed, kindly, kindness, merciful, pity reproach. (Strongs 2617) Used 245x in the O.T.

Leon Morris calls *hesedh* "a term extraordinarily difficult to translate into English; our language has no obvious equivalent." E.W. Heaton points out it expresses "one of the most profound ideas in Hebrew religion" and links it to terms like devotion, fidelity, loyalty and even the knowledge of God. The King James uses 11 different words to translate it, the favorite being "mercy"; the RSV renders it "steadfast love" 178 times. Important translation groups would be words meaning "love, kindness, lovingkindness, mercy, loyalty, promise, devotion, favor, and goodness". Nelson Glueck says it always indicates some kind of *relationship*, and a *deep lasting affection*. "But what does the word tell us about that relationship? What is the attitude it denotes? Very plainly, it is an attitude of goodwill. But it is more than that. It is *love strengthened by loyalty*. ..." *Hesed* was not merely love dependent solely on the subject, but was at the same time loyalty and duty." Norman Snaith holds it means "faithfulness rather than kindness, for we find the word to involve in almost every case a substratum of *fixed, determined, almost stubborn steadfastness*" C.H. Dodd combines both concepts calling it "loyal affection." (Leon Morris, *Testament of Love*, (1981) p. 65-70)

"To love God is to have pleasure in Him and strive impulsively after Him. Those who love God are basically ... *who seek God for His own sake*." (Kittel Vol. I p.28) "God's love for Israel is not impulse, but WILL; love for God and neighbor asked of Israel is not intoxication but ACT." It is a *love which makes distinctions, which chooses, which prefers*." (p.38)

GREEK

There are a number of N.T. words used for love like *storge* (natural affection, family love) its lack a characteristic of the last days (Rom. 1:31, 2 Tim. 3:3). Rom. 12:10 compounds *storgein* with "*philos*" translated as "kindly affectioned." *Storgein* designates the "quiet and abiding feeling within us, which resting on an object near to us recognizes we are closely bound up with it and takes satisfaction in that recognition." This love is "a natural movement of the soul, something almost like gravitation or some other force of blind nature." It is the love of parents for children, children for parents, husband

and wife for each other, of close relations, even the love of an animal for its offspring. It is a love of obligation used here not in its moral but natural sense; a necessity under the circumstances. This kind of love is the binding factor by which any natural or social unit is held together." (Wuest, *Word Studies In The Greek N.T.* "Bypaths" Vol. 3, p. 110)

philia (friendship, built on common insight, interest or taste) used 45 times in various forms of verb and noun is "an unimpassioned love a friendly love. It is love called out of ones' heart in response to the pleasure one takes in a person or object." It can be used of the joy a hypocrite experiences praying publicly (Matt. 6:5), or the kinship with falsehood of a practiced liar (Rev. 22:15) Men can be "lovers of their own selves" (2 Tim 3:2) or have the "love of money" or covetous which is a "root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6:10; Lk. 16:14; 2 Tim. 3:2) Likewise, one that "loves" his own life will lose it (John 12:25); and the world that "loves its own" (John 15:19) speaks of an inner affinity, a liking for that which is like us. Alternately we can be a "lover of that which is (intrinsically) good" (Tit. 1:8) show "kindness" (Acts 28:2) "love towards mankind" (Titus 3:4) or "courtesy" (Acts 27:3); we call this in English "philanthropy". *Philein* is often used with another word literally meaning "from the same womb" translated as "brotherly love" (Rom. 12:10; 1 Thess 4:9; Heb. 13:1; 1 Pet. 1:22) or "love of the brethren" (2 Pet. 1:7; 1 Pet. 3:8). Used in its verb form in Mat. 6:5, 10:37; 23:6; 26:48; Mark 14:44; Luke 20:46; 22:47; John 5:20; 11:3,36; 12:25; 15:19; 16:27, 20:21:15,16,17; 1 Cor. 16:22, Tit. 3:15; Rev. 3:19, 2:15; translated as "love" or "kiss".

Philein is based on *an inner community*, a shared bond between the person loving and the person or object loved. That is, both have things in common with one another; the one loving finds a reflection of his nature in the person or object loved. It is a love of liking, an affection for someone or something that is the outgoing of one's heart in delight to that which affords pleasure. When Jesus asks Peter twice "Do you love (*agapan*) Me?" He asks "Do you love Me because I am precious to you, a sacrificial love that would make you willing to die for Me?" and three times Peter replies "Yes Lord, you know I am fond of (*philein*) You; I have an affection for you because of the pleasure I take in You." (John 21:15-19). Wuest comments: "Jesus asked for a love of complete devotion; Peter offers a love of personal heart emotion. Jesus asks for a love of surrendering obedience; Peter offers Him a love of personal attachment." *Philein* in its noun form *philos* is translated "friend" in Matt. 11:19; Lk. 7:6,34; 11:5,6,8; 12:4; 14:10,12; 15:6,9,29; 16:9; 21:16; John 3:29; 11:11; 15:13-15; 19:12; Acts 10:24; 19:31; 27:3; Jas 2:23; 4:4; III Jn. 14.

The Greeks made much of friendship, and used this word to designate mutual attraction. "Whatever in an object is adapted to give pleasure tends to call out this affection." Connected with the sense of the agreeable in the object loved, best expressed by "fondness, affection, liking." *Philein* is used in John 16:27 where God the Father takes pleasure in and loves those believers who take pleasure in His Son, and therefore love Him. It is a love of friendly affection; the Father finds the same kind of love for the Son in the hearts of the saints that is in His own heart for His Son." As an outgrowth of its meaning of fondness it sometimes carries that sentiment into an outward expression of the same, that of kissing." (Wuest, *op. cit.* pp. 111-123)

epithumia (strong desire, or passion) is a word sometimes used positively as in Luke 22:15, Matt. 13:17 and Phil. 1:23 ("I have a deep desire to depart and be with Christ") but most often to refer to lust or covetousness (1 Jn. 2:16, Col. 3:5) Passion can be a blessing used rightly, or a curse if misused. Family affection may lead to unfairness with another family. A friendship may selfishly discriminate. A strong desire to do Gods' will could be also a strong desire to do our own.

The key word we focus on is **agape**, that special noun rescued from an obscure family of Greek words and given meaning and import as never before by N.T. Christians.

agape (ag-ah'-pay) love, i.e. affection or benevolence (choose to do good) (Strong's 26) 5/6 1:21
agapeo (ag-ap-ah'-o) perh. from *agan* (much); to love in a social or moral sense. (Strong's 25)
agape is used 116 times, *agapao* 143, the adjective *agapetos* 61, a total of 320 times, contrasted to *philia* (once), *phileo* 25, and *philos* 29, or 55 times. "Clearly it is **agape** and its cognates that mattered to the writers of the N.T." (Morris *op. cit.* p. 125)

Agapan was never common in classical Greek literature; it is used in Homer only ten times, in Euripides but three. "Its noun form *agapesis* is rare. The form *agape*, so frequently found in the N.T. does not occur at all. Its first appearance is in the Greek translation of the N.T. It conveyed the ideas of astonishment, wonder, admiration and approbation when connected with the word "agamai" which meant "to wonder at or admire." It was used in classic literature in conjunction with *philein* as "a love of prizing" distinct from "a love of liking." But its relative emptiness as far as the general knowledge of the person who spoke Greek was concerned made it an ideal vehicle to contain the new moral and ethical content of Christianity. (Wuest, *op. cit.* p. 114)

In pre-Biblical Greek it meant only "to be satisfied with something, to receive, greet, to honor as regards external attitude; seeking after, desiring something as internal attitude." Note one particular

characteristic - it took on the meaning of "prefer" - to "set one good or aim above another ; to esteem one person more highly than another". Agape love is a "love that makes distinctions, choosing and keeping to its object; a free and decisive act determined by the subject; a love of the higher lifting up the lower. It is often translated "to show love" - a giving, acting love on the others behalf." (Kittel, p. 36-37)

"Agapan is used in its verb, noun and adjective form about 320 times in the N.T. It is love called out of a person's heart by an "awakened sense of value in an object which causes one to prize it. It expresses ... esteem. Its impulse comes from the idea of prizing. It is a love that *recognizes the worthiness of the object loved*. Thus this love consists of the soul's sense of the value and preciousness of its object, and its response to its recognized worth in admiring affection."

"contrasting philein and agapan we might say that the former is a love of pleasure, the latter a love of preciousness; the former a love of delight, the latter a love of esteem; the former a love called out of the heart by the apprehension of pleasurable qualities in the object loved; the latter a love called out of the heart by the apprehension of valuable qualities in the object loved; the former takes pleasure in, the latter ascribes value to; the former is a love of liking, the latter a love of prizing." (Wuest, op. cit. p. 112)

"Love can be known only from the actions it prompts. God's love is seen in the gift of his Son. But obviously this is not the love of complacency or affection, that is, it was not drawn out by the excellency of its objects. It was an EXERCISE of the DIVINE WILL in DELIBERATE CHOICE, made without assignable cause save that which lies in the nature of God Himself." (Vines Expos. Dict. N.T. Words p.21)

True Love is

- **unconditional:** it is not *because of, if, when, while or unless*
- not just **emotional;** you can love someone you cannot stand.
- **supernatural;** it is rooted in God's own unselfish character and choices.

agapao is both used of human and Divine actions; it is basically a **choice for the highest good that expresses ones' character**. That it is basically a choice and neither metaphysical necessity or an intrinsic virtuous substance is shown by the fact that it is also used of people making a *wrong* choice. Someone may take as their "highest good" that which is not of greatest worth in God's evaluation; someone may prize and esteem as precious that which God condemns. You can **love the wrong thing**. "Love not the world" (1 John 2:15) "men loved darkness rather than light" (John 3:19) "they loved the praise of men" (John 12:43) and "Demas has forsaken me having loved this present world" (2 Tim. 4:10) *all use forms of agapao*.

"Because God is love we do not discover God from our experience of love, but we discover love from our experience of God". Brunner says: "Every attempt to conceive love as a principle ... becomes distorted either in the rigorist legalistic sense or in the hedonistic sense. Man only knows what the love of God is when he sees the way in which God acts, and he only knows how he himself ought to love by allowing himself to be drawn by faith into this activity of God." (Michael Harper, *The Love Affair*, Eerdmans (1982) p.22-23)

We can put all the ideas of the Bible words for this Divine love together and say that ideally **agape is an heartfelt supreme preference for the highest good of God and His related Universe, according to all their real, relative values.**

It is an *intelligent choice*, not just a pleasant but passing feeling. It is an *ultimate choice*, a whole-hearted commitment involving loyalty, faithfulness, and trustworthiness. It is truly unselfish. It opposes wrong. Ultimately loyal to God, it prizes and prefers Him above all other objects of devotion or affection, because He alone deserves this honor. It next deals with all God's creation truthfully, wisely and considers with care always their highest good. Here "God is LIGHT" (ultimate wisdom and truth) and "God is LOVE" (ultimate value and virtue) combine in that total expression of God's love and wisdom: "God is HOLY". "

Holiness" says Gordon Olsen "is simply intelligence applied to our various relations in proper proportion and esteem. ...Virtuous love places the welfare and happiness of God supreme in our lives in true worship and happy service, and that of our fellowmen equal to our own." Finney & Edwards both called it "*disinterested benevolence*" - the Divine motivation to choose good without selfish interest. It is a fundamental characteristic of God's moral nature; it is the great commandment on which hang all the law and the prophets; it is the foundation-stone of all true Christianity.

LOVING-KINDNESS is fundamentally true about God: Ps. 86:5; Is. 54:8; Lam. 3:22; Ro. 2:4; Ep. 2:4; Jas. 5:11; II Pet. 3:9. This key characteristic to live lovingly (in a state of voluntary good-willing) affects deeply all our relations: "Love is patient, love is kind" (I Co. 13:4). This is the opposite of allowing righteous feelings of vindictive justice towards those who have injured us to hold sway in our beings. The loving disposition of the Godhead has completely overcome all feelings of vindictive justice, which man's rebellion and persistence in wickedness has caused to arise in the Divine Being. Now, instead of this insistence on strict justice, mercy and forgiveness is offered upon certain necessary conditions which will make happy reconciliation possible.

Loving-kindness and mercy is a tendency to be lenient and kind toward the unworthy, the core meaning of the word "grace" so often applied to the Godhead (Tit. 2:11). This is the quality of humiliation and self-abasement, a willingness to jeopardize proper standing and recognition out of compassion to the undeserving. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." It is the sacrificial impartation of life rather than conservation of life. *It sacrifices its own welfare and just due to grant to other moral beings its storehouse of blessings.* "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus," wrote the Apostle Paul. Here Paul describes the Son's willingness to leave the serenity of heaven and enter the area of our humiliation, so that He might give His life in atonement for the sins of the whole world (Phil. 2:5). (GORDON OLSON)

6. MAN is GUILTY not just HELPLESS

Basis of **Conviction**: True guilt not guilt feelings
Law of God vs Irresponsibility and Determinism
Rom 3:23 "All **have sinned** and come short ... "Isa 53:6

- We live in an age without moral absolutes, without guilt and without conviction.
- Men and women no longer believe they are responsible for their actions.
- If guilt is only bad feelings and rules are only inventions, only shame rules life.
- There has never been a true awakening or revival without conviction of sin.

Our age mirrors again the situations recorded in the Book of Judges. Here we see **cycles**: of sin, God sends prophetic warning but a cruel oppressor arises. There is some instance of individual repentance; a heroic savior emerges who in some way seeks and trusts God. This followed by deliverance and prosperity until the sad ugly cycle starts all over again. Common element? *There was no King in the land. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*

Our failure to acknowledge the invisible King of all the earth has led us to a culture where law is *whatever you want it to be for you*. There are no acknowledged absolutes. Indeed the only absolute is that *there are no absolutes*. People who think and act as if there are real rights and wrongs are judged as intolerant, prejudiced and bigoted. It is not wrong to be a Christian; you can be anything you want. The only crime is to be a missionary for such a belief, to say everyone else in the world should live His way. This is not an attack on the content of truth, but the method of seeing and knowing it.

Postmodern thought - at once the most dangerous attack on Biblical truth and values - yet creates some surprising opportunities. Play a game where there *are* no rules (or keep changing them) and after a while *there is no game*. People without rules come under the rule of those strong enough or scary enough to make up their own. Dictatorial political and religious systems have a heyday in a culture where anything goes. When the rot sets in, the rulers of fear and force step in from the sidelines to take over the sheep.

- Arguments go largely away when everything is deemed alright.
- Testimony must be listened to – lest you risk the tag of bigotry.
- Hunger comes for love, wisdom and reality; three elements always missing in sin.
 - Perfect love casts out all fear.
 - No bitterness and heat of spirit.
 - Give yourself wholly to the Real
 - Be child-like in the knowledge of evil.
 - Become a heart listener
 - Demonstrate conviction and passion.
 - Be always utterly real and honest.

SATAN'S LAST STAND (Gen. 11:1-10; Rev. 12:7-11)

This chart is a simplified summary of three eras/areas of human thought.

PRE-MODERN **Absolute** World-View - **God's** Rule (*Agricultural Age*)
Time Period: Ancient Greece to Renaissance / Reformation
World View: Multi-faceted, Mysterious, Moral
Reality Perception leads to Interpretation: ("I Call them the Way They Are")
Common Elements: Supernatural (Deity) - Analytical (Absolute Truth)
Virtue: Purpose Through Truth
Tools: Study, Prayer, Authority
Truth is Marvelous - Moral Expedition - All That Is Can Be Known
Enemy: Deceit and Sin; **Battlefield:** Soul
Goal: Power to Explore **God's** Universe

FOCUS: Spirit - Find God

MODERN **Autonomous** World-View - **Man** Rules (*Industrial Age*)

Time Period: *Enlightenment:* French Revolution (1789) - Fall of Berlin Wall (1989)
World View: Materialistic, Mechanical, Marxist
My Interpretation of Reality: ("I Call Them The Way I See Them")

Common Elements: Deist - Atheist - Rationalist - Industrial

Virtue: *Perfection Through Technology*

Tools: Demythology, Science, Comparison

Enemy: Ignorance, Superstition, Spirits **Battlefield:** Mind

Goal: Power to Control *Our Universe*

FOCUS: **Stuff - Forget** God

POSTMODERN **Anti-World-View - No Rules** (*Information Age*)

Time Period: Present Western Climate Late 70s - Future (2001+ on) Information

World View: Multicultural, Methodologic (orthopraxy, not orthodoxy) Minority-Rule

Common Elements: Monist - Mystic - Critical - Cynical - Personal Experience

Virtue: *Peace Through Tolerance* - Tolerate anything (except Intolerance)

Tools: Deconstruction, Disorder, Denial

Enemy: Intolerance: Fundamentalist, Hierarchy, Missionary **Battlefield:** Language

Goal: Power to Create *Our Own Universe*

FOCUS: **Self - Be** God

We moved in a single generation from a Biblical picture of our world to an ugly other.

7. SIN is essentially SELFISHNESS

Basis of Responsibility:

Wrong choices vs sinful "substance" or inherited determinative wrong:

*Ez. 18:1-25: Not blamed by God for another's wrong
Matt. 16:24-25 "If any come .. let him DENY HIMSELF"*

- If we are not responsible for our wrong, we cannot acknowledge true guilt.
- No-one ever felt guilty for another's wrong unless first taught it.
- Sin is neither solid, liquid or gas, metaphysical or spiritual. It is moral.
- Every word for sin in both Testaments *underlines personal action*.
- Sin is rooted in the gift of creative choice turned against God and His law.

SIN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Our understanding of God's will is tied to how seriously we see sin. Hebrew words describing sin overwhelmingly show that people are *willful* in doing wrong and thus genuinely guilty before God. Every type of word used shows sin as both voluntary and vicious: **A sinner according to Scripture will:**

1. **Miss or err from the mark**, wander from the path of right planned for man: Ex.20:20; Eze. 18:4,20; Dan. 9:5, 15. Note: "to miss the mark" doesn't mean the mark is too high; but that we aim too low! This is not just ignorance or stupidity but stubbornness.
2. **Act perversely, or twist and distort moral character**, usually rendered "Iniquity:" Ex. 34:7, 9; Ps. 32:2, 5; Is. 53:6; Ezek. 18:20; Dan. 9:5.
3. **Transgress or break away from just authority**, be contrary: Le. 16:15-16, 21; Is. 1:2; Eze. 18:30-31. Involves violating safeguards and boundaries of protection. Gods' sanctions are wholly sensible.
4. **Refuse to obey or hearken**, a negative prefix to a verb basically meaning to (not) listen or attend to: De. 28:45; Ne.9:16-17; Dan. 9:10.
5. **Refuse to serve God**, a negative to a verb meaning to labor; to work, work for another, thus to *not* worship and serve our rightful Ruler: Deut. 30:17; Josh. 24:14-15; Neh. 9:35.
6. **Act treacherously or deceitfully**, usually as "trespass." Le. 5:15; 6:2; Josh. 7:1; Neh. 1:8.
7. Be **rebellious** (to make or tend to make God bitter): I Sam. 12:13-15; Is. 1:20; Neh. 9:17.
8. Be **stubbornly disobedient**, also rendered to rebel: Num. 14:9; Neh. 9:26; Eze. 2:3; Dan. 9:5.
9. Be **wicked or impious** (with an idea of strong excitement): I Kgs. 8:47; Is. 57:20; Dan. 9:5, 15.
10. **Live worthlessly** or without worthy purpose (idea of emptiness or vanity), often rendered "iniquity:" Micah 2:1; ("unrighteous man") Is. 55:7; ("wicked thoughts") Jer. 4:14. (Life minus God = NOTHING.)
11. **Spoil or dash to pieces** the moral worth God intended): Be outrageously disappointingly in evil Gen. 6:5; Ps. 7:9; 51:4; Is. 1:16; Jer. 4:14

SIN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

New Testament Greek carries on the same idea of sin shown in the Old Testament as wicked and inexcusable, again using many words with different shades of meaning. "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise they became fools" (Ro.1:21-22).

