

FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH

Contemporary faith in its historic perspective

These notes have been developed by BMi for use in our churches. The *Foundations of Faith* course is designed as a second level course for those who have completed a course on the introduction to the faith, such as *Born to Grow* or the *As He Is* discipleship notes.

These notes are recommended for use in churches to train people in the faith. They would be ideal for a weekly study program of perhaps two-hour or more sessions over a one year period. The length of study would depend on the extent of discussion encouraged. At this stage there are no assignments set but we are exploring the value of adding such to the course.

Various subjects in the course could be used as study material for home groups.

The notes are available in Microsoft Word format on request.

Foundations of Faith is the result of several BMi ministers' labour of love. We are particularly indebted to our pastors John Barnes and Chris Whiting for this particular edition of the course.

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INTRODUCTION

It is a trend in church history that movements and church fellowships grow up out of three forms of central influence. Church movements emerge and tend to be based on either:

1. The influence of a person ~ e.g. Lutheran Church, Wesleyan Methodists
2. Adherence to a particular doctrinal distinctive ~ e.g. Baptist Church or Dutch Reformed Church, Pentecostal Churches
3. Commitment to a particular form of church government ~ e.g. Presbyterians, Congregationalists

Bethesda Ministries International (Bmi) is somewhat unique in the realm of church movements in that it does not cohere around any one of these three influences. We are decidedly Pentecostal and we are indebted to the vision of our founder, Ps Peter Vacca, but we are not driven by governmental structures or doctrinal uniformity. The strength of Bmi lies in the capacity of its member churches to relate together in Christ's love.

Notwithstanding there are many things which we hold in common, not least being that confession of faith which has been a guide to Christ's Church for over 1,600 years - The Nicene Creed. The following notes have been structured around that confession and represent that which the Bmi Churches see as being the foundations of the faith and the essential elements of our shared experience in Christ and obedience to Him.

The following set of notes is the sum of input from many pastors and teachers from within the movement over many years. Whilst it is not possible to render due deference to all who have contributed it would be uncharitable to not make mention the efforts of Peter Vacca, David McGregor, Pam Busby and Chris Whiting who have made substantial input to these notes.

We would be grateful for any feedback, suggested revisions, possible additions or criticisms concerning these notes. Such comments can be forwarded to equippingministry@bmi.org.au

We commend these notes for use by anyone who is seeking to gain a broad understanding of the faith but especially to those who are members of that part of Christ's church known as Bmi. It is our hope that these notes will serve as a resource and framework for Bmi pastors and member churches. As such they are not an "entry level" resource and may in some places constitute a challenge both to thinking and faith. Our prayer is that the same Holy Spirit who has assisted in the preparation of these notes will enliven your understanding and capacity to live out the truths of the gospel as set down herein

on behalf of
National Leadership Team



Using these Notes

The Nicene Creed provides the framework for these notes but the notes are not meant to be an exhaustive treatment of the Creed. Thus there will be some things which the Creed seeks to emphasize but which are addressed only peripherally via the notes. Furthermore because the notes follow the Creed the logic of their numbering follows the flow of ideas as depicted in the Creed and not that which may be best for instruction or lesson structure.

Therefore those using the notes are encouraged to access the notes in the order or manner that seems best for their audience/students. Notwithstanding it is strongly urged that the notes not be used in a manner which neglects the Creed, therefore it is suggested that each lesson or module be commenced by having students recite the Creed. In this way the foundations of the faith will be reinforced, our connection with and indebtedness to the historic Church will be remembered, those things that BMI hold to will be restated and the module held in perspective.

We believe in one God The Father almighty
maker of heaven and earth of all things visible and invisible

And in One Lord Jesus Christ,
The Only Son of God, Begotten of The Father
God from God, Light from Light True God from True God,
Begotten not made one in essence with the Father
Through Him all things were made
For us and for our salvation
He came down from heaven and became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and
the virgin Mary and was made human
He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate
He suffered died and was buried
On the third day He rose again according to The Scriptures
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of The Father
He will come again to judge the living and the dead
And of His kingdom there will be no end

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life.
He proceeds from The Father and The Son and with The Father and
The Son He is to be adored and glorified
He has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.
Amen

The Creed

We believe in one God

The Father almighty

Maker of heaven and earth of all things
visible and invisible

And in One Lord Jesus Christ,

The Only Son of God, Begotten of
The Father

God from God, Light from Light True
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Through Him all things were made

For us and for our salvation

He came down from heaven and became
incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the
virgin Mary and was made human

He was crucified for us under Pontius
Pilate

Topics & Content

01 One God - The personhood and eternal attributes of God

02 God ~ The One and the Many - God as Trinity, its Biblical foundation and its necessity to understanding life

03 God ~ The Creator - The necessity and implications of God as Creator and deficiencies of the evolutionist/materialist worldview.

04 Tithing, giving - An acknowledgement that giving to God is a creation ordinance. An explanation of the purposes and benefits of giving to God our Maker.

05 The Lord's Law - The Ten Commandments (the Law of God) as a depiction of His character. Jesus' attitude The Law and principles for understanding The Law

06 The Incarnation - Our need for a Mediator and why that Mediator had to be both God and Man. The Lord's Table (or Communion) in light of The Incarnation.

07 Images of Christ - An understanding of Christ's nature and work via consideration of Biblical typology.

08 The Devil - Satan's origin and reality, the nature of His works and the Christian's armoury against Him.

09 Justification - The consequences of sin and the grace of God in Christ's Cross.

10 Sanctification - **Yet to be written but will address the Holy Spirit's role in forming the character of Christ in us.**

11 The Family - God's purpose for the family in church and nation. The rudiments of marriage and family relationships.

12 The Death of Christ - Christ's death as voluntary, the agonies The Cross, the prophecies pertaining to His death and the benefits which accrue to us via that sacrifice.

The Creed

Topics & Content

He suffered, died and was buried

13 Suffering & Divine Healing - The nature of Christ's suffering, Jesus our Healer and the Christian's attitude toward suffering.

On the third day He rose again according to The Scriptures

14 The Bible - The scriptures; their purpose, the source of their inspiration, the structure of the canon.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of The Father

15 The Resurrection - Christ's Resurrection contrasted with other worldviews, its infallibility and its necessity as a central element of the Christian faith.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead

16 Thy Kingdom Come - A comparison of three views of Christ's Kingdom and how they shape our view of the end times. Practical implications of end times doctrine.

And of His kingdom there will be no end

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life.

17 The Holy Spirit - The personhood and importance of the Holy Spirit.

He proceeds from The Father and The Son and with The Father and The Son He is to be adored and glorified

18 The Holy Spirit ~ The Giver of Life - The work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

19 Concerning Prayer - Reasons for praying, instructions concerning prayer and hindrances to answered prayer.

He has spoken through the prophets.

20 Praise - **Yet to be written but will address prayer, praise and guidance**

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church

21 We believe ~ Concerning faith - The Atheist's faith v's the Christian's faith, the nature and benefits of faith, faith and repentance. Growing in faith and why God looks for faith.

22 The Church - The origin, nature and purpose of The Church. The importance of plurality in Church government.

23 The Church & The State - The nature of law and the mutual obligations one toward another of church and state.

The Creed

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Amen

Topics & Content

24 Water Baptism - Why we should be baptized, the nature and scope of baptism, the mode of baptism.

25 Another Baptism - The Baptism of the Holy Spirit, How Jesus used and manifested the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, the distinction between gifts, fruit and ministries.

26 Death and Resurrection - Death defined, its nature and origin, Jesus as death's conqueror, the afterlife and its location.

ONE GOD

The Nicene Creed begins with a simple statement. "We believe in one God". Here at its opening sentence we find ourselves in controversy and some small difficulty because as The Creed develops it also speaks of The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit. The Christian faith understands God as a Trinitarian being. That is to say; Christians understand the one God to be composed of three persons who are each whole, entire and complete as individuals but who are so wholly identified and linked with one another that they represent are one.

This is a mystery to the human mind but an essential truth to the Christian faith. This lesson addresses the oneness of God.

ATTRIBUTES

An attribute is a 'personal quality' or 'characteristic'. Thus God's attributes reveal God's nature. As we study the attributes of God we will discover what God is like. This is important because God's actions are determined by His attributes. A.W. Tozer says: "All God's acts are consistent with all of God's attributes. All that God does agrees with all that God is; being and doing are one in Him. He cannot act out of character with Himself."

It is important for us to understand that all God's acts are consistent with all of God's attributes. We must never separate God's attributes or emphasise one attribute at the expense of another. They are all interwoven and interdependent. A.W. Tozer says: "Almost every heresy has arisen from believing things about God that are not true, or from overemphasizing certain true things so as to obscure other things equally true. To magnify any attribute to the exclusion of another is to head straight for one of the dismal swamps of theology. For instance, the Bible teaches that God is love; some have interpreted this in such a way as virtually to deny that He is just, which the Bible also teaches. Others press the Biblical doctrine of God's goodness so far that it is made to contradict His holiness. Still others understand the sovereignty of God in a way that destroys or at least greatly diminishes His goodness and love.

GOD'S NAME

The Christian often uses the word god spelt with a capital G ("God") as the name by which our creator is to be known. This a little unfortunate because whilst it is true that God is God above all other gods, throughout the Bible He has been much more informative and precise in His name than merely to refer to Himself as God. As Charles Ryrie says "A person's names always tell us something about him or about the relationship he has to those who use those names. Often names grow out of experiences people have. So it is with God. He has revealed aspects of His nature by the names He uses with men, and some of them have grown out of specific experiences men have had with God."

O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! (Psalms 8:9)

Scripture discloses that there are three primary names which God uses for Himself.

- Elohim - translated God (capital 'G')
- Adonai - translated Lord (capital 'L')
- Jehovah - translated LORD (all capitals)

We believe in one God.

- a) Elohim means 'Strong One' and it occurs over 2,500 times in the Old Testament. Interestingly this name is in the plural and speaks of the Trinity of God. (This will be the focus of a later part of these notes.)
- b) Jehovah means 'To Be' or 'The Self Existent One, The Eternal One'. It is that name which God spoke to Moses from out the burning bush when asked by Moses how he should explain to Israel that God was sending him to lead the people out of Egypt (Exodus 3:1-16). Jehovah is actually an artificial word put together from four Hebrew consonants YHWH and the vowels of another name of God ADONAI. The vowels 'a', 'o' and 'a' were inserted to form YaHoWaH. This is translated JEHOVAH. This name occurs about 7,000 times in the Old Testament. It is a most beautiful name because it tells us that God (Jehovah) is the essence of all that is. It tells us that all of the attributes which we are about to consider flow from the essence of His being. God doesn't have to think about being loving, truthful, wise, powerful or all-knowing. All of these attributes flow from His being.
- c) Adonai means 'Master'. Because of their fear and reverence of God, the Jews would never pronounce the name YHWH. Wherever they came to this name in the Scriptures they would say Adonai instead. This name conveys the thought that God is the absolute authority.

And God said to Moses, I AM THAT I AM. And He said, So you shall say to the sons of Israel, I AM has sent me to you. (Exodus 3:14)

GOD IS INFINITE

Infinite means 'not limited or bound'. God has no limits or bounds. Everything about God is infinite. Of course, it is impossible for our finite minds to comprehend an infinite God. And yet it is wonderful to be able to turn from our limitations to a God who has none!

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting You are God. (Psalms 90:2)

Can you by searching find out God? Can you perfectly find out the Almighty? Heights of the heavens! What can you do? It is deeper than hell, what can you know? The measure of it is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. (Job 11:7-9)

GOD IS ETERNAL

Eternity is 'infinity related to time'. God is not limited or bound by time. God existed before time. He made it! The Eternal God had no beginning and will have no end. Because all of God's attributes are all eternal we can be assured that God is always there.

To the only wise God, our Savior, be glory and majesty and might and authority, even now and forever. Amen. (Jude 25)

Because He is eternal God is not bound by time! He doesn't have to hurry. Time is no pressure to Him. He 'sets the times and the seasons' when we know this it brings us peace and causes us to relax.

For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works. (Ephesians 2:10)

God shares his eternity with us. For those outside of Christ, time is a devouring beast but those who are in Christ share with Him all the riches of

Yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach (Colossians 1:22)

limitless time and endless years. We have received from Him eternal life! As Jesus said "He who

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has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.” (1 John 5:12)

GOD IS IMMENSE

Immensity is ‘infinity related to space”. God is not limited or bound by space. God existed before space. He made it!! The Immense God cannot be measured or contained. How big is your God? We need to remember that God is greater than all. He is greater than all He has created and greater than all that is known.

But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heavens and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this house which I have built? (1 Kings 8:27)

Great is The Lord and greatly to be praised; and there is no searching out His greatness. (Psalm 145:3)

In the Book of Job, one of his friends Zophar asks a question of Job that people thru the ages have pondered “*Can you discover the depths of God?*” And Job finally came to see some of the depths of God’s character he declared himself to be a wretch and needing forgiveness for imagining that he was capable of understanding God (Job 42:5). But because God is so enormous we can be confident that no one can take us away from Him.

that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:17-19)

The immensity of God not only refers to His size but also to the depth of His energy, ability and life. All God’s attributes are immense. They cannot be fathomed; they are inexhaustible, they will never run out. Isn’t it good to know that along with all God’s other attributes, His Love is immense!! The Immensity and Eternity of God means that in God there is life enough for all and time enough for all to enjoy it!

GOD IS PERFECT

Perfect means ‘excellent, complete, having no faults”, God is complete and excellent, He is without fault. Because God is perfect whatever He does is also perfect! His work is always complete and without fault. He doesn’t start something without finishing it. If God has begun a good work in you He will finish it.

Because I will proclaim the name of Jehovah, ascribe greatness to our God. He is the Rock; His work is perfect. For all His ways are just, a God of faithfulness, and with-out evil; just and upright is He. (Deuteronomy 32:3-4)

(See also Psalm 18:30 & Matthew 5:48)

When God does something He does it well!! God’s first creation was perfect even though it was later marred by sin (Gen 1:31). And God’s new creation is perfect. The work which Jesus has done on The Cross will never be surpassed in the excellence of its love, wisdom and justice. Because that work is being expressed in us by the Holy Spirit we too can expect to be a complete work in love, wisdom and righteousness.

GOD IS IMMUTABLE

Because God is perfect He is immutable. That is to say God does not change. His self-awareness is

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning (James 1:17)

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perfect and His knowledge of the future is perfectly complete. Therefore He does not need to (and has never needed to) change anything about Himself. He is immutable.

A.W. Tozer says: “What peace it brings to the Christian’s heart to realize that our Heavenly Father never differs from Himself. In coming to Him at any time we need not wonder whether we shall find Him in a receptive mood. He is always receptive. He does not keep office hours nor set aside periods when He will see no one. Neither does He change His mind about anything. God never changes moods or cools off in His affections or loses enthusiasm”.

Here is real comfort, human nature cannot be relied upon, but God can! However unstable I may be, however fickle my friends may prove, God does not change. All praise to His glorious name! He is always the same. His purpose is fixed. His will is stable. His word is sure, a rock on which we may fix our feet, while the mighty torrent is sweeping away everything around us. The permanence of God’s character guarantees the fulfilment of His promises. The God of the Bible is the God of today. He is just the same. His character and purposes never change.

GOD IS OMNISCIENT

Omniscience means “all knowing”. It comes from two Latin words ‘omni’ meaning ‘all’ and ‘sciens’ meaning ‘knowledge’. God knows everything! His understanding is inscrutable (Is 40:28). His understanding is infinite (Ps 147:5). God knows all things (1 John 3:20).

God knows the past, present and future! Nothing takes Him by surprise. Not only does He know everything but it can also be said that He knows everyone. As Solomon said: “For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He watches all his paths” (Proverbs 5:21).

The Lord knows our:

- Words and deeds (Psalm 139:2-4)
- Thoughts (Psalm 139:1-2; 1 Chronicles 28:9)
- Limitations (Psalm 103:14)
- Secrets (Psalm 44:21)
- Troubles (Exodus 2:24-25)
- Minute particulars (Matthew 10:29-30)
- Sins (Psalm 90:8, Jeremiah 16:17, Psalm 69:5)

O LORD, You have searched me and have known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You search my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Jehovah, You know it altogether. You have closed me in behind and in front, and laid Your hand on me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot go up to it. (Psalms 139:1-6)

There is a special sense in which God knows those who love Him. He knows them intimately and treasures that relationship.

An important aspect of God’s omniscience is His wisdom. Wisdom may be defined as “the right use of knowledge”. God’s wisdom is so great, and so transcends the wisdom of all other beings that Scripture speaks of Him as “The only wise God” (Jude 1:25, 1 Timothy 1:17). God always acts according to His wisdom and we need to trust that wisdom.

God’s wisdom is displayed in His creation (Psalm 104:24 & 136:5; Proverbs 3:19; Jeremiah 51:15) and all His plans. God’s plan of redemption reveals His great wisdom.

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GOD IS OMNIPOTENT

Omnipotence means 'all powerful'. It comes from two Latin words 'omni' meaning 'all' and 'potent' meaning 'powerful'. God is all powerful. He can do anything that He chooses to do. The only limit to God's power is His own wise, holy and loving will.

There are many that claim to have power but their capacities are vastly inferior to those of God. It would be folly to imagine that the enemy of our souls does not have power. Without doubt Satan has power but God's power far exceeds any strength which Satan may display. With God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26). There is nothing too difficult for Him (Genesis 18:14).

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

(See also Luke 11:21-22)

GOD IS OMNIPRESENT

Omnipresent means 'everywhere present'. The word omnipresent comes from two Latin words 'omni' meaning 'all' and 'praesen' meaning 'to be at hand or present'. God is not everywhere in exactly the same sense. He is manifestly present in heaven (1 Kings 8:30).

He is also present in a special way when God's people begin to praise Him or gather in His name. (Matthew 18:19). Not only is He present when we meet with other Christians but there is a profound sense in which He lives in us by His Spirit. (Ephesians 2:22). The omnipresence of God means that God is always with us. We are never alone.

Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your presence? If I go up into Heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the furthest parts of the sea; even there shall Your hand lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. (Psalms 139:7-10)

(See also Jeremiah 23:23, Psalm 133:7, Acts 17:27-28)

... if two of you shall agree on earth as regarding anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them by My Father in Heaven. (Matthew 18:19)

In whom you also are built together for a dwelling place of God through the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:22)

(See also Hebrews 13:5-6)

GOD IS HOLY

Holiness means 'moral perfection, absolute purity' and that's how God is. He is morally perfect and absolutely pure. Because God is Holy He cannot sin and cannot tolerate sin. He loves what is right and hates what is wrong. The Old Testament establishes that God is so vastly holy that sinners cannot approach Him. In fact the holiness of God means that we need forgiveness. Moreover it is evident from the whole of scripture that there is no forgiveness without atonement, which is to say that we can only approach a Holy God on the basis of a sin sacrifice. This is the lesson of the Old Testament tabernacle. God dwelt in the Holy of Holies. This was an area separated from the people by a thick veil. Because of their sin, the people were forbidden

Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity. (Habakkuk 1:13a)

The way of the wicked is hateful to The Lord, but He loves him who pursues righteousness. (Proverbs 15:9)

Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy. (Psalm 99:9)

(See also Isaiah 6:3, Exodus 15:11, 1Peter 1:15:16 and Revelation 4:8 & 15:4)

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to enter God's holy presence. The High Priest alone, entered once a year into the Holy of Holies, and only then with the blood of a sin offering.

A.G. Strong says: "The first and fundamental reason why 'without the shedding of blood there is no remission' is because God is holy and sin must be covered before there can be fellowship between God and the sinner." The holiness of God is the reason why Jesus had to die for our sins. We approach God only on the basis of Jesus' shed blood.

But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. (Ephesians 2:13)

... without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (Hebrews 9:22)

We have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 10:19)

- a) The Holiness of God reveals the sinfulness of sin. (Job 42:5-6, Isaiah 6:5). W. Evans says: "Our view of the necessity of atonement will depend very largely upon our view of the Holiness of God. Light views of God and His Holiness will produce a light view of sin and the atonement."
- b) The Holiness of God magnifies God's grace. R.A. Torrey says: "How marvelous is God's love! It would be no wonder if an unholy God could love unholy men; but that God whose name is holy, the infinitely Holy God, could love beings so utterly sinful as we are, that is the wonder of Eternities. There are many deep mysteries in the Bible, but no other so profound as this".
- c) The Holiness of God brings reverence and awe. (Hebrews 12:28-29, Isaiah 6:1-3, Exodus 3:4-6)
- d) The Holiness of God is expressed in God's righteousness and justice. William Evans says: 'Holiness has to do more particularly with the character of God in itself, while in righteousness and justice that character is expressed in the dealings of God with men'.

GOD IS RIGHTEOUS

The righteousness of God means that God always does what is right and demands what is right from all His creatures. Because God is righteous His law is righteous. In short God's Law is an expression of His character. It is for this reason that no one is capable of keeping His Law.

The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. (Psalm 19:9)

So indeed the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good. (Romans 7:12)

(See Psalm 6:5, Jeremiah 12:1)

"The Lord is righteous in all His ways." (Psalm 145:7)

GOD IS JUST

The justice of God means that God always punishes what is wrong and vindicates what is right. Justice is the execution of righteousness. All God's dealings with men are on the basis of absolute justice.

Ascribe greatness to our God, The Rock, His work is perfect and all His ways are just, a God of faithfulness, and without evil; just and upright is He. (Deuteronomy 32:4)

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Because God is just:

- He shows no favoritism (2 Chronicles 19:7, Acts 10:34)
- He punishes the wicked (Nahum 1:3, Romans 1:18, Psalm 5:4-6)

But there is also good news to God's justice. When Jesus died on The Cross He took our punishment onto Himself. Jesus has paid the price for our sins. Because Jesus died for our sins it would be unjust for God to exact a further punishment for the same sins. Jesus' sacrifice has fully satisfied God's need for justice.

... that He might be just and the justifier of him who has faith in Jesus (Romans 3:26)

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Because Jesus has died for our sons and because God is just:

- He justifies the one who believes in Christ (Romans 3:26)
- He cleanses and forgives the Christian who confesses his sin to God (1 John 1:9)
- He rewards the righteous (Hebrews 6:10)

GOD IS LOVE

God does not merely love; God is love. Love is the very essence of His moral nature. He is the source of all love. E. Bancroft says: "Love is that attribute of God by which He is inclined to seek the highest good for His creatures and the communication (or giving) of Himself to them regardless of the sacrifice involved". The Bible teaches that the cross of Calvary is the highest expression of God's love for sinful man. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8)

The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love, . . . God is love and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. (1 John 4:8&16)

In this the love of God was revealed in us, because God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation concerning our sins. (1 John 4:9-10)

God's love takes on the character of all His other attributes. Thus His love is Infinite (unlimited), Eternal (unfailing), Immense (unfathomable), Immutable (unchanging) and Omnipotent (unconquerable). One of the most wonderful things about God's love is that it is unconditional. Men place conditions on their love; God places no conditions.

Have you ever asked the question: "Oh God why do you love me? Why did you choose me?" His answer is simply: "I love you, not because you deserve it but because I want to". He is kind. He loves you because He wants to love you. God loves you, not because you deserve His love or because of who you are or what you have done but simply because He has chosen to love you (Ephesians 1:4-5).

God's kindness in bringing Israel out of Egypt was accompanied by the giving of the Ten Commandments under Moses. Least Israel should think themselves to have won God's favor because of who they were or what they had done, God

According as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will (Ephesians 1:4-5)

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reminded them that His reason for loving them was based entirely in the inscrutability of His own will and decision (Deuteronomy 7:7-8). The same is true for His church today. No reason for His love can be given except that it is His pleasure to love you.

In fact the miracle of God's love is that it overcomes the many reasons why He should despise us. Not only is there nothing about us which is so attractive and appealing as to warrant God's love but there is everything about which earns His anger and dislike. The most amazing thing about God's love is that it came to us at the very moment of our most profound helplessness and our most odious despicable condition (Romans 5:6-10).

Even though we were helpless, ungodly, sinners and enemies of God, He loved us? If God loved us while we were His enemies, it is certain that He loves us now that we are His friends.

When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, their first reaction was to prepare coverings for themselves. Their consciousness of sin made them ashamed but their shame only lead to pride because they thought that their own attempts to deal with sin would resolve the problem between themselves and between God and themselves. This same tendency exists in us today. Many are mankind's attempts at dealing with sin and they all start with the notion that we can make ourselves acceptable to God by our own efforts.