Sin is to:

1. **Miss or err from the mark**, to wander from the path of uprightness and honor planned for man, not a mistake but deliberate misdirection of our faculties: Lk.15:21; 18:13; Jn.16:8-9; Ro. 2:12; 3:23; I Jn. 3:4-5.
2. **Trespass, fall beside** or deviate from the right path of life, stumble: Mt. 6:14-15; Ro. 4:25; Ep.1:7; 2:1.
3. **Transgress or step by the side of the prescribed path**, overstep or depart from the way of truth: Mt. 15:2-3; Acts 1:25; Ga. 3:19; He. 2:2. (Jay-walk)
4. Be **lawless, or refuse to conform to Divine law** revealed to increase man's understanding of the right way: Mt. 7:23; II Co. 6:14; Tit. 2:14; I John 3:4.
5. **Disobey or be disobedient, disbelieve or refuse belief** (willfully or perversely), from a verb to be persuaded, with a negative prefix: so to refuse to be persuaded or comply; be obstinate Jn. 3:36; Ro. 2:8; 10:21; Eph. 2:2; 5:6; Tit. 1:16; 3:3; He. 3:18; 4:6; I Pet. 2:7 -8; 4:17.
6. **Do wrong, be unjust or unrighteous**: refuse to do right: Ro.1:18; 2:8; ICo.6:9; Col.3:25; IJn. 1:9; Rev 22:11.
7. Be **ungodly act impiously**, without reverential awe toward God: Ro. 1:18; I Tim. 1:9; Tit. 2:12; I Pet. 4:18; Jude 15, 18.
8. Be **evil, wicked, or depraved in mind and heart**: Mt.12:34-35; 15:19; Ep.6:12; Col.1:21; He. 3:12

Sin is not a state, a substance or a spirit. Sin is a violation of revealed moral light, a stupid, selfish and often stubborn refusal to conform to what we know and perceive as God's truth. It brings guilt, shame and blame. Scripture shows the active nature of sin so many ways no-one can claim it as a mistake or a misunderstanding. The Bible shows a sinner as a rebel against a loving God, not just some subject of pity who cannot help who they are. There is always the idea of voluntary activity in sin, not some static, genetic or demonic causation that makes us helplessly bad. Sin has deeply hurt God as well as mankind. Everyone is personally held accountable for their own wrong. You will never stand before God and be able to blame your genetic descent, your Dad or the Devil for what you did to hurt yourself, others or Him. No definition of sin that tends to remove responsibility from a sinning individual honors God.

INSTANCES OF BLAME-SHIFTING

We are inveterate *blame-shifters*: This is not new; here are some of many Scripture instances:

Adam: ..The woman *whom you gave to be with me*, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. Genesis 3:12

Abram : *Say, I pray, you are my sister*: that it may be well with me for your sake; and my soul shall live because of you. Gen 12:13

Aaron: And I said unto them, Whosoever has any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and *there came out* this calf. Exodus 32:24

Jacob: And your father has deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me. Genesis 31:7

Saul: Therefore said I, The Philistines will come, so *I forced myself* ... 1 Samuel 13:12 (Samuel: "So what means this bleating of sheep I hear in my ears?") "*I spared the best for an offering to the Lord*" (the religious excuse)

Ananias & Sapphira: "After it was sold, was it not in your own power? why have you conceived this thing in your heart? you have not lied to men, but to God". (When revival comes people sometimes die in church) Acts 5:4

Antinomians to Paul: And not (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just. Romans 3:8

False Prophets: If a man walking in the *spirit of falsehood* lies, saying, I will prophesy to you of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people. Mic 2:11

Old Prophet: He said ..I am a prophet also as you; and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with you into your house, that he may eat bread and drink water. [But] *he lied to him*. 1 K 13:18

Humanity: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. Romans 1:25 **Pharisees**: You are *of your father the devil*, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for *he is a liar, and the father of it*. John 8:44 **Babylon**: The light of a candle shall shine no more at all in you and the voice of the bridegroom and the bride shall be heard no more at all in you: for your merchants were the great men of the earth; for *by your sorceries were all nations deceived*. Rev 18:23

GENUINE HONESTY IS EXPECTED OF ALL REAL BELIEVERS

For He said, Surely they are My people, *children that will not lie*: so He was *their Savior*. Isaiah 63:8
You shall not steal, neither *deal falsely, neither lie one to another*. Leviticus 19:11 God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: has he said, and shall he not do it? or has He spoken, and shall he not make it good? Numbers 23:19 *A faithful witness will not lie*: but a false witness will utter lies. Proverbs 14:5

Lie not one to another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his deeds; Colossians 3:9 I have not written to you because you know not the truth, but because you do know it, and no *lie is of the truth*. 1 John 2:21 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we *lie, and do not the truth*: 1 John 1:6 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. 11 Timothy 3:13 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 11 Thessalonians 2: 11 And there shall *in no wise enter into it any thing that defiles*, neither whatsoever works abomination, or *makes a lie*: Revelation 21:27

THE FIRST VITAL STEP IN RETURNING TO GOD IS CONFESSION: TOTAL HONESTY

Why does God ask us to confess our sins? It is surely not because He didn't see us doing what was wrong! Confession of sin is not primarily for Him, *but for us*. As long as we live a life outside of friendship with God, we will not only stay selfish, but grow more stupid. And most of all, we will become **unreal**. Moral darkness is a state of attempting to conceal our real wrong or representing it to ourselves as well as others as right. God's laws are descriptions of reality and *He never tells a lie*. God is utterly *real*, the foundation of all truth. The consequence of running away from God's law and voice will not only be guilt and shame; it will be *growing unreality*.

WE CANNOT BLAME OTHERS FOR WHAT WE DID WRONG:

God does not judge us for another's sins:

Then hear in heaven, and do, and judge your servants, condemning the wicked, to *bring his way upon his head*; and justifying the righteous, to *give him according to his righteousness*. 1 Kings 8:32

Ezekiel 18 - Yet you say, *Why? does not the son bear the iniquity of the father?* When the son has done that which is lawful and right, has kept all my statutes, and done them, he shall surely live. *The soul that sins, it shall die.* **The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.**

But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions he has committed, shall not be mentioned to him: in his righteousness he has done, he shall live. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? says the Lord GOD: [and] not that he should return from his ways, and live? Ezek. 18:19-23 But when the righteous turns away from his righteousness, and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, *shall he live?* All his righteousness that he has done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he has trespassed, and in his sin that he has sinned, in them shall he die. 25 Yet you say, *The way of the Lord is not equal.* Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not My way equal? are not your ways unequal? 26 When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, and commits iniquity, and dies in them; for his iniquity that he has done shall he die. Again, when the wicked [man] turns away from his wickedness that he has committed, and does that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. 28 Because he considers, and turns away from all his transgressions that he has committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. 18:27-29 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, *every one according to his ways*, says the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. 31 Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby you have transgressed; and *make you a new heart and a new spirit*: for *why will you die*, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, says the Lord GOD: wherefore turn [yourselves], and live. Ezekiel 18:30-32

8. GOD'S LAWS are NOT IMPOSSIBLE

Covenant-Keepers vs Antinomianism
Rules minus Relationship = Rebellion
Ps. 119:96,127,143; Matt 1:21; 1 Jn.5:3; Rom 7:12

- Law is a *rule of action*; a way a thing does behave (physical) or ought to (moral)
- Gods laws are not inventions but **reality descriptions from infinite perspective**. They are not made up arbitrarily, but accurately describe what is true about anything; about God, His creation and actual relationships between all things.
- God's law is "holy, just and good". There is nothing wrong with His laws.
- God's truth descriptions are not suggestions, options or possibilities but *mandate*.
- True law is not partial, particular or prejudiced. It is fit, right and universal.

Psalms 119:151 You [are] near, O LORD; and all Your commandments [are] truth.

Psalms 19:8 The statutes of the LORD [are] right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD [is] pure, enlightening the eyes.

Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; but you shall meditate therein day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written therein: for *then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success.*

Romans 7:12 Wherefore the law is holy, and *the commandment holy, and just, and good.*

1 Timothy 1:8 But we know that *the law is good*, if a man use it lawfully;

Exodus 15:26 If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD your God, and will do that which is right in his sight, and will give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put *none of these diseases upon you*, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I [am] the LORD that heals you .

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

Joshua 22:5 But take diligent heed to *do the commandment and the law*, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave to him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Psalms 111:10 The fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endures for ever.

Judges 3:4 And they were to prove Israel by them, to know *whether they would hearken to the commandments of the LORD*, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

- Ceremonial law is a visual primer, artistically showing what is spiritually true.
- Moral law is transcultural, universal and applicable in principle to any people.
- Moral law may be further stated as sanctioned precept, judgment or statute.
- True law has *sanctions*; either *implicit* (in the nature of itself) or *explicit*.
- Law without sanction is only advice. Only an infinite mind can see relative values
- Ignorance may be pardoned but still auto-incurs its own intrinsic penalty.

Deuteronomy 4:2 *you shall not add to the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish from it*, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said to them, Thus says God, Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, *that you cannot prosper?* because you have forsaken the LORD, he has also forsaken you. II Chronicles 24:20

And it *shall be our righteousness*, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us. Deuteronomy 6:25

Know therefore that the LORD your God, he [is] God, the faithful God, which keeps covenant and mercy with them that love him and *keep his commandments to a thousand generations*; Deuteronomy 7:9

You shall keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command you this day, that *it may go well with you, and with your children after you*, and that you may prolong [your] days upon the earth, which the LORD your God gives you, *forever*. Deuteronomy 4:40

Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, *always*. Deuteronomy 11:1

Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded, to teach you, that you might do them in the land whither you go to possess it: That you might fear the LORD your God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, *you and your son, and your son's son, all the days of your life; and that your days may be prolonged.*

Deuteronomy 6:1-2

To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, I command you this day *for your good?*
Deuteronomy 10:13 Beware that you forget not the LORD your God, in not keeping his
commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command you this day: Deuteronomy 8:11
A blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And
a curse, if you will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way
which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which you have not known. Deuteronomy
11:27-28 Only if you carefully hearken to the voice of the LORD your God, to observe to do *all these*
commandments which I command you this day. Deuteronomy 15:5

The Bible connects violation of law with guilt, even in ignorance; but also recognizes that **knowledge equals responsibility**. While some public demonstration of upheld law is always necessary as an atonement (a sacrifice – trespass or burnt offering) enforced penalties may be lessened, lightened or pardoned in proportion to available moral light. Hence:

EVEN IN IGNORANCE: GUILT REQUIRES PUBLIC DISPLAY

Speak to the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall *sin through ignorance* against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them: And if the *whole congregation* of Israel *sin through ignorance*, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which should not be done, and are guilty; Leviticus 4:2, 13

When a *ruler* has sinned, and done somewhat through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD his God [concerning things] which should not be done, and is guilty; And if any one of the *common people* sin through ignorance, while he does [somewhat against] any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty; And if a *soul* sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD; though he knew [it] not, yet is he *guilty*, and shall bear his iniquity. (Leviticus 4:22-27, 5:17)

If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. Exodus 22:2

If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed] for him; for he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. Exodus 22:3 (Distinction between housebreaker and burglar)

If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall restore double. Exodus 22:4

If a man shall deliver to his neighbor money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found, let him pay double. If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought to the judges, [to see] whether he have put his hand to his neighbor's goods. For all manner of trespass, [whether it be] for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, [or] for any manner of lost thing, which [another] challenges to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; [and] whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double to his neighbor. Exodus 22:7-9

And if any one of the common people *sin through ignorance*, while he does somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done and be guilty; Or if his sin, which he has sinned, *come to his knowledge*: then he shall *bring his offering*, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has sinned.

And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering and slay the sin offering in the place of the burnt offering. And the priest shall take of the blood with his finger, and put [it] upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar. And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall burn [it] upon the altar for a sweet savor to the LORD; and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him. (Leviticus 4:27-31)

KNOWLEDGE = RESPONSIBILITY

Jesus said: If you were blind, you *should have no sin*: but now you say, We see; therefore your sin remains. John 9:41

{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. (Matthew 11:21; Luke 10:13)

And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and did not prepare himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that did not know and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few [stripes]. For to *whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required*: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. (Luke 12:47-48)

My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. (James 3:1)

And the times of *this ignorance God winked at*; but now commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30)

For the time is come that *judgment must begin at the house of God*: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? I Peter 4:17

But to him that knows to do good and does it not, to him it is sin (James 4:17)

KNOWLEDGE = RESPONSIBILITY
RESPONSIBILITY ACCEPTED = FURTHER LIGHT
RESPONSIBILITY REJECTED = GUILT & CONSEQUENCE

9. TRUE REPENTANCE a CONDITION for SALVATION

*Real Change vs Incomplete Conversion - death even to **rights**, good things
Salvation "not to be repented of" Matt. 4:17; Luke 13:3 Acts 26:20 "Except you repent.."*

- Repentance is the first essential condition of genuine conversion.
- Repent was the first message of John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Himself.
- Repentance is not an optional extra but a fundamental requirement of pardon.
- In a world without moral absolutes repentance is core to seeing true change.
- We are called to not only repent from sin, the world and the Devil but also *our own righteousness*. The hardest death to die is not to bad things but good things.
- The circle of confession should match the circle of confession; private or public

Repent is the very first word of the Gospel message preached by every NT evangelist:

John the Baptist: Matthew 3:2 And saying, *Repent*: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Jesus Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, *Repent*: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Mark 1:15 And saying, {The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: *repent* and believe the gospel.

Disciples: Mark 6:12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

Peter Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, *Repent*, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

To the Jews: Acts 3:19 *Repent* therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

To Simon the magician: (Occult) Acts 8:22 *Repent* therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.

To Greeks: Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commands all men everywhere to repent:

Paul to Everyone: Acts 26:20 But showed first to them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should *repent* and turn to God, and *do works meet for repentance*.

Repent is Christ's key word to every religious believer in the Gospels to the Churches of the Revelation:

Believers: Luke 13:3 I tell you, No: but, except you *repent*, you shall all likewise perish.

Brothers: Luke 17:3 Take heed to yourselves: If your brother trespass against you, rebuke him; and *if he repent*, forgive him. Luke 17:4 And if he trespass against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to you, saying, I *repent*; you shall forgive him.

Ephesus: Revelation 2:5 Remember therefore from whence you are fallen, and *repent*, and do the first works; or else I will come to you quickly, and will remove your candlestick out of his place, except you *repent*.)

Pergamos: Rev. 2:16 *Repent*; or else I will come to you quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Thyatira: Revelation 2:21 And I gave her space to *repent* of her fornication; and she did not repent. Rev 2:22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

Sardis: Revelation 3:3 Remember therefore how you have received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If you shall not watch, I will come on you as a thief, and you shall not know what hour I will come upon you.

Laodicea: Revelation 3:19 {As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Repentance involves **outward public** as well as **inward private change** as in **Baptism**

Mark 1:4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the *baptism of repentance* for the remission of sins. Luke 3:3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

Matthew 3:8 Bring forth therefore *fruits meet for repentance*: Luke 3:8 Bring forth therefore *fruits worthy of repentance*, and not begin to say within yourselves, We have Abraham as our]father: for I say to you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. (repentance like faith is not genetic or inherited)

Matthew 3:11 I indeed *baptize you with water to repentance*: but he that comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

Matthew 9:13 But you go and learn what this means, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but *sinners to repentance*. Mark 2:17 When Jesus heard it] he says to them,

They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Luke 5:32

Repentance + Faith Core **Conditions** for **Gospel joy, forgiveness** and God's remission of sin

Luke 15:7 I say to you, that likewise *joy* shall be in heaven over *one sinner that repents*, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. Luke 24:47 And that *repentance* and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Acts 11:18 ... God also to the Gentiles granted repentance to life.

Acts 5:31 Him has God exalted with his right hand [to be] a Prince and a Savior to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. Acts 19:4 Then said Paul, John truly baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people, that they should *believe on him* which should come after him, that is, *on Christ Jesus*. Acts 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, *repentance toward God*, and *faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*.

REPENT

It is often said “repent” is the first word of the Gospel. It is also the foundation of revival. Frank Bartleman, journalist whose writings helped spread the fire of the Azusa Street Outpouring, said “the depth of any revival will be determined exactly by the spirit of repentance that is obtained. In fact, this is the key to every true revival born of God.” Why is preaching repentance so essential?

Repentance prepares the way for the Lord's coming. John the Baptist, forerunner of the Lord Jesus, preached repentance (Matt 3; Luke 3), and Jesus Himself preached repentance (Matt 4:17 to prepare the way for God's coming kingdom! Preaching repentance helps prepare hearts for Divine visitation in times of revival. Obstacles of sin, rebellion, uncleanness, pride, and dead tradition are removed and we make ready the way for the Spirit's outpouring.

Repentance is the Lord's primary word to a backslidden church, as He calls on His people to wake up from slumber and return to their first love. Jesus brings words of repentance to five of the seven churches of Asia Minor, telling them to repent and be restored or face certain judgment (Revelation 2-3). Repentance preaching is essential to revival, since revival is for the backslidden, worldly, or compromised. Those constantly ablaze for God do not need revival! As Charles Finney noted, revival “presupposes that the Church is sunk down in a backslidden state, and a revival consists in the return of the Church from her backslidings, and in the conversion of sinners.”

Repentance calls for sinners to turn from their evil ways. It demands an about face. That's why Peter preached repentance in his Pentecost sermon – calling his fellow-Jews to turn from the error of their ways and to embrace Jesus as Messiah and Lord – and the same message of repentance resounds throughout the Book of Acts (see Acts 2:38; 3:19; 000). It is also the revival message confronting disobedient sinners with the holy standards of an all-knowing, all-seeing God.

Repentance paves the way for refreshing (Acts 3:19), another essential element of revival. As thoroughgoing as the repentance is, so glorious will the refreshing be! (Michael Brown)

TRUE REPENTANCE

Repentance (*metanoia*) literally means “above or beyond the mind.” To repent means to *change your mind*. You thought dumb things about God, heaven, hell and your own place in the world; your picture of Him was too small, too silly or plain wrong. You lived a life that was stupid, selfish and false. Now under the flame of God's holy truth by His Spirit and His Word you see everything in a different light and the word that comes to your heart with force is this: *change your mind*. Scripture speaks of a repentance *not to be repented of*. What does godly repentance look like?

ELEMENTS OF TRUE REPENTANCE

Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that *you sorrowed to repentance*: for you were made sorry after a godly manner, that you might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow works repentance *to salvation not to be repented of*: but the sorrow of the world works death. (2 Corinthians 7:9-10) What does true repentance look like?

For behold this selfsame thing, that you *sorrowed after a godly sort*, what it wrought in you, yea what -

1. **Carefulness** - Take up your sins one by one. *Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what you have done to hurt your own life, the life of others and most of all, the Living God. If need be, make a list. See A Spiritual Checkup*
2. **Clearing yourselves** – Ask God to help you be absolutely honest and real. Let nothing remain hidden in heart.

3. **Indignation** – Catherine Booth said it is the task of the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin. That He would help us to first of all see, then to *hate* and finally *forsake* our sin. Those that hate sin will not easily court or embrace it.
4. **Fear** – What if this was the list God used on judgment day for your sin? What if He read it aloud to the world?
5. **Zeal** – Sometimes translated as jealousy of a husband or of God. Angry if something has come between you.
6. **Vehement desire** – an intensely strong passion to make things right, to set in motion deep hunger for God
7. **Revenge!** Taking some kind of destructive action towards a representation of your wrong. Break or burn it.

The Holy Spirit is like a trial lawyer. He first assembles together all the evidence, then one by one lays all the facts out before both the plaintiff and the jury. Such is the process of true conviction. The way to develop conviction is not to kneel, strain and try to feel guilty or sad. Just ask the Holy Spirit to go over with you in your mind one grim fact after the other. Let Him lay out the truth of your inner life line on line, until the evidence becomes overwhelming.

10. SALVATION is an ACT OF MERCY & GRACE

God's grace vs "works righteousness" Man does not deserve Christ:
Ask God to **accept us**: 1 John 3:16

- Nothing we can ever do can earn God's pardon, mercy or forgiveness.
- The *ground* of all God's acts of salvation, healing, revival is *grace alone*.
- While *conditions* are *not without which*, grace and mercy is *reason for which*.
- God does not reference His actions to our faithfulness, but to His own.

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. Genesis 6:8
In this truth the *future of all humanity is spared*. **Grace** or gracious and its sister **mercy** or merciful are each found over 300 times in Scripture.

Moses marked by grace: And Moses said to the LORD, See, you said to me, Bring up this people: and you have not let me know whom you wilt send with me. Yet you have said, I know you by name, and you have also found grace in my sight. Now therefore, I pray you, if I have found grace in your sight, show me now your way, that I may know you, that I may find grace in your sight: and consider that this nation [is] your people. For wherein shall it be known here that I and your people have found grace in your sight? is it not in that you go with us? so shall we be separated, I and your people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. And the LORD said to Moses, I will do this thing also that you have spoken: for you have found grace in my sight, and I know you by name. (Exodus 33:12,13,16,17)

Ruth entered Christ's lineage by grace: And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after [him] in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said to her, Go, my daughter. ... Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said to him (Boaz), Why have I found grace in your eyes, that you should take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger? (Ruth 2:2,10)

Samuel was promise-born by grace: And she said, Let your handmaid find grace in your sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad. (1 Samuel 1:18)

Ezra's nation spared by grace: And now for a little space grace have been [showed] from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage. (Ezra 9:8)

Esther favored by grace And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti. Esther 2:17

Jesus clothed in grace: And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the *grace of God was upon him*. Luke 2:40 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John 1:14 And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. John 1:16 For the law was given by Moses, [but] grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. John 1:17

GRACE IS A CROWN GIFT OF GREAT BEAUTY

You are fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into your lips: therefore God have blessed you for ever. Psa 45:2

For they [shall be] an *ornament of grace* to your head, and chains about your neck. Proverbs 1:9 So shall they be life to your soul, and grace to your neck. Proverbs 3:22 She shall give to your head an *ornament of grace*: a crown of glory shall she deliver to you. For the LORD God [is] a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good [thing] will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. Psalms 84:11 He that loves pureness of heart, [for] the grace of his lips the king [shall be] his friend. Proverbs 22:11 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers Ephesians 4:29. Let your speech [be] always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer every man.

Colossians 4:6 **Grace is focused by the face, adorns our speech and crowns our heads with the aura of royalty.**

THE GIFT OF SALVATION BEGINS & CONTINUES IN GRACE

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. Titus 2:11 Even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ, (*by grace you are saved*;) Ephesians 2:5 That being *justified by his grace*, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Titus 3:7 That in the ages to come He might show the *exceeding riches of His grace* in [his] kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For *by grace are you saved through faith*; and that (salvation) not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: Ephesians 2:7-8 But we believe that *through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved*, even as they. Acts 15:11 Being *justified freely by his grace* through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Romans 3:24 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had *believed through grace*: Acts 18:27 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would *cleave to the Lord*. Acts 11:23 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to *continue in the grace of God*. Acts 13:43 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is *able to build you up*, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. Acts 20:32 Wherefore receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, *let us have grace*, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: Hebrews 12:28

I I. The GOSPEL works by TRUST and LOVE

*Gospel vs Legal (Punishment & reward, bribe and threat)
Moses can't take you into the Promised Land: (Gal 3:13, 14; 3:2-5)*

- Law has limits. It is *description*, not *motivation*. It has no intrinsic power to -
- *Justify*: Law does not have authority to pronounce a wrong as right.
- *Pardon*: Broken law can only sentence or consequence, not forgive.
- *Sanctify*: Law has no power of and in itself to make a bad man good.
- Law has sanctions, giving authority and enforcement to description.
- Only a Lawgiver/Judge can intervene between violation and sentence.

For when we were self-centered, the actions of sins, which were (defined) by the law, worked in our (bodily) members to bring forth fruit to death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead in what we were bound; we should serve in newness of spirit, and not [in] the oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? is the law sin? God forbid! No, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, you shall not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin [was] dead. For I was alive without the law once:(before moral light) but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be to death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death to me? *God forbid*. But sin, that it might show up for what it is, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become (seen as) exceeding sinful. (Romans 7:5-10,13) *Enhanced*

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded [is] death; but to be spiritually minded [is] life and peace. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you. For if you live after the flesh, you shall die: but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with [him], that we may be also glorified together. (Romans 8:3-17)

When God restores us to Him it is not by pretending we *did not* sin, nor accepting us *in* our sin. When is a door not a door? *When it is a-jar. When it is something else*. When is a sinner no longer a sinner? Not just when he is not sinning. Not just if he stops sinning. But when he becomes in Jesus *something else*. We become a new creation. This change is a decision that is real, substantial and ongoing. Of old, God is gracious. He did not need the cross to make Him so. Reconciliation is not about restoring God to us, but *us to God*. And making us again like Him.

These Are the Facts

God Loves You

He made you. He knows how you feel. He understands all your problems. He knows your background. He knows your name. And God loves you and wants you to have the best for your life. Everything God does, He does out of love. His love is not just a good feeling about His Universe, but an unselfish CHOICE to will our highest good. "Herein is love; not the we loved God, but that He loves US and sent His Son to be the way through which we could be forgiven and come back to Him."

Sin Has Come Between You and God

Sin is really selfishness; a "me first" attitude of heart and life. It is denying God's right to be God in your life; it is breaking His laws, and scorning His guidelines for happiness. It is putting ourselves first above everyone else; living first of all to serve and please ME instead of God, and refusing to treat all others according to their rightful place and value in the Universe. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world; and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil..." "ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

God Hates Sin Because It Costs So Much

Sin is the cause of all the heartache in our world. God didn't plan sin. He never plans unhappiness. He wants man to be happy and free. Sin is the reason why there is pain, misery and death in our land. Sin enslaves us to our feelings instead of our doing what is right and smart. Sin makes us feel guilty and afraid and alone. *Sin is the most expensive thing in the Universe.* It cost God His only Son. It cost Jesus Christ His life.

God, Who must be just, never can allow sin to go unpunished, or His Universe would be overrun by evil. When God's infinitely important law of love for happiness is broken, any law-breaker must pay the penalty. A law without a penalty is only advice. That penalty must be as important as the law it is designed to protect. For such a terribly important law as God's law, made to direct and protect His intelligent moral creatures, the penalty is awful - *endless death*, or separation forever from His Universe and all the rights and privileges of living and growing in it through eternity. "The soul that sins shall die...The wages of sin is death."

You, As A Sinner, Deserve To Be Punished

You know that deep inside. By right *you* should pay the penalty of your sin. You knew what was right, but did not do it. You have made a mess of your life. If you are really honest, you know you have no excuses to make. Nothing you could say to God could possibly justify the choices you have made to please yourself. "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of law...for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His Word is not in us."

But - In His great love and wisdom, God found a way to forgive you, and still be just - IF you are willing to meet His conditions.

The Lord Jesus humbled Himself and became man. He lived a perfect life and never broke His Father's law of love. He offered His own perfect life as a sacrifice to provide a substitute for the penalty of your sin. His death on the cross shows at once how much God loves you and how much He hates your sin. You can choose one of two things: pay the penalty for your sin OR resolve to turn your back on the past and give your life to God, letting the Lord Jesus be your substitute.

God CANNOT forgive you unless you are willing to stop fighting Him and make Him your Boss. His Holy Spirit makes you willing to change, and He draws you now by His love. He wants to help you make a life-changing decision NOW. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man comes to the Father but by Me." "He that trusts his life wholly to the Son is experiencing eternal life; he that does not believe on the Son of God shall not see life; but the anger of God abides on him."

SALVATION is God's plan to restore man to a holy, happy relationship with Him. All problems of sin, doubt, failure and lack of victory or God's power can be conquered by the following steps:

Rethink...

Stop running away from the Voice of God and look at your life. We do not naturally want to obey God; only if we let the Holy Spirit show us our sin as GOD sees it will we realize just how bad we have been. To do this, you MUST be TOTALLY HONEST!

Don't pretend. Don't "play down" your sin.

Stop making excuses! Admit it *from your heart*: "God, I am all wrong!"

If necessary, get paper and pencil and WRITE DOWN the things that have come between you and God, and stopped you from serving Him as you ought.

Repent...

Turn your back on your old way of life. Be WILLING to lose any habit, any plan, any friend that you have been living your life for instead of God. This is not easy, but Jesus said if we wanted to follow Him, we must first count the cost. (Luke 14:25-33) Salvation is like a real marriage. Two people promise themselves to each other, pledge their love to each other before a watching world, and give up forever all their old dates and unholy alliances. This is what God wants you to do to know His love.

Renounce...

Give up all RIGHTS to your own life. If you are going to be a part of God's world-changing family, you cannot be your own boss any longer. You must DIE to your own plans, dreams and ambitions, and be willing to do whatever God wants you to do. He knows EXACTLY what will make you most happy. It may hurt to surrender everything at first, but God knows best, and will never ask you to do anything that you will regret in the end. A true Christian has nothing of his or her own; time, talents, money, possessions, friends, career, and future - all must be surrendered for his King's service wherever and whenever He wants them.

Replan...

Be prepared to make many changes in your life! The very moment you make this heart-choice for God, the old "you" will die, and a new person inside you will begin to live. If the Holy Spirit is speaking to you about getting something right with someone, you must be willing to do it for God to help you. Wherever you need to confess wrong, or restore or repay something to someone, the Lord Jesus will give you the courage and the words to say. Becoming a Christian implies the WILLINGNESS, as far as is humanly possible, to right all known wrong. (Prov. 28:13) If you write out a list of things that have come between you and God, ask His forgiveness for those done against Him; plan to make right all others with people you know you have wronged, and know you are guilty of. *The circle of confession must fit the circle of committal of sin.* Those against God, confess only to Him; those against one person, to that person alone; those against a group, to the group.

Receive...

The Lord Jesus Christ by FAITH (a loyalty of love to the Word of God) to rule in your heart as King. He must be your absolute Boss from now on! This act of faith is neither an idea or a mere feeling but an ACT, a CHOICE of your WILL, made intelligently and carefully. Give Him your doubts, your weakness and your loneliness. Your heart will never have peace, your doubts will never clear up, you will never die to the world until you trust, surrender, BELIEVE from your heart! Be totally honest with Him. Receive Christ into your life as your Lord and Master to live for Him from this moment on, forever. (Rom. 10:9-10)

Now - Ready?

**THERE IS NO TIME LIKE NOW...
GOD HAS DONE EVERYTHING HE CAN FOR YOU...
THE NEXT MOVE MUST BE YOURS!!!**

Are you willing to trust His love? Will you choose His life, or turn your back on His love and choose a future without Christ, without hope and without an end? Will you be very honest with Him right now? Talk to God before the touch of His Holy Spirit lifts off your life.

Tell Him in your own words something like this:

"God, I'm sorry I've been selfish and rebellious so long. I'm sick of my old life and I want to change. Please forgive my sin, and give me the power to live my life from this moment on for You. I give you my heart; take over everything I have and am, and be my Lord and King. Amen."

12. HOLINESS is not an OPTIONAL EXTRA

Christian Perfection, not "Carnal Christian"

Practical vs optional consecration, "dedicated" Christian:

Walk before me and be perfect" (Gen.17:1) "Be PERFECT as your Father in heaven" (Matt.5:48)

- Holiness is the measure of love and wisdom: *infinite in Him, finite in those made His.*
- While "*nobody is perfect*" is almost a modern axiom, it is certainly not Biblical.
- Over 650 times in Scripture, God and those He calls His are designated as *holy*.
- The word *Holy* is a summary of God's own demonstrated nature and character.
- Holiness is not self-generated nor peer-reviewed. It is God-given and revealed.
- A holy life is the fruit of loving response to the revealed gracious goodness of God.
- In a digital culture compromise is wholly contrary to the tenor of a true commitment.

GOD IS AWESOMELY HOLY

Marked Forever: "And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing like the engraving of a signet; HOLINESS TO THE LORD ... as the Lord commanded Moses" (Exodus 39:30) "For I am the LORD your God; you shall therefore sanctify yourselves; and you shall be holy; for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44) **Make a Real Difference:** "And you shall be holy to Me; for I the Lord am holy and have severed you from other people that you should be Mine" (Lev. 20:26) "I, the Lord which sanctifies you, am holy" (Lev. 21:8; 20:8)

Jesus' prayer for His disciples in the Garden "Sanctify (*hagiason*) them in the truth; Your word is truth ...and for their sakes I consecrate (*hagiazon*) myself that they also may be consecrated (*hegiasmenoi*) in truth." (John 17:17,19) .

Song of the Angels: "And one cried to another and said "Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory." (Is. 6:3)

The SON is called HOLY

Conceived Supernaturally and Uniquely: "Found with child of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 1:18) "The Holy Ghost shall come upon you .. that holy thing which shall be born (Lk 1:35) **Linked to the growth of the Early Church:** "Of a truth against your holy child Jesus" (Acts 4:27) ... By the name of your holy child Jesus" (Acts 4:30) This unusual title is given Him in Acts, perhaps because of (a) a revelation of the Father's affection for Jesus and the parallel between the Fathers care for Christ and them in the infancy of the church and (b) calling out the protective, defending power of the Fathers character and nature.

Recognized as such by demons: "I know You who You are, The Holy One of God" (Mk 1:24, Lk 4:34)

Prophesied One Who would rise again: "You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption"(Acts 13:35)

The FATHER is called HOLY

"But as He that has called you is holy, so you be holy in all manner of life; because it is written, you be holy for I am holy. And if you call on the Father who without respect of persons judges according to every mans work, pass the time of your sojourning here with reverential fear." (1 Pet. 1:15-17) "Holy Father, keep through Your own name" (John 17:11) Only once, in this verse, is the Father specifically called holy; this is because He is already understood so by the multiple O.T. references to the Holy One. Perhaps as the directing authority in the Godhead He, (unlike the Son and more particularly the Spirit) is the One who "sets apart" or dedicates both the Son and the Spirit in Their respective earthly ministries of bringing holiness to the Church.

The SPIRIT is called HOLY

"He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost" (Mk. 1:8) "That I should be a minister ... being sanctified by the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15:16) There are multiple references to the Holy Spirit in Scripture; they comprise the bulk of verses where the word *holy* is ascribed to God in the N.T. He is a **Person** not a thing.

GOD IS UNIQUELY HOLY

"You cannot serve the Lord for He is a holy God" (Josh 24:19) ".Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God?" (1 Sam. 6:20) "To whom then will you liken Me or shall I be equal?" says the Holy one of Israel" (Is. 40:25) "There is none holy as the LORD; for there is none beside You; neither is there any rock like our God. (1 Sam. 2:2) "Are You not from everlasting, oh LORD my God, my Holy One?" (Hab. 1:12) "Oh God, You are awesome out of Your holy places" (Ps. 68:35) "These things says He that is holy, He that is true" (Rev. 3:7) "Who shall not fear You O Lord, and glorify Your Name? for only you are holy; for all nations shall come and worship before You; for your judgments are made manifest." (Rev. 15:4) "...For I am God and not man, the Holy One in the midst of you (Hos 11:9) "LORD who shall abide in Your tabernacle? Who shall dwell in Your holy hill?" (Ps. 15:1) **God is utterly different from us as Uncreated Creator.**

"No man can say Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor.12:3)

GOD'S NAME IS HOLY

"You shall not take the Name of the LORD your God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that takes His name in vain" (Ex.20:7)

"Neither shall you profane My holy name" (Lev. 21:22) "Pollute My holy name no more" (Ezek. 20:39)

"I will be jealous for My holy name (Ezek.39:25) "they have even defiled My Holy Name" (Ezek.43:8)

"When you pray say "Our Father which art in heaven; hallowed be Thy Name." (Luke 11:2)

WE ARE TO WORSHIP HIM IN HIS HOLINESS

"But You are holy that inhabits the praises of Israel" (Ps.22:3) "Oh sing to the LORD a new song; for He has done marvelous things; His right hand and his Holy arm has gotten Him the victory " (Ps. 98:1)

"Give to the LORD the glory due to His Name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness" (Ps. 29:2)

"For the LORD is our defense; the Holy One of Israel is our King" (Ps. 89:18) "Rejoice in the Holy One of Israel" (Is. 29:19) "Glory in the Holy One of Israel" (Is. 41:16) "He sent redemption unto His people; He commanded His covenant forever; holy and reverend is His name" (Ps. 111:9)

"For thus says the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." (Is. 57:15) "The LORD is righteous in all His ways and holy in all His works .. My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD; and let all flesh bless His holy Name forever and ever " (Ps. 145:1,7,21)

THERE IS WISDOM IN HIS HOLINESS

"The *fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom*; and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding

" (Prov.9:10) "For You have said my doctrine is pure and I am clean in mine own eyes; But oh that God would speak ... and that he would show you the *secrets of wisdom*, that they are double to that which is! ..." (Job 11:4-5b) "But *God has revealed them to us by His Spirit*; for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God ... which things also we speak not in the words which mans' wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches .." (1 Cor. 2:10,13) **Without an Infinite Reference we are never going to be wise.**

THERE IS POWER IN HIS HOLINESS

"Let them praise Your great and terrible name, for it is holy; the kings strength also loves judgment; You do establish equity; You execute judgment and righteousness in Jacob; Exalt the LORD our God and worship at His footstool; for He is holy ... and worship at His holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy" (Ps.99:3,4,5,9) "So I will show my greatness and My holiness and make Myself known in the eyes of many nations" (Ezek. 38:23 NIV)

"Through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15:13) **Legitimate manifestation of power is always linked to the character control of a holy life.**

THERE IS JOY IN HIS HOLINESS

"Bless the Lord oh my soul and all that is within me bless His holy Name" (Ps 103:1) "Glory in His holy name; let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD" (Ps.105:3,1 Chron. 16:10) "Save us O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen to give thanks to You holy name and to triumph in Your praise" (Ps. 106:47) "Blessed is the people who know the joyful sound; they shall walk O LORD in the light of Thy countenance. In Thy Name shall they rejoice all the day; and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted." (Ps.89:15-16) "For the Kingdom of heaven is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:7) **Contrary to popular prejudice a holy life is a truly happy, joyful life** the opposite of a threat and bribe religious driven-ness..