The irony is that God does not cleanse us from sin in order that He can love us. He first loves us and as a result of that love cleanses us from sin (Revelation 1:5b). The order in this verse is significant. It is a beautiful fact that God loves us first and then washes us from our sins. He doesn't wash us first and then love us.

God loves you as you are - faults and all. He doesn't expect you to change before He loves you. He doesn't say "Change and then I'll love you." He says: "I love you". And so it is *because* of His love for us that we want to change. Love changes us! (If you want someone to change - love them just as they are. You will find that they will change in response to your love)

God's love is unconditional, it cannot be bought or earned and yet it is tempered by His wisdom, truth and justice. For this reason God can love but still hate sin.! We don't have to try to buy God's love. You can't buy a gift and you can't make God love you. He already does.

GOD IS MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS

God's love is expressed by His mercy and grace.

Arthur Pink says: "Divine grace is the sovereign and saving favor of God exercised in the bestowment of blessings upon those who have no merit in them and for which no compensation is demanded from them. Nay, more; it is the favor of God shown to those who not only have no

The LORD did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any people; for you were the fewest of all people: But because The LORD loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn to your fathers, has The LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. (Deuteronomy 7:7-8)

For we yet being without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will with difficulty die for a righteous one, yet perhaps one would even dare to die for a good one. But God commends His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. (Romans 5:6-8)

(See also Jeremiah 31:3, 1 John 4:10, Titus 3:3-5, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2:4 & Ephesians 5:2)

. . . To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. (Revelation 1:5b)

The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. (Psalm 103:8)

We believe in one God.

positive deserts of their own, but who are thoroughly ill-deserving and hell-deserving. It is completely unmerited and unsought, and is altogether unattracted by anything in or from or by the objects upon which it is bestowed. Grace can neither be bought, earned, nor won by the creature. If it could be, it would cease to be grace. When a thing is said to be of 'grace' we mean that the recipient has no claim upon it that it was in nowise due him. It comes to him as pure charity, and, at first, unasked and undesired."

The fullest exposition of the amazing grace of God is to be found in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul. In his writings 'grace' stands in direct opposition to works and worthiness, all works and worthiness, of whatever kind or degree. Grace and works are like acid and an alkali. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). The absolute favor of God can no more consist with human merit than oil and water will fuse into one.

And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more of grace; otherwise work is no more work. (Romans 11:6)

(See also Romans 4:4-5)

GOD IS TRUTH

God is not only truthful, He is truth. Because God is truth He is faithful. There is no shadow or turning in Him. He is trustworthy and can be relied upon (Deuteronomy 7:9, 2 Timothy 2:13). He means what

If indeed you have heard Him and were taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus. (Ephesians 4:21)

(See also 1 John 5:20, John 14:6)

He says and does what He means. In short He is absolutely trustworthy because it is not in Him to tell a lie. Because He is truth we can expect that the presence and guidance of His lie in our lives will lead us into all truth.

GOD AND PERSONHOOD

It is an interesting and vital fact that so many of the attributes which are important to us as humans are to be found in the personhood and being of God. Our study has shown us that truth is not a concept, it is a person (John 4:16). Love is not a concept or an emotion, it is a person (1 John 4:8). Similarly righteousness is not an objective entity, it is a person (Romans 3:26). We opened this set of notes with the observation that God's name of Jehovah means 'The Self Existent One'. Thus we are unsurprised to find that life is not a power or energy but a person (John 14:6).

To appreciate the centrality of God's Name and attributes is to understand that so many of the things which we treat as concepts are in fact the essence of the personhood of God. This provides us with an answer to the philosopher's conundrum. Socrates asked: "Is something good because the gods declare it to be good? Or do the gods declare something to be good because it is in itself good?" For the Christian this question is resolved by recognizing the personhood of God. As Jesus taught "There is none good but God" (Mark 10:18).

To deny God is to deny the very essence of personhood. Thus to deny personhood is to deny the personhood of our own humanity.

GOD - THE ONE AND THE MANY

The Nicene Creed is written so as to define the roles of The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit. Our previous notes spoke about the oneness of God. These notes set that same oneness in the context of The Trinity.

THE FRAMEWORK OF REASON

The doctrine of The Trinity is one which is inferred from scripture rather than being stated directly as a clear matter of the faith. Without doubt the Scriptures which necessitate the doctrine of The Trinity are compelling but our understand of this doctrine is based on argument rather than direct Biblical statement. These notes address the doctrine in the following manner:

- 1) The doctrine of The Trinity is Scriptural
 - a) the doctrine is implied in the Old Testament by God's names
 - b) the Hebrew word used when describing God as 'one' is a word that carries the notion of 'compound one'
 - c) the personal pronouns used by God are in the plural
 - d) many Scriptures do not make sense unless God is understood as "one and many"
2. The doctrine is made clear in the New Testament
 - a) the baptism of Christ and the baptismal formula speak of The Trinity
 - b) Christ's teaching speaks of the Trinity
 - c) the writings of the apostles agree that God is triune in nature
 - d) the shared eternal nature of Father, Son and Holy Spirit
 - e) each member of The Trinity is a distinct person but inter-dependent with the other
3. The created order speaks of a Trinitarian Creator
 - a) the triune nature of the creation
 - b) the triune nature of light and time
 - c) the triune nature of matter

THE TRINITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The unity of God as expressed in the Old Testament is not an absolute unity but a compound unity. This is implied or allowed for in the meaning of the word 'one' in the Old and New Testaments. There are two Hebrew words which mean one:

- 'yacheed' means 'absolute unity'. This word is used in such expressions as 'the only one'. It indicates absolute or singular unity.
- 'echad' means 'compound unity'. This word is used in such expressions as 'one cluster of grapes' or 'all the people rose as one man'. It indicates compound or plural unity.

And they (husband and wife) shall be one (echad) flesh (Genesis 2:24)"

And The Lord said: "The people, is one (echad) and they shall have one language." (Genesis. 11:6)

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It is very significant that the word *yacheed* (which means absolute unity) is never used to express the unity of God. The word that is consistently used is *echad* (i.e. compound unity). About 300 years before Christ's birth, the Old Testament was translated from the Hebrew into Greek by 70 Jewish scholars who were careful to ensure that the Greek words used were as close to the Hebrew meaning as possible. This translation, known as The Septuagint, used the Greek *'heis'* to describe the unity of God. This word also carries the meaning of 'compound unity'.

*He that plants and he that waters are one (heis)
(1Corinthians 3:7)*

*That they all may be one (heis), as You Father, are
in Me, that they also may be one (heis) in Us, so
that the world may believe that You have sent Me.
(John 17:21)*

The Bible teaches fact that God exists as a tri-unity, meaning that within the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The word Trinity simply means 'three in one'. It comes from the two Latin words 'tres' meaning 'three' and 'unitas' meaning 'unity'.

The Anathanasian Creed offers a concise statement of the Doctrine of the Trinity:

"We worship One God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet there are not three Gods but One God. The God-head of The Father, and of The Son, and of the Holy Ghost is one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal. And in this Trinity none is afore or after other. None is greater or less than another, but the whole Three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal."

This concept of God as Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - one in essence but three in persons is unique to the Christian faith. Before we study the Trinity in detail it must first be said that the doctrine of the Trinity is a deep and profound mystery.

Unsurprisingly therefore, it is impossible for us to fully comprehend the mystery of the Trinity of God. Many people object to this doctrine because they cannot understand it. However, this is no basis for rejecting anything. There are many things we cannot understand, but our inability to understand them does not make them invalid. A man once asked Daniel Webster, "How can you reconcile the doctrine of the Trinity with reason?" The brilliant statesman replied, "Do you expect to understand the arithmetic of heaven?"

How can we as finite beings expect to fully comprehend an infinite God? In fact if God were perfectly explicable (able to be explained) to a finite being, He would not be God!

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY IS SCRIPTURAL

The reason why we believe the doctrine of the Trinity is very simple - the Bible teaches it. The doctrine of the Trinity is based on the teaching of many scriptures. It is true that the word 'trinity' does not appear in the Bible and that there is no one scripture that formally and specifically states the doctrine of The Trinity.

{There is a verse in the KJV of the Bible which says:

*"There are three that bear record in heaven, the
Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these
three are one." (1 John 5:7)*

*This verse however does not appear in the earliest
manuscripts and these days is omitted in most
modern translations.}*

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Although the doctrine of the Trinity is not directly taught in any one scripture it is certainly implied in many. As such it becomes our only possible conclusion when we consider the teaching of Scripture as a whole. To not believe in the Trinity is to not believe in the clear teaching of the Bible.

THE TRINITY IS IMPLIED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT,

The burden of the Old Testament is the Unity of God and yet a careful study reveals many inferences and indicates of the Trinity of God.

1. The Hebrew name for God is plural

Elohim the Hebrew word for God is plural. Literally translated it means 'Gods'. (The singular form of this word is 'eioa'h'.) Thus the very first verse in the Bible indicates that God is Trinity. The Bible opens: "In the beginning elohim (plural) created the heavens and the earth." or "In the beginning Gods created the heavens and the earth". (See also Gen. 3:5)

In the beginning God (elohim) created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

for God (elohim) knows that in the day you eat of it, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods (elohim), knowing good and evil. (Genesis 3:5)

2. The Hebrew word for one means plural unity

We have already seen that the Hebrew word used to describe the unity of God is the word 'echad'. This word indicates compound or plural unity. God's statement of Himself as being "One God" (Deuteronomy 6:4) at first glance seems to refute the fact that God is Trinity.

Hear O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! (Deuteronomy 6:4)

But, when we look closely at this verse in the original Hebrew we find that the word translated 'Lord' both times in this verse is the Hebrew name for God, 'Jehovah'. This word is singular and the word translated 'God' is another Hebrew name for God, 'elohim'. This word is plural. Also the word translated as 'one' is 'echad' which means a compound or plural-unity! Thus a literal translation of the verse is:

Which is to say: "Hear O Israel! The Jehovah (singular) our Elohim (plural), the Jehovah (singular) is Echad (compound plural)"

"Hear, O Israel! The Jehovah (singular) our Elohim (plural) the Jehovah (singular) is Echad (compound unity)".

It is also interesting to note that God's name is mentioned three times in this verse, which another seeming inference that God is a Trinity.

3. The personal pronouns used by God are plural

There are many places in Scripture where God refers to Himself as 'Us'. God was not talking to the angels in these verses. He was, as it were, talking within Himself. (See Genesis 1:26, Genesis 11:7, Isaiah 6:8 and Isaiah 40:14). It is also pertinent to note that the literal translation of the Hebrew words 'creator' and 'maker' appearing in certain scriptures are also plural.

God said 'Let US make man in OUR image according to OUR likeness (Genesis 1:26)

*Then the Lord God said; "Behold, the man has become one of US..." (Genesis 3:22
Come let US go down and confuse their language . . . (Genesis 11:7)*

Whom shall we send and who will go for US? (Isaiah 6:8)

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We are told to "Remember now thy Creators (plural) in the days of your youth" (Ecclesiastes 12:1). And Israel was told that God "Thy Makers (plural) is thy husband" (Isaiah 54:5).

4. Many Scriptures which don't make sense unless God is plural

There are many Scriptures which don't make sense unless God is understood to be communing within Himself when He speaks. There are many instances where The Lord commits to a course of action which He then hands over to 'The Lord' or to 'The Spirit' to perform. These scriptures would not make sense unless there were a distinction in personhood between the one making the commitment and the one performing.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. (Genesis 1:1-2)

Referring to Genesis 1:1-2 we find that Here God and the Spirit of God are distinguished and yet both are attributed with the work of creation?

Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven (Genesis 19:24)

Referring to Genesis 19:24 we see the LORD is distinguished from the LORD and yet the fire and brimstone came from both of them?

But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and will save them by Jehovah their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen. (Hosea 1:7)

In Hosea 1:7 the LORD says that He will deliver Judah by the LORD? This indicates that the One is plural and that the name and essence is shared.

Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion. For lo, I come, and I will dwell in your midst, says Jehovah. And many nations shall be joined to Jehovah in that day, and shall be My people; and I will dwell in your midst, and you shall know that Jehovah of Hosts has sent me to you. (Zechariah 2:10-11)

Reading carefully Zechariah 2:10-11 we see that in this verse the LORD is sent by the LORD?

For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be on His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

Here in Isaiah 9:6, The Son is called the Mighty God and the Eternal Father. Therefore the Son of God must be God and yet He is distinguished from God?

And you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, you being least among the thousands of Judah, out of you He shall come forth to Me, to become Ruler in Israel, He whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity. (Micah 5:2)

Concerning that Scripture which foretold the place of Christ's birth (Micah 5:2) we see that the one born in Bethlehem (Jesus, The Son) is said to come from the Lord and also to be eternal. Only The Lord is eternal, therefore the Son must also be The Lord.

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It is also beautiful to observe that the threefold benediction (Numbers 6:24-27) also speaks of the plurality of God. For the three parts of this benediction not only indicate the Trinity but also speak of their respective ministries! The Father is the source of all blessing and protection. The Son is the One 'full of grace and truth'. The Spirit is the One who brings peace.

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious toward you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-27)

Similarly, Jacob's blessing of Joseph's two sons (Gen 48:15-16) includes a three part benediction also indicate the Trinity and their ministries. The Father is the One before whom we walk. The Son is the One who redeems us. The Spirit is the One who guides us.

And he blessed Joseph and said, May God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who fed me all my life to this day, the Angel who redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads. (Genesis 48:15)

When Isaiah was caught up into the throne room of God he heard the angels worshipping God with a threefold adoration. Many consider this threefold repetition of the word "holy" by the Seraphim as the adoration and worship of the Three Persons in the Trinity. There is good reason for believing this for later in the same chapter (Isaiah 6:8) God, the Lord Himself refers to Himself as Trinity by using the plural personal pronoun 'Us'. Moreover

And one cried to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of Hosts; the whole earth full of His glory. (Isaiah 6:3)

- whereas Isaiah is said to have seen The Lord Jehovah (Isaiah 6:1) we are told in the New Testament that Isaiah actually saw Christ (John 12:41), and
- the words spoken to Isaiah were delivered by The Lord Jehovah (Isaiah 6:9) and yet the New Testament records that it was the Holy Spirit who spoke these words (Acts 28:25 see also Psalm 29:3-5).

It should be noted that all the scripture references above do not prove the doctrine of the Trinity; however, they certainly do make a very strong case by inference.

THE TRINITY IS CLEARLY TAUGHT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

It is also very important to note that the clear teaching of the New Testament on the Trinity is really an expansion of the Old Testament revelation. It does not contradict the Old Testament teaching on the nature of the Godhead; it simply amplifies it. The One God of the Old Testament is the same One God of the New; but in the New He is revealed to be what He has always been - 'One God, Three Persons' for the New Testament teaches that the members of The Trinity are equally God.

- The Father is God
(See Romans 15:6, John 6:27, Romans 1:7, 1 Peter 1:2 and Ephesians 4:6)
- The Son Is God
(See Hebrews 1:8, John 1:17-18, Romans 9:5, Titus 2:13, Colossians 2:9, John 20:28, Philippians 2:6, Acts 20:28, 2 Peter 1:1 and 1 John 5:20)
- The Spirit is God
(See Acts 5:3-4, 1 Corinthians 10:11 and Ephesians 2:22)

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The doctrine of the Trinity is clearly taught in the New Testament. It is not merely intimated as in the Old Testament, but definitely stated. The New Testament makes numerous references to the three persons of the Trinity. This can be seen from the following:

1. The Baptism of Christ

Jesus' baptism was a most momentous moment in His ministry. It was the means by which He was to be revealed to the world (John 1:25-20). As He came up from the waters He received the spoken approval of The Father and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The Father speaks from heaven and as the Son is being baptized the Holy Spirit descends in the form of a dove. (See also Luke 3:22)

And Jesus, when He had been baptized, went up immediately out of the water. And lo, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him. And lo, a voice from Heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. (Matthew 3:16-17)

Again when Jesus instituted the formula by which Christians are baptized He included a clear expectation that we would be baptized into the Trinitarian name. Note that we are to be baptized into "name" (singular) as distinct from "names" (plural). We are baptized into name of The Father, the name of The Son and the name of the Holy Spirit.

This Trinitarian approach to baptism is entirely appropriate for the Christian because baptism is a symbolic participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are baptized into His death and raised again into the newness of His life (Romans 6:3-4). Yet scripture tells us that Christ's resurrection was a Trinitarian event. He was raised by the glory of The Father (Romans 6:4), by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11) and according to Jesus' own authority (John 10:17-18). If Jesus' resurrection is a work of the Trinity then our burial and resurrection in baptism should also be done according to God's Trinitarian nature (Matthew 28:19).

Therefore go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19)

2. The teaching of Christ

Jesus took care to warn us not to blaspheme against Holy Spirit. Because blasphemy is sin against God's name and nature we can conclude that Jesus was teaching that the Holy Spirit is indeed God. In fact when instructing about this form of blasphemy, it is listed against three distinct persons; God, the Son of Man and the Holy Spirit. Moreover since blasphemy is the abuse of God's name and all three persons of the Trinity are mentioned by Jesus, we are lead to see that both the Son of Man and the Holy Spirit are God.

But he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God. And whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him. But to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven. (Luke 12:9-10)

Furthermore when Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit, He described the Spirit as *another* helper. This other Helper is a person distinct from The Son who also is our helper. (John 14:16-17, 15:26 and 16:7-10).

3. The writings of the Apostles

It is virtually impossible to read the New Testament writers without encountering their commitment to the Trinity. Whether in the gospels or the letters, each one of God's inspired writers presents a

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common image of the simultaneous “one and many” nature of God. This tendency is seen most often in the benedictions which conclude many of the letters which written by the apostles, but it can also be readily found in numerous other places.

- Paul acknowledges The Trinity
(See 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 2 Corinthians 13:4, Ephesians 3:14-16)
- Peter acknowledges The Trinity
(See Acts 2:32-33, 1 Peter 1:2, 1 Peter 3:18)
- Jude acknowledges The Trinity
(See Jude 20-21)
- John acknowledges The Trinity
(See John 17:20-23, 1 John 3:23-24, Revelation 1:4-5)

4. The eternity of the Persons in The Trinity

Since each member of the Trinity is God, each member is eternal. The Westminster Confession of Faith emphasizes the eternal nature of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In the Unity of the Godhead, there are three Persons of one substance, power and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; The Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost is eternally proceeding from The Father and The Son."

- **The Father is eternally The Father.** The Father did not become a Father. He has always been the Father. The Father is "of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding".
- **The Son is eternally The Son.** He did not become a Son. He has always been The Son. The Son is "eternally begotten of the Father". Some people (e.g. Christadelphians and Jehovah's Witnesses) do not believe in the pre-existence of the Son (i.e. that Christ existed before He came to earth). However, John's gospel opens with a clear and unequivocal statement to the effect that The Son existed before taking on human form (John 1:1-4)

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. (Psalms 90:2)

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

Jesus is the Word before He became flesh. He was with God and He was God. Both Jesus and the John the Baptist testified that Jesus existed prior to coming to earth in human form. Even though John the Baptist was born several months before Jesus, he said of Him “ . . . He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for he was before me” (John

Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, Before Abraham came into being, I AM! Then they took up stones to throw at Him. But Jesus hid Himself and went forth out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and passed on by. (John 8:58-59)

1:15). Moreover elsewhere Jesus told the Pharisees that He existed even before Abraham was born (a span of about 1,500 years). This the Pharisees took to be a statement that Jesus

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was God because when they heard it they sought to stone Jesus as a blasphemer and heretic (John 8:58-59).

Jesus also said that He had descended from heaven which implies His pre-existence. (Refer to John 6:33-41). There are many other references to the pre-existence of Christ. (See Proverbs 8:22-24, Proverbs 30:4, Micah 5:2, Colossians 1:17, Revelation 1:8 & 17).

It is worth noting that every passage which teaches the eternal Sonship of Christ also teaches the eternal Fatherhood of God. If the Son existed eternally; the Father must have also have been an eternal Father, otherwise the term Son would not make sense.

- **The Spirit is eternally The Spirit.** The Holy Spirit did not become a Spirit. He has always been the Spirit. The Spirit is "eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son." The Nicene Creed makes use of John's gospel (John 15:26) to indicate that the Spirit "proceeds". He didn't begin to proceed. He has always been proceeding (where 'proceeding' means 'going forth'.)

Thus it is very important to accept that all three Persons of the Trinity are Eternal. To not accept this is to deny their Deity.

... Christ (who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God) ... (Hebrews 9:14)

And when the Comforter has come, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He shall testify of Me. (John 15:26)

5. Each Person of The Trinity depend on one another

The members of the Trinity are not independent, they are inter-dependent! They all rely on one another, submit to one another, need one another and content themselves in glorifying one another. They never do anything unless it is in co-operation with each other and unless it ensures that each member of the Trinity is glorified. They do not promote themselves or glorify themselves but rather they promote and glorify each other!

And He said to them, Why did you look for Me? Do you not know that I must be about My Father's business? (Luke 2:49)

(See also John 17:4, 4:24 & 8:29, Hebrews 5:7)

- **The Father depends on and glorifies The Son.** The Father depends on the Son to accomplish His will. Many many times during His earthly ministry Jesus declared that He had not come to do His own will but that He was sent by The Father to do His will. The Father entrusted Jesus with the plan of redemption.
- **The Son depends on and glorifies The Father.** The Son does nothing on His own initiative (John 8:28). Jesus was thoroughly dependent on The Father for the direction of His life and ministry. It was Jesus' passion to see The Father glorified (John 17:5).
- **The Spirit depends on and glorifies The Son.** The Spirit depends totally upon the Son. Since He proceeds from The Father and The Son, The Spirit is dependent on the other persons in

And Then Jesus said to them, ... I do nothing of Myself, but as My Father has taught Me, I speak these things. (John 8:28)

(See also John 5:19, Colossians 1:16)

And now Father, glorify Me with Yourself with the glory which I had with You before the world was. (John 17:5)

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the Trinity for the direction of His manifestation. Furthermore Jesus taught that the Holy Spirit would say nothing of Himself (John 16:13).

Since we find that each member of the Godhead lives for the other, ought we not in the same manner live selfless lives? This most incredible eternal community reveals to us that the love, faith and humility that are central to Christian obedience flow from the very essence of who God is. When scripture places a demand on our passions and flesh, it is merely inviting us into the essence of the Creator's heart. It is evident therefore that the fruit of the Holy Spirit are not some external characteristic but the outflow of the character of God from the Godhead into us and through us to others.

Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. (Philippians 2:3)

THE NATURE OF CREATION

Scripture tells us that everything reproduces after its own kind. Elephants don't produce monkeys as offspring. We might expect that this same principle will apply when we consider the cosmos which God Himself has created. As we contemplate its essence and structure we find that it too has a triune nature which in turn speaks of a triune source.

1. The triune nature of the cosmos

In his book 'The Bible has the Answer' H. Morris says: "The truth of the triune nature of the Creator is clearly implied by the profoundly triune nature of the Creation. Thus the physical cosmos is clearly a tri-universe of Space, Matter, and Time, and each of these is co-extensive with the entire universe. Space is the omnipresent background of all physical reality. Matter (or "mass energy") is that which is everywhere observed in Space, and Time is the ever-flowing but invisible agent through which we can actually experience the phenomena of Matter and Energy."

"Each of these three entities is also itself a tri-unity. Thus, Space is three-dimensional, with each dimension comprising the entire space. Space is measured in terms of one single a dimension (e.g. the foot, the meter, etc.), but can be seen in only two dimensions and is 'lived in' in three dimensions. Just as the 'reality' or volume of space is obtained by multiplying the three dimensions together, so one might say the mathematics of the Trinity is not 1 plus 1 plus 1 equals 1, but rather 1 times 1 times 1 equals 1.

Similarly Time is a tri-unity of Future, Present, and Past time. The Future is the unseen source of Time, becoming visible moment-by-moment in the Present, and then passing into the realm of the 'experienced' Past. Each is the whole of Time, yet each is distinct and necessary for the understanding of Time.

Finally those phenomena and processes which take place in Space, through Time, which men call Matter, also constitute a remarkable tri-unity. Energy is the unseen source, manifesting itself in Motion, and then experienced in a particular process or phenomenon. Everything that 'happens' in Space and Time is measured in terms of its particular rate or motion, meaning how much time to move through a unit of space. But the particular Motion is inseparably linked with the particular kind of Energy which caused it on the one hand, and the particular kind of phenomenon which it

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produces on the other. The tri-unity of Matter thus is that of Energy continually producing and revealing itself in Motion, which is then experienced through associated phenomena."