HE CREATES & REDEEMS IN HOLINESS

"Fear not you worm Jacob and you men of Israel; I will help you says the LORD and your REDEEMER, the Holy One of Israel" (Is. 41:14, 43:14) "That they may see and know and consider and understand together that the hand of the LORD has done this and the Holy One of Israel has CREATED it" (Is. 41:20)

"I am the Lord, YOUR Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King" (Is. 43:15) **The infinite resources of this astonishing Creator and Lover are with us.**

"Thus says the LORD, the redeemer of Israel and HIS holy One: to him that man despises, to him whom the nation abhors, to a servant of rulers: Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship because of the LORD that is faithful and the Holy One of Israel and He shall choose you." (Is. 49:7)

"... to bring their sons from afar, their silver and their gold with them to the name of the Lord your God AND TO the Holy One of Israel because he has glorified you." (Is. 60:9)

HE JUDGES IN HOLINESS

"They have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger ..." (Is. 1:4) "But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness" (Is. 5:16) "And the light of Israel shall be for a fire and His Holy one for a flame ..." (Is.

10:17) "The LORD is in His holy temple; the LORD'S throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men" (Ps. 11:4) "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy which temple ye are." (1 Cor. 3:17) **He is not a "tame lion". Utter love, terrifying truth, unbearable Light.**

"And they cried with a loud voice "How long, oh Lord, Holy and true do You not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:10)

- There has *never been* an awakening in history where this theme is not felt nor upheld.
- The *sheer volume* of Scripture around this truth is overwhelming in its emphasis.
- The sense of God's holiness and terrifying Otherness is the root of all true conviction.
- *Holiness to the Lord and in His people* is the cry of all heaven and the loss of all our earth.
- Being "perfect" is not infinite perfection, nor some perfectionist inability to do wrong or make a mistake. It is the equivalent of being both sincere and blameless; with honest intention *living up to the light God gives us.*
- While we tend to go out of our way to deny or discard this call, *it remains dear to God's heart.*
- Without holiness, *no-one shall see the Lord.* This is true on earth as in heaven.

We are made to grow. Growth only comes when we are given stress from where we are to where we might be. God's call to be like Him (an infinite Being) means there will *always be a gap between what we are and what we can become.* That form of healthy stress is not only safe, but *necessary.* When we deny the possibility of change or worse, *reject* that real difference by attempting to alter or compromise the reality of that standard, we sentence ourselves to stagnation and even some form of eventual death.. **We cannot change the standard to fit our own fitness.** Being "perfect" in a Biblical way, is not only possible. it is *mandatory.*

HOLY LIVING SHOULD FOLLOW CONVERSION – G. Gilchrist Lawson¹

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¹ [Gilchrist Lawson was author of *Deeper Experiences of Famous Christians & The Marked Reference Bible*] These references from Scripture show how much attention is given to this subject.

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36, 38, 39; 12:1, 14, 25; 13:4, 20, 21. Jas. 1:21-end; 2:8-end; 3:11-13, 14-18; 4:4, 8, 17; 5:9, 19, 20. I
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 14:4, 5, 13; 20:12; 13; 21:7, 8, 27; 22:12, 14, 15. (from Summary of Chain References:Zondervan Marked
 Reference Bible, pp. xx-xxii)

13. GODS KINGDOM is FOUNDED on Inner FREEDOM not External FORCE

Basis of **Liberty**: vs. *Legal/Religious Dictatorship*

Inner transformation not External compulsion: "Righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom 14:17; Gal 5:1; Jn 8:32-26,36; 1 Cor 13:4; 2 Cor 3:17 Ps 119:45

- In a government rooted in love and trust, the focus is on the Ruler, not the rules.
- "Men qualify for freedom in direct proportion to their ability to put moral controls on will and appetite. *The less there is within, the more there must be without.* It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. *Their passions forge their fetters.*" (William Burke)
- True freedom is not the *right to do what you want*, but the *power to do what is right*. "If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed."
- Freedom is a fruit of mercy and grace; good works flow out of a grateful heart.
- Liberty is not top down, but heart-out. Legal cannot carry you past hope and fear.
-

FREEDOM IS THE PROMISE OF GODLY SERVICE

And if your brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold to you, and serve you six years; then in the seventh year *you shall let him go free* from you. And when you send him out free from you, you shall not let him go away empty:
(Deut 15:12-13) It shall not seem hard to you, when you send him away free from you; for he has been worth a double hired servant [to you], in serving you six years: and the LORD your God shall bless you in all that you do (Deut 15:18)
And you shall hallow the fiftieth year, and *proclaim liberty throughout all the land* to all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee to you; and you shall return every man to his possession, and you shall return every man to his family. (Lev 25:10)

When a man has taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be *free at home* one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he has taken. (Deuteronomy 24:5)

And these are the singers, chief of the fathers of the Levites, who *remaining in the chambers were free*: for they were employed in that work day and night. (1 Chronicles 9:33)

Then Hezekiah answered and said, Now you have consecrated yourselves to the LORD, come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the LORD. And the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank offerings; and as *many as were of a free heart* burnt offerings. II Chronicles 29:31

[Is] not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to *let the oppressed go free*, and that you break every yoke? Isaiah 58:6

Peter said to him, Of strangers. Jesus said to him, *Then are the children free.* (Matthew 17:26)

And you shall know the truth, and the *truth shall make you free.* They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how do you say, You shall be made free? John 8:32-33
If the Son therefore shall make you free, *you shall be free indeed.* John 8:36

GOD IS THE ORIGINAL FREE SPIRIT

Restore to me the joy of your salvation; and uphold me with your *free spirit.* Psalms 51:12

And *I will walk at liberty*: for I seek your precepts. Psalms 119:45

The Spirit of the Lord GOD [is] upon me; because the LORD has anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; (Isaiah 61:1) Now the Lord is that Spirit: and *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.* (II Corinthians 3:17)

This word came to Jeremiah from the LORD, after king Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people at Jerusalem, to *proclaim liberty to them* ... And you were now turned, and had done right in my sight, in *proclaiming liberty* every man to his neighbor; and you had made a covenant before me in the house which is called by my name: (Jeremiah 34:8,15)

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 preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to *set at liberty* them that are bruised, Luke 4:18 Because the creature (creation) itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the *glorious liberty* of the children of God. (Romans 8:21)

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Galatians 5:1 For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. (Romans 8:15)

SALVATION: FROM LEGALITY TO LIBERTY

The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. I Corinthians 7:39

[There is] therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:1-2)

But whoso looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. James 1:25 So speak, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. James 2:12 And *deliver them* who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Hebrews 2:15

And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: Galatians 2:4 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But now, after that you have known God, or rather are known of God, how do you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto you desire again to be in bondage? Galatians 4:3,9; 5:1 Which things are an allegory; for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which genders to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answers to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. Galatians 4:24-25 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. II Peter 2:19 And *deliver them* who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Hebrews 2:15

FREEDOM IS NEVER A LICENCE TO SIN

Who gave himself for our sins, that *he might deliver us from this present evil world*, according to the will of God and our Father: Galatians 1:4 For, brethren, you have been called to liberty; *only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh*, but by love serve one another. Galatians 5:13 As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. I Peter 2:16

And the Lord *shall deliver me from every evil work*, and will preserve me to his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. II Timothy 4:18 The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished: ... While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. (II Peter 2: 9, 19)

But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak. I Corinthians 8:9

Conscience, I say, not your own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? I Cor. 10:29

But whoso looks into the *perfect law of liberty*, and continues in it, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a *doer of the work*, shall be blessed in his deed. James 1:25 So speak, and do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. James 2:12

The law of God as revealed in His Word is the finest, fairest and most comprehensive description of moral reality ever given to humanity. The record of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible are filled with detailed description from God's heart to Israel of His expressed will to them as a nation. The laws given to Israel were not inventions, but *sets of descriptions of what was true*. Some laws described truth in practical matters like safe or risky foods. Some, like a child's primer were ceremonial structures. They described much bigger truths like the necessity of an atonement not easily grasped by simple description. But all God's given law is rooted in reality. These descriptions were not the origin of the truth, but the revelation, illustration and clarification of what ***is already true and in place***.

For Millennia, God has been building His church. The scaffolding is the Law, the description; His life in His Body the building itself. The advent of Christ in His life, death and resurrection signals the end of the need for the scaffolding for those who are truly part of the building. More damage has been done by those who confuse the scaffolding with the building than almost any other misused good thing in history.

The first truth is always Personal, Real and Relational. Form follows function. Spirit precedes structure, Message generates the matrix. Reality itself always precedes the revelation and description of its structure and form. When we do not see this, everything becomes flipped backwards and upside down, a deceptively dark mirror of Divine order. That is why it is so easy to become a Legalist, a Will-Worshiper or a Bibliolater. "Search the Scriptures" said Jesus to the greatest religious scholars and spiritual leaders of His time; "for *in them you think* you have eternal life; and these are they that testify of Me. But *you will not come to Me* that you might have life."

At the heart of the Universe is not a set of Principles but a Person.

14. GOD IS FULLY ACTIVE in HISTORY

Basis of **Missions and Evangelism:**
Supernatural Activity vs Religious Fatalism (Is 48:6-7)
God can change any future; prayer really does change things:
Ezek 22:30-31; Jer. 18:7-10; Jonah 3:10; 2 Chron 7:14

- *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.*
- He is not only the Uncreated Triune God, but *still the Creator* of all things.
- He has not stopped being God and still has power to speak and act into history.
- At the end of all time nations come to learn from His law and *listen to His Voice*.
- Mankind is not at the mercy of blind fate, but under the mercy of a kind Father.
- His sovereign power and wisdom do not limit His present intervention in our world. He is bound only by His character and His word to do what is right.
- This is one *fundamental difference* between Christianity and all other religions.

GOD IS ACTIVE IN TIME

"I have showed you NEW THINGS FROM THIS TIME; even hidden things and you did not know them; they are CREATED NOW, and NOT FROM THE BEGINNING; even before the day when you heard them not lest you should say "Behold, I knew them." (Is. 48:6-7) There are no Bible words for *timeless eternity*, only without limit, beginning or end.

"In the BEGINNING God created ..and the evening and the morning were the FIRST DAY" (Gen. 1:1,5) "And God SAW everything that He had made, and behold IT WAS VERY GOOD. And the evening and morning were the SIXTH day." (Gen. 1:31) "And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt; FOR all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth; and God said to Noah "The end of all flesh IS COME BEFORE Me; FOR the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I WILL destroy them with the earth." (Gen. 6:13) "And the Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in His heart, "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living AS I HAVE DONE." (Gen. 8:21)

"Why, seeing TIMES are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know Him NOT SEE HIS DAYS?" (Job 24:1)

"The Lord SHALL COUNT, when He writes up the people, that this man was born there. Selah." (Ps. 87:6)

"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 ye may be also." (John 14:2)

A special word is used in the NT to denote the intersection of God's timing with our time; *kairos* which denotes a *Divine intervention into human affairs*. Again and again *kairos* is the root of all revivals and the fountainhead of missions and massive evangelistic harvests in history.

GOD CAN CHANGE HIS ACTIONS WHEN PEOPLE CHANGE

"And God saw the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that the imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually; and it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth and it grieved Him at his heart." (Gen. 6:5,6)

"And God SAW their works that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that HE HAD SAID that He WOULD DO to them; and He DID IT NOT." (Jonah 3:2,4,10; 4:2) **God is not limited by anything except His character.**

"Nevertheless He regarded their affliction WHEN HE HEARD their cry and He remembered for them His covenant and repented according to the multitude of His mercies." (Ps. 106:40-45) **God really does answer earnest prayer.**

"David said "Let me now fall into the hands of the Lord for very great are His mercies; but let me to fall into the hands of men. And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it; and AS HE WAS DESTROYING, the Lord beheld, and He repented Him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed; "It is enough; STAY NOW your hand." (1 Chron. 21:11-15)

"IF YOU WILL still abide in this land, THEN WILL I build you and not pull you down; and I will plant you and not pluck you up; for I repent Me of the evil that I have done to you." (Jer. 42:9-12) *Obedience to God's Word can change the future.*

"If you forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then He will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that He has done you good." (Josh. 24:20) *God is wholly just and fair. He does not play favorites with what is right or wrong.*

"IF that nation against whom I HAVE pronounced (judgment) turn from their evil, I WILL repent of the evil that I you ght to do to them ... IF it do evil in My sight that it obey not My voice, THEN will I

repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them." (Jer. 18:5-10) "The Lord repented for this ... it shall not be, said the Lord." (Amos 7:3,6)

"Stand .. and speak ... diminish not a word, IF SO BE they will hearken and turn every man from his evil way THAT I MAY repent Me of the evil which I PURPOSE TO DO to them because of the evil of their doings." (Jer.26:2-7, 12-13,17,19)

"The fear of the Lord prolongs days, but the days of the wicked shall be shortened. ... Be not overmuch wicked neither be foolish; why should you die before your time?" (Prov.10:27; Eccl.7:17) **The time of our death is not fixed by fate.**

"Mine heart is TURNED WITHIN ME; my repentings are kindled together. I WILL NOT execute the fierceness of My anger, I WILL NOT return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee" (Hos.11:7-9)

"TURN to the Lord your God; for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness and repents Him of the evil. Who knows if HE WILL RETURN and repent and leave a blessing behind Him?" (Joel 2: 12-14)

GOD TESTS PEOPLE AND RESPONDS TO THEIR RESPONSE

"Oh that My people had hearkened to Me and Israel had walked in My ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies and turned My hand against their adversaries." (Ps.81:13-14)

"And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God led you; these forty years in the wilderness to humble you and to PROVE YOU, to know what was in your heart, *whether you would keep His commandments or not.*" (Deut.8:2)

"Because that this people has transgressed ... *I also will not HENCEFORTH drive out any before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died; that through them I MAY PROVE Israel whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein as their fathers did keep it or not.*" (Judges 2:20-3:5 (Cf. Ex.33:2,34:24)

"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to SHOW HIMSELF STRONG on behalf of those whose heart is perfect towards Him." (1 Chron. 16:9)

"Then said the Lord to Moses; Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I MAY PROVE THEM, whether they will walk in My law or not." (Ex. 16:4)

"You shall not hearken to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God PROVES you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." (Deut.13:3)

"Wherefore the Lord God of Israel said "I said indeed that your house and the house of your father should walk before Me FOREVER; BUT NOW, the Lord says "Be it far from Me; for them that honor Me I will honor, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed." (1 Sam. 2:27-30)

"*Whereupon* the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said "The Lord is righteous" and WHEN the Lord saw that they humbled themselves, the Word of the Lord came ... *therefore* I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance; and My wrath shall not be poured out on Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak." (2 Chron. 12:6,7)

GODS' FUTURE DECISIONS APPEAR AS FUTURE TO HIM

"*Let Me alone* that My wrath may wax hot against them and that I may consume them; and *I will make of you a great nation.*" And Moses besought the Lord ... and said "Turn from Your fierce wrath and repent of this evil against Your people." And the Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do to His people." (Ex. 32:7-14 (12,114)

"And you shall remember the way which the Lord your God led you; these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and prove you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or no." (Deuteronomy 8:2)

David said "Let me now fall into the hands of the Lord, for very great are His mercies" ...And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it; and *as He was destroying*, the Lord beheld and He repented Him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed: "It is enough; stay now your hand." (1 Chron. 21:11-15)

"*Because* this people has transgressed .. *I also will not henceforth drive out any before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died; that through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein as their fathers did keep it or not.*" (Judges 2:20-3:5; cf. Exodus 33:2,34:24) "You shall not hearken to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proves you, to know whether you love the Lord your God ..." (Deut. 13:3)

And He said to them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in his own power (authority) Acts 1:7 But of that day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Mark 13:32 (Some Divine decisions are *still future*; not subject to chronological time, but Divine command.

GOD'S PROPHETIC CALLS ARE NEVER FATALISTIC

"IF that nation against whom I have pronounced turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do to them ... if it do evil in My sight that it obey not My voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them."

(Jeremiah 18:5-10)

Wherefore the Lord God of Israel says "I said indeed that your house and the house of your father should walk before Me forever; *but* NOW, the Lord says, "Be it far from Me; for them that honor Me I will honor; and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed." (1 Samuel 2:27-30) (*Promised blessings & protections of grace and mercy still have conditions of faith*)

"Nevertheless He regarded their affliction WHEN He heard their cry and He remembered for them His covenant and repented according to the multitude of His mercies." (Psalm 106:40-45) *God is faithful to His promises and covenant.*

"Stand and speak ... IF SO BE they will hearken and turn every man from his evil way THAT I MAY repent Me of the evil which I purpose to do to them because of the evil of their doings." (Jeremiah 26:2-6, 12-13, 17, 19)

"IF you will still abide in this land THEN I will build you and not pull you down; and I will plant you and not pluck you up; for I repent Me of the evil I have done to you." (Jeremiah 42:9-12)

"Turn to the Lord your God; for He is *gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness* and repents of the evil. Who knows if He will return and repent and leave a blessing behind Him?" (Joel 2:12-14) Oh that My people had listened to Me, and Israel had walked in My ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies and turned My hand against their adversaries." (Psalm 81:13-14) *God's ability to intervene extends to all nations on condition of our listening and obeying.*

"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 may you be also." (John 14:2b-3) (*The future is still future under the securing care of God.*)

"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you forever ..." (John 14:16a)

"Ye also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (*Jesus to the twelve disciples*) (Matt. 19:28c) cf.-

"You Lord ... show whether of these two You have chosen that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by *(his) transgression fell.*" (Acts 1:24b-25) (*Judas had a throne.*)

And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said to the people, You have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up to the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned to the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if you wilt forgive their sin; - *and if not, blot me, I pray, out of Your book which You have written.* And the LORD said to Moses, *Whosoever has sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.* (Exodus 32:30-33) cf. "... if any man shall add to these things, God shall add to Him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away His part out of the book of life and out of the holy city." (Rev. 22:19) (*Names added to or taken away from God's Book.*)

There is *nothing like this* in any other major religious picture of God in the world. Such care and protection of a Person who orders a Providence without *kismet, karma* or luck and chance is unknown outside of the pages of the Bible. The true Creator God, Who made us in His own image and likeness to grace us with the gift of choice and the responsibility to order our days trusting His love and wisdom is still able and willing to step into dying or defeated lives and bring resurrection.

LEXICAL NOTE ON “Foundation of the World”.

A puzzling phrase occurs in ten places in the New Testament that in many translations seems somewhat out of context.

Matthew 13:35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret *from the foundation of the world*. Matthew 25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you *from the foundation of the world*} Luke 11:50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed *from the foundation of the world*, may be required of this generation. John 17:24 Father, I will that they also, whom you have given me, 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* Ephesians 1:4 According as He has chosen us in Him *before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: (*in front of the collapsing culture*) Hebrews 4:3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished *from the foundation of the world* Hebrews 9:26 For then must He often have suffered *since the foundation of the world*: but now once in the end of the world has he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (*because of the collapsing culture*) I Peter 1:20 Who verily was foreordained *before the foundation of the world*, but was manifest in these last times for you, Revelation 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain *from the foundation of the world* Revelation 17:8 The beast that you saw was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life *from the foundation of the world*, when they beheld the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

At first reading we assume the translation *from (or before) the foundation of the world* refers to God's original creation of the earth. But the Greek phrase *apo (or pro) katabole kosmos* does not actually speak of creation but **destruction** and not of the created planet earth, but of a **culture**. *Katabole* comes from two root words *kata* (down) and *bole* (throw – we get the word “ball” from this). *Katabole* is only used as a word for “foundation” because it is what is thrown or *laid down* before a house is built. Its literal translation however is to **throw or fall down** – collapse or disintegrate. The Greek word for the planet, or the Earth is *ge*. but is not used here. *Kosmos* is translated usually as the *world system*, or *culture*, now seen as become an enemy of God. Although this phrase is allowable the substitution of “*in front of*” for “*before*” or “*because of*” for “*from*” the *collapsing culture*” is not only more lexically accurate but contextually much more relevant in each case.

15. The ATONEMENT: 10 Gates of Christ to God

Dynamic Use in Metaphors of Missions (1 Cor. 1:18)

Victor – Lamb – Judge – Martyr – Adopter- Redeemer- Representative - Expiator- Reconciliator - Justifier
"God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of Christ" (Gal 6:14)

- Gods' greatest gift to us is that of His dearest love, His only-begotten Son Jesus.
- God in Christ became *one of us*, true representative of both God and mankind.
- The mission of Jesus was to "*do the will of the Father*", "*destroy the works of the Devil*" and to "*seek and save that which was lost.*" (Jn. 5:30; 1 Jn 3:8; Lk. 19:10)
- His purpose in all these are summed in the magnificent mystery of His death on the cross and His subsequent triumphant victory over death, Hell and the grave.

"Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3:18). "We do see Jesus, who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone" (Heb. 2:9). "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace" (Ep. 1:7).

The problems of reconciliation were temporarily overcome under the Old Covenant in Old Testament times through a sacrificial offering system which God progressively revealed. Sacrificial offerings were practiced since the days of Adam and Eve. The full development of the sacrificial system of mercy and worship, along with the Tabernacle and later the Temple with their sacred arrangements, were given through Moses. Prescribed offerings may be classified in a twofold way: First, offerings which were propitiatory, for the purpose of obtaining forgiveness of sin and restoration to God. The most solemn great Day of Atonement was to be observed once each year by the whole nation of Israel (Le. 16:1-34). It was to be a time of great mourning for sin (31), with repentance, confession, forgiveness and cleansing. *Trespass offerings* were for specific guilt or blame which any one incurs (as Le. 5:5-6, 7, 15-16). Secondly, offerings which expressed communion and fellowship with God: *Burnt offerings* (Le. 1:3, 10, 14), *peace offerings* (Le. 7:11-15, 16-17), and *grain offerings* (Le. 2:1-16). These sacrificial offerings were designed to make a profound impression upon each individual participating and upon the whole nation Israel. They demonstrated that:

- (1) Sin is a dreadfully serious matter against God;
- (2) Sin is an offence to God's sense of values with unchanging hatred;
- (3) Realization of guilt and true humiliation was necessary;
- (4) Man needed something tangible to bring realization and be an object for faith;
- (5) God has a right to full supremacy and devotion;
- (6) God delights in peaceful fellowship and communion; and
- (7) Tithes and offerings to God are a privileged obligation.

- No single picture can adequately describe the Divine purposes in His death.
- The Early Church used *ten metaphors* dynamically to different audiences to portray His passion for the purpose of evangelism. We tend to use just one or two.

IMAGES OF THE ATONEMENT

(Summarized from *Understanding The Atonement* - John Driver)

I. Jesus the Victor

Conflict-Victory-Liberation: Salvation occurs when God pours out righteousness; his own life-giving power in such a way that both God's people and all creation are delivered from the forces of evil and established in God's kingdom. Christ's work is specifically described in terms of victory over evil powers (Gal. 4:3-9; Eph. 1: 19-22; 2:14-16; 3:7-13; 6:12; Phil. 2:9-11; Col. 1:13-14; 2:8-15; 1 Pet. 3:18-22). While "powers" may be a difficult reality for modern people to grasp, they are taken seriously in the New Testament, understood as invisible, spiritual forces which enslave and oppress people in a bondage from which they are unable to break free themselves. These forces lie behind many religious, social, and political institutions. In fact, the earliest confession of faith *Jesus is Lord* was also a denial of the loyalty claims of all other powers. The New Testament image which views Christ's work in terms of conflict, victory, and liberation is solidly based in the Old Testament vision of God's saving activity. The theme of colossal conflict between God on behalf of his people and the enslaving evil powers seen in its sharpest Old Testament focus is liberation from Egyptian bondage in the book of Exodus.

The work of Christ effected the physical *healing of the sick as well as the moral and spiritual wholeness of the sinful*. While the church never forgot that healing in its deepest sense includes forgiveness of sins, it has a notable tendency to assign a figurative or spiritual sense to healing when associated to the work

of Christ. The chief significance of His work was that *He won the decisive battle*, the turning point in God's struggle with the forces of opposition. This struggle waged through the Old Testament continued in the early church is still being waged in our time. It is the war of the Lamb against all principalities and powers of Satan's kingdom.

2. Jesus The Servant Lamb Who Suffers for Us

The New Testament from the beginning describes and interprets Jesus' saving mission as a vicarious suffering-servant. Each of the Gospels begins on this note. The synoptic Gospels describe Jesus' messianic commission in terms of Isaiah 42:1 (Mark 1:11; Matt. 3:17; Luke 3:22). John associates Jesus with the *lamb* of Isa. 53:7. In Aramaic the same term, *talya* means both "lamb" and "servant." John the Baptist may have intentionally used these two meanings, but the Evangelist, writing in Greek, had to choose one of the terms for his Gospel. *Lamb* is found only in the Gospel of John and Revelation.)

... In the Bible there is a *connection between alleviation of physical evils and expiation of sin*. The same Servant bore our diseases and "the sin of many" (Isa. 53:12). We may interpret the low-key servant-hood nature of Jesus' ministry like Isaiah 42:1-4 (Matt. 12:16-21), the response to Jesus' public ministry in Isaiah 53:1 and 6:9-10 (John 12:37-43). In Luke 22:37 Jesus himself interprets his impending passion with specific reference to Isaiah 53:10 and also when He speaks of his suffering and death (Mark 8:31; 9:12b,31; 10:33f.,45; 14:21). The "many" of Mark 10:45 ("to give his life as a ransom for many") strongly reminds us of the fourfold "many" in Isaiah 52:14-15; 53:11-12. The early church certainly understood Jesus' messianic ministry in terms of the Suffering Servant

3. Jesus Our Representative:

Several archetypal images in the New Testament are applied to Jesus. These include Representative Man, Pioneer, Forerunner, and Firstborn. While not generally related to the atonement in recent theology, these messianic titles apparently did play a substantial role in the early church's articulation of the meaning of the saving work of Christ.

Furthermore, all these images significantly relate Christ's work to the new life in Him the apostolic community experienced with such intensity. These simply underscore understanding God's gracious saving initiatives, including Christ's work in the context of experiencing salvation in God's community.

Representative Man: *Son of Man* is the title Jesus most often refers to himself. In Romans 5:12-21 Jesus is called "the one to come," "that one man," or "the one man" repeatedly in contrast to Adam, who is simply called Adam or "one man." In I Corinthians 15:45-49 Christ is called "the last Adam" When Paul speaks about Adam and Jesus Christ, he refers representatively to *two humanities*. Adam represents what humankind might have been and what we are now: humanity made for communion with God but who has become the slave of self. Jesus represents a new kind of humanity: humanity which not only dies but lives again. Jesus' representative role covers the present as well as the future of humanity. Jesus represents what we are now, and by his obedience he represents what we may become.

Philippians 2:5-11 also refers to Christ Jesus assuming the "likeness of men" and "being found in human form. It was the early church's conviction that Jesus came not merely as a man, as one man among many, but as Representative Man not only subject to death but also obedient to God even to the point of death on the cross. The biblical vision of humankind set forth in Psalm 8:4-6 was widely used in the early church in its testimony to Jesus Christ and his saving work (I Cor. 15:27; Eph. 1:22; Phil. 3:21; Heb. 2:6-9; I Pet. 3:22). The writer to the Hebrews states the conviction that Jesus was The Man who fulfilled the destiny God had originally intended for humanity. Humankind had been created "lower than the angels"

Archegos (Pioneer) appears four times in the New Testament, and in every case refers to Jesus Christ and his saving work. Peter charged Israel as having "killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead" (Acts 3:15). That charge is repeated in Acts 5:30-31, this time leveled at the Sanhedrin: "The God of our fathers raised Jesus whom you killed by hanging on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." We read in Hebrews 2:9-10 that Jesus suffered death "so that by the grace of God he might taste death for every one. For it was fitting that he ... should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering." In Hebrews 12:2 Jesus is described as "the *pioneer and perfecter* of our faith who ... endured the cross." How does this term contribute to our understanding of the meaning of Christ's saving work? In ancient Greece the term was applied to the **hero of a city**, to one who had founded the city and given it his name or served as its guardian. *Archegos* carried the sense of captain. In the Septuagint *archegos* is usually applied to the political or military leader of the people, or head of a clan or tribe. Occasionally used figuratively it is translated variously as "father," "elder," and "beginning." In Judaism the term is applied mainly to the patriarchs but also to Adam and Noah. But in the New Testament the term is applied *exclusively to Jesus* and always in a context which deals with his saving death and resurrection. In Acts 3:15 and 5:31 the resurrection is cited as evidence that the title *archegos* is an appropriate one. In these passages, we can understand Christ's saving work as *archegos*, the founder and preserver of a faithful and obedient people, a community in which repentance leads to forgiveness

of sins, a participation in his glory, and a share in his witness to God's holy love even to the point of suffering.

Prodromos translated "forerunner," occurs only once in the New Testament, a reference to Jesus who "has gone as a forerunner on our behalf" (Heb. 6:20). Jesus as a forerunner for us (*huper hemon*) is important, since "for us" is almost a technical phrase for understanding the meaning of the death of Christ in the New Testament. The fact that *prodromos* appears only here in the New Testament is not necessarily an indication of its lack of importance. On the contrary, it suggests that the term must have been chosen with care. Seeing Jesus as "a forerunner on our behalf" (6:20a) is best understood in light of the fact that "although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him" (5:8-9). The title is always applied to Jesus. (The term also appears twice in the plural form - Heb. 11:28; 12:23.) Only in Luke 2:7 is the term used in its natural literal sense (Jesus is the firstborn of Mary). Five times it is a Christological title for Jesus, and three of these in contexts with explicit reference to the saving death of Christ. Jesus is the prototype of the *believers' obedient running*. Jesus ran as his community now runs. He reached the goal of his obedient running, a goal also possible for those who obey him (Heb. 5:9). Terms translated "to run" (*dromos* and *trecho*) became an important part of the vocabulary of Christian edification in the early church. Used in an Old Testament figurative sense, "to run" commonly carries the meaning of prompt obedience. This idea, rather than Hellenistic ideas of athletic achievement, is probably uppermost in the Pauline use of this figure (*dromos* in Acts 20:24; II Tim. 4:7; *trecho* in Rom. 9:16; I Cor. 9:24,26; Gal. 2:2; 5:7; Phil. 2:16; Heb. 12:1). Running is an emphatic form of *walking*, also carrying moral and ethical content in its figurative uses in biblical literature used to denote the whole life and conduct of believers.

Prototokos (Firstborn) appears twice in Colossians 1:15-20. In 1:15 the term surely points to Christ as Mediator in creation and therefore *uniquely supreme over all creatures*, rather than simply assigning to him priority in time as preexistent Lord. From its context, the reference to the firstborn in Hebrews 1:6 is to the supremacy of Christ over all others. The Son (1:2) is the unique and supreme agent in God's saving activity. In Revelation 1:5 the primary reference does not appear to be priority in time, but rather the supremacy of the risen Christ. However, this text makes more explicit what was implicit in other uses of firstborn to refer to the supremacy of Jesus Christ. Here it is linked to his death, as was the case with the Colossians 1:15-20 passage. Christ is the one "who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood" (Rev. 1:5). Christ's obedience unto death, which was vindicated by God in the resurrection, is the essential element in his supremacy which is reflected in the title "firstborn."

4. Jesus The Martyr-Witness

In the majority of its occurrences the family of terms generally translated in the New Testament as "witness" or "testimony," together with the corresponding verbs, is used in the technical sense of *witness to ascertainable facts*. But in the New Testament there is a *progression* in the use of the terms from this common secular sense to mean witness to truths and reality experienced, then to confession, and finally to *suffering and death as a result of witness to this reality*. In fact, the meaning of the terms seems to move back and forth between the senses of *witness* and *martyrdom*, meanings really complementary rather than mutually exclusive. (There are) two common elements found in witness portrayed by Isaiah and the NT. First, in both cases *witness is borne to someone*. In Isaiah 40ff. witness is to Yahweh and against the gods of the nations. In the New Testament witness is borne to Jesus Christ, the faithful witness against the powers. Second, in both cases *witness is given to the nations*. Apparently both the personal and the missionary dimensions of this witness-suffering were missing in Judaism. In Luke 24:48 *martures* is used in a way which combines witness to the facts of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection with witness in the sense of *evangelistic confession* which lies beyond the realm of observable facts and includes the *living experience of the witness* who has grasped the significance of Jesus. In Acts 1:8 Jesus reiterates the fact that his disciples are his witnesses. The early part of the book of Acts underscores the importance of a firsthand knowledge of the story of Jesus (1:22; 10:39; 2:32; 3:15; 5:31f; 10:41). Acts 13:31-32 may well reflect the transition between the two shades of meaning which the term witness carries. Eyewitnesses are "his witnesses to the people" (Israel in Palestine). And now Paul and his colleagues "bring ... the good news" of God's saving activity in Jesus to the world outside of Palestine. There *witness is confession based on their experience*. The important role of Matthew 10:16-42 for understanding the meaning of Jesus' death is clear. Jesus had indeed died for us, as the early tradition recognized (I Cor. 15:3). But Matthew points out that Jesus also died to show those who confess him before the world (10:32-33; cf. Phil. 2:11) *how to make this confession and how to die in their witness when necessary*.

5. Jesus Our Sacrifice

Ancient Israel celebrated its covenant relationship with Yahweh by means of elaborate sacrificial ritual. The new covenant is not so much the abolishing of the old as it is a fulfillment. In the New Testament, particularly in Paul's writings, Christ's work is seen in sacrificial terms. Christians are perceived as the new temple. The life of Christians is understood in sacrificial images, not primarily in a ritual or liturgy, but above all in ethics and practice. Nowhere in the Old Testament do we find a fully developed

rational explanation for the practice of sacrifice. Perhaps a part of the essential nature of sacrifice is that *it cannot be fully explained in purely rational categories*. Ancient Hebrew sacrifice was complex, and modern attempts to identify its essential elements must be tentative at best. The most common suggestions include: a gift offered to the deity (Lev. 7:11-16); homage of a subject to the Lord (Gen. 12:68); the expiation of offenses (Lev. 4:5); communion with the deity, especially in sacrificial banquet (Daly, 1978:4).

Burnt Offering appears to be the most important and the most frequently mentioned of ancient Israel's sacrifices. In this type of sacrifice, the animal (and sometimes grain) was completely consumed by fire on the altar (Lev. 1-2). This is distinguished from *peace* or covenant offerings or from sacrificial banquets in which only a part of the offering was burnt and the rest was consumed by the people (esp. Lev. 3), and *sin and guilt offerings* which were consumed by the priests alone (Lev. 4-5; 6:26-30; 7:6-10; 10:16-20). Some offerings, such as first-fruits and tithes, were not burned at all, but given for the support of the temple and priests. The burnt-offering ritual appears in the Old Testament as follows: the daily burnt offering of a lamb (Num. 28:6); special sacrifices offered on feast days (Num. 28:129-40); royal sacrifice (II Kings 16:15); purification rites, e.g., following childbirth (Lev. 12); as a sacrifice of atonement (Lev. 4,5,16); as an expression of joy, thanksgiving, and praise (Ex. 32:6; Judg. 6:25-32; I Sam. 6:14; I Kings 18:17-40); as a private sacrifice (Lev. 1:2-12; Num. 15:1-10; Ezek. 44:11; II Chron. 29:31-35; Ezra 3:1-6). The implication is that the purpose of the altar was to be the place where burnt offerings were sacrificed, and the fire which consumed the burnt offering was the symbol and sometimes even the mode of God's presence (II Chron. 7:1-3; Ex. 19:16-24; 24:1518; 40:34-38).