The physical universe is thus fundamentally a Trinity of Trinities! Everywhere we look we see this universal tri-unity of Cause, Event and Consequence or said another way the tri-unity of Source, Manifestation and Meaning. It is therefore not at all mathematically unreasonable, but rather intensely realistic, to believe that the Creator of this Tri-universe is a Triune God."

2. The triune nature of light

Griffith Thomas gives this illustration of the Trinity. "Rays of light are threefold. There are heat rays which are felt but not seen; light rays which are seen and not felt; and actinic rays which are known only by the effects of their chemical action '(as in photography), being neither seen nor felt."

3. The triune nature of music

Griffith Thomas also gives this illustration. "The only perfect chord in music is a trinity, consisting of the fundamental note with its third and fifth which proceed from it and form the complete chord, known as the Perfect Triad. From this chord all other harmonies are built, and the moment we add any other note we get what is technically known as a discord, a chord which requires resolution, which leaves the ear unsatisfied, and which must invariably be resolved on to the concord of the Perfect Triad before the musical sentence can be satisfactorily finished."

THE GODHEAD LIVES FOR ONE ANOTHER

DeVern F Fromke talks about the Trinity's commitment to one another in his book "The Ultimate Intention". He says: "The Father makes all His plans with His eternal Son in view; that in the unfolding ages ahead, Jesus Christ might have a glorious Body, in which to 'express His very life, and a family of brothers with whom He might enjoy fellowship. Then as we understand the innermost purpose of the Son, we see how in turn He dedicates Himself to helping the Father realize His intention for Himself; that He (the Father) might have a family of sons in whom He can have paternal honor, glory, pleasure and delight. The Father plans for His Son, whereas the Son lives unto the Father. So it is within the Godhead. In a sense no member lives for or unto Himself, but each for the other. The Father intends that in all things the Son might have pre-eminence. The Son lives to reveal the Father and thus brings glory and pleasure to Him. Likewise the Spirit speaks not of Himself (nor for Himself) but dedicates His activity to the revealing of the Son and to the realizing for both the Father and the Son. What is this inner attitude, spirit and purpose of selfless giving, serving and sharing but a divine rule of action which has always been expressive in God? This is the principle revealed in The Cross.

It may come as a real surprise to some when we suggest that The Cross has always been an eternal principle in God. It is not an afterthought or accident in the universe, nor is it a principle read into things by loving hearts. It is inherent in God. This Cross-Principle which seems woven into the very bosom of the Father is demonstrated by the Son and interpreted by the Spirit. It has ever been the principle of action by which the Godhead would surely bring to pass the divine intention. We see then the Cross is far more than an act in history. It expresses the very qualities and manner of life of

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the triune God. It is the life-giving light-sharing and love-bestowing principle by which God has dealt with man from the beginning.

Thus in the Godhead we have the supreme example of serving. Each member of the Godhead dedicates Himself to the fulfillment of the others' desires. They serve one another! In consequence we too ought to serve one another.

GOD - THE CREATOR

The Nicene Creed is a statement of the rudiments of the faith. It is important to note the nature of its content. As with its predecessor, The Apostles Creed (about 140 AD), the Nicene Creed (325 AD) is written around the historical facts of Christ's birth, death and resurrection. Both Creeds affirm that the plan of salvation was a real, historically verifiable, event-based action on God's part.

To this end the Christian faith stands apart from all other faiths. It is based in time and reality. It is not based on scriptures written as myth, in the way that Hinduism is based on the Bhagavad Gita, it is not based on inaccurate history as the revelation of God, in the way the Islam is based on the Koran and it is not based on philosophical writings as Buddhism is based on the Sutras and the Dharma. The Bible states itself as being the inerrant word of God who, in Jesus Christ of Nazareth, was born into a certain nation at a pre-determined time and died a real death as was prophesied of Him. In as much as his birth and death were real events, so too His resurrection was an actual fact.

The creeds cement us into reality. Starting with the reality of God as Creator and focusing on the reality of Christ as risen savior, they address two errors which were prevalent at the time of the founding of The Church and which still exist today.

Firstly, there was the error of Gnosticism which, being rooted in the Greek worldview, believed that the physical world was evil. Thus while accepting that the supreme Being was perfectly holy and pure light; the Gnostics asserted that the Creator of the world was either a spirit of darkness, or, if he was a spirit of light, that he was not entirely free from darkness (1 John 1:5), since they thought the world itself was an evil thing. In this way Gnostics divide the reality of God's world into that which is holy (spirit and ideas), and that which is evil (flesh and the material world). In particular the reality of Christ's appearing and manhood was argued as being an illusion, because the Gnostic could not accept that a holy God would take on a (sinful) material existence. Secondly there was the error of the Stoics (Acts 17:18) who believed that the earth had no beginning, but was itself eternal.

And this is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5)

Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? Other some, He seems to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. (Acts 17:18)

Both of these errors exist today. As regards to Gnosticism, there are certain theologians and ministers who contend that the story of Christ's resurrection is not real but figurative and a mere indication of God's purposes. Secondly there are the materialists or evolutionists who believe that the universe is eternal and the sum of all that is. Thus consideration of the Bible's creation account is foundational to our faith as it contends with both Gnosticism and Stoicism.

We will address the creation order of God along the following lines:

- 1) The necessity for a literal reading of the Bible's creation account
 - a) Christ's acceptance of a literal rendering
 - b) the dangers of current day Gnosticism
- 2) The implication of the materialist approach and deficiencies of evolution
 - a) the nature of science meaning that evolution and creationism are both non-scientific

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- b) the deficiency of the geological model and fossil records
 - c) the inability of evolution to account for biological development
 - d) arguments from probability
 - e) the adverse implication of entropy (Second Law of Thermodynamics)
 - f) the inadmissibility of thought and virtue to a materialist worldview
- 3) An alternative rendering - you can't refute something with nothing
 - 4) The implications of God being our creator

THE DECISIVENESS OF A LITERAL READING OF GENESIS

The scriptures report in more than 100 places that God is the creator of heaven and earth. The fact of Him being creator cannot be in dispute as a foundational element of the Christian faith.

Where Christians fail to agree is concerning the means by which God formed the cosmos. There are those Christians who are content with the creation account of Genesis (Genesis 1:1 – 2:3). Then there are those Christians who, giving credit to the oftentimes beneficial insights of science, feel it necessary to make excuses for the Bible's claim that God created the earth in six days. Because of this the creation account is subjected to an array of interpretive models all of which, to varying degrees, pay homage to the notion of an old earth which emerged by naturalist means.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made. (Genesis 2:3)

Scripture tells us that it is faith which leads us to see that God made all things (Hebrews 11:3). Scripture also cautions us not to make a stumbling block for those brothers who are weak in faith (Romans 14:1). Therefore in contending for the inerrancy of God's creation account we should not be abrasive but be gentle with those who are not yet able to make the transition out of a materialist worldview and have not considered truth in a manner which brings every worldview into captivity to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). There are solid scientific, philosophical and Biblical reasons to rest in or trust on the Genesis account but it is a ministry of the Holy Spirit to bring truth to light in the heart of man and He does so in His own way and timing.

By faith we understand that the ages were framed by a word of God, so that the things being seen not to have come into being out of the things that appear. (Hebrews 11:3)

As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. (Romans 14:1)

1. Jesus believed the world to have been created by The Father

Jesus assured His disciples that an inability to believe Moses would result in an inability to believe Him (John 5:46-47, Luke 16:31). Given that the first five books of the Bible are attributed to Moses, we should be challenged in our faith to take the Bible's creation account seriously. Furthermore we find that Jesus was fully persuaded that "from the beginning" God made Adam and Eve (Mark 10:5-9, Matthew 19:4). Thus if Christ called us to believe Moses and

He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female" (Matthew 19:4)

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Himself indicated a commitment to the creation account we are obligated to treat that account seriously.

It should also be noted that scripture affords Jesus the title of the Last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45). In this title is Christ's role of undoing all the damage done by Adam's sin. If Genesis 2 is figurative in setting forth a first Adam, then not just this title but all of Christ's work becomes meaningless. It is an affront to Christ's sovereignty, faith and ministry to assume that the human race was anything other than God's creation.

2. Gnosticism denied

Because Gnosticism is averse to viewing God's cosmos with full acceptance, there is a tendency within it to de-physicalize and de-historicize the Christian faith. Gnosticism transforms history into ideology and facts into philosophy. In this way it presents religion as man's reflections about God and reality, instead of God's revelation of Himself to man. (See James Jordan ~ "Creation in Six Days - A defense of the traditional reading of Genesis 1").

Therefore we face a challenge. Either we read the Genesis creation account in historical terms because we understand that scripture and the historicity of Christ are indicative of God's intention to reveal Himself to the human race as the solution to our sinfulness, in real-time-space terms. Or we read the Genesis account as allegory in the understanding that the Creator's real-time-space intervention awaited a time somewhat after Genesis 1?

Neither The Apostles Creed nor the Nicene Creed would have us take God's revelation of Himself as allegory.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF MATERIALISM AND EVOLUTION

It is Scripture's claim that God has granted to us all things that pertain to life and virtue (2 Peter 1:3).

It is unsurprising therefore that any theory which seeks to displace God must also be able to account for all things; the material world, life and virtue. In short it is the burden of evolution that it must explain *everything* that we encounter in the world around

us¹. It is salient to observe that as knowledge increases the ability of evolution to explain what is encountered diminishes!

... according as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who has called us to glory and virtue. (2 Peter 1:3)

1. Neither evolution nor creationism are scientific

If something is scientific, it is observable and testable (i.e. able to be repeated). Given that the commencement of the earth and universe was a once off event it is neither observable nor repeatable. On this basis creation and evolution are both outside the realms of science. As such it is unfair for evolution to take the intellectual high ground and claim to be scientific in preference to creationism as being unscientific.

¹ Many of the arguments, facts and observations from this section of the notes have been drawn heavily from: John Ashton (Ed), "In Six Days - Why fifty scientists choose to believe in creation", New Holland Publishers (Australia) Pty Ltd, Frenchs Forest, 1999

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Although neither viewpoint can be proven (since they are both outside of science), the circumstantial evidence, the consistency of the evidence and the most fundamental laws of science tend to suggest that creation is a more viable model. This is because the application of scientific thinking and precepts indicates that evolution is certainly not scientific, but creation is not in disagreement with what is truly scientific. We might best understand this by recognizing that the natural laws under which scientists work are adequate for explaining how the world functions, but are inadequate to explain its origin, just as the tools with which we service an automobile are inadequate for its manufacture.

It is sometimes asserted that a preparedness to accept God's involvement in the natural order will lead to intellectual stupor. In fact it is well documented that scientific thought was still born in all cultures apart from the Christian culture of Europe. This is for at least two reasons. It is firstly because Christians see a clear distinction between God and His creation. Without such a distinction those ancients who conducted scientific enquiry faced the danger of disturbing the gods by their investigation. Additionally the notion of a law-giving Creator meant that an orderly universe made perfect sense. Scientists living midst a Christian worldview came to expect that the universe was governed by laws since its Creator was a law giving entity.

Lastly it must be asked if evolution is a real ongoing process with scientific justification based on observation, why do we not we find new developing complex organs in organisms that lack them? The evidence for ongoing evolution is extremely thin if not non-existent.

2. The deficiency of the geological model and fossil records

Geology and its fossil record offered the initial justification for Charles Darwin's theory of evolution (1859). It is an interesting commentary on the validity of that theory that the foundations for its initial appeal have become less credible over time. In particular we find:

- ***Absence of fossils to explain key developments*** ~ There are gaps in the fossil records for all the major breaks. There are inadequate fossils to evidence the development transitions from; fish to amphibians, amphibians to reptiles, reptiles to birds and reptiles to mammals. In fact the fossil record shows that:
 - * life forms manifest little or no change during their history,
 - * most fossil types are virtually identical to their living descendants,
 - * fossil types appear in the fossil record without ancestral lineage, and
 - * fossil organisms either become extinct or survive until the present.
- ***Fossil records do not evidence movement from simple to complex life forms*** ~ The fossil record does not support the model of a slow, gradually advancing evolutionary process. For instance, the simplest forms of life are assumed to have evolved about 3500 million years ago. Yet almost 3000 million years later, the fossil record shows little evidence of any evolutionary advancement.

In fact there are instances of fossilized trees and dinosaur necks which have been fossilized vertically and thus lie through rock strata that are (supposedly) millions of years old.

- ***The geological long age assumptions are unreliable*** ~ Materialist geologist holds to an assumption that the present can be fully account for the earth's past. This assumption,

known as *uniformitarianism* presumes that rock formations are slow. Yet:

- * there is increasing evidence of a global flood catastrophe on the earth's surface which resulted in accelerated changes to the geological column, and
- * the eruption of Mount St Helen in 1980 has given rise to geological formations which in uniformitarian terms should be millions of years old.

- ***The measurement techniques for fossil and geological long age dating are unreliable*** ~

Techniques such as dating via carbon isotopic deterioration are very popular amongst materialist geologists and evolutionists. Yet there are significant conflicts between these radiometric methods and other non-radiometric methods for the dating of geological events. For example, whereas radiometric readings are seen to support a very old earth:

- * the amount of sodium salt accumulated in the ocean is less than should be if the earth were extremely old,
- * the rate of uplift of the Himalayas is less than should be if the earth were extremely old,
- * the current rate of sediment accumulation in the ocean basin is less than should be if the earth were extremely old.

In addition the theory of radiometric dating is itself dubious since argon dating and carbon dating yield different ages for the same rocks.

- ***The tendency toward circular logic*** ~ The difficulties associated with setting a start date or datum point for the measurement of geological time are well understood by evolutionists. Evolution and old-earth geology presuppose each other, meaning that the one requires the other in order to appear viable. This difficulty is of such magnitude that the measurement of fossils and the geological column become self-referential.

Evolutionist Dr J E O'Rourke explains that the dating of rocks "starts from a chronology of index fossils, abstracts time units from it and then imposes them on the rocks". Thus he admits that: "Radiometric dating would not have been possible if the geological column had not been erected first". The fact that the geological column consists of the speculations of previous paleontologists about which fossils belong in a certain layer and which rock layers pre-date others, exposes the whole concept as arbitrary and circular in its logic.²

3. The inability of evolution to account for biological development

Evolution's initial developments were based on observations from the fossil record and life forms known to naturalists of the day. Developments in the field of microbiology have yielded new areas of assessment for the theory of evolution. It has become evident that what is tenuous at the level of macro-evolution is virtually impossible at the level of micro-evolution. Observations which have been damaging to the evolutionary theory include:

- ***The complexity of the design in biology*** ~ The origin of life could not have occurred by a gradual process but must have been instantaneous. Every machine must have a certain minimum of parts for it to function, and if one below this minimum is removed, the machine will cease to function. Without protein life cannot exist. This is true also of DNA and RNA

² Refer J McDurmon "Biblical logic in theory and in practice", American Vision, Powder Springs Georgia, 2009, pg 151

and protein. These must be ALL be present if any of them are going to be present in a living organism. Thus life must have been created completely functional.

Dr Timothy Standish observes: ". . . For natural selection to occur, all proteins on which it is to act must be part of a living organism composed of a host of other functional protein machines. In other words, the entire system must exist prior to selection occurring, not just a single protein." For this reason the gradualism in development as suggested by evolution is impossible.

- **Life from non-life** ~ There is a principle in science known as 'biogenesis' which states that life only comes from life. In addition to being a Biblical principle (Genesis 1:11, 1:12, 1:21, 1:24, 1:25 & 6:20) this is an observable fact in our current world. For evolution to be true it is necessary for there to have been a non-conforming event, referred to amongst scientists as 'abiogenesis'. This event assumes that (unknown) conditions in the distant past operated to produce the first living thing. These unknown forces do not occur today.

And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after its kind, cattle, and creepers, and its beasts of the earth after its kind; and it was so. (Genesis 1:24)

For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has given to the Son to have life within Himself (John 5:26)

It is yet to proven, even theoretically, how any combination of material elements and energy can combine to produce life. Life begets life and the inanimate always yields that which is lifeless.

- **The presence of information within genetic components** ~ It is instructive that scripture tells us that the beginning of all things commenced with 'The Word' (John 1:1). Since Jesus, 'The Word', is the source of life and creation, it is unsurprising to the Christian that microbiology finds an astounding extent of information written into the most basic elements of life. All the detailed chemical and structural complexity associated with the metabolism, repair, specialized function and reproduction of each living cell is a realization of the coded algorithms stored in its DNA. A paramount issue therefore, is how do such extremely large language structures arise?

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

[It is worth commenting at this stage that language and information structures are clear manifestations of non-material reality. This observation will be addressed again in these notes when considering evolution's difficulty to explain that which is of a non-material nature in our world.]

We have already noted that complexity of design (the fact that the created order is of such irreducible complexity that it seems to be the consequence of a design plan which necessitates that all components be present at the same time) is a significant element of life's structure. This degree of complexity is further enhanced when the myriad of information inherent in each component is taken into account.

As Dr Jerry Bergman observes: ". . . the enormous amount of genetic information that is translated into the complexity that is evident everywhere in the living world is far beyond

that found in non-living and human-manufactured world. Products produced by the non-living world (such as smooth stones polished by moving water) could never produce either plant or animal life because all life is based on information, and the parts produced by that information must be assembled according to a designed plan in an environment such as a certain ecosystem that supports life."

- **The tendency for mutations to produce organisms with less genetic information** ~ The theory of evolution looks to small and gradual changes in organisms to yield a different life-form of a higher order. Yet the changes (mutations) observed at a molecular level, such as DNA, are predominantly disruptive, and always with a loss of, not gain in, information and complexity. In fact L Spetner, ('Not by Chance', 1997, The Judaica Press, New York), writes: " . . . The failure to observe even one mutation that adds information is more than just a failure to find support for the theory [of evolution]. It is evidence against the theory.' "

4. The challenges posed by ecological systems and cycles

It is evident that complexity in micro-biological life poses a serious challenge to the feasibility of evolution as the source and mechanism of life. The necessity for all components of a system to co-exist is true in respect of eco-systems as well.

- **Irreducible complexity in ecosystems** ~ Ecosystems are held together by essential and unbelievably complex biodiversity, about which information is steadily increasing. There is a dilemma similar to the one faced when the intricate structure of the cell was discovered. Since ecology is built upon so much underlying multi-species complexity, trying to explain the origin of ecology by chance events painfully stretches one's credulity.

For example plants capture the sun's light and convert it, via photosynthesis, into stable chemical entities such as sugars/carbohydrates. But plants aren't self-sufficient. They completely depend on nitrogen-fixing microbes. Also other soil microorganisms degrade dead organic matter, thereby recycling the precious elements of carbon, nitrogen, sulphur and phosphorus. Plants can't exist without microorganisms and the microorganisms can't exist without plants. The system had to come into being as a whole.

The centrality of this matter is highlighted by the fact that the whole ecology operates on solar power.

5. Arguments from probability

Without doubt arguments from probability are attractive but for all of that, they are inconclusive. The fact that an event is improbable does not say that it is impossible. The following scenarios all point to the *extreme* improbability for evolutionary theory. We will find many instances of probability at such levels of unlikelihood as to place the related theoretical proposition outside the bounds of reasonable scientific hypothesis. The fact that

For God's wrath is being revealed from heaven against all the ungodliness and wickedness of those who in their wickedness suppress the truth. (Romans 1:18)

- ***The improbability that a one-of formation of protein can be repeated*** ~ It should be remembered that evolution's proto-cell must reproduce and develop a reproductive process which ensures the continuation of its form.

Even if there were oceans full of amino acids just trying all kinds of different combinations, a correctly formed molecule in the Indian Ocean is not going to be able to co-operate very easily with another correctly formed molecule in the Atlantic Ocean. Nor would a correct sequence of amino acids be able to interact with another functional protein which happened to occur in the same physical location but a mere one year later. The improbability of a one-of abiogenesis is exacerbated by the need for a companion event.

6. The universe is winding down

The Second Law of Thermodynamics, indicates that all real processes are irreversible. This results in a decrease of energy to effect further change. In short the basic movement of the universe is from energy to matter, from order to chaos and from complexity to disorganization. It is contrary to the precepts of this law that evolution should result in enhanced structure and form. As Dr Ariel Roth contends: ". . . How did evolution from simple to complex counter the tendency toward randomness that is so prevalent in nature? For two centuries evolutionists have been searching for a mechanism that would explain the origin of complexity, but so far this has been a virtually futile search."

Thus we see that the universe is not improving but winding down.

7. The inexplicability of the non-material realm

There is a sense in which for the evolutionist matter is the only thing that matters. Einstein's genius was to relate matter to energy ($E = mc^2$). But evolution requires a further theory of relativity that can relate matter to virtue, in particular truth. For it is the burden of evolution that it must explain everything.

- ***The inconsistency of relying on probability for certainty*** ~ Evolution has at its foundation a logical inconsistency. Those who are committed to evolution must walk a line between chance, as allows material factors to coalesce into the current world, and certainty, as makes their theory meaningful and a useful predictor of what can be found elsewhere in the cosmos. Such reliance on chance for consistency is a significant problem for the theory.

This conundrum is explained eloquently by C. S. Lewis: ~ "If the solar system were brought about by an accidental collision, then the appearance of organic life on this planet was also an accident, and the whole evolution of Man was an accident too. If so, then all our thought processes are mere accidents - the accidental by-product of the movement of atoms. . . . But if their thoughts - i.e. of Materialism and Astronomy - are merely accidental by-products, why should we believe them to be true? I see no reason for believing that one accident should be able to give a correct account of all other accidents."

- ***The non-material nature of information*** ~ It has already been noted that evolution is incapable of accounting for the presence of information in the genetic structure of living

things. What is even more difficult to explain is the very existence of information. Language structures are clear manifestations of non-material reality.

Language is not a material entity. A message can be communicated via numerous media. It can be written on paper, cut into rock, signed via the hands, even generated as smoke signals! Thus we observe that linguistic information itself is independent of its material carrier. This independence means that there is no means of arguing that the information arose as part of the abiogenesis that evolutionists postulate. And yet we find this non-material attribute firmly, irrevocably and widely located in all that is living?

Einstein pointed to the nature and origin of symbolic information as one of the profound questions about the world as we know it. He could identify no means by which matter could bestow meaning on symbols. The clear implication is that symbolic information, or language, represents a category of reality **distinct from** matter and energy. This is so much so that linguists today speak of the gap between matter and meaning-bearing symbol sets as the 'Einstein gulf'.

The fact that an evolutionist speaks to communicate is a denial of their own theory. There is nothing in a materialist worldview that can give rise to information and language acquisition.

- **Virtue** ~ Whilst evolution has problems explaining life and the material world, it has even greater problems explaining the non-material world. The problem is worse for the non-material, since man's conscious and spiritual aspects defy strict scientific definition, much less a natural process of development.

Evolution relies on brute fact and probability. It argues that the physical universe exists as a matter of fact devoid of reason. In this way it denies all that is noble about the human condition. Love becomes nothing more than self-interest. Virtue or moral value ceases to have any absolute worth. Justice is no more than that which the more powerful specie can enforce. Truth becomes that which works to advance the life-form regardless of the moral implication. Moreover truth based on reason becomes meaningless since reason or rational thought is itself non-existent.

To quote C. S. Lewis again: “ . . . I grew up believing in this [Evolution] Myth and I have felt - I still feel - its almost perfect grandeur. Let no one say that we are an unimaginative age: neither Greek nor the Norsemen ever invented a better story. But the Myth asks me to believe that reason is simply the unforeseen and unintended by-product of a mindless process at one stage of its endless and aimless becoming. The content of the Myth thus knocks from under me the only ground on which I could possibly believe the Myth to be true. If my own mind is a product of the irrational, how shall I trust my mind when it tells me about Evolution?” (Quoted from C. S. Lewis - 'Christian Reflections', Eerdmans, 1975).

Yet in the same way that the human mind tends toward reason, the human heart craves virtue. The yearning for love, justice, truth, knowledge and beauty are hardwired desires of the human psyche. If matter is all that matters then matter must in some way

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (Philippians 4:8)

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explain that which is common in every human soul. As a theory for everything, evolution cannot explain the existence of life let alone life's deeper yearnings.

AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE MATERIALISTIC WORLDVIEW

It has been said that you can't beat something with nothing. Thus the Christian must do more than merely deny evolution and the materialist worldview. Without seeking to offer detailed scientific or philosophical arguments we might observe:

- Far from being uniformitarian in its origins, there is significant evidence to suggest that the world was shaped by catastrophic events akin to that of a worldwide flood. For this and all of the matters pertaining to microbiology the Christian can explain the natural laws under which scientists work are adequate for explaining how the world functions, but are vastly inadequate to explain its origin.
- The supposition that the universe is observable and predictable, following certain laws, is inconsistent with a worldview based on chance but entirely consistent with a universe given to us by a Designer who Himself is a law giver.
- Whereas the evolutionist lives in a material universe which has moral values appended to it in a manner which is to them inexplicable, the Christian lives in a cosmos which when first created was deemed "good". Thus the Christian abides in a cosmos which is moral in nature but has a material manifestation.
- The fact that mankind can be incredibly noble, generous and loving contrasts with the fact that we can also be horribly base, cruel and selfish. The Christian explains the co-existence of the admirable with the despicable in man by reference to the fact that we are simultaneously created in God's image (hence noble) but fallen (hence ignoble).

THE IMPLICATIONS OF GOD BEING OUR CREATOR

God being our creator has several implications for us as Christians. Foremost is the realization that, God being a person and we being created in His image, our personhood is assured by having regard to Him and His way of doing things. Every departure from acknowledging God as creator is a step into a lower estate than that for which we were created (Romans 1:21-23). Indeed every departure from acknowledging God is a denial of self since, being created in God's image, the human heart is framed so as to have a longing for and basic understanding of God (Roman 1:20).

For the unseen things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being realized by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, for them to be without excuse. Because, knowing God, they did not glorify Him as God, neither were thankful. But they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and birds, and four-footed animals, and creeping things. (Romans 1:20-23)

Since God is our creator and the creator of all things we find that:

- ***Our personhood finds its ultimate expression in Him and in His ways*** ~ Because we are created in God's image we share certain of His attributes but in a modified or reduced form.

The Maker of Heaven and Earth

God being holy He at all times detests sin. Hence we find that sin is unhealthy for us and a blight upon our souls (Psalm 103:2-4). Being in God's image we also find ourselves with a shared humanity wherein we all stand before God, having those family characteristics which He Himself has assigned (Ephesians 3:15).

- **God is the ultimate standard for righteousness and justice** ~ God is good in His very being. Whereas we have to think to do the right thing, God's goodness flows out of the essence of who He is. He doesn't have to decide as to what is good. He *is* all that is good. For this reason God is the ultimate standard of all that is just. As such, any unrighteousness or injustice is an attack on God and a reproach to His divine order. It is a folly and offence that mankind should imagine ourselves capable of deciding right from wrong apart from God (Job 4:17).

Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker? (Job 4:17)

Additionally for us to conduct ourselves after our own ways whilst occupying God's created order is a reproach on Him. To do so says that we know better than He. It mocks God for having created us and given us being that we should use our existence in opposition to Him and His ways. Having God as our creator makes justice dependent on principle not on power and ensures an equality of justice for all (Proverbs 14:31 & 17:5, Malachi 2:10).

He that oppresses the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honours Him hath mercy on the poor (Proverbs 14:31)

Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers? (Malachi 2:10)

The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all. (Proverbs 22:2)

See also Proverbs 17:5 & Genesis 9:6

- **Being Creator He can re-create in righteousness** ~ The sin of Adam and our sin has defiled that which God created as excellent, pure and good. Death has entered in. But because God is creator He is also qualified to be the re-creator. Sin and its impact are being reversed by Christ's death and resurrection. If God were not our maker then the Psalmist prays in vain when he asks, "Create in me a clean heart" (Psalm 51:10) and the apostle writes in error when he urges us to look for a "new heaven and a new earth" (2 Peter 3:13). If it is uncertain that God created the earth by the hovering of the Holy Spirit over that which was mere chaos, how can we be certain that the same Holy Spirit can regenerate new men and new women from the more detestable material of our sinful natures (John 3:6-8)?

Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it. (Isaiah 45:8)

See also Psalm 104:30 & Isaiah 42:5-9

- **Being Creator we can take comfort in His protection** ~ The Psalmist declares that It is God who has made us (and not we ourselves) and that therefore we are His people and the sheep of His pasture (Psalm 100:3). It would be a sad reflection on God's might if having started something He was unable to sustain it. It would be akin to a person who makes a bomb and, because it exploded unexpectedly, is devastated by that which he has made! Nothing takes God by surprise (Isaiah 40:28) and nothing eludes His sovereign might

Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing, as to a faithful Creator (1 Peter 4:19)

But now so says Jehovah who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel; Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. (Isaiah 43:1)

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(Isaiah 43:1, Revelation 4:11). For this reason we can be assured that having made us He will care for us as a good shepherd cares for his sheep (Isaiah 51:13, 1 Peter 4:19).

- **Being God's earth we must steward it's resources** ~ It is instructive that when God placed Israel into the promised land that He gave them the principle of Jubilee. By this law the Hebrews were to ensure that all land transactions were reversed at the end of each 50 year period and in this way family land was always in the possession of its God appointed owners. In this we see an image of God's insistence that the earth and its resources belong to Him. We are to use them for productive purposes and we are to tend the creation in a manner which brings honour to Him who created it, achieving the just and fruitful purposes for which it and we were made.

It is vital to note that God expects the righteous use of His resources. Adam lost possession of Eden because of sin. Noah's generation lost possession of their world because of sin. Israel lost possession of their land because of idolatry and sin. History is replete with the stories of nations whose violence and lawlessness meant the loss of their dominion. The stewarding of God's resources is not a matter of economics and sustainability but a matter of godliness. It is an irony in today's politics where there is more concern shown for trees and beached whales than there is for the protection of the unborn?

- **Being Creator He is worthy of all honor and praise** ~ Because all things owe their existence and being to God, it is appropriate that He be praised and thanked in all things. Teenage years are often a time when a young person tries to distance themselves from their parents. There is nothing more galling than to a teenager to be told that they look like one of their parents. But a child cannot deny their source and origin. So we cannot deny that God is our source and origin. We are obligated not only to acknowledge God as the source of our being but to praise and thank Him for being created the way that we are. Anything less than that is infantile rebellion.

Such unequivocal worship might seem a tyrannical thing were it not that the God we worship is a God of love as well as a God of justice. In His love He sent His Son Jesus to purchase our forgiveness and thereafter He sent His Holy Spirit to create in us a life that longs to live in Christ's righteousness and praise Him unendingly. Let us fear God our Maker, and worship Him but let us do so with a heart of thanksgiving for His love and grace.

O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker. (Psalm 95:6)

Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created. (Psalm 148:5)

I am the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King. (Isaiah 43:15)

For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else. (Isaiah 45:18)

Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands? (Isaiah 45:9)

TITHING & GIVING

The scripture tells us that we should love the Lord with all our hearts, but there are fewer things closer to our hearts than our money. Therefore to consider the Bible's teaching on tithing and giving is a challenge that indicates that which we truly worship.

And yet scripture does not call for a tithe (meaning a tenth) as a measure of worship only. It is a measure of obedience because the tithe is God's fund raising instrument for the advancement of His church and kingdom. To deny God His tithe is to rob from Him (Malachi 3:8) and to forget the source of our blessings. The Nicene Creed reminds us that God is the maker of all things. Because the earth and its fullness belong to God (Psalm 24:1 & 50:12) all its produce, including the fruit of our labours belong to Him. Therefore to return one tenth of our earnings to Him is no less than to pay Him a portion of what is already His own.

Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me. But you say, In what have we robbed You? In the tithe and the offering! (Malachi 3:8)

We will discuss the principles and benefits of tithing and giving along the following lines:

1. The centrality of sacrifice in worship
 - a) giving as an expression of thanks for fruitfulness
 - b) the example of Abraham's tithe to Melchizedek
 - c) tithing as part of the Old Testament law
2. The fruit and benefits of giving
3. The principles of Godly giving

The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein (Psalm 24:1)

THE CENTRALITY OF SACRIFICE IN WORSHIP

The essence of Eden's rebellion is that mankind chooses to be God. In our fallen ways this leads to two attitudes. Either we ignore God entirely or if do we acknowledge Him, it is for the purposes of taming Him to comply to our will. When it comes to giving and tithing this means either that we withhold the tithe or we endeavour to use giving and sacrifice as a means of bribing Him.

The Christian must give with a heart of thankful obedience to God, in the first place because it is His entitlement and secondly because it is in His grace that He brings us into victory and prosperity. To deny Him His entitlement is theft and to give in an attempt to bribe Him is sin.

1. Giving to God as an expression of thanksgiving for the fruit of our labours

It is significant that the offering of the fruit of man's labours occurs very early in the Bible. We need go a mere four chapters into Genesis to find that men were taking of the fruit of their labours and offering it to God in sacrifice (Genesis 4:3-4). Furthermore we find that God was particular about the nature of the offering and gave favour to Abel ahead of Cain (Genesis 4:4).

And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering. (Genesis 4:3-4)

This first Bible account of sacrifices instructs us not only that we should give to God but that there are right and wrong ways of giving.

2. Melchizedek receives a tithe from Abraham

The first mention of the giving of a tithe is to be found in respect of Abraham's gift to the priest and king Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18-20, Hebrews 7:4). We can do no better than to quote Albert Barnes (1798-1870) concerning this offering; "This is a very significant act. In presenting the tenth of all the spoils of victory, Abram makes a practical acknowledgment of the absolute and exclusive supremacy of the God whom Melchizedek worshipped, and of the authority and validity of the priesthood which he [Melchizedek] exercised. We

have here all the indications of a stated order of sacred rites, in which a costly service, with a fixed official, is maintained at the public expense, according to a definite rate of contribution."

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. . . . And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. (Genesis 14:18&20)

3. Tithing under the Law of God

The most detailed instruction concerning tithing is given by God to Moses as part of Israel's national law and worship.

- ***Tithing fulfilled several functions*** ~ It was God's intention to use tithing as a continuing reminder to Israel of the need to be thankful (Deuteronomy 16:10, 16-17), as a revenue source for the priesthood (Numbers 18:21) and as part of the general equity to the poor (Deuteronomy 14:28-29 & 26:12) for which the nation was to be known (Deuteronomy 4:8). In consequence tithing was God's means for advancing the civic and religious strength of the nation.
- ***Tithing was supplemented by freewill giving*** ~ For these reasons we find that tithing was compulsory. Even though tithing was compulsory, there were freewill offerings which could be made to the Lord. On the basis of these we can see that the Israelites, even though under law, gave liberally (Deuteronomy 16:10 & 16-17, 2 Chronicles 31:5)
- ***Tithing was to be an act of worship*** ~ If tithing was not accompanied by sincere worship, it was considered a mockery by God (Amos 4:1-6).
- ***Failure to tithe was considered as theft*** ~ If the Israelites neglected to tithe it brought them sorrow and a curse (Malachi 3:8-9). Yet it is not for fear of a curse that we should give but out of obedience, love and faith.

. . . the sons of Israel provided in abundance the first fruits of the grain, new wine, oil, honey and all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of all' (2 Chronicles 31:5)

. . . A free will offering of your hand... you shall give just as the Lord your God blesses you . . . every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you" (Deuteronomy 16:10, 16-17)

Scripture tells us that without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). For this reason there were numerous laws under

Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say; how have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you. (Malachi 3:8-9)

the old covenant which required faith in order to obey them. For example Israel was expected to give the land a Sabbath rest each seventh year. This meant that they had to trust God that the sixth year harvest would be a bumper crop since the land would be freed from cultivation on the seventh year. Israel could harvest whatever grew (unaided) in that seventh year but they couldn't cultivate the land. This law required faith to obey it. It was because Israel failed to trust God in this law (and others) that He exiled the nation and gave the land the rest that it should have had.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding . . . Honour the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce; and your barns shall be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine" (Proverbs 3:5- 9&10)

Therefore in the same way, when it came to tithing and giving, Israel was expected to bless their obedience with faith (Ecclesiastes 5:13; Haggai 1:5-11). Through tithing the Israelites demonstrated their trust in God (Proverbs 3:5- 9&10).

- ***Tithing was on the first fruits*** ~ The first commandment is that God will come first in all things (Exodus 20:3, Matthew 4:10). For this reason we are to make our tithes and offerings a priority in our finances. Israel was expected to give God of its first and its best fruits (Proverbs 3:9, Exodus 34:26). So too we are to honour God by giving Him the first of our income (not the left-overs). This can be a challenge at times but the assurance of God is that He will bless us if we do (Malachi 3:10-12).

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse so that there may be food in My house and test Me now in this, says the Lord of hosts if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until there is no more room enough to receive it. (Malachi 3:10)

GIVING

Paul, a Jew, was apostle to the Gentile peoples. Even so, he had a great love for the people of his own nation and wanted them to be partakers of the grace of Christ. About 13 years after Christ's crucifixion there arose a famine in Syria and Palestine of such proportions that even Roman historians (Jospheus, Seutonius and Tacitus) wrote of it. The Holy Spirit had already warned that such a famine was to occur (Acts 11:27-28). In order to help his fellow Israelites, Paul arranged for an offering to be taken from amongst the Christians in Greece so that it could be used for the relief of the Christians in Jerusalem. Paul's instructions and urgings in respect of this offering give us several reasons why giving is important.

- ***Giving is an important part of Christian maturity*** ~ Even as James wrote that patience would make the Christian complete, entire and lacking nothing (James 1:4), so Paul writes to the Corinthians to tell them that giving was a fulfilment of the grace of God's character in their lives. The Corinthians abounded in everything; faith, knowledge, earnestness and love. Therefore it was prudent that they also abound in giving since this would complete their excellence in Christ (2 Corinthians 8:7).

But even as you abound in everything, in faith, and in word, and in knowledge, and in all earnestness, and in your love to us; you should abound in this grace also. (2 Corinthians 8:7)

- **Giving is demonstration of our Christian love** ~ James warned that it is not enough that we should have faith. He said that real faith comes with compassion and therefore will seek to bless those who are poor. The gospel is not just pie in the sky. It is real concern for those that God places in our day to day lives. Therefore the true Christian supplements and demonstrates his faith via giving (James 2:15-17). So too Paul tells the Corinthians that their readiness to give for the relief of the saints in Jerusalem is a demonstration of the presence of God's love in their lives (2 Corinthians 8:8)

I do not speak according to command, but through the eagerness of others, and testing the trueness of your love. (2 Corinthians 8:8)

- **To give is to imitate Christ** ~ Jesus gave us the greatest example of giving. For not only did He become poor by departing glory and joining the human race (Philippians 2:6-8), He gave of His own life in order that we might live (John 15:13). Yet even in the humility of His daily life Christ gave us an example of giving, for it was His practice whilst ministering to ensure that the poor were cared for (John 13:29). The Christian who does not know how to give fails to imitate Christ (Galatians 2:10).

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9)

- **Giving is to our own benefit** ~ Jesus gave of Himself on The Cross in order that The Father would be glorified (John 12: 28) and in the process was Himself glorified (John 1:12:23). We see here, within the Trinity, an application of a most basic principle in God's Kingdom; give and it shall be given to you (Luke 6:38). Learning to give is to our advantage. And yet the prospect of receiving ought not be the essence of our motivation, otherwise we find ourselves moving in law and not in faith.

And herein I give my advice: for this is profitable for you . . . (2 Corinthians 8:10)
It is more blessed to give than to receive. (Acts 20:35)
Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. (Philippians 4:17)

- **God receives glory when we give** ~ It is a surprising thing that He who is the maker and owner of the heavens and the earth should be glorified by our giving! And yet we find that the display of love and faith which our giving summons within us, rebounds to the glory of God's character (2 Corinthians 9:11-13).

You will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service... is overflowing through many thanksgivings to God... by this ministry they will glorify God. (2 Corinthians 9:11-13)

- **Giving builds relationships** ~ When we give to a cause or a person we find that our interest level for that person or ministry increases. There is something of ourselves tied up in their future and success. Moreover when we receive a gift from someone we tend to feel both a debt of gratitude and a bond of love for their interest and generosity (2 Corinthians 9:13).

PRINCIPLES OF GIVING

We observed at the start of these notes that Abel's offering was accepted but that Cain's offering did not find favour with God. Thus we learned not only that we should give but that there are right and wrong ways of giving.

Nearly everyone knows what it is to receive a gift that has not been given in a good spirit. Sometimes there is no joy or love in the gift because it has been given out of obligation. Sometimes there is no pleasure in the gift because we know what it has been given to us in expectation of a return gift. In the same way that we can give but give inadequately one to another, scripture tells us that there are correct principles when giving to God.

- **Give bountifully** ~ Our giving should always be generous and bountiful because God is bountiful, extravagant and abundant in all His blessings which He has bestowed upon us. When we give we are to give in Christian character therefore we are to give as God does for He has shown exceeding riches in His grace toward us (Ephesians 2:7).
- **Give sacrificially** ~ Former Beatle John Lennon wrote a very popular song in which he imagined a world where there was nothing to kill or die for. The sad corollary to that aspiration is that if there's nothing worth dying for then there's nothing worth living for either. He who has a religion which costs him nothing, has a religion that is worth nothing. Therefore the scripture commands that we should honour the Lord with our substance and with the first fruits of our earnings (Proverbs 3:9). This is to say that we are to learn to give sacrificially. We are to give from that which is close to our everyday blessings and not wait until we have something left over that we might spare for the Lord.

It happened that Jesus watched as people gave into the temple treasury. Many gave large gifts but there was one poor widow who gave a very small gift. This woman Jesus commended because the (apparently) generous givers had given out of their excess, but the widow gave from her substance (Mark 12:41-44).

Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability they gave of their own accord, begging us with much entreaty for the favour of participation in the support of the saints, and this not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. (2 Corinthians 8:1-5)

- **Give willingly** ~ There is nothing worse than a surly giver. Giving is both an act of obedience and an act of worship. How can we be said to worship God in our giving if we are grudging and unhappy? If we are happy to receive from the Lord then we should also be happy to give to Him also (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:7)

- **Give intelligently** ~ Sometimes people give emotionally – not intelligently. We should seek to become spiritually mature rather than emotionally influenced in our handling of the Lord's money (2 Corinthians 9:7). On this basis it is prudent to give what you have. Don't give what you don't have (2 Corinthians 8:12).

In particular, don't be generous with other people's money. We should not give away what rightfully belongs to another. We should pay outstanding debts. This does not

For, assuming the earnest willingness, the gift is acceptable according to whatever a man has, and not according to what he has not. (2 Corinthians 8:12)

mean that we cannot contribute to special offerings until we have discharged the debts concerning our house and car and paid off all other regular commitments. If you have

entered into a contract to make regular payments over a certain period of time, then budget accordingly. You are only legally indebted for the amount which is due each week or month.

On the other hand we should not allow our debts to prevent us from moving by faith. There are many testimonies of those who have placed themselves in straightened circumstances via their obedience in giving and then have found God's wonderful provision. They proved God in their obedience and giving.

- **Give to your local church** ~ One important function served by the Old Testament tithe was the support of the temple and the work of the priests. Therefore we should ensure that our giving goes to the place and ministry which exercises care over our spiritual well being. Give to your local church to support that ministry which God has placed over you (1 Corinthians 9:13-14, Galatians 6:6).

Do you know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have a share in the altar? So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the Gospel to get their living by the gospel. (1 Corinthians 9:13-14)

Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches (Galatians 6:6)

Other ministries or charitable activities may be supported generously, but we should bring our tithes and love gifts to the local church where we are fed.

- **Give in faith** ~ Every act of giving should be an act of faith. Some Christians give out of habit. For years they have tossed the same note (or coin!) into the offering bag. Even the tithe, while a sound basis for Christian giving, can be paid out of habit, even legalistically or perhaps self-righteously. However, whatever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23). Therefore we should learn to give in faith.
- **Give of your time** ~ It is salutary to observe that the Old Testament tithes were often presented at times of national feasts. Thus in some instances presenting the tithe would require many Israelites to leave their homes and travel for several days to the Tent of Congregation or Temple in order to gather with their kinsmen in worship. In today's society there are so many pressures on our daily lives that we find it hard to make time for the things of God and church. Money is useful but there are some things that can only be done by being personally available to The Lord and His Church. We ought not allow our giving to be a substitute for our personal effort and involvement (1 Timothy 6:18-19).

"... Do good, be rich in good works, be generous and ready to share, storing up for yourselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future so that you may take hold of that which is life indeed. (1 Timothy 6:18-19)

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in or steal. (Matthew 19-20)

GIVE FOR THE FUTURE

The Bible teaches that we should give with eternity in mind. When a man dies, men ask how much he left behind but angels ask how much he sent on before him. A man's true wealth is not in what he keeps but in what he gives away. We can lay up treasure in heaven by using earthly treasure for spiritual ends – by using our funds to resource what God is doing (Matthew 6:19-20).

THE LORD'S LAW

The Nicene Creed is unequivocal in its commitment to Jesus Christ as LORD. It is a sad commentary on the undue, and at times flippant, familiarity which The Church ascribes to her Master that we do not tremble in Godly fear in recognition of the majesty of Christ's authority and reign. If The Church does not fear Christ, how can we criticize those outside The Church if they do not take Him seriously. Thus the Creed reminds us that this same One LORD Jesus Christ who died "for us and for our salvation", is He who "will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead".

Christ's reign extends across the total expanse of human life. It spans the kingdoms and nations of this world (Psalm 89:27, Revelation 11:15). For this reason it has been said that either Jesus is lord of all or He is not lord at all. Dutch pastor and former Prime Minister of The Netherlands, Abraham Kuyper (1837 – 1920) put it more thoroughly when he said: "In the total expanse of human life there is not a single square inch concerning which Christ, who alone is sovereign, does not declare; 'Mine!'"

Yet we see from scripture that, not just earth, but all things in heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18) as well as things under the earth, even death and hell (Colossians 1:16-18, Revelation 1:18) are under His dominion. Jesus Christ is LORD!

But what is a king without regal rule? What is a lord without law? In this section of the notes we will be considering that which Jesus referred to as "The Law". The rudiments of Christ's law and rule are the same as that law which Moses received on Mount Sinai when God lead Israel out of Egypt. Sometimes referred to as the Ten Commandments or the Decalogue our notes will cover:

- 1) The Law as a reflection of the Lawgiver
 - a) Jesus' summary of The Law as two commandments
 - b) the summary does not reduce The Law from ten to two commandments
 - c) grace and law are not opposites
- 2) Jesus' attitude toward The Law
 - a) He advocates a keeping of The Law
 - b) His warnings of lovelessness and condemnation as consequences of lawlessness
- 3) The Law is good if used lawfully
 - a) Jesus is the central message of The Law
 - b) The Law has not ever and cannot ever be used for man's justification
 - c) the three functions of The Law
- 4) Principles in applying The Law
 - a) ceremonial law and food laws abrogated because Christ is our new High Priest
 - b) the ten commandments as precept and their application via case law
 - c) The Law does not just forbid sins but imposes sin's contrary obligations
 - d) The Law does expects obedience where blessing accrues
 - e) the weightier matters of The Law per church & state and life & death
- 5) Christ our sacrificial lamb and the sin of those who laid hands upon Him

LAWS ARE A REFLECTION OF THE LAW GIVER

When considering that nature of The Law we do well to remind ourselves of the nature of Jesus Christ, our Lord and lawgiver, for laws whenever they are made will always reflect the nature and the values of the lawmaker. The Lord Jesus Christ is:

- a) the perfect expression of God's love,
- b) a member of the Trinity, the second person in Godhead, and
- c) both God and man.

This being the case we might expect that God's law:

- a) is based on love,
- b) flows from and serves to ensure community as the essence of being, and
- c) orients the human existence so as to love God and love one another.

1. Jesus' summary of The Law

On occasions Jesus was asked to identify which of the commandments He considered to be the most important. He responded with a twofold answer. He said firstly, that we are to love God with all of our hearts mind and being and secondly, that we are to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:29-31). This two commandment summary is a reflection on the being and character of Christ. It points us to God, it orients us to one another and it is based on love.

And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like it, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. (Mark 12:29-31)

Thus we find that The Law is not some arbitrary set of rules which God derived for us as external to Himself or to us. The Law is an expression of God's character. And we, since we are made in God's image, will find that The Law is hardwired into the human conscience (Romans 2:14-15) and if adhered to represents health for our bones and benefit to our own existence (Proverbs 3:1). If The Law is an expression of God's character, then we can expect that the essence of The Law and its moral requirements will remain forever over time since God is a god who does not change (Psalm 111:7-8, Psalm 119:152, Psalm 119:160). That is why The Law and its ten commandments remain as a foundation to our faith today.