Sin Offering and Atonement is central in both Jewish and Christian self-understanding. In the Old Testament atonement is understood as "the process whereby the creature-creator relationship, after having been disturbed (by the creature), is restored by the creator to its proper harmony" (Daly, 1978:25). The Hebrew verb *kipper* carries the basic meaning of carrying out an atoning action. In ancient Israel sin was an offense or disobedience against God and was, by nature, a social reality, not strictly a private one. Transgression, which would eventually lead to destruction among the people, needed to be neutralized by atonement. Likewise ritual impurity or contamination called for purification by atonement, lest the contagion and its consequences spread. In a certain sense the *epitome of sin in the Old Testament is viewed as violence*. Sin and corruption are gathered up and summarized by the term violence (Gen. 6:11,13; cf. Ezek. 7:10-11; Jon. 3:8). In the prophetic writings lists of sins frequently culminate with some form of violence (Hos. 4:2; 12:1; Mic. 7:2). According to Isaiah, the sins which separate the people of Judah from God consist fundamentally in their violence (Isa. 59:2-7). In view of this, the thesis that an *essential function of sacrifice is somehow to diffuse, absorb, contain, and arrest violence and its cumulative consequences in the human community* takes on special meaning. Sacrifice, including the death of Jesus Christ, effectively serves to interrupt the spiral of human violence in all of its spiritual and social dimensions

Double function of the atonement process: The positive element is that of rendering persons or objects acceptable to Yahweh, making it possible for them to participate in Israel's life and worship. Negatively, atonement was understood as averting or interrupting the course of evil set in motion by transgression (Lev. 10:6; Num. 1:53; 17:11; 18:5). Expiatory actions set in order the relationship between creature and Creator disturbed by sin. In contrast to the concept of propitiation in which the action is understood as being directed to God by the creature in order to appease or placate God's anger, expiation is an action in which God alone is ultimately the subject or origin and the creatures are the objects of God's action. Leviticus 16 shows that both people and things can be objects of expiation. The principal New Testament passages which speak of Christians' sacrifices are Romans 12:1-2; 15:15-16; I Peter 2:4-10; Hebrews 10:19-25; 12:18-13:16. All of these passages, either explicitly or implicitly (by virtue of the fact that they all occur in contexts of ethical exhortation), understand sacrifice as the living of a life of Christian conduct and mission. So the center of a specifically New Testament concept of Christian sacrifice is not ritual or liturgical, but practical and ethical.

Twentieth-Century Sacrifice : When they deal with the theme of sacrifice, contemporary theologians tend to fall into two broadly defined types. One group insists on the *universal validity of sacrifice in human experience* in all periods and places; however, the meaning of sacrifice is conceived in purely religious or theological categories. Another group recognizes the existence of the concept and practice of sacrifice in the ancient world (the biblical world included) and among primitive peoples of the modern era, but hastens to add this category is *meaningless to moderns*. So we are left with what has often seemed to be an impasse: Sacrifice is a purely religious phenomenon in the limited sense, and thoughtful people of the industrialized West simply cannot accept this seemingly archaic concept as having any validity. The Bible does not separate the religious realm from the social and political realm. The practice of dividing ancient Hebrew law into civil and ceremonial categories does not stand up under a careful scrutiny of the nature of these biblical laws. In ancient Israel the areas of civil and ceremonial law, of politics and piety, of justice and liturgy, of economics and cult, overlap to such a degree that to separate them into neatly logical and distinct

categories is really not possible. In light of this global biblical vision of reality, the question arises, *What if we moderns did not separate so sharply the supposedly religious and secular, or political, spheres?* Might we find the concept of sacrifice not so alien to contemporary Westerners as some of us have often imagined? In reality the amount of sacrificing done in the twentieth century among so-called Christian nations of the West is impressive. One need not limit understanding of sacrifice to cultic acts, like those practiced among ancient pagans destined to placate the anger of the gods, or in the later Anselmic sense of an offering needed to redress the wounded honor of God. Surely we have a sense in which **sacrifice is something we're willing to offer or the price we're willing to pay in order to gain well-being (salvation), be it personal, corporate, or national.**

On another level human beings generally are willing to offer sacrifices for personal benefit. In ancient times sacrifices included human victims, animals, or the products of their labors. The case of modern counterparts provides a striking similarity. The unborn are sometimes sacrificed in the interests of the well-being, self-realization, or honor of the offerers. Both people and things are sacrificed in the interest of self-realization in vocational achievement. With sacrifice in all of these modern forms so deeply rooted in contemporary Western experience, it should not be so foreign for us to hear that God did not hold back his Son, but delivered him up "and sent him as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 4:10, NIV). The New Testament conviction (with the exception of free self-sacrifice expressing itself in praise to God and serving others) is that His is the *ultimate sacrifice to end all sacrifice*. Since Christ's sacrifice, humanity need no longer sacrifice at any of the many altars on which we are still prone to offer victims. Our well-being (salvation) depends on simply trusting obediently in God who provides for absolutely all of the needs of his people.

6. Jesus Who Expiates The Wrath of God

One of the essential functions of sacrifice in the Old Testament was the expiation of sins. Traditionally this image has been one of the principal categories for interpreting the death of Christ, even though relatively few specific references to the term appear in the New Testament. In only six New Testament texts do these terms appear: *hilaskomai*, *hilasterion*, and *hilasmos*, variously translated "be merciful" (Luke 18:13), "to make expiation" (Heb. 2:17), "expiation" (Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 4:10) and "mercy seat" (Heb. 9:5). The most notable difference in translation in English versions occurs between the RSV and the KJV. In the RSV the substantive is regularly translated as "expiation" and in the KJV as "propitiation." These English terms, of course, carry different shades of meaning. The English term "to expiate" requires as its object a sin or some impurity. The object of this action is impersonal. On the other hand, in the English language the verb "to propitiate" calls for a personal object. Traditional interpretations hold the object of propitiation is God.

Ancient Hebrew Understanding: the term *kipper* (literally, "to rub off" or "to rub on") appears to have carried two basic meanings: (1) to purge, to purify, to cleanse; and (2) to cover (Herrmann, 1965:305-10). Expiation could be made through the payment of money, thus covering the hurt which had been committed and releasing the guilty party from obligation (Ex. 21:30). In other cases expiation appears to be accomplished through the forfeiting of a life (Num. 35:31f.; II Sam. 21:3-6). This life thus substituted was a sort of representative or ransom payment (cf. Num. 8:19; Ex. 30:16). Ancient Israel's conviction was that the merciful God is accustomed to expiating guilt. If God does not atone, or does not make or grant expiation, or does not forgive, then sinful people must die (Jer. 18:23; Isa. 22:14). If God atones, people may live (Ps. 78:38) and be saved (Ps. 79:9). About three fourths of the occurrences of *kipper* in the Old Testament are in connection with *us*; humankind, not God's attitude, needs to be changed. God hates sin, but at the same time loves the sinner (Rom. 5:6-8). The highest expression of God's love was Jesus Christ and his self-sacrifice on behalf of sinful humanity. In fact, Jesus in his death for us *has become* God's mercy seat for humanity. For Paul, *hilasterion* is not something which *makes* God gracious, since providing a *hilasterion* for human sin presupposes a gracious God. Jesus, as *hilasterion*, reveals and expresses most fully God and his covenant righteousness (Rom. 3:21,25,26). In Christ (God's *hilasterion*), sinners and their sin are distinguished. Sinners are separated from their sin. They are brought to faith which involves repentance, (i.e., self-judgment) and conversion. The work of Christ is not merely a declaration of a transcendent attitude on the part of God. The experience of grace and judgment *really happens* in the human race. Jesus Christ is God's *hilasterion* which genuinely frees humans to experience a new reality variously called in the New Testament redemption, reconciliation, adoption, justification, communion, and peace.

The Wrath of God Of all the human characteristics applied to God in the Bible, wrath is probably the most difficult for people of a modern mentality to understand. When we compare the Old Testament understanding of the wrath of God with other concepts held in the ancient world, the differences are more noteworthy than the similarities. In the Old Testament there is a consistent linking of nouns for wrath with Yahweh, the covenant God. Genesis contains no term for the wrath of God. This is theologically important, since it shows that the biblical idea of wrath is essentially bound to the *reality of the covenant*. This serves to set the concept of the wrath of God in context. If indeed wrath is an important Old Testament theme (nouns for wrath are used 375 times in the Old Testament with reference to God, **covenant love, or tender mercy** (*hesed*), *is more important by far*, since it is both the love which is shown in covenant, and the love on which the covenant

relationship itself is based (McKenzie, 1968:752-53). So the source of wrath in ancient Israel was not some mysterious and distant deity. It was Yahweh whose electing, covenant-establishing love had formed Israel into a people of his own possession. Far from the irrational, unmotivated wrath of the gods, the wrath of Yahweh is associated with the justice which characterized covenant relationship. In a truly remarkable way the Old Testament writers relate God's wrath to *his jealousy* (Ex. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 32:16, 21; Pss. 78:58; 79:5; Ezek. 16:23ff., 38, 42). God's wrath can also be understood as jealousy, as the *response of the wounded love of the Lover* of Israel. God had covenanted his people. And by his jealous wrath God *sought to protect them from their unfaithfulness and apostasy* (Deut. 4:25; 9:7,8,18,19). Increasingly, people recognized God's wrath as a response to Israel's covenant violation. God's gracious election guidance, his covenant love, is the background against which the prophets bring their warnings of the wrath of God.

Underlying every prophetic denunciation against the prostitution of cultic practice (Isa. 9:11; Hos. 5:10), social injustice (Isa. 1:10-17; Amos 5:21-27), trust in armaments and alliances rather than in God's providence (Isa. 30:1-5; Jer. 2:35-37; Hos. 5:13), the worship of other gods (or the supposed worship of Yahweh through alien cultic forms), we find the *continual lament that the people have turned away from Yahweh and despised his covenant love* (Hos. 11:1-6; Amos 2:9-11)

In the Old Testament divine wrath as a personal activity of the covenant establishing God is the *form which God's wounded covenant love takes*. It is the *divine response to Israel's repeated faithlessness*, in spite of God's constant faithfulness, rather than being primarily a response to the transgressions of certain legal statutes. It was more fundamentally a question of personal covenant relationship than the mere infraction of laws, serious as this might be. While Israel shared with their neighbors of the ancient Near East a concept of divine wrath, it was filled with meaning which set it distinctively apart. It was the personal response of the covenant-making God to the faithlessness of his people. Its aim was not so much the destruction of his rebellious people as it was their restoration. It was a way of taking the sin of his people seriously while remaining steadfast in his love for Israel. It was a jealous anger whose last word was the mercy of covenant love. We find at the beginning of the New Testament the concepts of wrath, repentance, gospel, and kingdom set in fundamental relationship (Matt. 3:2,7-12; 4:17-25; Mark 1:4-8, 14-15; Luke 3:2-18; 4:14,21, 43).

For Paul and John, too, essential relationship exists between the gospel and the wrath of God (Rom. 1:16-18; John 3:36). In the New Testament God's covenant-establishing love shows itself in anger in the face of unfaithfulness and rejection, just as in the Old Testament. In both Testaments the God who saves his people will also be their judge. Likewise the same God, who in infinite love has given both the new and old covenants, manifests his wrath against all forms of unfaithfulness. The wrath of which the New Testament speaks has both eschatological and historical dimensions, designated by terms such as "the wrath to come" and "the day of wrath". The NT message is similar: return in repentance or conversion (Matt. 3:7-12; Luke 3:7-14) to the covenant-establishing God most fully revealed in his Messiah. The NT relates deliverance from wrath, both present (1 Thess. 2:16), as well as to come (Rom. 5:9), to the person and the saving work of Jesus Christ. Through His vicarious self-offering to death we can be both set right and made righteous (i.e., restored to covenant relationship with God and his people). In God's reconciling initiative in Messiah Jesus his wrath is breached, wounded covenant love is healed, and new possibility of covenant relationship in the kingdom of God opened to all who receive it

7. Jesus Who Redeems and Buys Back

The redemption image family of related biblical terms translated "to ransom," "to redeem," and "to buy," together with their corresponding nouns, constitute an important word group in the New Testament rooted in the Old Testament for understanding the saving work of Christ. The divine act of redemption from Egyptian bondage became a paradigm for understanding God's future acts of salvation in behalf of people (Ex. 6:6; 15:13; Deut. 9:26; 21:8). Israel's redemption from Egypt was a fundamental historical reality in the life of God's people. The same is true of this term applied to the manumission of slaves. The primitive community experienced Jesus Christ who had freed this new people of God from bondage to sin, Satan and the evil powers, an especially appropriate image referring in its primary corporate sense to the redemption of God's people. The ancient world carried out the manumission of slaves through payment of a *ransom, or purchase price*. Christians of a Greco-Roman background were especially familiar with the terrifying reality of enforced servitude in mines and galleys. So it is quite natural to understand the saving work of Christ as a ransom payment or purchase out of slavery to sin in order to live in the freedom of sonship and service to God.

Redemption in the Old Testament: translated "ransom" (*lutron*) is used in several different ways in the Old Testament with different shades of meaning. In one of its uses *lutron* refers primarily to the means of the redemption. As the translation for the Hebrew term *kipper*, *lutron* always denotes a vicarious gift whose value covers a fault, not merely to cancel indebtedness but to make *representative reparation*. The *lutron* in these cases generally appears to be money given in lieu of human life (Ex. 21:30; 30:12; Num. 35:31-32; Prov. 6:35; 13:8). In another Old Testament usage of the term, *lutron* seems to underscore the practice of *redeeming*, as well as the subject of the redemption. It refers to the way in which the family or clan *ransomed people or goods which had fallen into bondage* (Lev. 25:25, 48ff.; Jer. 32:7). This concept is applied to God who redeems his chosen, be they the forefather Jacob (Gen.

48:16) or God's people, Israel. The title Redeemer is one of the favorites of the prophet Isaiah who calls God Redeemer of his people at least thirteen times in Isaiah 40-65.² God is depicted as the responsible relative of Israel by adoption. In this usage the idea of the payment of a ransom price is excluded (Isa. 45:13; 52:3). So the prophet contributes to the freeing of the concept of redemption from the need to make ransom payment. Israel's redemption is a free act of God's grace which embraces the Gentiles as well.

Understood in this light, the term leads us to *the heart of the biblical understanding of the relationship between God and his people*. God will be Israel's Redeemer just as surely as he was their Creator (Isa. 41:14; 54:5). Israel's redemption rests on the sure foundation of God's covenant faithfulness. In a third usage of *lutron* the emphasis falls on the *redeeming action* more than on the subject, as such. Therefore the role of grace becomes prominent. The term is widely used with reference to Yahweh's deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage (Ex. 6:6; 15:13; Deut. 7:8; 9:26; 15:15; 21:8; 24:18; Mic. 6:4). In this usage of the term the thought of paying a ransom price is again absent. In the redemption of Israel from Egypt, *God does not pay a ransom price*. Rather, by his power he redeems them (Deut. 7:8; 9:26). *Yahweh owns both Israel and the nations (Deut. 4:32ff.), so all payment of ransom would be out of order.*³ The Old Testament pictures God as redeeming people from hostile forces which seek to ruin them. Far from being a strictly commercial transaction involving payment of a ransom price, redemption is an act of salvation and grace and presupposes that all hostile powers are ultimately subject to God. For the Jews ransom could easily carry the thought of expiation by the vicarious suffering of a righteous person, so that finally the ransom idea led to a belief in the atoning power of righteous suffering. In this view, martyr suffering could be redemptive. In rabbinic Judaism the verb *lutron* meant "to free by ransom," "to buy by ransom," or "to set free." This understanding of the term is reflected in Hebrews 11:35.

Belonging to a New Master: In other parts of the New Testament, particularly in Paul, the redemption-purchase motif is used more concretely to understand the meaning of the work of Christ. Two terms of special importance are *exagorazo*, "to redeem" (Gal. 3:13; 4:5), and *agorazo*, "to buy," "to ransom," or "to redeem" (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; 11 Pet. 2:1; Rev. 5:9; 14:3-4). These terms were used in the ancient world to refer to the sacral manumission of slaves in which a "god" buys the freedom of a slave from the former owner. In reality the participation of the god is a fiction, since the purchase money is supplied by the slave and deposited with the priests for securing the slave's freedom. The invocation of the god in the process was merely a formal legal structure provided to guarantee the seriousness of the venture. Paul borrowed this terminology from the contemporary practice of release from a state of slavery to describe the action of Christ in redeeming believers (Gal. 3:13; 4:5). To use this term only here in the New Testament with no Septuagint background appears to indicate Paul must have had special reasons for using it. While there is a remarkable correspondence to the practice of sacral manumission, there is also an essential difference. In contemporary practice the god paid the purchase price *only in appearance*, while in reality the price was deposited by the interested slave. However, in Paul's metaphor, Christ not only pays the purchase price in appearance, but in *costly reality*. Paul's picture is one of release from a condition of slavery from the curse of the law, of relying "on works of the law" (Gal. 3:10); from slavery to the "elemental spirits of the universe," which exercise control over those who rely on works of the law for their salvation, in order that they may be adopted as children and heirs of God (Gal. 4:3-7). The **cost** of this deliverance was Christ's having become a curse in our behalf (*huper*) in submitting to crucifixion, the sign of standing under the curse of the law (Gal. 3:10, 13).⁵ While the cost of this deliverance from bondage is the death by crucifixion of Messiah, these texts do not specifically speak of a price or of a recipient of a ransom payment.

The result of this act is "being made righteous" (Gal. 3:8, 11), receiving the gift of the Spirit (Gal. 3:14; 4:6), and being set free from slavery to become free children of God (Gal. 4:5-7). Therefore, the emphasis of this metaphor of ransom of slaves falls on the fact of deliverance of sinners and their entrance into a new life of freedom.

The phrase "You were bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23) must have been almost a slogan for Paul, if we judge from the almost verbal repetition of the phrase and the abruptness with which it is introduced in both cases. The phrase was undoubtedly so familiar to readers that this brief allusion was adequate to communicate its meaning. The implication is that *previously they had served themselves or other persons like themselves*. To be "bought with a price" is probably not intended to emphasize the magnitude of the price paid, but simply to point out the fact that the purchase has been completed (Barrett, 1968:152). The consequence of this purchase is that they now belong to God. Paradoxically, this manumission converts us into *slaves of God* (1 Cor. 7:22). [The word Jesus followers called themselves as *His servants*.]

8. Jesus Our Reconciler

To reconcile means literally to *bring people into council again*, and this calls for *restoring broken relationships*. All five of the NT passages in which the reconciliation motif occurs contain reference to real restoration of relationships among humans as well as with God. Reconciliation is used in a figurative way, as an image, in the sense that restored relationship with God may be conceived of as a

mystery not fully accessible to the sphere of human observation. Reconciliation, however, whether between God and humans, or humans among themselves, is both an image and a literal reality.

A Change in Order: The terms translated "to reconcile" and "reconciliation" in the New Testament belong to a family of Greek words which carry the basic meaning of "to alter," "to change," or even "to exchange". In the New Testament the terms refer to the act of establishing friendship and peace by removing enmity. The resulting state is a relationship of oneness. In fact, the King James Version translates *katallage* as "atonement" in Romans 5:11. However, because atonement means something else in modern secular usage, the term is hardly acceptable as an equivalent of reconciliation in trying to understand the meaning of the saving work of Christ. To reconcile is to *return to a council, to bring people back together*. Although to atone originally meant to reconcile it has come to mean to *expiate*, or even to *propitiate*, in current English usage. To atone for something carries the idea of making a wrong right by suffering, by laying on oneself a penalty. This is certainly not the biblical meaning generally translated "to reconcile." Primary use in the New Testament refers to *restored relationship with God and others*, i.e., Jews and Gentiles reconciled to God and to each other in one body (Eph. 2:16), achieved through Christ's work. Although the term's use in the New Testament is relatively infrequent (twelve times in five passages), it is a *fundamental category for understanding the saving work of Christ*.