The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness. (Psalms 111:7-8)

The Church is not immune to the course of human history and its ideas. It is hard for us not to be influenced by our society's prevailing attitudes as we read our scriptures. The consequence is that we read into the scriptures an emphasis which the Holy Spirit did not mean to place there. For example the influence of Western Romanticism (1770 to 1880's) abides with us today.

Romanticism's influence stretched across the arts and philosophy (Keating, Wordsworth, Hugo ~ poetry; Wagner, Schumann, Verdi ~ music; Emerson, Goethe, Hegel ~ philosophy). The early Romantic period coincides with what is often called the "age of revolutions" - including, the

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American (1776) and the French (1789) revolutions. This was an age of upheavals in political, economic, and social traditions, the age which witnessed the initial transformations of the Industrial Revolution. This revolutionary energy was also at the core of Romanticism, which quite consciously set out to change how men and women saw themselves. The imagination and emotions were elevated to a position as the supreme faculty of the mind. This contrasted distinctly with the traditional arguments for the supremacy of reason. As such the Romantics asserted the importance of the individual over society. In all of this we find a distortion of the Biblical meaning of love. The emphasis shifted from duty to emotion. Accountability to the one loved was replaced by accountability to self. In this way love was now something that we felt rather than something that we did.

This distortion needs to be remembered as we read Jesus summary of The Law. It is true that love is at the core of the Christ's commandments but it must

not be forgotten that commandments are exactly that. By placing the love of God as the first commandment Jesus is calling us to obedience, duty and fealty. This is a commandment, not an option.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. (Colossians 2:8)

This is an obligation wrought in stringent faithfulness, a compliance of us warranted by the excellence of who God is. It is an obedience that is absolute and indisputable.

When Jesus says that the second commandment is to love one another, He is not merely setting a framework for how we should react to each other when things go wrong. Jesus is commanding us to be pro-active and to engage vigorously, purposively, energetically and faithfully with the world and those around us. The love that we are to show is the same love that He showed to us. He did not wait for us to draw near to Him. He came looking for us. He took the initiative. We are to love one another as He loved us!

2. Why Ten and not Two?

There are some Christians who believe it to be a waste of effort to learn about The Law and its ten commandments. They are satisfied that Christ's two commandment summary is sufficient to lead a godly life. But whilst there is some truth in this approach we must remember that Jesus' summary of The Law is just that; a summary. To tell a newly licensed vehicle driver to "drive safely" is a prudent summary of the road laws and their responsibilities, but it is hardly sufficient guidance to allow them to do just that. The driver must know a great deal more than the summary before they are equipped to sit behind a car wheel.

Jesus clarifies what it means to love God and speaks in a way consistent with the Old Testament, "You have commanded us to keep your commandments carefully" (Psalm 119:4) when He says: "If you love me you will keep my commandments" (John 14:21). It is not possible to claim a love for Jesus without also declaring a commitment to The Law.

Using this framework of the two love commandments we can orient the ten commandments into two groups. At an initial glance it is inviting to suggest that the first group represents our obligations toward God and the second group are our obligations toward each other. This is inviting but it is wrong.

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Because both commandments are God's commandments to us, both loves are obligations toward God. Thus the first group represents those things that are commanded of us toward God because God is God and the second group are those things commanded of us toward each other because God is God. They can be summarized into 20 words

Commandments toward God because God is God	Commandments toward Others because God is God
---	--

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One God• No idols• Holy Name• Holy day | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Honour parents• Don't kill• Stay married• Don't steal• Don't lie• Don't envy |
|---|---|

These 20 words are a trite, simplistic summary of the commandments (Deuteronomy 5:6-21) but learning to remember them in this way helps keep one of the foundations of the faith stored into our heart and thinking.

3. Grace and Law

It is fashionable for some to dismiss The Law by assuming a distinction between the Old Testament and the New Testament. It is said that Israel was under law but since Christ has come we are no longer under law but are now under grace. Language of this kind presents law and grace as being opposites. Such thinking not only obscures the scriptures but it distorts the common meaning of the English language. Grace is not the opposite to law. The opposite to law is lawlessness and the opposite to grace is merit.

It is true that there are many New Testament scriptures which express a difference between the law-keeping of Old Testament Israel and the faith-keeping of the New Testament Church, but the coming of Jesus was not grace instead of law but "grace upon grace" (John 1:16). It was the exchange of the glory of the Mosaic law for the far greater glory of life in the Holy Spirit, since we are being "changed from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18). But in so saying scriptures points to the fact that there is glory in the Mosaic law. The coming of Jesus also means

6 I am Jehovah your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

7 You shall have no other gods besides Me.

8 You shall not make a graven image for you, any likeness of anything that is in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters beneath the earth.

9 You shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them. For I Jehovah your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me,

10 and doing mercy to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments.

11 You shall not take the name of Jehovah your God in vain, for Jehovah will not acquit the one who takes His name in vain.

12 Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as Jehovah your God has commanded you.

16 Honour your father and your mother, as Jehovah your God has commanded you, so that your days may be made longer, and that it may go well with you in the land which Jehovah your God gives you.

17 You shall not kill.

18 And you shall not commit adultery.

19 And you shall not steal.

20 And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

21 And you shall not lust after your neighbour's wife, nor shall you covet your neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is your neighbour's. (Deuteronomy 5:6-12 & 16-21)

And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. (John 1:16)

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. (Romans 1:17)

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that we have gone “from faith to faith” (Romans 1:17) and in so saying scripture points to the fact that there was faith under the Mosaic law.

The Mosaic law was gracious in that it alerted Israel as to what was required of them in order to live well and to please God. No other nation had been graced by God with His word, prophets and law in the way that Israel was (Deuteronomy 4:7-8). The

Mosaic law was glorious in that it revealed God’s character. And the Mosaic law called forth faith because its ceremonies and feasts spoke of the Christ who was to come. The Christian is counted as righteous by looking back to Jesus on Calvary and believing God for forgiveness on the basis of an

atonement sacrifice which has now been made. As they faithfully performed the ritual atoning sacrifices which spoke of The Lamb yet to be slain, The Jew was counted righteous by believing God for forgiveness on the basis of the Christ who was to come.

In as much as The Law spoke of grace in Israel’s day, the grace of Christ speaks of The Law to us today.

The opposite to grace is merit. No person has ever merited salvation. The very idea of such self-effort is offensive to God. The opposite to law is lawlessness. To interchange grace for lawlessness as the opposite to law, is to invite Christians into a life which ignores, even despises, the judgments and boundaries which the all-wise, all-loving God has set for us.

For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? (Deuteronomy 4:7-8)

JESUS’ ATTITUDE TOWARD THE LAW

Jesus made much use of The Law and made many observations about it during His earthly ministry. Foremost in Jesus’ attitude toward The Law was that He took it seriously! He considered that its implications were so important that He died for we, who have failed to keep it and are therefore liable to its penalties.

- **Jesus saw lawlessness leading to lovelessness** ~ If love lies at the base of The Law then we might expect that where The Law is abandoned, love too will be abandoned. This is exactly what Jesus told the disciples (Matthew 24:12).

To keep The Law means that we will grow in love. To abandon The Law will mean that we will grow cold in our love one toward another.

And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. (Matthew 24:12)

- **Jesus believed that to teach and adhere to The Law is the source of blessing** ~ Jesus made plain that it was a great disgrace to undermine the faith of a child (Matthew 18:6). He was equally as adamant that to break the least commandment or to teach others to break even the least of the commandments was to our eternal detriment (Matthew 5:17-20). For this reason Jesus taught that He had not come to set The Law aside but rather to fulfill all of the Old Testament types and prophecies concerning Himself so that we could live The Law in the newness of His Life (Matthew 5:17, Romans 8:3-4).

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. (Matthew 5:17)

- **Jesus urged adherence to all The Law, especially its weightier matters** ~ Jesus was met by many religious people who assumed that the holy life was about being devout and keeping away from the world. Rather than praise them for their piety Jesus rebuked them! Christ's kingdom is one of ever increasing peace and justice (Isaiah 9:7). Therefore He expects His saints to be contributing to justice in the community as well as maintaining an exemplary level of personal holiness (Micah 6:8).

Jesus termed justice, mercy and faith as the weightier matters of The Law. He told the Pharisees that they should have been emphasizing these matters of The Law *and* not leaving the holiness matters undone (Matthew 23:23). In this we observe that Jesus was emphatic about all of The Law and advocated its applicability to the whole of life.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, and faith: these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone. (Matthew 23:23)

He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does The Lord require of you but to do justice and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)

Even though He upbraided the Pharisees for their small mindedness and pietistic use of The Law, Jesus was keen that those present would not be dismissive of Moses' law for He told them "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matthew 23:2-3). It would be inconsistent of Jesus to require the people in His day to submit to The Law if He didn't intend that all His saints would take The Law seriously.

- **Jesus is offended by those who call Him Lord but fail to keep The Law** ~ Jesus will never condemn a person who lacked the power to raise the dead. Jesus will never condemn a person because they had insufficient faith to see their prayers answered. But Jesus will look unfavourably on those who have not sought holiness through the forgiveness of His Cross and obedience to His ways.

When Jesus returns to judge the earth He will be seeking evidence of His character in the life of believers. He will not be looking for miracle working power. He comes expecting that His saints will have lived character-filled principled lives.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (Matthew 7:22-23)

The Law has at its heart the character of God. Thus when Jesus returns as judge looking for noble and holy character in His saints, He will judge according to the requirements of His Law. Many in that day will say to Jesus that they have called Him Lord and have done great and miraculous works in His Name, but He will declare them as sinners and workers of lawlessness (Matthew 7:22-23).

- **Jesus called for us to believe Moses** ~ We are sometimes tempted to see a vast chasm between the Old Testament and the New Testament. We study the gospels because they contain the message of Christ's ministry and sacrifice. Yet Jesus tells us that we cannot truly believe in Him unless we also believe in Moses (John 5:46). Indeed failure to honour the applicability of The Law is to subvert our own salvation.

Jesus lived by perfect adherence to The Law. He died in obedience to The Law. He died because in our sinfulness we had broken the moral requirements of The Law and were exposed to God's wrath (Romans 5:9 & 13:4).

Jesus rose again so that the Holy Spirit could write The Law on our hearts and lead us in conformity to its moral requirements (Jeremiah 31:33, Ezekiel 36:24-25). To imagine that God can ignore His own Law is to deny the very reason that Jesus lived, died and rose again. It destroys the need for and basis of our salvation.

For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. (John 5:46)

For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. (Galatians 2:19)

- **The Law was Jesus favourite set of scriptures** ~ There are 39 books in the Old Testament. Of these Deuteronomy contains the most accessible summary of The Law. Interestingly Deuteronomy was the book which Jesus quoted from or referred to more than any other book in the Old Testament. (More than 50 times in the Gospel of Matthew alone!). To appreciate Deuteronomy is to understand Jesus ministry.
- **Jesus has delivered us from the curse of The Law** ~ Scripture affords us the joyous news that Jesus Christ's death has delivered us from the curse of The Law (Galatians 3:13). This is to say that Jesus has delivered us from the curse associated with breaking The Law. It does not mean that Jesus has delivered us from the cursed Law (or that Law which is itself a curse).

Imagine that a policeman has issued you with a fine for driving too fast. Then imagine that some kind friend came and paid the fine for you. They would have delivered you from the punishment of the law. This however does not mean that you can keep driving too fast. You have been delivered from the fine associated with breaking the law but you have not been ushered into a place where the law about speeding has been taken away. There is a difference between the law and the penalty that it imposes.

So too Jesus, by His death on the cross, has delivered us from the punishment associated with breaking The Law. This does not mean however that we are delivered from having to

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree. (Galatians 3:13)

keep that law. It is an indicator of the rebellion in our hearts that even some Christians should see God's law as being a wretched thing. Rather than rejoicing at God's law as being that which; converts the soul (Psalm 19:7), affords great peace to those that love it (Psalm 119:165), yields delight to those that meditate on it (Psalm 1:2) and gives wisdom to the wise (Proverbs 28:7), many Christians consider The Law an irrelevance at best and an embarrassment at worst.

The Law is not a curse. Indeed The Law is holy! It's commandments are just and good (Romans 7:12). It is God's expectation that all men everywhere are accountable to it. Additionally we find that as Christians we have been empowered to live lives in conformity to it (Romans 8:3-4). Thus there is a double imperative on us that the Christian should walk in The Law since all men are commanded to adhere to God's Law, and we are enabled by the Holy Spirit to keep it.

Lastly let us remember, because God's character is eternal, His Law is eternal. If God's Law is not eternal but a disposable set of arbitrary rules then His judgements are not acts of justice. Rather they are the vengeful acts of a petty Creator who has failed to get His own way. This is not so. God has created the cosmos in conformity to His own character for it is good. The universe is moral and designed to function in conformity to His character. Therefore God's judgements are just and His Law is relevant and true forever.

THE LAWFUL USE OF THE LAW

Having established the enduring applicability of The Law we need now to consider the extent and manner in which it applies. Paul tells us that The Law is good if we use it lawfully (1 Timothy 1:8).

We shall find that there are some limits as to what

The Law can achieve and that there parts of The Law which are no longer current.

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

1. Jesus is the central message of The Law

We have observed at length that The Law informed Israel about the promise of Christ's coming and ministry. There were many requirements of The Law which were given for the sole purpose of depicting Christ's ministry. How are we to discern which of the Old Testament laws Jesus has retained and which have been done away with? It is said that the Mosaic law was comprised of three elements:

- the moral and civil law,
- the food laws, and
- the laws of sacrifice tabernacle/temple administration.

When God instructed Moses concerning the tabernacle, being the place where He would meet with Israel during the festivals, sacrifices and worship, He called for the building of an ark or elaborate box above which His presence would dwell. The author of Hebrews reminds us that the ark when retained in the tabernacle included emblems of these three aspects of the law. It held the tablets of stone, indicative of the civil and moral law; the golden pot of manna indicative of the food laws and it also held Aaron's rod, which speaks of the priests' authority to conduct sacrifices (Hebrews 9:4).

However by the time that the temple was dedicated we see that "there was nothing in the ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there at Horeb" (1 Kings 8:9). The Israelites continued to adhere to the food laws and the laws of sacrifice until Christ, but with this image (and many other New Testament scriptures ~ Acts 10:15; Romans 14:14-18; 1 Timothy 4:4) we can see that the church is no longer obligated to the ceremonial laws and food laws.

More particularly the book of Hebrews, which was written at a time when the temple still stood in Jerusalem, tells us that the former priesthood has passed away and that a new priesthood has been established in Christ (Hebrews 7:4-28. See also 1 Peter 2:5&9 and Revelation 1:6.)

2. No person is justified by keeping of The Law

It must be emphasized that The Law cannot be used as justification before God (Acts 13:39, Romans 3:20 & 3:28, Galatians 2:16 & 3:11). No person has ever been justified before God by the faithful adherence to The Law. This is for two reasons. Firstly no person has ever entirely complied with all of The Law's requirements. All have sinned (Romans 3:23). Secondly even were a person able to demonstrate an unfaltering moral excellence equivalent to that of God it would make that person independent of God. An independence of this kind would mean a self-sufficiency of a kind alien to the Godhead. Being Trinitarian in nature, God has set the whole of the created order, life and existence in a manner which is communal (or symbiotic). This is why faith is that which pleases God (Hebrews 11:6). Faith brings us into a place of dependence on God and positions us in relationship with Him. Thus from Abraham onwards scripture has linked righteousness and faith (Romans 4:3).

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (Galatians 2:16)

This is the reasoning that Paul uses when writing to the church in Rome. This church was made up of both Jews and Gentiles and so Paul wanted to explain the gospel of Jesus in a way that would be acceptable to both groups. Some Jews felt that the Gentile converts should be keeping all of the Mosaic rules, such as the food laws and circumcision. So Paul explained that Abraham, who walked the earth some 500 years prior to Moses, was counted as righteous because of his faith. Therefore faith and not law must be the basis of the gospel since The Law, coming after faith, can't replace faith's priority (Romans 4).

For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." (Romans 4:3)

3. The threefold application of The Law

What then is the purpose of The Law if only the moral law remains and if that law can't be used for our justification before God? Generally speaking there are three uses for The Law. These are:

- **To reveal the character of God** ~ As has already been stated, The Law comes from the essence and character of God. Therefore to have a fondness for The Law is to desire the character of God.
- **To drive people to Christ** ~ We have noted that no person is justified by adherence to The Law. In fact every person stands condemned for their failure to keep The Law. Thus The Law instructs us that we need a saviour. Our inability to please God with the righteousness which He requires is meant to drive us to Christ and cause us to lean on Him as our only hope. That is why scripture calls The Law our schoolmaster.
- **To restrain evil** ~ God's law applies to the whole of His creation therefore everyone, not just Christians, are obligated to honour it. Justice and equity for the general community can be found in The Law. Thus The Law is meant by God to be the basis for all of society's law and rule. That is why when the apostle instructs the Christians in Rome to be subject to the

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. (Galatians 3:24)

government, he also sets down the parameters of the state's authority as being The Law (See Romans 13:1-4 & 9).

PRINCIPLES IN APPLYING THE LAW

There is more to God's law than just ten commandments. The three of the Bible's first five books are devoted to the details of The Law. In Deuteronomy alone there are 21 chapters of detailed rules. They cover things such as how to conduct trials, principles in marriage, how to engage in war, limits to a king's authority, the treatment of false prophets, rules of inheritance and much more. To appreciate The Law it is helpful to see it as being in two parts:

- there are the precepts and base elements of The Law which are set down in the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 5:7-21), and
- there is the case law which shows how these base principles are to be applied (Deuteronomy 6 to Deuteronomy 26).

We will limit our discussion of the principles in the application of The Law to four considerations.

1. Where a sin is forbidden, the contrary obligation is commanded

The relationship between precept and case law application reveals a very beautiful and important principle in The Law. It is a principle which amplifies the grace and love that exists in God's Law (and character). Let us consider Moses' instruction to owner-builders concerning the design of their new house. The Law required that a banister or guard would be placed around the flat-topped roof least anyone should fall off (Deuteronomy 22:8). We see here several aspects of how The Law functioned.

FIRSTLY we observe that The Law is not negative only. This regulation is an application of the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill". This application shows that Israel was expected to be proactive in the way that they preserved life. The sixth commandment was not just a constraint against murder. It had to be actively applied so that harm was not caused, even inadvertently.

Then there was the requirement that an Israelite had to help someone if they saw that person's animal in difficulty (Deuteronomy 22:4). In fact The Law is clear that this regulation applies not only when a friend is in need, but when an enemy is in trouble (Exodus 23:4-5, Luke 10:25-37).

SECONDLY we see the extension of the obligation beyond that of avoiding inadvertent harm to the expectation that the Israelite will be active in his concern for his neighbour. He could not just ignore someone when that person was in trouble.

THIRDLY we see that the root application of The Law is to love our neighbour.

This leads us to an important principle when reading The Law:

"Where a sin is forbidden, the contrary obligation is commanded".

In this way we see that it will not be sufficient for people to stand before God on judgement day and claim that they kept the ten commandments. The Law requires us to be proactive in seeking justice and righteousness in all of life. Those who seek to be justified by The Law will also need to indicate

that they assisted to preserve the sanctity of marriage, that they worked to defend the poor, that they spoke encouragement to their neighbor and that they discouraged the thief. The Law is not a list of constraints it is the key to an active, loving life.

2. Where a blessing accrues, the related obligation applies

By this it should be easier to see that the gospel's message of love was not a new thing but an extension of The Law. The apostle Paul was very familiar with the principle: "Where a sin is forbidden, the contrary obligation is commanded". He writes to those that had been thieves and tells them not just that they are to stop stealing (Deuteronomy 5:19). He tells them that they are to work, which is itself a commandment (Deuteronomy 5:13). But Paul goes one step further. He tells the former thief that they should then make a gift to the poor of a portion of what they are now earning. The Law has turned the thief into a donor. He who took now gives (Ephesians 4:28).

Let him who stole steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, so that he may have something to give to him who needs. (Ephesians 4:28)

But what is interesting is that Paul also knew that the principle worked the other way. If a forbidden sin is indicator of a contrary obligation, then a promised blessing must mean expectation of the related obligation.

For example the commandment tells us to "Honour father and mother" (Deuteronomy 5:16). This is a blessing upon parents but if the blessing applies then the parents must be subject to a related obligation. That is, parents must live honour-worthy lives. This is exactly what Paul taught. He reminds children that they are to obey their parents. And then he speaks to fathers and tells them not be harsh on their children (Ephesians 6:1-4).

This presents us with a further principle when reading The Law:

"Where a blessing accrues, the related obligation applies".

3. Weightier matters of The Law ~ Church and State

These two preceding principles have made use of the word 'obligation'. This leads us into that which Jesus called the weightier matters of The Law; "justice, mercy and faith" (Matthew 23:23). We live in a day when people feel at liberty to demand their rights. The Law of God is an act of God's grace to mankind. It is not written in terms of rights. Instead it is expressed in the terms of obligations because that is the Trinitarian nature of the God who gave it.

Because each member of the Godhead moves in unity and love for one another their starting point for all action is to consider the needs of the other. Thus whilst each of the three members exist as three separate persons, each having their own determination and rights, they function as one because each member submits to the obligation of not disrupting the unity that exists. So when God gave us The Law He presents nothing in terms of rights but everything terms of obligation. Therefore your 'right' to walk the streets in safety is expressed as another's 'obligation' not to harm you. Your 'right' to own property is expressed as another's 'obligation' not steal and so on.

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In this way we see that no element in society has an absolute authority. In particular the relationship between state and church is defined. The state's right to make laws is tied up in its obligation not to make laws which breach the law of God. The state's right to the blessing of honour and respect from its citizenry is tied up in its obligation to act in an honour-worthy and God honouring manner.

4. Weightier matters of The Law ~ Life and Death

When Moses had finished the reading of the law in the land of Moab he concluded with an invitation to Israel saying: "I call Heaven and earth to record today against you. I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life . . ." (Deuteronomy 30:19). As a choice this would have to be a no-brainer. In this Moses has summarized the purpose of The Law. It was given by our Creator God to form and preserve life.

Remembering God's passion for life might help us when we have to choose between two conflicting aspects of The Law. Such choices are not common but they can arise. For example the Bible records that Rahab the Canaanite had to choose between telling a lie or revealing the two Israelite spies to those who would most certainly have killed them. She chose to deceive the authorities of Jericho and preserve the lives of the spies (Joshua 2:1-15). For telling such a lie Rahab was admitted to the lineage of Christ (Matthew 1:5) and deemed a hero of the faith (Hebrews 11:31)!

We live in a fallen world and there will be times when we have to make choices between what God requires. Let us remember that there are weightier matters in The Law. All of God's laws and precepts are important but there are times when some are more important than others. May God grant us the wisdom and Holy Spirit guidance to know what is good and acceptable. May we be led by to choose for life when making such decisions.

CHRIST OUR SACRIFICIAL LAMB AND THE SIN OF THOSE WHO LAID HANDS UPON HIM

Let us conclude our consideration of The Law by looking to Christ's Cross. If Jesus has paid the price for our sin and if The Law defines sin for us (Romans 3:20) then might we not expect that His Cross will speak of those sins and demonstrate that Jesus atoned for our failings in totality?

The ceremonial aspect of The Law included provision for the sacrifice of an animal as atonement for sins. The priest would lay his hands on the animal and pronounce the sins of the person or the nation over it, after which the animal would be slain and the sins would be deemed paid for and taken away. Jesus is the atoning Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). It is interesting to note that the gospels record many occasions where Christ's enemies tried to lay hands on Him but He escaped from their midst, apparently untouched.

The next day John sees Jesus coming to him and says, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29)

This was the case until the night of His arrest. Soldiers, acting on the orders of the High Priest, seized Jesus and brought Him to trial by the Jewish court, the Sanhedrin. Thereafter He was presented to Pilate and subsequently crucified. In the first ever Christian sermon the apostle Peter accused those in Jerusalem of Christ's crucifixion saying: "you took, and by lawless hands, nailing Him to a cross,

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you killed Him" (Acts 2:23). Thus the first hands laid on Christ were lawless and wicked hands. It was via these hands that the sin of the world was placed on God's Lamb of sacrifice.

A careful examination of the circumstances around Christ's crucifixion reveals that the wicked hands which killed him were hands which imparted breaches of every aspect of The Law's requirements onto Christ. Let us revise the Ten Commandments by

... this One given to you by the before-determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken and by lawless hands, crucifying Him, you put Him to death (Acts 2:23)

looking to Calvary. We will commence from the last commandment and work backwards to the first. We will see that Jesus bore sin as defined by the ten commandments to Calvary for our sakes.

- **Don't Envy** ~ Pilate knew that envy was at the root of the Jew's desire to crucify Christ (Matt 27:18).
- **Don't Lie** ~ There were many that testified against Jesus at His trial but they were all described as false witnesses (Mar 14:56-57).
- **Don't Steal** ~ The chief priests made use of temple money to procure Christ's arrest (Mark 14:11). We can assume it to have been temple money because when Judas returned it to them they were not able to put it (back) into the treasury. John Gill (1690-1771) says: "It is highly probable, that they took this selfsame money out of the treasury to buy this blood with, and yet scruple to put it in, having bought it . . . " If the money had come from an individual then they would have offered it back to that person. Thus the priests took that which was God's and used it for sinful purposes. This is theft.
- **Don't commit adultery** ~ The priests had long ceased worshipping the true God, the Israel of their day having been divorced by God as an adulterous nation (Jeremiah 3:8).
- **Don't kill** ~ There are many injustices and miscarriages of process in Christ's trial. All of them undertaken for the single purpose of killing an innocent man!
- **Honour Parents** ~ Those who crucified Christ failed to honour their fathers in that these, who held charge of the temple and The Law as entrusted to them by their forefathers, were unfaithful to it (Deuteronomy 12:1, 13:6 & 17 and 29:25, Proverbs 1:8-11).
- **Honour the Sabbath** ~ Jesus ought not to have been tried on the eve of a Sabbath nor that of a Holy Day (John 19:31). Moreover the Pharisees' observation of the Sabbath was thoroughly out of proportion to its purposes (Mark 2:27).
- **Don't use the Lord's Name in vain** ~ The high priest used God's Name so as to force a confession from Jesus (Matthew 26:63-64). This was an abuse of that most sacred Name because under Jewish law no man could be forced to incriminate himself. Jesus answered the High Priest because The Law required that an oath be responded to (Leviticus 5:1).
- **No idols** ~ Caiaphas prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation by which he really meant that Jesus should die in order to protect the status quo and preserve the temple (John 11:50). The priests had exalted the temple beyond a means of worship. It had become an object of worship in itself. Moreover the temple represented a huge source of income to the High Priest's household. Care to avoid the loss of such wealth would also have been a factor in Caiaphas's desire to preserve the temple.

And in One Lord, Jesus Christ

- **No Other Gods** ~ It was not just a political expediency when the nation cried out "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15). Neither was it merely a separation of politics and religion when Israel declared Caesar as their king. It was an acceptance of another god, since the Ceasars were worshipped as gods. Moreover to acknowledge Caesar as king of Israel was a denial of God since He held claim as their Creator and King (Isaiah 43:15).

John Calvin: " . . . It was not sufficient [for Jesus] to endure any kind of death. To satisfy our ransom, it was necessary to select a mode of death in which he might deliver us, both by giving himself up to condemnations and undertaking our expiation. Had he been cut off by assassins, or slain in a seditious tumult, there could have been no kind of satisfaction in such a death. But when he is placed as a criminal at the bar, where witnesses are brought to give evidence against him, and the mouth of the judge condemns him to die, we see him sustaining the character of an offender and evil-doer. . . . When we read that Christ was led away from the judgement-seat to execution, and was crucified between thieves, we have a fulfilment of the prophecy which is quoted by the Evangelist, "He was numbered with the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12; Mark 15:28). Why was it so? That he might bear the character of a sinner, not of a just or innocent person, inasmuch as he met death on account not of innocence, but of sin."

And further: " . . . Thus we perceive Christ representing the character of a sinner and a criminal, while, at the same time, his innocence shines forth, and it becomes manifest that he suffers for another's and not for his own crime. He therefore suffered under Pontius Pilate, being thus, by the formal sentence of the judge, ranked among criminals, and yet he is declared innocent by the same judge (John 19:4-6), when he affirms that he finds no cause of death in him. Our acquittal is in this that the guilt which made us liable to punishment was transferred to the head of the Son of God (Isaiah 53:12). We must specially remember this substitution in order that we may not be all our lives in trepidation and anxiety, as if the just vengeance which the Son of God transferred to himself, were still impending over us." - from J Calvin "Institutes of Christian Religion" 2.16.5

Thus we observe that the wicked who laid hands on Jesus were guilty of breaches of the whole law. Let us be persuaded of the full sufficiency of Christ's death. Jesus took the all breaches of the whole law on to Himself. Jesus is Lord. He is Lord of all. He rules by His Law over the Creation that He made. He, by that same Law died for us that He could demonstrate His Lordship over the Creation when it sought to rebel against Him.

"We must specially remember this substitution in order that we may not be all our lives in trepidation and anxiety, as if the just vengeance which the Son of God transferred to himself, were still impending over us."

THE INCARNATION

Many are familiar with the quote from Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) which says: “If I have seen further than others, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants”. Such an utterance was never so true as it is for the benefits which today’s church derives by standing in the doctrine of the bishops and divines who constituted the Council of Nicea (325 AD). This Council, from which the Nicene Creed derives its name, was called by Emperor Constantine and was convened in order to address a number of matters contentious within the Church at the time.

It is no overstatement to say that the whole of Western government and liberty, as well as the future of the Church rested with that Council’s decisions. Foremost amongst those issues was consideration of the divinity of Jesus.

The Council had to decide whether God the Father and Jesus Christ were one in being and essence or merely one in purpose. At stake was the eternal divinity of Christ. If the Council had decided that Jesus and The Father were not of the same eternal essence, then the effect would have been to subordinate Jesus to the status of a created being. This would have lead the Christian church to read the gospels as the means by which a *creature had become God*. But if it were possible for a created Christ to *become* God then the way was open for other creatures to be accepted as gods. More particularly the Roman Emperors could revert to their pagan status as divine leaders of the state. The Roman Empire would have again returned to the adoration of the genius of the Emperor as the empire’s unifying leader/principle.

Western civilization has been so long under this concept of a de-divinized state that we are naive as to the consequences to a nation of having a national leader who is accepted by the people as being divine. It is useful to remember that as recently as 1945, the Japanese Emperor Hirohito (1901-1989) was considered by his nation to be god and thus was seen to guide his people with the authority and wisdom of a deity. A glimpse of the devastation, intellectual stupor and inequity caused by worship of the state can be seen if one considers the poverty and oppression in North Korea as its citizens pursue the state religion of Juche, being a religion whose prime function is to institutionalise Kim Il-sung (1912-1994) as the “Eternal President of the Republic¹” and his descendants as the divine leaders of the nation.

But to deny the eternal divinity of Christ is also to do irreparable harm to our salvation. The hope of our faith becomes lost. Had the Council decided other than it did, then Jesus would have been a creature and not a part of the Godhead. To have a saviour who Himself is not eternally God devastates the message of salvation to the point of absolute futility and impotency. Thus it is vital that our faith rests soundly and irrevocably on the work of the God-man

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. (Matthew 1:18)

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:35)

¹ The breathtaking arrogance of the title of Eternal President of the Republic is all the more stupefying when one considers that this is the title afforded Kim Il-sung in the nation’s current (1998) constitution. Not even Julius Caesar (who declared himself “Perpetual Dictator” in 45 BC) nor Napoleon Bonaparte (appointed “First Consul for Life” in 1820) sought to rule from beyond the grave!

God from God . . . He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary

Jesus Christ, He who is “God from God” and who “became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary” (Matthew 1:18, Luke 1:35).

These notes omit further consideration of the civilizing influences of the incarnation for the sake of addressing the relationship between this doctrine and our salvation. As such the notes move along the following lines:

- 1) The need for a Mediator between God and Mankind
- 2) Six reasons why our Mediator had to be Man
- 3) Five reasons why our Mediator had to be God
- 4) The nature of the union of God and Man in Christ
- 5) The Lord’s Supper as our participation in His Incarnation
 - a) three understandings of what happens to the bread and wine
 - b) reasons for observing The Lord’s Supper
- 6) The meaning of the Lord’s Table

OUR NEED FOR A MEDIATOR

Scripture paints a grim image of the relationship between God and man. On the one hand we find that God is angry with sinners all the day long (Psalm 7:11). On the other hand we find that mankind is at war with God (Romans 1:30) and resentful toward Him. Whereas men and women are without excuse for their opposition to God, God is justified in His anger toward mankind.

God judges the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. (Psalm 7:11)

1. God’s righteous anger and Man’s unrighteous anger

The Lord our God is entirely righteous and holy beyond all understanding. He has given His Law as an expression of His holy character and nature. Therefore when men and women decide to contravene God’s Law they are actually making an assault on His very character. Imagine inviting someone into your home and upon their arrival they proceed to insult your family, they specifically set about finding and desecrating photographs of yourself and then as if that weren’t bad enough they purposely trash your possessions. In the same way, every act of sin is an act of defiance against the One who made us. God our creator made us and has placed us in His cosmos and having arrived, we, by every act of sin, set about to destroy the image of God in ourselves and all that He has made!

Make no mistake. God is justified in His anger with sin and sinners.

And yet mankind has the pride, bold-faced gall and effrontery to be angry with God? There are those who are in open rebellion against God, declaring it unfair that the God of all the world should judge (Genesis 18:25, 2 Corinthians 5:10). Then there are those that are in passive rebellion. These are not open and flagrant in their sin, instead they withhold

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. (Romans 8:7)

(See also Romans 1:30 & 5:10, Colossians 1:21)

praise and adoration of the One who made them and live life according to their own values, expecting that because they have been covert, or even polite, in their rebellion that God will turn a blind eye toward their sins and excuse them in the same way that they excuse themselves.

God from God . . . He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary

Perhaps God should be persuaded to pass over certain sins? What is it about God's sense of justice that all sin must be punished? As the commentator Joseph Morecraft III (1944 -) says: "For God to treat lightly the infractions of His law and to disregard its just claim for the punishment of the offender would be to allow the guilty to go unpunished, and to commit the outrage of violating and dishonouring His own character revealed in His law. Fallen man would conclude that crime does pay."

Moreover if the Judge of all the earth proves immoral, incompetent or lazy, the cause of righteousness for all the universe is finally and hopelessly lost. Thus it becomes necessary that . . . "all of God's perfections are honoured. His faithfulness must be upheld, His justice satisfied, His broken law demanding our punishment silenced, His anger turned away, His holiness honoured, and His government and moral order preserved intact. If God's wisdom cannot devise a way whereby man can be saved and these divine interests, so vast and fundamental, honoured, then the whole project must be abandoned and the sinner left to His eternal doom."

2. Jesus our Mediator

Praise God, His mercy, love and wisdom found a way in His Son, Jesus Christ who came as God in human form. Only Christ could placate an angry God by paying the price which our sins demand. And only Christ's love could induce resentful man to abandon his anger and be transformed by God's forgiveness.

A mediator is "One that interposes between parties at variance for the purpose of reconciling them" (Webster's Dictionary). In order to stand between two parties in a dispute a mediator must have several attributes. He must:

- a) have moral and personal attributes which allow each party to trust him as having their legitimate interests at heart,
- b) understand the needs and the capabilities of both parties, otherwise the mediator may pursue terms of settlement which whilst acceptable to one party are impossible to the other,
- c) be able to communicate effectively with both parties in terms that each party will understand.

Who can God trust but Himself? Who can know God's heart but Himself? How can mankind trust someone whom they cannot see? Who can understand the frailties and capacities of Mankind but one of our own? Thus it is that our Mediator has to be both God and man. Who can speak to both God and men and be understood by each (John 12:28-30 & 14:16)?

Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. (John 12:28-30)

These are the logical requirements why our mediator needed to be both God and Man, which is to say this is why Jesus Christ is the only one qualified to reconcile us to God and God to us. In addition to the constraints of process, there are further reasons from scripture why only Christ as God-man is competent to resolve the chasm between an infinitely holy God and sinful humanity.

SIX REASONS WHY OUR MEDIATOR HAD TO BE HUMAN

There are several reasons why our Mediator had to be human. Jesus came as the son of Mary, born into the line of David so that:

- **He would perform the required obedience to God's Law** ~ In that The Law of God demands punishment for sins, it also demands perfect obedience from mankind. Therefore the obedience of the Mediator had to be that of a man (Matthew 5:17, Galatians 4:4). It should be remembered that in Eden there were two things required of Adam. On the one hand he had to abstain from the Tree of Knowledge and on the other hand he was expected to partake of the Tree of Life in consequence of his faithfulness to the appointed task of tending the garden. In parallel with this, if Jesus is to undo all of Adam's failings then He must not only pay the price for our faults but He must also exercise a perfect obedience to the Law. Thus Christ's obedience to the Law is as central to our salvation as was His suffering and death.

But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, coming into being out of a woman, having come under Law (Galatians 4:4)

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. (Matthew 5:17)
- **He would be familiar with our weaknesses** ~ As God, Jesus has full knowledge of our weaknesses and infirmities, but this knowledge cannot really be described as an "experiential knowledge". Only as a human could Jesus know and experience the passions, weaknesses and emotions of human life. Because Jesus was "like us in all things except sin" (Hebrews 4:15) He was tempted in a manner similar to us. In this way He can fully identify with our predicament and correctly represent our circumstance to The Father, whilst at the same time fully honouring God's requirement that His Law be kept.

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)
- **He would be a full and fitting substitute for the punishment due to us** ~ Since man had sinned against God, man must bear the spiritual and physical penalty for that sin. Because it is impossible for God to die it is not only appropriate, but necessary, that He come in a form that can undergo death (Romans 5:8-9). Our mediator had to be human so as to be the atoning means by which justice and violated law could be conciliated.

But God commends his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. (Romans 5:8-9)
- **He could save our souls** ~ Article 18 of The Belgic Confession (1567), speaking of Christ's incarnation, reminds us: "He not only assumed human nature as far as the body is concerned but also [took] a real human soul in order that He would be a real human being. For since our souls had been lost as well as the body, He had to assume them both to save them both together." Inherent in this statement is the idea that we are saved "spirit soul and body" (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

God from God . . . He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary

We might add to this the observations that it was necessary for Jesus to come in a body like ours for if His body were not of the same nature as ours there would be no sound reason to believe Paul's statement that since Christ is risen we also shall rise with Him (1 Corinthians 15:20-21).

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

- ***We could be adopted as sons*** ~ If Jesus were not human then He could not call us brethren (Hebrews 2:11-13), but because He is human and remains such, He and we are part of the same family. In as much as The Holy Spirit came to Mary so that The Son of God might become the Son of Man (Luke 3:38) by birth, we find also that as a consequence of Christ's saving work, that the Holy Spirit now moves to make the sons of Man (Adam) into sons of God by adoption (Romans 8:15, John 1:12). The apostle Paul states clearly that Christ was born of a woman in order "that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:4-6).

. . . God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons (Galatians 4:4-5)

- ***He could make intercession on our behalf*** ~ Jesus came to plead our cause before The Father. Being raised from the dead He continues everlastingly to make intercession on our behalf (John 14:16, Hebrews 7:25 & 9:24, Romans 8:34, 1 John 2:1). Yet God cannot make intercession to Himself because intercession presupposes dependence which is inconsistent with God's self-sufficiency and independence. Therefore Christ's making intercession for us is possible only because He is a man.

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25)

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

FIVE REASONS WHY OUR MEDIATOR HAD TO BE GOD

Having ascertained that our Mediator needed to be one from amongst us, we find that there are several reasons why only God could play the part of Mediator.

- ***An infinite offence requires an infinite sacrifice*** ~ God is infinite in nature. Therefore His character expresses itself in an infinite way. When God loves He loves infinitely. When God thinks He thinks with infinite wisdom and when God is offended He is infinitely offended. Therefore the only way to appease an infinite offence is with a sacrifice of infinite worth. If our Mediator were only human, sinless though He might be and although His actions and sufferings were perfect, yet being a finite creation, nothing He did could be of the infinite value demanded by God's justice (Acts 20:28, Hebrews 9:12-14).

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with His own blood. (Acts 20:28)

- ***Only God can complete The Cross's victory by sending the Holy Spirit*** ~ Scripture makes clear that we are reconciled by Christ's death but we are saved by His life (Romans 5:10).

God from God . . . He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary

Thus it is insufficient for us merely to believe in Christ's atoning sacrifice, we must participate in His resurrection life, which is to say that the same Spirit which raised Christ from the dead needs to dwell in us (Romans 8:11).

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me (John 15:26)

What man has authority to send the Holy Spirit, for the Spirit obeys only God (John 15:26 & John 16:7). Therefore it was necessary that God be Mediator in order that The Cross's victory would be complete.

- **Only God is competent to defeat all enemies** ~ Mankind has been made a little lower than the angels (Psalm 8:5, Hebrews 2:7). Angels, even fallen angels or demons, live in a state of being which exceeds us in understanding and might. Therefore if the pollution wrought by Satan and his minions is to be undone, then it must be conquered by one who is greater than they. A spiritual enemy can only be vanquished by a mightier spiritual opponent.

And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. (Colossians 2:15)

God Himself is the only one qualified in holiness and spiritual character to defeat all that which Satan did to corrupt the creation and mankind (Colossians 2:15).

- **Only God has power over death** ~ We have already noted that our Mediator needed to be human because God cannot die. For almost the obverse reason our Mediator needed to be God because mankind has no authority over death. No created person can lay down their life in death and then at a later time, on their own authority and power, take it up again. Yet it was necessary that our saviour be able to defeat all foes especially death. Jesus, as God, had the power both to lay down His life and to take it up again (John 10:17)

Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. (John 10:17-18)

- **Our Salvation is not just by Christ but in Christ** ~ Jesus is not only the producer of our eternal blessedness and everlasting joy, He is its very heart and focus. Scripture depicts the Christian as the Bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2, Revelation 19:7 & 21:9). In the same way that newlyweds seem to find a contentment in each other which makes them oblivious to all other things and people, we too will find Jesus as the focus and depth of our joy. On this basis it is both fitting and necessary that the author and centre of our eternal contentment should Himself be infinite. A finite saviour would mean a finite fountain of joy. Eternity is a long time to spend with someone whom you have come to know so well that they are boring!

HOW THE UNION OF GOD AND MAN FUNCTIONS

We see now how it was necessary that our Saviour and Mediator be both God and Man. Being God incarnate, Jesus Christ alone fulfils our need. Therefore we must agree with Paul (1 Timothy 2:15) that there is but one mediator between God and man.

But it remains that we consider how this union worked in practice.

For God is one, and there is one Mediator of God and of men, the Man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5)

God from God . . . He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary

1. The formal understanding

Scripture alerts us to the basic relationship between the divine and the human in Christ.

Firstly we see that The Second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God became man. John's gospels tell us that The Word was in the beginning and was God (John 1:1). The Word then became flesh (John 1:14). In this way we understand that the governing, root element of Christ's personality was/is His deity. Jesus is God-man not man-God. To re-state the findings of the Council of Nicea, Jesus was/is a humanized deity not a deified human. Christ's incarnation originated from heaven. God became man. There is no scope within the Incarnation to provide for a man to become God, for this is to repeat the sin of Adam and Eve in Eden.

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

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)

Secondly John tells us that The Word dwelt (or to use the Greek ~ "tabernacled") amongst us (John 1:14). The eternal Son of God employed, or occupied, human form, the physical son of Mary, as the place of His abode and manifestation. This truth Jesus Himself reiterated when He described Himself as God's temple (John 2:19-21).

Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. . . . But he spoke of the temple of his body. (John 2:19-21)

Even this understanding is incomplete, because it allows the suggestion that there were two Christ's, an eternal Christ dwelling in (but not united with) a human Christ. God did not look down from heaven to find a body that He could inhabit, as if the Second Person of the Trinity were some hermit crab seeking out a shell to live in. Such a notion is insufficient because the crab and his shell are separate entities, clearly divisible. Christ's divinity is inseparable from His humanity.

To understand this, let us recall the source of Christ's human existence as described in the other gospels. Matthew and Luke explain Christ's entry into the material world as being via the power of God the Holy Ghost operating in the womb of Mary the virgin mother (Matthew 1:18 & 1:20, Luke 1:35). Christ owes His humanity, His body and soul, to conception by God as His father. Thus Christ's body, the humanity of Christ, is not a mere shell or edifice. Christ's humanity derives its existence from the empowering of God in Mary's womb and so has been uniquely fashioned by a divine source.

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:35)

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. (Matthew 1:18)

And yet there is one further thing that we must clarify about this Jesus Christ of Nazareth who is perfectly and fully God whilst having a complete and typical

human nature inseparably united in the one person. We need to state that this inseparable union is without any blending or mixture of the two natures. This is because blending results in a third entity. Had there been blending, Jesus would have ceased to be fully man and fully God. Both natures would have been confused, adulterated or changed into a third essence.

God from God . . . He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary

Jesus is divine and human in a manner such “ . . . that the whole perfect and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition or confusion [to either] . . .” (Westminster Confession of Faith ~ 1643-48).

2. How this inseparable but unblended union functions

Because the Incarnate Jesus Christ is such an unusual person it is difficult for us to comprehend how this union functioned. We are given to wonder how it is, if Christ was inseparably and simultaneously divine and human, that He was required to grow in wisdom (Luke 2:52), or did not know the day and hour of His coming (Mark 13:32) or wearied in His travels (John 4:6)?

The first thing to keep in mind is that it was Christ’s divine nature which is the root and base of His person. We will make use of W G T Shedd (1820-1894) who in his “Dogmatic Theology” poses several reasons why the divinity and not the humanity of Christ is the controlling factor in His person. Speaking of the divine nature as The Logos and the human nature as Christ, Shedd explains that the functioning of the union can be seen:

- ***In the way that Christ’s acts of power were regulated*** ~ “If the Logos so determined, Jesus Christ was powerless; and if the Logos so determined, Jesus Christ was all-powerful. When the divine nature withdrew its support from the human, the latter was as helpless as it is in an ordinary human creature. And when the divine nature imparted its power, the human nature became “mighty in word and deed.” When the Logos so pleased, Jesus of Nazareth could no more be taken by human hands and nailed to the cross than the eternal Trinity could be; and when the Logos so pleased, He could be arrested without any resistance and be led like a lamb to the slaughter.” (John 18:3-12)
- ***In the way that Christ’s knowledge operated*** ~ “The human mind of Jesus Christ stood in a somewhat similar relation to the Logos, that the mind of a prophet does to God. In the same way that the prophet Isaiah could know no more of the secret things of God than it pleased the Holy Spirit to disclose to him, so the human mind of Christ could know no more of these same divine secrets than the illumination of the Logos made known. The finite and limited human nature hindered a full manifestation of the omniscience of the deity. This was a part of the humiliation of the eternal Logos. He condescended to unite himself with an inferior nature, through which his own infinite perfections could shine only in part. When deity does not work as simply deity untrammelled, but works in “the form of a servant,” it is humbled.”

This comparison between the operation of the mind of Isaiah and that of Christ is instructive but not exact . . . “because the Logos and the human mind in the instance of Jesus Christ constitute one person, while the Holy Spirit and the inspired prophet are two persons, yet in respect to the point of dependence for knowledge, there is an exact similarity.”

- ***In the way that Christ was placed in and rose from the grave*** ~ As if understanding the incarnation in the living Christ were not hard enough, there is the conundrum of His death. How does the inseparability of Christ’s eternal nature function when the human aspect of Christ lies dead in the grave? Again let us re-state that the personality of the God-man Jesus Christ depends primarily on His divinity, not on His humanity.

God from God . . . He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary

Death for Christ was the same as for any human. His body and soul separated (Luke 23:46). But . . . “The divine and the human natures from the moment of their first combination, have been and are forever inseparable. For even when Christ’s human soul forsook the tabernacle of his body, his deity forsook neither body nor soul. If it had, then we could not truly hold, either that the PERSON of Christ was buried, or that the PERSON of Christ did raise up himself from the dead. For the body separated from the Word can in no true sense be termed the person of Christ”.

Indeed it is necessary that Christ be raised body and soul because “since the soul [mankind’s soul] had been lost as well as the body, He [Jesus] had to assume them both to save them both together” (Belgic Confession).

So in the doctrine of the Incarnation, we find ourselves with a deep mystery which has vast and wonderful implications for our lives. Those things presented here are merely the first outer petals in the bud of this most beautiful bloom of doctrine. There remains one other aspect to Christ’s flesh that warrants our respectful consideration.