The terms *katallasso*, *apokatallasso*, and *katallage* played no essential part in Greek or Hellenistic pagan religious scene, not even in relation to rites to propitiate deities or expiate sins. The relationship between deity and humans did not have the degree of personal nearness these terms convey. In Greek-speaking Judaism the term translated "to be reconciled" does occur infrequently: if as a result of prayers, confession, or conversion from disobedience on the part of humankind, God renounces his wrath and is gracious again, they said "God was reconciled".

In the New Testament, these terms are used only in Paul's writings to refer to the relationship between God and humankind. The active form of the verb "to reconcile" is used *only of God*, while the passive form is applied exclusively to humankind. God *reconciles us* or the world to himself (II Cor. 5:18f.; Eph. 2:17; Col. 1:20,22). Strictly speaking, God is not reconciled, nor does he reconcile himself to us or to the world. God (or Christ, in the case of *apokatallasso* in Ephesians 2:16 and Colossians 1:22) is the subject of reconciliation. Humankind, as well as the world, is the object of reconciliation. We are reconciled to God (Rom. 5:10) or to receive reconciliation (Rom. 5:11). In a sense we reconcile ourselves to God (II Cor. 5:20). *Reconciliation is not viewed as a mutually reciprocal process in which both parties become friends, whereas they were formerly enemies*. God's supremacy and initiative in this process is everywhere presupposed.

Does humankind play an active or a passive role in reconciliation? In a sense both appear to be the case. Perhaps the best answer is that people are *made* active. Certainly the passive use of the verbs in Romans 5: 10-11 shows that God, through the death of the Son, is the acting agent. In Ephesians 2 reconciliation is described as the act of Christ. In Colossians 1 God reconciles through Christ. In II Corinthians 5:18a,19a God through Christ is the reconciler. But by the very nature of the case reconciliation is not unilateral. The ministry of reconciliation (II Cor. 5:18b) and the message of reconciliation (v. 19c) are *given to the church*, and finally the appeal is stated in the imperative, "be reconciled to God" (v. 20b). The fact that Paul speaks of reconciliation as a request excludes the possibility of regarding persons as merely passive in reconciliation. *In reconciliation, as in all of God's relationships with humankind, we are treated as people. As such, we can be invited to accept a gift*. The analogy between the imperative "be reconciled" (v. 20) and the similar form, "should be reconciled" (lit. "let her to her husband be reconciled," I Cor. 7:11), applied to a married couple, is instructive. *Even if the woman does not attempt reconciliation in taking the initiative, she must at least agree to the attempt of her husband. If she were to remain purely passive, there could not be any new fellowship*. **Authentic reconciliation excludes mere passivity on the part of humankind.** To speak of reconciliation, as if it must by definition be one or the other, is not really helpful. In a certain sense it is both.

9. Jesus Who Justifies

Justification has traditionally been used as a prime category for understanding the work of Christ. But in spite of the importance of the concept in the history of Christian doctrine, the New Testament has no common technical term which corresponds to the meaning which in traditional theological debate has assigned to justification: the act in which God declared the individual to be righteous. In order to understand justification biblically, we need to review various forms of the term in the New Testament and attempt to understand the meanings assigned to them there (Schrenk, 1964:198-225).

Justification in the New Testament

The noun *dikaiosisune* occurs ninety-six times in the New Testament. Over half of these are in Pauline writings, and in Romans and Galatians alone the word appears forty times. In the Septuagint this is the term usually used to translate the Hebrew, *tsedaqa* usually translated in English versions as "righteousness." The term can refer to human character as well as God's. Depending on the context it can be translated "piety" (Matt. 6:1), "justice" (Acts 24:25), "justification" (Gal. 2:21), "right" (I John

2:29), "what is right" (Eph.5:9), "justified" (Rom. 10:4,10). The adjective *dikaios* occurs 76 times in the New Testament and is usually translated "righteous" or "just." The term usually refers to human moral character, but depending on the context it can also be translated "right" (Titus 1:8) or "justly" (Col. 4:1). The verb *dikaioo* appears forty times in the New Testament. The most common English translation of the term is "to justify." But depending on the context it may mean "show to be righteous" (Matt. 11:19), "pronounce righteous" (Luke 7:29), "to make righteous," or "to make just." This term is especially important for Paul, since 21 of the forty times it is used are in Romans and Galatians. Other related terms are used with less frequency in the New Testament. The noun *dikaion* appears ten times and signifies a concrete expression of righteousness, either in act or in command. It can, according to the context, be translated "just requirement" (Rom. 8:4), "decree" (Rom. 1:32), "justification" (Rom. 5:16), "acts of righteousness" (Rom. 5:18), God's "judgment" (Rom. 15:4), or "righteous deeds" of the saints (Rev. 19:8). *Dikaiosis* signifies the act of pronouncing or making righteous or justifying. It is used only twice in the New Testament. Jesus was "raised for our justification" (Rom. 4:25); Jesus' act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men" (Rom. 5:18). *Dikaios*, an adverb which occurs five times in the New Testament, signifies "righteously" or "justly" (1 Pet. 2:23; Luke 23:41). It can also be translated "upright" (Titus 2:12). In 1 Corinthians 15:34 the term is translated "come to your right mind and sin no more." *Dikaiokrisia* occurs just once signifying "righteous judgment" (Rom. 2:5).

The corresponding series of **negative terms** used in the New Testament also throws light on the meaning of this word group. *Adikia* is a noun translated variously as "unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9; 5:17), "injustice" (Rom. 9:14), "iniquity" (11 Tim. 2:19), or "wickedness" (Rom. 1:18). The term occurs 25 times in the New Testament. The adjective *adikos*, which appears eleven times, is translated "unrighteous" (Luke 16:11) or "unjust" (Matt. 5:45) where it is used in direct contrast to *dikaios*. The verb *adikeo* occurs 27 times and means "to do harm or injury" or "to act unjustly." The noun *adikema* (used three times) refers to an "unrighteous or unjust act." The adverb *adikos*, "unjustly," is used only in 1 Peter 2:19.

Historical Understandings of Justification

The emphasis which contemporary Protestantism places on justification as an image for understanding the work of Christ has not come about in an ideological vacuum. Some historical background behind the justification debate may be useful. During the Middle Ages justification, as a theological term, generally came to mean *the act whereby God pronounced an individual righteous*. Since medieval Catholicism was interested in the maturity and holiness of Christians, a tendency was to view justification as happening at the end of the sanctification process. But since God was perceived as a distant and angry judge in much of medieval piety, many religious people were terrified at the prospects of purgatory and hell. They were anxious for assurance that God, indeed, regarded them as righteous justified, and thereby exempt from punishment. This led to redoubled efforts to attain to justification: prayer, fasting, works of charity, frequent participation in the sacraments, and ascetic practices of various kinds. To a sensitive, introspective person the process was agonizing and the goal seemed hopeless. The church's theology insisted that only as such acts were enabled by God's grace did they contribute to justification. But to those who became Protestants, all this seemed to be an attempt at salvation through works. Furthermore the debate about justification dealt largely with the individual aspects of salvation. It was fundamentally a question of *when and how* the individual was justified. The story of Martin Luther's personal search for a gracious God is well known. When he finally realized that God's righteousness was not that of a severe and angry judge, but of one who "through grace and sheer mercy" justifies through faith, Luther felt himself "to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise."

In reality, justification by faith meant for Luther and for others that justification comes at the beginning of the sanctification process rather than at the end. So the good works of righteousness are seen as the fruit which grows out of God's justifying love. The Reformers laid stress on the all-important primacy of God's justifying action as something distinct from human response. Justification is first of all something that God does apart from us for our salvation; that is, it is objective. Of course, people do not benefit from justification unless they respond in faith. Faith, then, is subjective. So justification came to be seen fundamentally as a *forensic, or legally valid*, declaration of God's acceptance.

Medieval Catholicism recognized that the biblical terms *dikaion* and *dikaios* usually refer to character or activity which is righteous. Therefore the church held that God's justification has something to do with producing actual righteousness of character. To justify, they held, meant actively to make righteous.

Subsequently, Protestant orthodoxy responded by defining its view of justification more precisely and distinguishing it more sharply from medieval Catholicism's understanding. Orthodox theologians, in order to stress the primacy of God's righteousness and to disallow any tendency toward a salvation by works, began to emphasize the imputed nature of humankind's righteousness. God declares us to be righteous, not because we actually are, but because Christ's merits are

imputed to us. In Protestant orthodoxy sin is understood as transgression of the law, and Jesus' death is viewed largely in terms of meeting the resulting legal demands of a divine moral law. In justification God declares us to be legally innocent on the basis of Christ's substitutionary death. Christ's righteousness is "all he became, did and suffered to satisfy the demands of divine justice, and merit for his people the forgiveness of sin and the gift of eternal life" (Hodge, 1898:142). Since God accepts this righteousness as a substitute for human righteousness, then when he looks at those who are in Christ, he sees Christ's righteousness instead of their unrighteousness. In other words, Christ's righteousness is imputed to them. Although Christians are not subjectively righteous, they are treated by God as if they were righteous. By trusting in Christ through faith, individuals are declared righteous; they are justified in a legal or forensic sense (Hodge, 1898:144-45).

Reformation and post-Reformation theology said a great deal about the forensic character of justification. The term "forensic" was used only in a restricted sense to indicate that God's righteousness was fully credited to humanity's account, avoiding any notion of real righteousness in humankind. The Reformers and their successors made a distinction between *declaring* that a person is righteous and *making* that person righteous. They intended to rule out any possibility of claiming human merit. Justification meant that humankind was looked upon by God *as if people had fulfilled* what the obedient Son of God, Jesus Christ, had done. So God simply gave righteousness to the evildoer forensically by declaration, in spite of people's being dead in sin. According to this view, justification is a legal fiction, i.e., it exists only in abstract formulation it is not concretely real (Sanday and Headlam, 1902:367). Western Christianity has generally placed far more weight on the legal metaphor of justification than did Paul, for instance, who is the chief articulator of this image in the New Testament. Alongside the juridical metaphor, the apostle Paul used imagery from political, cultic, social, familial, biological, technological, and athletic realms. These include liberation from Egypt (or the ransoming of slaves), conflict and victory of Christ over his enemies, reconciliation, adoption, and formation of the body. But in the church, while the doctrine of justification has even been made a test of orthodoxy, other images have fallen into disuse.

The extraordinary development and popularity of the juridical image for understanding the work of Christ in Christendom probably owes more to the Roman Empire and the legal practices of the Justinian Code than it does to Paul and the source the Old Testament from which he drew the juridical imagery which he used. The Western church has poured content into its understanding of the juridical metaphor from the familiar spheres of Roman law (guilt, punishment, satisfaction, acquittal) and Greek philosophy (abstract concept of universal moral law), while the apostles used the juridical metaphor with Old Testament covenant concepts in mind.

The sacramental-penitential practice of medieval Catholicism as well as the solafideism of Protestant orthodoxy have both found the juridical metaphor especially compatible for explaining the work of Christ. This is not so much because of their biblicism, but because both were Constantinian in their view of the church, and each in its own way offered a solution to the problem which occurs when the church and society in general become coterminous. As frequently happens in a bipolar debate, many have perceived only two alternatives for understanding justification. Either it is God's declaration of acceptance after a long process of sanctification, or it is a forensic declaration of people's righteousness *as if they were* righteous which in reality is a legal fiction, since they are not. Inasmuch as we are able to take a fresh look at the biblical material, we will discover another way to understand these terms and consequently the possibility of enriching our understanding of the saving work of Christ by way of the justification image. One way to throw light on the meaning of justification is to reexamine the biblical meaning of *dikaïosune* in the light of its Old Testament predecessor, *tsedaqa*.

How does this righteousness/right-wizing image correspond to traditional orthodox Protestant understanding of justification by faith? First of all, it affirms the Protestant position in recognizing that our justification results from a divine act performed apart from our acts and in spite of our rebellion against God. God alone has proven himself faithful to us, as well as to himself as a covenant-keeping God, while we have been utterly unfaithful. However, at other points this vision departs notably. We do not conceive of God's act of justification primarily as one of declaring humankind to be just, i.e., of imputing legal righteousness in a *purely formal sense*. While legal metaphors are used occasionally in describing the death of Christ, this image, as it has been used in the church's tradition, *has not taken human sin and God's holiness with sufficient seriousness*. Sin involves our transferring ultimate allegiance from God to created things, faithless disobedience to the covenant-keeping God, and deceitful self-centeredness and self-aggrandizement. In these attitudes and actions we have become enslaved to fallen structures from which we cannot escape.

Orthodoxy has tended to reduce this state of affairs to a *legal transgression*; righteousness, God's struggle to defeat the powers and establish his new creation (we see that *tsedaqa* in the Old Testament was God's saving acts), tends to be reduced to a *forensic declaration*. While the traditional view is not altogether inadequate, it provides the framework for reducing justification to the *private*

transaction between the individual and God, while overlooking the social and cosmic dimensions of sin and righteousness. (Luther's intense personal struggle has left its indelible mark on Protestantism.) The matter is not one of denying the validity of the personal aspects of justification. It is a question of getting a vision of the fuller biblical perspective of the righteousness. The entire life, death, and resurrection of Jesus answers the question of whether God creates a people for himself, caring for them, keeping his promises to them, in short, *whether he is the God of the Bible*. God's righteousness is *not merely the declaration which pardons the individual, but that power which establishes a whole new world, the force which brought the kingdom of God into being*. So when Paul writes in Romans of the revelation of God's righteousness, his focus is on the historic saving acts of God in Jesus Christ. This vindicates God in the face of human doubt and rebellion. Protestantism's fundamental claim that human efforts can in no way earn the righteousness of God may be wholeheartedly affirmed. It comes to us as a gift. It is a matter of accepting the fact that God accepts us. But in spite of this, we may still question the value of *justification* as the major technical term to understand the work of Christ. The verb *dikaioo* can just as well be translated "to make righteous" as "to justify." Its relationship to *dikaiousune* (righteousness) and *dikaios* (righteous) is evident. However, the verb has nearly always been translated "to justify," and *dikaiosis* has been translated "justification." In doing this, Protestant theologians have often lost sight of the vital, subjective implications of *making righteous* or right-wizing. They have undervalued the social and cosmic implications of God's righteous saving acts. Traditional Protestantism has been able, relatively easily, to *divorce faith from the rest of life and action*. As long as God's initiative and primacy in humankind's salvation remains clear, it might be better to speak of "right-wizing," that is "setting right" and "making righteous." **God's righteousness is not merely a moral attribute or a legal standard or a forensic declaration. It is primarily saving activity.** It includes the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ through which the powers were defeated and new life was bestowed. The kind of faith which makes us righteous is the covenant faithfulness of God "who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 4:24; cf. 10:9-10). To be made righteous is to live in obedient submission to the righteous God (Rom. 6:13). In the biblical perspective, *justification and sanctification are inseparable realities*, and their separation in the interests of pastoral care or doctrinal logic in the church's tradition may well be challenged on the authority of the biblical witness.

10. Jesus Adopts Us Into His Family

The Greek term for adoption (*huiothesia*) occurs five times in the New Testament. It is translated in the Revised Standard Version as "sonship" (Rom. 8:15; 9:14), "adoption as sons" (Rom. 8:23; Gal. 4:5), and "to be his sons" (Eph. 1:5). Adoption has not generally been considered an image which helps us to understand the nature of the atonement. But while this category of thought is less clearly linked to the meaning of the death of Christ, it does provide a clear description of what God does for our salvation. In fact, in three of the five occurrences of the term, the concept of redemption appears in one or another of its meanings. In Romans 8:23 Paul employs this image "We wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." In Galatians 4:4-5 adoption is related to both the incarnation and redemption: "God sent forth his Son . . . to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons." In Ephesians 1:5-7 the relationship between adoption and Christ's death is explicit: "He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ . . . In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace." While the term translated "adoption" is limited in the New Testament to five Pauline occurrences, the concept is related to the **family** metaphor which is of prime importance in biblical literature as a description of the people of God (Moule, 1962:48-49). "Children" or "sons of God" is an important designation for God's people of both covenants. "Brothers" and "sisters" is the most common designation for God's people in the New Testament, "Being born anew" (John 3:3,7; 1 Pet. 1:3; 2:2) or "born of the Spirit" (John 3:5,6,8) is a related image which describes the reality achieved through the work of Christ. So the adoption metaphor would appear to be a useful image for understanding the work of Christ.

Old Covenant Understanding of Adoption-Family Image

With considerable frequency the father-son image is used in the Old Testament to denote the relationship of Yahweh to Israel. Yahweh is called the Father of Israel in a number of passages (Deut. 32:6,18; Jer. 3:4; cf. Num. 11:12). Yahweh speaks of Israel as his firstborn son (Ex. 4:22; Jer. 31:9), his dear child (Jer. 31:20). Yahweh has called his son out of Egypt (Hos. 11:1) and given him a special place among the nations (Jer. 3:19). Israel, understood in a corporate sense, consists of Yahweh's sons and daughters (Deut. 14:1; 32:5,19; Isa. 43:6; 45:11; Hos. 2:1). The Israelites, too, speak of God as "our Father" (Isa. 63:16; 64:7; Mal. 2:10). It is equally possible to speak of Israel as the son, or Israelites as the sons, of Yahweh. Some passages use both expressions (Deut. 32:5f.,18f.). In other passages "my people" and "sons" are used as parallels (Isa. 63:8; Jer. 4:22). And in the Old Testament Yahweh pities, bears with, and comforts his children like a parent (Deut. 1:31; 8:5; Pss. 27:10; 68:6; 103:13; Isa. 66:13; Mal. 3:17). This father-child image does not express a relationship which has arisen naturally and therefore is, by the nature of the case, indissoluble. Israel and the Israelites are not children of God in a physical or quasi-physical sense, as was the case in the understanding prevalent among other ancient peoples. In fact, by unfaithfulness and disobedience *they can become children of false gods* (Jer. 2:26f.; cf. Mal. 2:11). So in ancient Israel this relationship was *spiritual and moral* in its nature.

The father-son metaphor also serves to denote two special aspects of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel. The first of these is the distance between them. Israel is subject to Yahweh. This is stressed when the father's dominion, possession, and control, together with the corresponding subordination of the son, are evident. The parallel between father and son and master and servant in Malachi 1:6 emphasizes this aspect. Deuteronomy 8:5 points to the same idea when it compares God's visitations on his people with parental discipline. Yahweh's legal claim on Israel which he has created, his care for them, and the duties of Israel toward him are often mentioned in relation to the father-son image (Ex. 4:22f.; Num. 11:12; Deut. 14:1; 32:6, 18; Isa. 1:2; 30:1, 9; 45:9-11; 64:7; Mal. 1:6; 2:10).

The second use of the father-son metaphor serves to express the *kindness and love* of Yahweh, since it is everywhere presupposed that this is the responsible paternal attitude (Ps. 103:13). This image of the father supplements the idea transmitted by the metaphors of husband, shepherd, and redeemer. The image stresses the fact that Yahweh is committed to his people and they may appeal to his mercy (Isa. 63:15f.). He has called his son out of Egypt and preferred him over other peoples as a favorite son (Hos. 11:1; Jer. 3:19; 31:20). Even in the face of rebellion and disobedience they are invited to return to their loving Father (Jer. 3:14, 22), and he promises to receive them again as sons (Hos. 2:1).