THE LORD’S SUPPER

Not only did Jesus take on flesh and blood but He offered these to us in a form which the Church now calls Communion, The Lord’s Supper or The Lord’s Table. So important is the Incarnation that the Church has been celebrating Jesus’ first coming and His return via this sacrament. It was a hallmark of the early church that they took communion together, using both bread and wine (Acts 20:7), in the manner that Jesus gave them on the night before He died (Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24).

And as they ate, Jesus took a loaf and blessed and broke it, and He gave to them and said, Take, eat; this is My body. And taking the cup, giving thanks, He gave to them. And they all drank out of it. And He said to them, This is My blood of the New Covenant, which is poured out for many. (Mark 14:22-24)

1. Three understandings of The Lord’s Supper

Prior to the Reformation (1517 - 1648) the predominant understanding of Communion or The Lord’s Table was as taught by the Roman Catholic Church (being transubstantiation) but within the Reformation two other views developed, that of the Lutherans (being consubstantiation) and that which is now held by most Protestant churches (being the memorial view).

- **Transubstantiation** ~ An incorrect use of Jesus words “this is my body” (Mark 14:22) and “this is my blood” (Mark 14:24) leads Roman Catholics to believe that the bread and wine are changed into the literal body and blood of Christ at the time of their consecration during Mass. (That is why Catholics treat the bread and wine with a sacred respect, handling it with great deference since its actual substance has been transformed.) The Priests’ prayers during Mass include the idea that the body and blood of Christ are offered or sacrificed again, and every time, that Mass is said. Thus in its strictest understanding Mass is not a re-enactment of Calvary but a repetition of it.

Protestants reject this view of Communion because the verses concerning the bread and wine (Mark 14:22 & 24) are meant to be interpreted symbolically not literally, since when Jesus spoke them He was still with His disciples and His body had not as yet been broken nor had His blood been shed.

God from God . . . He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary

Protestants reject the notion of Mass as a repetition of Calvary because The Bible makes clear that Christ's sacrifice was complete once and for all (Hebrews 9:12, 10:12 & 10:14).

But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right of God . . . For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified. (Hebrews 10:12 & 14)

- **Consubstantiation** ~ The Lutheran view holds that while the bread and wine remain bread and wine, the presence of Christ is in the elements. As stated by Luther himself "the participant partakes of the true body and blood of Christ in, with, and under the bread and wine though there is no change in the elements at all".
- **The Memorial View** ~ This is the commonly accepted Protestant view that the elements do not change and Christ is present in the service but not in the elements in any special way. The communion service is a memorial service and the blessing received by the participants is according to their faith.

2. Reasons for observing the Lords Supper

We observe the Lord's Supper because Communion and Baptism are the only two ordinances that Jesus Himself instituted.

Jesus established The Lord's Supper on the night that He was betrayed (Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-26, Luke 22:14-20, 1 Corinthians 11:23). He and the disciples celebrated Passover by eating the meal in the prescribed manner. At meal's end Jesus offered the disciples the bread and wine as representing His body and blood and told them that

this was the basis of the New Covenant. By this we understand that The Lord's Supper replaces the Passover Meal. Whereas Israel ate the Passover as a

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:26)

meal which looked back to their deliverance from Egypt and forward the promise of a Messiah, the Christian church partakes of communion looking back to The Cross and looking forward to Christ's return (1 Corinthians 11:26). Thus we celebrate communion because:

- **It is Christ's commandment** ~ Jesus told the disciples that they must "do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19).
- **It emulates the practice of the early church** ~ The disciples chose the first day of the week (rather than the Sabbath) to meet and break bread together (Acts 2:42).

- **It is the New Covenant which supersedes God's former covenant with Israel** ~

Whereas the Passover Meal was the reminder to a nation of a covenant based in The Law and faith, Christ's Communion is a reminder

In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." (1 Corinthians 11:25)

to the church, which is constituted from peoples of all nations, of a new covenant based on grace and faith (1 Corinthians 11:25).

THE MEANING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

The celebration of The Lord's supper serves several purposes. The Lord's Supper is to be:

God from God . . . He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary

- **A commemoration or remembrance** ~ Jesus told us to celebrate the Lord's Supper so that we would remember Him – particularly His death for us (Luke 22:19).

The bread and wine represent Christ's body and blood (John 6:32-68) and remind us that Christ, the Eternal Son of God, became a man. The bread broken and the wine poured out remind us of Christ's death on the cross – that His body was broken and His blood was shed

And when He had given thanks, He broke it and said 'This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me'. In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My Blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me. (1 Corinthians 11:24-25)

for us. Thus at the Lord's Supper we remember the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, which are the very foundations of our faith. Through the Lord's Supper we are continually reminded that it is only through His death that we have access to God and all the blessings of our salvation.

- **A proclamation of Christ's death, resurrection and reign** ~ At the Lord's Supper, we not only remember the death of Christ, but we proclaim it as a great victory. The Lord's Supper is a victory celebration. At the Lord's Supper we remember and declare the Lord's death (1 Corinthians 11:26). We proclaim that the new covenant God promises has been established and ratified by Christ's Blood.

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes (1 Corinthians 11:26)

- **A proclamation that Satan has been defeated** ~ Because Communion centres on Christ's death and resurrection it simultaneously declares Christ's victory over the Devil. The Church stands under the covering and blessing of Christ's blood and makes a public display of Christ's purpose and victory (Hebrews 2:14-15).

Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who has the power of death – that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15)

- **A celebration or thanksgiving** ~ The Lord's Supper is a celebration service. It is a time of joy and thanksgiving. Jesus Himself instituted the Lord's Supper by giving thanks (Luke 22:19). It is for this reason that the Apostle Paul calls the cup that we receive at the Lord's Supper "the cup of thanksgiving" or "the cup of blessing" (1 Corinthians 10:16). Because it is a cup of thanksgiving and blessing we are to rejoice and enter into the blessing of this celebration. Even as the Early Church broke bread together with gladness and singleness of heart (Acts 2:46).

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? (1 Corinthians 10:16)

Everyday they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God (Acts 2:46)

- **A participation or sharing** ~ When we partake of the Lord's Supper we do so as a corporate body, acknowledging our unity and sharing together in the blessings provided for us by the Lord. Just as the one loaf is made up of many grains of wheat – so the Body of Christ is made up of many individuals all united together in Christ. Via this ordinance we are reminded of the fact that through our personal faith in Christ we have become part of a corporate body.

God from God . . . He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary

The Lord's Supper shows that our unity is based on Christ Himself. It is through our union with Christ that we are united together with one another.

*For we, the many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.
(1 Corinthians 10:17)*

All those who profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are welcome to share in the Lord's Supper. There is no other condition. The unity of the Body of Christ which is made up of believers in all denominations opens the Lord's Table to all those who are in faith.

- **A communion or fellowship** ~ The term 'communion' actually means 'fellowship', 'partnership' or 'sharing'. The Lord's Supper is a time of fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ and with fellow believers. When the early Church celebrated the Lord's Supper they enjoyed a time of rich fellowship and communion with the Lord and with one another (Acts 2:44-47).
- **An examination (or discerning) of self** ~ It is important that we partake of the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner because God places great importance on the Lord's Supper. There were many cautions to Old Testament Israel that she should not pollute her worship of God with idolatry nor be neglectful of His sacrifices. In many cases these warnings were accompanied by serious penalties, even death. Such cautions carry over into the New Testament for Paul warns that to receive the Lord's body and blood unworthily can lead to sickness and death (1 Corinthians 11:29-30).

*For he who eats and drinks unworthily eats and drinks condemnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and many sleep.
(1 Corinthians 11:29-30)*

To partake of the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner means that we are to judge or examine ourselves. If we have any unconfessed sin, wrong attitudes or wrong motives we are to confess them to the Lord and receive His forgiveness. We should remember however, that to examine ourselves does not mean to condemn ourselves. If the Holy Spirit does not bring any sin to our minds, we should partake of communion with joy and not with fear or any sense of unworthiness.

On this basis it is clear that non Christians ought not partake of the Lord's Supper for in so doing they bring judgement on themselves for they fail to discern or appreciate what the Lord's death means for them. Christians who fail to discern the Lord's Body will also fail to receive the full blessings that are available to them – they too may become weak, sickly or even die.

However, if Christians approach the Lord's Supper with reverence knowing that Christ's blood was shed for their forgiveness, they will receive health and strength, cleansing and forgiveness and the full blessings of Calvary in their lives as they partake of the supper in faith.

We must not only discern our relationship with Christ (whether we are in a state of sin) but we must also consider our relationships within the Lord's mystical body (His Church). This means that as we receive communion we must do so with the right attitude towards

*But in enjoining this, I do not praise you, because you come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when you come together in the church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and I partly believe it.
(1 Corinthians 11:17-18)*

God from God . . . He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary

our brothers and sisters in the church. We must make sure that there are no divisions amongst ourselves - no strife, jealousy, bitterness or lack of forgiveness. Paul rebuked the Corinthian Church for their divisions and their lack of discerning (or appreciating) one another (1 Corinthians 11:17-18 & 33).

Jesus Himself said that we must make peace with our brother before we come to meet with the Lord (Matthew 5:23-24 & 18:15-17).

Therefore if you offer your gift on the altar, and there remember that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:23-24)

- **An anticipation or expectation of Christ's return** ~ The Lord's Supper helps us not only to look back to the Cross of Christ in the past but it also helps us to look forward to the coming of Christ in the future.

We are to continue to observe the Lord's Supper until Jesus comes. Each time we gather around the Lord's Supper we are to look forward in anticipation of Christ's second coming and to the hope that we have in Christ. When Christ comes again we shall participate in the greatest communion service of all time, the marriage feast of The Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9).

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. (1 Corinthians 11:26)

IMAGES OF JESUS

The Nicene Creed tells us that Jesus is the only Son of God. On the face of it this seems an straight forward concept, but there are so many aspects to the character and ministry of our magnificent Saviour that it is difficult to grasp the breadth and diversity of His character. For this reason the Scripture uses many metaphors or images to depict and explain the Son of God. These images are sometimes referred to as 'types'.

A type is 'a divinely purposed illustration of some truth'. It is 'a figure or representation of something to come'. There are more than 40 types of Christ in the Bible and there are 300 prophecies fulfilled by Christ in His during His life. There are various kinds of types. A type may be:

- A person - Adam is said to be a type of Jesus (Romans 5:14)
- An event - The sacrifices under Jew's ceremonial law are a type of Christ's dealing with sin on the Cross (1 Corinthians 10:11)
- A thing - The veil within the tabernacle of Moses is a type for Christ's broken body (Hebrews 10:20)
- An institution - The priesthood of Melchizedek as a type for Jesus function as our High Priest (Hebrews 9:11)

PEOPLE WHO WERE TYPES

There are many Old Testament saints who offer insights into the character and ministry of Christ. Adam, Melchizedek, Isaac, Joseph, Joshua, David, Solomon and Boaz are a few of the many persons whose lives of faith and obedience mirror Christ. In fact in His day there were those that likened Jesus to Elijah and Jeremiah (Matthew 16:14). Of interest is Adam:

1. Adam is a type of Christ:

- **As the representative head of the race** - Adam as head of the old creation is a contrasting type of Christ the Head of the new creation. All of humanity is classified by God as being either 'in Adam' or 'in Christ'. Adam through one act of disobedience and sin brought condemnation and death to all men. (Since all are born 'in Adam'). Christ through one act of obedience brought justification and life to all who believe - (Only those who believe are 'in Christ'). Those 'in Adam' are condemned and lost. Those 'in Christ' are justified and saved.

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. (Romans 5:14)

- **Both Adam and Christ entered the world sinless through a special act of God** - In the same way that Adam's one act of sin condemned all mankind to reprobation. Jesus' one act of atonement bought us acceptance before God. Our justification does not depend on our works. It depends solely upon Christ's work. By His act of obedience we have been justified.

And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. (1 Corinthians 15:45)

(See Romans 5:12-21, 1Corinthians 15:21-22 & 45-47)

2. Melchizedek is a type of Christ

The life of Abraham introduces us to an obscure but important figure. At the conclusion of an important battle Abraham pays homage to Melchizedek. As King of Salem, Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine as the priest of the most High God and blessed Abraham. The Scriptures record that Abraham gave Melchizedek tithes of all that he had (Genesis 14:1-20).

Later the writer of Psalms predicts that Jesus Christ would be a 'Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek' (Psalm 110:4). The book of Hebrews presents Melchizedek as a type of Christ our Great High Priest (Hebrews 5:7).

- **The name Melchizedek** - Melchizedek is a combination of two words meaning 'king' and 'righteousness' and means 'king of righteousness'. Melchizedek was King of Salem. Salem means 'peace'. He was therefore 'King of Peace'. Melchizedek was also called the 'priest of the Most High God'.

Combining all these together we find that Melchizedek was a King Priest; King of righteousness and peace and Priest of the Most High God (Hebrews 7:1-2). Melchizedek is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ because He also is also a King and a Priest (Zechariah 6:13)

As a King, Christ rules with authority. As a Priest, Christ intercedes for us with compassion.

- **The offering of bread and wine** - This is the first mention of the emblems of bread and wine, which have become so precious to us. These are the emblems of Christ's sacrifice on The Cross. Since the bread and wine are the memorials of sacrifice some have suggested that Melchizedek is a type of Christ our resurrected High Priest.

Christ's priestly work in Heaven is to intercede on our behalf on the basis of His finished work (1John 2:1-2).

- **No recorded genealogy** - There is no recorded genealogy of Melchizedek. The New Testament takes this as a type of Christ's eternal and unchanging priesthood. (Hebrews 7:3). This is one of the unique things about Christ's priesthood. It is eternal. Jesus will always be our Great High Priest. The priesthood of the Levitical order as instituted by Moses was limited by death but Christ's priesthood continues forever.

And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continues ever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:23-25)

- **His superiority** - Melchizedek was superior to Abraham. This can be seen in two ways. He blessed Abraham, and in receiving his blessing Abraham recognized that Melchizedek was greater (Hebrews 7:7).

Furthermore Melchizedek received tithes from Abraham. Thus Abraham recognized Melchizedek as a priest, since it was the priest's office in the Old Testament to receive tithes. Yet in as much as Melchizedek was greater than Abraham, he must also be recognized as superior to the priests who would come from Abraham's son Levi. Melchizedek was superior to Aaron and all the Levitical priests (Hebrews 7:9).

And was made human

Thus the superiority of the Melchizedek Priesthood is a type of Jesus Christ our Great High Priest who is superior to all other priests.

3. Joseph

Joseph is the most complete type of Christ in the Old Testament. More than one quarter of the Book of Genesis is devoted to his story. Following are some of the ways in which Joseph exemplifies Jesus Christ:

Joseph	Jesus
Joseph had a miracle birth (Genesis 30:22-24)	Jesus had a miracle birth
Joseph's names ... Joseph means 'adding' (Genesis 30:24).	The first Adam, through disobedience, 'took away' from man and through him all men were lost. The last Adam, through obedience 'adds' to man and through Him those who believe are saved..
Joseph was renamed by Pharaoh and called Zaphenath-Paneah which carries a diversity of meanings amongst which (according to Jamieson, Fausset & Brown) are 'saviour of the age' or 'revealer of secrets' (Genesis 41:45). This name he received when he went 'down to Egypt' (a type of the world) and became its deliverer during the seven years of famine.	Christ received the name of Jesus which means 'saviour' at the time of His conception, that is at the time when He came into this world (Matthew 1:21). By His coming, He revealed the hearts of men (John 15:22) and gave gifts of revelation to His Church (1Corinthians 12).
Joseph was a shepherd (Genesis 37:2).	Jesus is the Good Shepherd (John 10:14).
Joseph was the well beloved son of his father (Genesis 37:3).	Jesus is the well beloved Son of His Father (Matt 3:17 John 10:17).
Joseph testified against his brothers' sin and they hated him (Genesis 37:2).	Jesus testified against men's sin and they hated Him (John 15:18).
Joseph revealed to them the exalted position he would hold in the future, and they hated him the more (Genesis 37:5).	Jesus revealed to men the exalted position He would hold in the future, and they hated Him the more (Matt 24:30, 31).
Joseph lived in Hebron, the place of fellowship, with his father before being sent to his brothers.	Jesus lived in Heaven the place of fellowship, before coming to the earth (John 17:5).
Joseph's father sent him and he was perfectly willing to go (Genesis 37:13).	Jesus' Father sent Him and He was perfectly willing to go (John 3:16; Phil 2:5-7).
Joseph came seeking his lost brothers (Genesis 37:15).	Jesus came to seek and to save the lost (Matt 18:11).
Joseph's brothers plotted against him (Genesis 37:19-20).	Jesus' brothers, according to the flesh (the Jews) plotted against Him (Luke 20:13-14, 19:46-47).

And was made human

Joseph	Jesus
Joseph was sold by Judah for 20 pieces of silver (Genesis 37:25-28).	Jesus was sold by Judas for 30 pieces of silver (Matt 26:15).
Joseph was tempted and did not yield (Genesis 39).	Jesus was tempted but did not yield (Matt 4:1-11).
Joseph was accused wrongfully (Genesis 39:13-18).	Jesus was accused wrongfully (Matt 26:59-65).
Joseph did not justify himself.	Jesus did not justify Himself (Is 53:7).
Joseph was put in the Egyptian dungeon, the place of death, with two malefactors (Genesis 39:20). One of the malefactors died and the other lived (Genesis 40:21-22).	Jesus was put on the cross, the place of death, with two malefactors (Mark 15:27-28). One of the malefactors died and the other lived spiritually (Luke 23:39-43).
Joseph was raised from the place of death by the king of the land (Genesis 41:14).	Jesus was raised from the place of death by the King of the Universe (Eph 1:19-20).
Joseph was given all power in Egypt (Genesis 41:42-44).	Jesus was given all power to Heaven and earth (Matt 28:18).
After his exultation, Joseph took a Gentile bride to share his glory (Genesis 41:45).	After His exultation, Jesus takes a Gentile bride (the Church) to share His Glory (Eph 5:23-32).
Joseph was acknowledged to be the saviour of the people and their ruler (Genesis 47:25).	Jesus is our Saviour and Lord (Phil 2:10-11).
Joseph gave all honour to the king and delivered all things into his hands (Genesis 47:14-20).	. Jesus gives all honour to the King (Father) and delivers all things into His Hands (1Cor 15:24).
All must get their bread (physical life) through Joseph (Genesis 41:55-57).	All must get their spiritual life through Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12).
Joseph knew the past history of his brothers (Genesis 43:33).	Jesus knew what was in man (John 2:24-25; Matthew 9:4).
When Joseph's brothers humbled themselves before him and threw themselves on his mercy, he freely forgave them (Genesis 44:45).	All who confess their sins to Jesus receive His forgiveness (1 John 1:9).
Joseph's brothers were blessed for Joseph's sake (Genesis 47:5-6).	Believers are blessed for Jesus' sake (Eph 1:3).
Joseph's brothers found access to the king through him (Genesis 47:1-2).	We have access to God through Jesus (Eph 2:13, 18).

These are a very few of the vast array of types which are depicted in the Bible.

THE ENEMY OF OUR SOULS

The Nicene Creed tells us that God created all things both that which is seen and that which is unseen. It is fairly straight forward to understand God as the author of all that is seen, but we forget how much of the unseen lies within His creative dominion, for God is the source of all those things which we consider as concepts or ideas in themselves. God is love (1 John 4:9), God is truth and life (John 14:6) and God Himself is all that is holy. He is our righteousness (Romans 3:26). All things, both the seen and the unseen find their existence because of Him.

The spirit world is an unseen realm and is as much attributable to God's creative sovereignty as anything which is tangible. The unseen realm is comprised of angels, those beings who are part of God's heavenly host, and fallen creatures referred to as demons or devils. The captain of these wicked creatures goes by several names but his purpose is singular; to overturn God's rule and sovereignty and creation. His hatred of God and those to whom God has given dominion is such that the Devil must be seen as the enemy of our souls. We will be considering this defiling being along the following lines:

1. Satan's origin
 - a) the uncertainty as to the exact nature of his origin
 - b) the errors consequent on speculation concerning his origin
 - c) Satan and sin
2. The reality of Satan
 - a) Old and New Testament reasons for believing that Satan is real
 - b) personal attributes of Satan as described in scripture
 - c) Satan's names and tactics
 - d) demons
3. The nature of Satan's works and devices
4. Satan's ultimate fate and destiny
5. Overcoming our enemy
 - a) the Christian's armory against Satan's wiles
 - b) the basis of spiritual warfare

SATAN'S ORIGIN

According to Smith's Bible Dictionary (1884): "Of the nature and original state of Satan, little is revealed in Scripture. He is spoken of as a "spirit" in (Ephesians 2:2), as the prince or ruler of the "demons" (Matthew 12:24-26) and as having "angels" subject to him (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:7-9). The whole description of his power implies a spiritual nature and spiritual influence."

And He has made you alive, who were once dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience. (Ephesians 2:1-2)

1. Uncertainty as to the exact process of Satan's origin

There is a principle when handling Scripture that we should frame our understanding of a matter or doctrine on the basis of that which is clear and unambiguous, moving from there to that which is less clear or more obscure in its language. This is especially the case with the origin of Satan. It is clear from the Book of Jude that wicked angels fell from their assigned status (Jude 1:6). "These words may be understood of their having invaded the office or dignity of some others, or of their having by some means forfeited their own. This is spoken of those generally termed as fallen angels; but from what they fell, or from what cause or for what crime, we do not know. It is generally thought to have been pride; but this is conjecture." (Refer Adam Clarke's Commentary (1715-1832)).

And those angels not having kept their first place, but having deserted their dwelling-place, He has kept in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of a great Day. (Jude 1:6)

Quoting Smith's Bible Dictionary again: "We conclude, therefore, that Satan was of angelic nature, a rational and spiritual creature, superhuman in power, wisdom and energy; and not only so, but an archangel, one of the "princes" of heaven. It cannot be thought that anything essentially and originally evil was created by God. We can only conjecture, therefore, that Satan is a fallen angel, who once had a time of probation, but whose condemnation is now irrevocably fixed. As to the time, cause, and manner of his fall, Scripture tells us virtually nothing; but it does describe to us distinctly, the moral nature of this evil one."

2. Satan as Lucifer

There have been well meaning attempts to explain Satan's origin in terms of two Old Testament stanzas which speak either of the King of Tyre (Ezekiel 28) or Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon (Isaiah 14). Appropriating these scriptures to the origin of Satan only leads to the obscuring of God's real purposes in history for these kings and makes a travesty of God's prophetic imagery.

In terms of God's prophetic imagery, we see from the creation account that stars and moon were set so as to rule for times and seasons (Genesis 1:16-18).

Therefore it is common to see scripture describe rulers as great lights, stars or the sun. Jesus Himself is called the Sun of Righteousness (Malachi 4:2) and refers to Himself as the Morning Star (Revelation 2:28). In Isaiah, king Nebuchadnezzar is referred to as

How you are fallen from the heavens, O shining star, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! (Isaiah 14:12)

a star and the son of the morning (Isaiah 14:1). This is the only time that the word "lucifer" appears in scripture. What is fascinating is that God uses King Nebuchadnezzar (this Lucifer?) in a most remarkable way to protect Israel for 70 years. God works in that king's life to the point where Nebuchadnezzar is given the title "My Servant" (Jeremiah 25:9) and is given the privilege of being the only pagan in scripture to present the testimony of his conversion to faith in Yahweh (Daniel 4).

It is true that Isaiah 14 paints a terrible picture of a ruthless and egotistical ruler, but this chapter ought to be read as the background to what became a much humbled Nebuchadnezzar. To call Satan by the name Lucifer it to use one of the less clear aspects of God's prophetic imagery to make a mockery of God's sovereignty and grace in the affairs of men.

3. Satan and sin

This small clarification as to the precise nature of he whom scripture calls the son of the morning (Lucifer) is instructive in a number of ways:

- **The human heart is fundamentally ill-disposed toward understanding the Word of God** ~ To depict God's Servant, a protector of Israel and a brother in the faith as evil is not the fruit of a devilish conspiracy but a demonstration of the fact that we are more than capable of misunderstanding the scriptures. This is because we are lead astray by the sin within us.
- **Our fallenness is as much a problem to us as is Satan** ~ It cannot be denied that Satan's power is real and his intentions toward mankind are thoroughly malevolent. Whilst he is an adversary worthy of respect, some Christians are prone to blaming him for the failings of their own lives. It is instructive to note that it is Satan who leads Eve astray (Genesis 3:1-6) but that it is Sin which leads Cain astray (Genesis 4:7). Scripture tells us that the devil will flee from us if we will submit to God (James 4:7). The thing which prevents us from such victorious submission is the sin tendency within us.
- **Popular culture is unlikely to be accurate in its depiction of Satan** ~ If Christians are prone to misunderstanding the names and ways of Satan then we might expect that our culture's depiction of him will be even more unreliable and fanciful. As Christians we ought not indulge ourselves in specious speculation and lurid images of this lying, murderous, thieving being (John 8:44).