New Covenant Development of Adoption-Family Image

The spiritual and moral content of the father-son relationship is further developed in the New Testament. While there may be a sense in which God is Father of all, this does not mean that all people are God's children. In fact, only those of faith are "sons of Abraham" (Gal. 3:7ff.). The use of the term "son" for Israel is now transferred to the "Israel of God" (Rom. 9:7-8, 25-26). Jesus described as sons of the Father those who take the love of the Father in heaven as the model for their relationships (Matt. 5:45, 48). Here, too, sonship is not given by nature. It is grounded in the fatherly love of God which first, by his grace, grants the possibility of obedience, and with it sonship. The parallel in Luke 6:35-36 points to the fact that sonship implies participation, by God's grace, in the *same kind of loving and merciful attitudes and actions which characterize God*. Matthew 5:9 points in the same direction; God's children are peace-makers, just as their Father is.

In Paul's writings "all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). The reference to Hosea 2:1 in Romans 9:26 shows that Paul understood that the eschatological promises of sonship are already being fulfilled in the community of Christ. The alternative to slavery to the evil powers manifest in the universe is the Spirit who makes sonship a reality (Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 4:3-7). To break the power and curse of law, as an attempt to establish relationship with God, and in order that life and peace might be found in the new community of the Messiah, God has sent his Son (Gal. 4:4; Rom. 8:3f.). What Paul calls the "Spirit of sonship" (Rom. 8:15) is referred to as the "Spirit of the Son" (Gal. 4:6). By their sonship Christians are freed from slavery (Gal. 4:7a; Rom. 8:15a) to become heirs of God as co-heirs of Christ (Rom. 8:17; Gal. 4:7b). The reality of this sonship, which in its fullness is eschatological (Rom. 8:19), is already experienced in the family of God gathered by Messiah. The fact that Christ is God's image (Col. 1:15) underlies the possibility that, as members of his community, we may "be conformed (*summorphous*, literally, formed together) to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29). An alternate paraphrase of this text might be "to have a share in the form of His Son."

A similar vision is found in John's epistles. *Sonship is a gift of God's grace to us*. This sonship is a present reality (1 John 3:1) and object of our hope for the future (3:2). Prime evidence of this divine sonship is the *concrete practice of the righteousness which characterizes God* (3:7, 10). Just as obedience was an essential characteristic of the Son, is also is a mark of sonship within the community of the Son (5:2).

The writings of both Paul and John contain a configuration of concepts which relate to sonship closely associated with the atoning work of Christ. These concepts include righteousness and justification, being freed from slavery to the powers of evil, redemption, cleansing, and purification (Phil. 2:17; cf. Deut. 32:5). This supports our thesis that adoption is another New Testament image useful for understanding the work of Christ.

In its New Testament usage the term generally translated adoption" (*huiothesia*) is used exclusively for a relationship of sonship toward God.

The choice of this word to describe the new relationships which are the result of the work of Christ shows that this sonship is not a natural one, but is conferred by God's act (Schweizer, 1972:399). As we have already noted, Israel's sonship rested on God's covenants and promises (Rom. 9:4). The main point of the context which follows

is that sonship is not understood as a relationship of natural descent or based on merit, but as a sonship which is always dependent on God's free grace, to be received in faith.

In Galatians 4:5 reception of sonship is identical to liberation from the law as a principle of justification. This adoption is achieved through the work of Christ (Gal. 4:4). It is the transforming act of Christ, the Son, which changes our bondage into sonship. The use of the term "redeem" (*exagorazo*) as a parallel to adoption points to the fact that we are here confronted with another image to describe the atoning work of Christ. Paul in Ephesians 1:5 underscores the gracious character of God's initiative with the phrase, "He destined us in love ... through Jesus Christ."

The use of the term *Abba* (Dearest Daddy) in two of these five passages (Rom. 8:15-16; Gal. 4:6) adds to our understanding of the character of the atoning work of Christ. It underscores the depth of intimate relationship with God which results from the work of Christ. While the Old Testament

writers recognized God as Father (I Chron. 17:13; Ps. 89:26; Isa. 63:16; 64:8; Jer. 3:18; 31:9; Mal. 1:6; 2:10), the image was not employed with great frequency. In fact Joachim Jeremias finds no evidence that *Abba* was used as a personal address to God in early Palestinian Judaism. Thus Jesus' use of this familiar form must have certainly been an innovation which astonished his contemporaries. The fact that this term was adopted in the common usage of the primitive Christian community (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15b-16) indicates that the spirituality of the early church finds its roots in Jesus' own spirituality. More importantly for our purposes, the use of *Abba* communicates in these contexts the *depth and intimacy of the filial relationship with God that is achieved through the atoning work of Christ*. This image speaks with a depth and clarity which has often not been possible in the case of the other images with which the church has understood the atonement. It was a relationship proclaimed and lived out by Jesus in the midst of his community. But now it is a relationship achieved through his messianic work and actualized by the presence of his Spirit in his community (Rom. 8:23; Gal. 4:5).

The Work of Christ

Ephesians 2:14-18 might well be called a hymn on Christ's death and its effects. References to the blood of Christ and the cross speak directly to the work of Christ in *sacrificial* imagery. **All ten of the New Testament motifs for understanding the work of Christ are present either directly or by association in this passage.** The *expiation* motif is present in the sacrificial imagery, and the *vicarious suffering* and *martyr* motifs are implied in the references to suffering as a way to make peace. The *conflict-victory* motif is present in the reference to the hostility which Christ has overcome (Eph. 2:14,16; cf. Col. 1:20-22). In Ephesians 3:3-11, Paul refers to "principalities and powers" (3:10), and in Colossians 2:14-15 Christ's *victory* over them is emphatically declared. The *archetypal* image is referenced in the creation of one new man "in himself" and "in one body" (Eph. 2:15-16; cf. 2:10). The biblical concept of Representative Man helps us to understand an otherwise somewhat obscure identification of Christ and the peace which he creates. The *reconciliation* motif is specifically mentioned in both its horizontal and vertical dimensions (2:16). While the *redemption-purchase* motif is not specifically mentioned in this particular passage, it is implied in the cost of making peace (Eph. 2:15-16). It is specifically mentioned in Ephesians 1:7 and in Colossians 1:13-14. A specific reference to the *adoption-family* image appears in Ephesians 2:19. The *justification* motif is present in the immediate context (2:8-10) and implied in the unconditional obedience to the Father and faithfulness to death, "abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances" the law legalistically misconceived as a means of perpetuating and justifying divisions from, and enmity with, the Gentiles and re-establishing God's righteousness (2:15). This appears to be the understanding of the ministry of the servant described in terms which apply to both the priest and the victim, which Isaiah 53:12 presents. The servant's death is a sin-offering (53:10) through which intercession is made for transgressors (53:12). He "is stricken for the transgression of Israel . . . bears the transgression of many . . . makes himself a sin offering," and finally described as making "intercession for the transgressors" (Isa. 53:8,10-12). In Exodus 32:30-32, Moses seeks to make atonement for the sins of the people and intercede for them. Moses, in his act of intercession, *offered his life* to God. The high priest *risked his life* by bearing the sin of the people into the holy of holies. The servant of Isaiah 53 actually gives his own life in the intercession which he makes.

The *peace and reconciliation* which result from Christ's sacrificial death (Eph. 2:11-22) really have nothing in common with the pagan understanding of appeasement of gods or people. The purpose of Christ's sacrifice is not propitiatory in the strictly literal sense of the term (i.e., aimed at placating God's anger and thus making him propitious), since its object is expressly declared to be the reconciliation of alienated groups in such a way that "a New Man" is created in order that both together they may be reconciled to God. The function of sacrifice here seems to be that of intercessory prayer. The messianic peace, obtained at the cost of the Messiah's own blood, is not merely a repaired or restored relationship. It is an unheard-of novelty, best described as a *new humanity* or a new creation. This sacrifice-death understood as intercession is like the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 7:60). Romans 8:34 and Hebrews 7:25 9:24 also speak of Christ's continuing intercession forcefully expressed in his sacrifice. 2 Corinthians 5:21 is in the same vein: Christ is a sin offering made so God's covenant righteousness might be established. This is, in effect, the *shalom* described in Ephesians 2:15-17. So Jesus' sacrifice may be viewed as *intercession in behalf of hostile people, groups, causes, and conditions, an intercession carried to its highest expression, culminating in the death of the intercessor*. Jesus' intercession did not consist merely of words (e.g., the high-priestly prayer of John 17), but was rather a life of intercession magnified by the voice of "his blood" (Heb. 12:24). Jesus' messianic mission was an intercession on behalf of alienated peoples to the point of death itself. This is the sacrifice which establishes his ongoing and eternal intercession (Heb. 7:25,27).

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SUMMARY

"The simple statement of the Bible seems to be, that sin is such a dreadful tragedy in the kingdom of God that it cannot be disposed of in any simple manner. Some equivalently terrible event must be brought to pass to deal honorably with the matter. God may be ever so ready to forgive freely man's sin out of His great bounty of love, but cannot do so simply because there are other conditions and problems involved. The judgment of eternal punishment has been pronounced upon sinners for their sins. This woe was pronounced out of God's love for righteousness and because it is man's true desert. God has said: "The person who sins will die" (Eze. 18:20). Sin has been committed and continued in with persistence. Can God now reverse Himself and say, "The person who sins will live," without some great substituted procedure being brought to pass to justify the change?

Of course, the subjects of mercy must absolutely repent of their sinful ways or no mercy at all could be extended. What! Pardon a criminal behind bars who vows by his brazen heart to continue the ways of crime when he is released? Would one respectable judge in the land be found to do such a thing? Certainly God is not less judicious. Therefore there must be sincere and honest and humbling repentance, or no forgiveness is possible (Ps. 51:17; Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30)

But God has declared it as a fact emanating from His authority, that even if He is loving and kind and ever so willing to forgive, and if man's heart is ever so broken up in penitence and willing to forsake all sin, still salvation is impossible, for "without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (He. 9:22). The un-loveliness of animal sacrifices instituted in Old Testament times were as a temporary measure to enable God to forgive penitent sinners. That this was temporary is evident from Heb. 10:4. The great fact of the atonement of Christ is stated in He. 9:13-14 and I Pe. 3:18. Now the Godhead are exceedingly happy in the possibility of the free exercise of mercy on the basis of repentance and faith.

The Bible does not systematize all the reasons for the necessity of the awful event of the sufferings of Christ. The Bible does state, however, that *in some vital sense the sufferings of Christ from a broken heart over the world's sin, during a brief duration of time unto death, were substituted for the endless punishment of sinners as a measure of righteous forgiveness of sins*, when the conditions of sincere repentance and the committal of faith are exercised. Beyond this we do not need to go, nor to attempt to exhibit brilliance in any new discovery. When the words *reconciliation, propitiation, ransom, redemption*, and the like, are used in connection with the sufferings of Christ, we are to understand them as modified by Bible usage and not seek to inject various shades of meanings that have been developed in the secular world. The blessed Word of God will balance itself out and convey to us the thoughts that God deemed it necessary that we know, if we accept it at face value in all sincerity.

Let it always be remembered that no one is saved because he professes belief in a particular theory. We are saved when we have allowed ourselves to be exposed (in the illumination of the Holy Spirit) to the gruesome fact that the Lord Jesus Christ has come into our world and has suffered the agony of death because of our sins, have thus been humbled under the guilt of our sins in repentance, and have committed ourselves wholly in faith to the Savior's sufferings as the only means of forgiveness. "As many as received Him (all that Christ is and did for us), to them He gave the right to become children of God" (John. 1:12). When this is done in all intelligence and sincerity, we will receive assurance by the witness of the Holy Spirit that all our past sins have been forgiven (Ro. 8:16) and will experience transformation of heart and life (II Co. 5:17). The Thessalonian Christians experienced "full conviction" in their salvation (I Th. 1:5), which might be rendered "much full assurance" to convey the import of the words. Peter wrote that we will "greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory" (I Pet. 1:8).

In Old Testament times, when a repentant sinner brought his sacrifice and with hands solemnly laid upon its head, saw it slain, confessing his guilt, he was humbled and experienced painful reactions. In a much greater measure, when we come to the cross of the Savior with our sins in our hands, we will be humbled and be brought into an experience of true virtuous love for the first time in our lives. The Father has been looking for us "a long way off" and will welcome us into His loving and forgiving heart and say, "we had to be merry and rejoice" (Lk. 15:20,32). "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." said the Savior (Lk. 15:10). We are saved by a *humbled confrontation with the blessed Atonement*, then, and not by theorizing about it. This allows its unparalleled manifestation of love to conquer us completely (2 Co. 5:14-15). (From: *The Truth About The Life and Death of Jesus Christ - Sharing Your Faith*: Gordon C. Olson)

16. GODS'S GREAT GRIEF OVER SIN

Basis of **Compassion**: *The Broken Heart of God*
"Jesus Wept" The shortest verse in Scripture
John 11:35; Gen 6:6; Ezek. 6:9; Isa 5:4; 53:3,10

- Men march for their *own* rights; who marches for the *rights of the great God*?
- We know how to weep over the consequences of our own sin, and realize to some extent how much it hurt our friends, our families, our world and our own heart. What we do not see and cannot know without His Holy Spirit is the *grief of God*.
- Both heaven and hell are real and realized in this culture. What is not seen is *why*.
- Social justice and mercy works cannot be rooted in the demands of human misery. Without greater perspective, poverty and injustice lead only to anger and despair.
- Only a Gospel flowering from the heart of Heaven can touch the hurt of our earth.
- The sadness of God over the sin and ruin of His dear lost world is the *missing element* in much of our preaching on deserved punishment and judgement. Men know they are wrong *by the Holy Spirit*. True grief only comes when we know by the conviction of that Holy Spirit what *we have done to the loving heart of God*.

THE GRIEF OF GOD - TRAGIC, AGONIZING DISAPPOINTMENT

The Godhead planned to live an absolutely intimate life with man (Acts 7:48; 17:27-28; II Chr. 16:9; Col. 1:16; Zeph. 3:17). The tragedy that happened instead was certainly not the will of God. Human revolt and the persistent resistance of the great majority of mankind against these intimate plans has deeply affected God and brought unspeakable disappointment. A great many passages in the Bible open to us the secrets of the Divine heart and convey to us the wonderful fact that the Godhead are just as tender-hearted as They are great. ***Grief is always in proportion to intimacy*** and to depth of understanding in contemplating this intimacy. Who can really begin to fathom the sorrow of the Creator? The God of all love, wisdom and holiness could not in any sense author or be the cause of His own disappointment and grief.

A. SIN DEVELOPED TO SUCH TRAGIC PROPORTIONS GOD'S GRIEF OF HEART MADE HIM REGRET THAT MAN HAD BEEN CREATED:

"God looked on the earth" with the sole desire to bless men with Divine experiences of joy and blessing; (Ge. 6:12, 5-7) now the Holy Spirit had to "strive with man" to restrain their concentration on sin (6:3). This resistance brings endless grief because of His great love (Acts 7:51; Ep. 4:30; I Th. 5:19). If striving and wrath were God's nature there would be no grief. Instead of a reign of love in men's hearts, we must contend with Satan's "beachheads" (Ep. 2:2) and those of "the flesh" or addictions of emotional supremacy (Ga. 5:16-17).

"The Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God" (De. 6:15). God is deeply disturbed with selfish perversions or formal allegiances with the enemy. "Indignation every day" (Ps. 7:11) because of His love for righteousness is an endless intrusion into the Divine happiness.

B. GOD'S MOST PAINFUL GRIEF AND DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE NATION ISRAEL.

The nation Israel was developed from Abraham to have special intimacy with God as a means of reaching the world (Ge. 12:1-3) and of bringing about the advent and sufferings of the Savior (Ga. 4:4-5). In spite of untold miracles and loving manifestations, God was almost uniformly grieved with the great majority of the nation and had great disturbances of mind in bringing about necessary judgments: Ex. 32:7-14; 33:5; Nu. 14:21-39; De. 5:29; 8:2; I Sam. 8:5-9, 19-22; 10:17-19; 15:10-11, 22-23, 35; II Chr. 36:14-16; Ps. 78:37-42, 56-61; 81:13-14; 95:10-11 (He. 3:7-11); Is. 5:1-7; 48:17-19; Jer. 6:16-19; 11:6-11; 25:3-9; Eze. 6:9.

C. GOD'S GRIEF AND UNHAPPINESS DEMONSTRATED IN GOD'S RELUCTANCE TO BRING ABOUT RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT FOR MAN'S SIN.

1. The Bible very frequently testifies of the profound patience and long-suffering of God with rebellious mankind: Joel 2:12-14; Jonah 3:10; 4:2; Micah 7:18-19; Ro. 2:4; I Pe. 3:20 (Ge. 6:3); II Pe. 3:9.

2. When God permitted nations to judge Israel for their sins, He was moved to send deliverance as soon as any evidence of repentance was manifested: Jud. 2:16-18; 10:13-16; Ps. 106:43-45; or even *without it*. I Chr. 21:14-15.

3. God offered to change His mind about certain planned judgments if man was willing to turn from sin: Jer. 18:7-10; 26:2-7, 12-13; Hosea 11:8-9; Eze. 33:11. Men take unfair advantage of God's mercy and long-suffering (Ecc. 8:1).

4. It certainly grieved God to bring about major changes in His whole program for man after the Fall and have to:

- a. Impose burdens to restrain sinful development by too much leisure: Ge. 3:16-19.
- b. Drive man from the beautiful garden and from "the tree of life," which must have sustained perfect health: Ge. 3:24.
- c. See man deteriorate and die, when he was designed to live: Ge. 3:19.
- d. Allow man to develop "a depraved mind" (Ro. 1:28) so he could walk more comfortably in the moral darkness which he insisted upon having (Jn. 3:19).
- e. Above all, to assign incorrigible men to a place of eternal confinement called "hell" (Mt. 25:41, 46; Lk. 13:28; Re. 22:11), "prepared for the devil and his angels," whom man chose and continues to choose allegiance to.

5. The **LORD JESUS** was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Is. 53:3), putting on display the disposition of the entire Godhead (Jn. 1:18; 14:9).

- a. The strong Son of God wept "with loud crying and tears" (He. 5:7), as most men rejected Him: Lk. 19:14. He *came to His own* who did not receive Him. Jn. 1:11; 5:40, 42.
- b. The blessings which He carried in His bosom had to remain un-manifested and this broke the Savior's heart: Lk. 19:41-42; Mt. 23:37 (finally, *literally*: Lk 22:44; Jn. 19:34.)
- c. He entered our sphere of life "that the world should be saved through Him" (Jn. 3:17), but only a comparative "few" were responding: Lk. 13:23-24 Mt. 8:12; Jn 6:66
- d. He felt "compassion for the multitudes," who wandered about aimlessly and did not want the true Shepherd who longed to guide them: Mt. 9:36.
- e. The resurrected Christ and the tender-hearted love of God *still* pleads with men to reconsider their rejection of Divine mercy: Re. 3:20; 22:17. Mt 23:37; Lk. 13:34