You are of the Devil as father, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and did not abide 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)

SATAN IS REAL

C.S. Lewis says in his book 'Screwtape letters' that: "There are two equal and opposite errors about the devil into which our race can fall. One is to disbelieve in his existence. The other is to believe and feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in him".

In our approach to this subject we must be careful not to fall into these extremes.

We must not fall into the first extreme of not talking about him. It is very important for us to be fully aware of what the Bible teaches about Satan. Secrecy, non-detection or failing to take the devil seriously are amongst Satan's trump cards. We must not be ignorant of his devices. We must know our enemy. How can we fight unless we know who or what we are fighting?

Neither must we fall into the second extreme of talking too much about Satan. It is important that we do not become pre-occupied with Satan and demons, for as Geoffrey C Bingham says in his book 'The Dominion of Darkness': "Some people have a morbid interest in the powers of evil. Such persons generally have a negative approach to life . . . Christians who become absorbed in the doctrines of Satan, his powers, his demons, and evil forces become so obsessed that they imagine life is fraught with enormous dangers. Fear pervades them. It seems, often, that Satan is the one who has the power and not God!"

Thus we shall consider the Bible teaching on Satan in order that we will 'not be ignorant of his devices' or let him 'get an advantage' (2 Corinthians 2:11). However, we will always keep in mind

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the wonderful truth that Satan is a defeated foe. Christ was 'manifested to destroy the works of the devil' (1John 3:8) and He has 'given us power over all the power of the enemy' (Luke 10:19).

He who practices sin is of the Devil, for the Devil sins from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was revealed, that He might undo the works of the Devil. (1 John 3:8)

Behold, I give to you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the authority of the enemy. And nothing shall by any means hurt you. (Luke 10:19)

1. Satan exists

If we accept the inspiration of the scriptures then we must also accept that Satan exists, for scripture includes many references to him.

- The Old Testament presents him as a real being (1 Chronicles 21:1, Job 1:6-12, Job 2:1-7 and Zechariah 3:1-2).
- Jesus dealt with him as a real person (Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 10:18, Luke 13:16 and Matthew 13:19 & 39).
- The Apostles thought of and encountered him as a real being (Acts 5:3, Acts 10:38, 2Corinthians 11:3-14, 2Peter 2:4 and 1John 3:8).

If Jesus believed in the existence of a personal devil, then we would be foolish and arrogant to believe otherwise. F. J. Huegel says: "that Christ believed in a personal devil whose domination He came to shatter; that He commanded demons to come out of their victims, that He was convinced that if He were to save man He must show up the prince of darkness in his true light and break his power over human hearts. That Jesus really believed these things, no student of the Scriptures would for a moment pretend to deny."

2. Satan is personal

When the Bible speaks of Satan it always refers to him as a person.

- he is referred to with personal pronouns (Job 1:8, Job 2:1-2 and Zechariah 3:2).
- he has personal characteristics such as intelligence (2 Corinthians 2:11 and Ephesians 6:11)
- he has personal characteristics such as memory (Matthew 4:6)
- he has personal characteristics such as knowledge (Revelation 12:12)
- he has personal characteristics such as a will (2 Timothy 2:26)
- he has personal characteristics such as emotions (Revelation 12:12)
- he behaves as a person in that he speaks (Job 1:9-10 and Matthew 4:1-11)
- he will be punished as a person who has rebelled against God (Matthew 25:41)

3. Satan's names and tactics

The Bible uses many names for Satan. This is not by way of flattery but as a means of explaining the breadth of his nature. The diversity of names also tell us the variety of realms in which he operates. His influence can be found in realms which are intellectual, spiritual, geographic and physical. If his power and influence is broad then the impact of Christ's Cross which defeated him must be broader yet! For it is true to say that there is no part of our lives which Christ's sacrifice does not impact.

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Because each name is used in a context, the names tell us something of Satan's nature and they also tell us something of his tactics:

- **Satan** (1 Chronicles 21:1, Zechariah 3:1-2, Matthew 4:10)
This word 'satan' means "adversary". He is the chief adversary both to God and to humans. He is the hater, opponent and enemy of God and man. His intractable opposition to life means that he is a murderer.
- **Serpent** (Genesis 3:1, Isaiah 27:1, Revelation 12:9 & 20:2)
This name depicts the sense in which our enemy is subtle, crafty and deceitful. He is a liar and tempter. This was the first reference to Satan in scripture, as he stalked and deceived Eve. The very first utterance of him recorded in scripture is the stating of a lie.

And the serpent said to the woman, You shall not surely die. (Genesis 3:4)

- **Belial** (2 Corinthians 6:15)
This term appears most often in the Old Testament in the context of "worthlessness." This worthlessness reflects the contrast between those things which God values and those things which Satan promotes. Whereas God values justice, faith, humility, holiness, life and truth, this Worthless One is a rebel and sows the seeds of lawlessness which leads to hatred, deceit and death.
- **Evil One** (Matthew 13:19&38, Ephesians 6:16)
Satan is the personification of all evil and wickedness.
- **The devil** (Matthew 13:39, Ephesians 6:11)
This term occurs in the New Testament only. It comes from the Greek 'diabolos' and means to accuse and slander. In this way we see Satan as the spoiler, the one who defiles, soils, debauches, besmirches, smears, blights, mars and traduces.
- **Beelzebub** (2 Kings 1:2&16, Matthew 10:25, 12:24&27, Mark 3:22)
The exact meaning of this term is not certain. It is thought by some that it means "lord of the house" or "lord of flies" and in the context of its use refers to Satan's authority over the demons. He is the god of corruption and the prince of demons. The name Beelzebub was used in the Old Testament to describe the god of the Philistines (2 Kings 1:2&16). This god was believed to be the ruler of all evil spirits.
- **The great dragon** (Isaiah 51:9, Revelation 12:3&7, Revelation 13:2)
The term dragon is an extension of the name Serpent. The means "serpent" or "sea monster". As dragon we find Satan to be a destructive beast who seeks the total devastation of God's people. At times the Bible uses the sea as an image for confusion and turmoil. {That's why God's prophetic language tells us that there is no sea in heaven (Revelation 21:1)}. To depict Satan as a sea monster is to emphasis the chaos which lawlessness causes in our lives and society.
- **Angel of Light** (2 Corinthians 11:12-14)
This phrase makes use of Satan's status as a fallen angel to describes his masterful ability of deceit by imitation and counterfeit. It conveys that sense of Satan being a wolf in sheep's clothing, disguising evil in a good-looking package.

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- **Abaddon and-Apollyan** (Revelation 9:11)
These Greek and Hebrew terms mean Satan is the destroyer.
- **Prince of the power of the air** (Ephesians 2:2 & 6:12)
By this term we understand Satan as the leader of evil angels and prince over the host (army) of subordinate demons. It is to say that he rules the demonic hosts which occupy the earth's atmosphere.
- **Prince of this world** (Daniel 10:12 & 11:1, John 12:31, 14:30 & 16:11)
Satan is the architect and power behind the world system that takes men's hearts away from God.
- **God of this age** (2 Corinthians 4:4)
Although judged at the Cross (Colossians 2:15), Satan is still active in the world today. Even as his first tactic was to draw mankind away from God, he continues to do that today by drawing mankind toward the worship of a lie.
- **Roaring lion** (1 Peter 5:8)
This word picture emphasizes Satan's continual persecution and his role as a persecutor of believers.
- **Tempter** (Matthew 4:3, 1 Thessalonians 3:5)
This name indicates that Satan's constant purpose is to cause people to sin. The methods of his temptations are numerous but the goal is always one.
- **Father of lies** (John 8:44, 1 John 3:8)
This title describes Satan as the source (father) of all that is untrue (lies).
- **Wicked One** (1 John 5:18)
The meaning of this description is self evident.

4. Demons

Satan was not alone in his fall and rebellion. For reasons which are unknown (but concerning which there has been ample speculation) many angels accompanied him in his demise. These are lesser angelic beings than Satan and occupy the status of demons or subordinate devils in the kingdom of darkness. Demons vary in wickedness. Some are extremely base in their nature, while others appear almost righteous. Nevertheless, all demons are:

- wicked (Matthew 12:45, Ephesians 6:16, 2 Thessalonians 2:8)
- unclean (Zechariah 13:2, Matthew 10:1 & 12:43, Acts 5:16)
- foul (Mark 9:25, Revelation 18:2)
- deceitful (1 Timothy 4:1)
- rational enough to understand their fate as being eternal perdition (James 2:19)
- evil (Luke 7:21)

As we consider the works of Satan we must remember that much of this work is carried out on his behalf by lesser evil beings or demons. If by submitting to God and resisting the Devil, Satan is required to flee (James 4:7), how much more will his lesser minions flee from us when we stand for God and against them?

SATAN'S WORKS

Many are the works of Satan, but the following are especially instructive:

- **Satan oppresses** (Acts 10:38)

Satan is the ultimate source of all suffering, because he is the ultimate source of all sin, its primal cause. He is also immediately responsible for many individual cases of sickness and disease.

... God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and He went about doing good, and healing all those who were oppressed by the Devil, for God was with Him. (Acts 10:38)

- **Satan allures to evil** (1 Chronicles 21:1, Matthew 4:1-9, 1 Corinthians 7:5)

Satan incites men to sin. He so arranges times and controls events and circumstances as to make the greatest possible appeal to the sinful tendencies within man. He is the tempter.

- **Satan ensnares men** (1 Timothy 3:7, 2 Timothy 2:26)

Satan lays snares for men and takes them captive.

- **Satan inspires wicked thoughts and purposes** (Acts 5:3, John 13:2)

Satan takes advantage of the fallenness and sin within us to inspire wicked thoughts and plans within us. Unless halted and constrained by the Word and Spirit of God such thoughts will become expressed by word and action.

- **Satan takes possession of men** (John 13:7, Ephesians 4:27, James 4:7)

On occasions we will notice mould growing on ageing fruit. Airborne fungal spores settle on the most prone surfaces of the fruit and then interact with the fruit to hasten its decay. Satan behaves in a similar fashion. There are times when he takes advantage of the rebelliousness or sinfulness of a person's nature to attach himself to that person's spirit and hasten or accelerate the decay and sinfulness.

Satanic or demonic possession is not as frequent as some films (or preachers) depict. Nonetheless all should avoid behaviours which facilitate the enemy of our souls forming attachments or footholds. Idol worship, habitual sin or compulsive emotionalism are those things which allow evil spiritual beings to gain strongholds.

- **Satan blinds the minds of men** (2 Corinthians 4:4)

Unbelief of the truth seems to be the same as a special invitation to Satan to bring in the darkness of error and falsehood. He blinds the minds of unbelieving men to prevent them from receiving the light of the Gospel.

in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving ones, so that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ (who is the image of God) should not dawn on them. (2 Corinthians 4:4)

- **Satan accuses believers** (Revelation 12:9-10)

Scripture tells us that the spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord searching the inward parts (Proverbs 20:27). In this way men and women

are convicted by their own consciences of the sins which they perform. This conviction is capable only of alerting us that we have failed to do that which is right. It is not a conviction informative enough to lead us to the hope of Christ as the source of our forgiveness, since it is the ministry of Holy Spirit to do that (John 16:6-7). Satan at times will take advantage of our consciences and accuse us for our failings.

Jesus teaches us that the only one competent to judge is he who is sinless (John 8:7). No matter how accurate Satan's accusations, he is not competent to judge and we are not answerable to him. God in Christ has declared us forgiven. Jesus is the only one competent to judge and it is to Him that we must answer. We must learn not to heed the enemy's accusations.

When anyone hears the Word of the kingdom and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and catches away that which was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown by the wayside. (Matthew 13:19)

- **Satan dissipates and obstructs the truth** (Luke 8:12, Matthew 13:19)
Satan is the arch-thief or robber of the universe in relation to both God and man.

SATAN'S DESTINY

There are times when the Christian might ponder what the world would have been like if the serpent had been unsuccessful and Adam and Eve had not sinned in Eden. Sometimes these thoughts lead to a desire for a return to the sinless perfection of Eden. This prospect has no merit. No matter how wonderful Eden may have been, the fact that sin has entered the world through it tells us that it was subject to corruption. Satan's very presence remains a continuing threat to sanctity and life, even if Adam and Eve hadn't sinned. Therefore we find that the ministry of Christ's cross at Calvary served not only to restore all things to a condition of incorruptibility but it dealt with Satan so as to remove him from the scene.

Thus it is necessary that that the resurrection life of Jesus Christ should do more than merely restore the cosmos to the condition it had prior to the fall. The regenerative force of Christ's righteousness means that death itself will be defeated (1 Corinthians 15:26), all things will be raised anew in incorruptibility (1 Corinthians 15:54) and Satan and his demons will be forever consigned to the fires of hell (Revelation 20:10).

- **Satan is cursed for all eternity** (Genesis 3:14-15, Isaiah 65:25)
Scripture is unequivocal. Satan was cursed for his ruination of God's creation in Eden. The completion of that process is yet to be seen, but the promise of scripture is that Calvary will crush and destroy him.

And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: (Genesis 3:14)

- **Satan is conquered** (John 12:31 & 16:8-11, 1 John 3:8, 1 John 5:18, Hebrews 2:14)
The Christian does not live life so as to seek victory, we start from the point of a victory already won for by Jesus. Satan is to be treated as a conquered enemy.

And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it [the Cross]t. (Colossians 2:15)

- **Satan is to be cast into the lake of fire** (Revelation 20:10)

The career of Satan since his rebellion has been downward, ever downward. That abasement will continue until he has been stripped of the last vestige of authority and power, and cast in abject impotence as the arch-criminal of the universe into the eternal burnings.

OVERCOMING OUR ENEMY

God has given every believer spiritual weapons by which we can pull down all Satanic strong-holds and bondages. These weapons are effective not only for overturning the fruit of his devices, they are useful for denying the power of his temptations.

1. The Christian's armory

Several times in these notes we have declared that Satan has been defeated because of Christ's Cross and that he will flee if we submit to God and resist Satan. But whilst the obedience of Christ to God the Father and our obedience in Christ to God the Father are the base faith elements of our victory, there are several strategies which scripture offers as means or weapons for defeating the Devil. We can defeat the Devil:

- on the basis of Jesus' shed blood (Revelation 12:11, Zechariah 9:11)
- using the authority given us by Jesus (Luke 10:19)
- via The Name of Jesus (Philippians 2:9-11, Psalm 44:5)
- by declaring The Word of God (Ephesians 6:17, Hebrews 4:12, John 8:32)
- by appropriating the armor of God (Ephesians 6:11-18)
- through faith (1 John 5:4), and
- with songs of praise (Psalm 149:6-9).

Therefore take to yourselves the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Therefore stand, having your loins girded about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all, take the shield of faith, with which you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching to this very thing with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. (Ephesians 6:13-18)

2. The basis of Spiritual Warfare

The nation of Israel was brought out of Egypt in order to possess the land of Canaan. Their victory and ongoing possession of that land had a military component but it was substantially a spiritual battle. Their assignment was to displace the idolatry and Satanic worship of the Canaanites by being a nation which worshipped and obeyed God in the entirety of their cultural, economic, civic and religious lives. Thus their spiritual warfare was as much a matter of their daily lives and obedience as it was a spiritual, ritualistic or religious observances. For as long as they loved and obeyed God with the whole of their heart, mind and soul they would be assured of ongoing victory.

The same is true for the Christian. Spiritual warfare is not a matter of technique. It is not about praying the right sort of prayer or fasting in the manner or possessing a superior faith attitude. Our

warfare is based on a whole of life commitment to Christ. It's as we learn of Christ's power in our own lives to cleanse us from sin that we grow in authority to rebuke the enemy in other locations.

There was a time when Jesus' disciples were unable to cast out a demon from a young boy. All of their techniques, prayers and invocations of God's power had failed. When Jesus arrived on the scene He dealt comprehensively, quickly and powerfully with the matter. After the event the disciples asked Jesus why they had been unable to deal authoritatively with the evil spirit. Jesus told them: "This kind (of spirit) does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:21). It is important to note that Jesus had had no prior

indication that He would be engaged in a matter of such violent demonic activity. It was because Jesus had a lifestyle of prayer and fasting that He was better equipped than the disciples.

However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting. (Matthew 17:21)

The point is that spiritual warfare is not based on process, technique or special knowledge. It is based on a heart attitude which sees The Cross as the pivotal event of all time and history. It is based on a lifestyle which acknowledges our obligations to Christ for the magnificence of His action in freeing us from the gravity of our sin and lives a life submitted to God in loving thankfulness. And as a result of such heartfelt, vibrant submission and obedience, causes the Devil to flee.

JUSTIFICATION

The Nicene Creed provides us with two assurances concerning the life of Christ. Firstly it tells us that He was crucified, suffered died and was buried, and secondly it tells us that He rose again three days after His crucifixion. These two truths are of vital importance to our understanding of Christ's ministry. They tell us that by His death, Jesus came to pay sin's price and that by His resurrection He demonstrated His victory over death.

These truths lie at the heart of two of the New Testament's main teachings. Christ's cross speaks of our justification and Christ's resurrection speaks of the new life now available to us through Him, a new life which will lead us into sanctification (or holiness). These are two distinct but related aspects of our walk in Christ. Failure to grasp the relationship between these two will prevent us from enjoying the full benefits of The Cross and keep us from pleasing God as we ought. Their difference is set out for us by the apostle Paul (Romans 5:10).

Paul tells us that we have been justified by Jesus' death but that we are saved by His life.

*For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.
(Romans 5:10)*

Every action has both a source, or motivation, and a consequence. Consider a couple who are planning for their wedding. The wedding has a source. Their love for one another leads them to want to live together for the rest of their lives. But the wedding will also have a consequence. In due time, the couple will have children.

Sin is the same. It has a source and a consequence. It's source lies in our sinful nature which has been alienated from God and has learned to assume that we can live life independent of God. It's consequence is that we are condemned for our sinfulness, we are subject to feelings of guilt because we are the objects of God's wrath and displeasure. Justification is God's process in Christ to deal with sin's consequences via The Cross. Sanctification is God's process in Christ to deal with the source of sin by giving us Christ's new life as will not want to keep sinning.

To understand the extent of Christ's justifying work on The Cross we might first consider what are the consequences of sin. These notes will address the doctrine of justification by considering:

1. The consequence of sin as being that:
 - a) we are addicted to relying on our own self-efforts
 - b) we are guilty and subject to punishment in hell
 - c) we are objects of God's wrath and displeasure
 - d) we are alienated from God
 - e) we are condemned as sinners
 - f) we are spiritually dead and unable to respond to God.
2. The relationship of justification to sanctification

JUSTIFICATION

The Bible teaches that all Christians have been justified. Justification is a legal declaration of right standing with God. It means 'to declare righteous'. The word 'righteous' and 'justify' come from the

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same root word in the Greek ('dikaios' means 'righteous': 'dikaioo' means 'to justify'). To be righteous is to have right standing before God. It carries with it the notion of being innocent and guiltless. To be justified is to be declared, pronounced, decreed or acknowledged to have right standing before God.

For the Christian all justification and righteousness come via Jesus. They are not in any sense based on our own works or endeavours (Romans 3:24).

being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24)

1. Instead of self-effort, Justification is based on our being 'in Christ'

Scripture's account of the initial sin by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden is very instructive. It tells us that their first reaction was to make fig leaf coverings for themselves and hide from God (Gen 3:8-11). Sin drove them, and us, to self-effort. Thus the first of sin's consequences to be remedied must be the re-establishment of reliance on God. It is for this reason that our justification is first based on being *in Christ*.

How can God treat a sinner as a righteous person? How is it possible for God to declare us righteous? We know that no judge has the right to declare righteous someone who is not really righteous! Judgment must be according to truth. God does not legalise what is false.

The answer is that God has provided us with the righteousness of Christ.

Jesus Christ is righteous. He has a perfect standing before God. Because we are in Christ we have His righteousness. We have His perfect standing before God. This means that we have as much right to stand before God as Jesus. God accepts us just as He accepts Jesus. We stand in God's favour. We have the righteousness of God.

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

If we were to stand before a just and holy God outside of Christ, in our sin, there is only one pronouncement that God could make - guilty, condemned and under God's wrath! However the moment a person believes in Jesus' atoning work on The Cross, God takes away their sin and places them *in Christ*.

For you died and your life has been hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3)

(See also Galatians 3:27-28, Philippians 3:9, Jeremiah 3:26, 1 Corinthians 1:30)

In Christ we are no longer naked. We are clothed in the righteousness of God. Because we have His righteousness there is only one pronouncement that God can make concerning us - "Not Guilty, Righteous, and Accepted".

The Bible clearly teaches that we are righteous only because we are *in Christ*. Thus, the reason God can declare us righteous is because God has placed us in Christ and clothed us with His righteousness. God does not look at us in our sins, but He sees us in Christ.

2. Instead of guilt, Justification brings forgiveness (and more)

Guilt is a natural outworking to the knowledge of our sinfulness. It is significant to observe that Adam and Eve did not feel guilt at its most shameful and acute until God came into the Garden. This

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is true of people today. Most people are happy in their sin. They may feel a small pang of conscience when do something wrong but the fact is that they do not feel the horror of sin as they ought. It's not until God reveals Himself in His love, righteousness or wisdom that a person sees how truly unloving, unholy or sinfully foolish they are. Thus whilst many people may have some sense of guilt for their indiscretions, it is not until God the Holy Spirit brings conviction concerning sin that a person comes to the point of repenting for the sinner that they are, as distinct from merely repenting for the sins that they have committed (John 16:8).

And when that One comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and concerning righteousness and concerning judgment. (John 16:8)

But with the Holy Spirit's conviction comes the realization that we are forgiven through The Cross. To be forgiven means that God has taken away our sins. It means that we will not be punished for our sins. We have been pardoned.

As wonderful as this is, it only leaves us in a neutral status with God. In order to be acceptable to God, we need more than the subtraction of our sins. We need the addition of Jesus Christ's righteousness.

- To be a sinner is to have a negative status. It is to be under guilt and penalty of sin.
- To be forgiven is to have a neutral status before God. It is to be set free from sin's penalty.
- To be justified is to have a positive status before God. It is to be identified as having Christ's righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Scripture tells us that the sinner has two shortcomings in their life. They have sinned and they have fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:21). Thus the act of our justification in Christ is to bring us to forgiveness and to clothe us in God's glory, being His righteousness (Zechariah 3:4).

And He answered and spoke to those who stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy clothes from him. And to him He said, Behold, I have caused your iniquity to pass from you, and I will clothe you with ceremonial robes. (Zechariah 3:4)

To be justified by God is to have God Himself clothe us in festal robes (rich apparel), for in Christ:

- we have not only freedom from punishment; but also from guilt,
- we have not only pardon; but also acceptance,
- we have not only acquittal; but also approval,
- we have not only remission; but also restoration,
- we have not only forgiveness; but also righteousness

3. Justification means the appeasement of God's wrath

Scripture tells us that the wicked man must forsake his ways and the unrighteous man his thoughts (Isaiah 55:7a). The unbeliever's thoughts are not so much wicked because they are wicked, they are wicked because they are *his*. The unrighteous man's ways are not just unrighteous because they are sinful, they are unrighteous because they are *his*. A man's

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. (Isaiah 55:7a)

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ideas about what is right and wrong are not in error because he has failed to choose in the way that God would choose, they are unrighteous because they are *his*. The first source of the first sin was that Adam and Eve decided at Satan's bidding that they could become competent to decide for themselves what was right and wrong (Gen 3:5-6).

Because unbelievers walk according to their own conscience and their own understanding of what is acceptable to God they are at war with Him. Not just our sin but our very way of thinking make us God's enemies and thus by walking in the desires of our own minds we indicate that we are by nature objects of God's wrath and anger (Romans 8:7, Ephesians 2:3).

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. (Romans 8:7)

Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. (Ephesians 2:3)

In short as unbelievers we were at war with God. We were walking in our own sense of self-justification and repeating Eden's error. We were denigrating God's wisdom in favor of our own. But now Christ has died for us and we have become participants in His act of obedience and justification (Romans 3:26). The direct result of being justified by faith in Jesus is that we have submitted to His assessment of our moral situation and now have peace with God (Romans 5:1).

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

There is a difference between 'peace with God' and the 'peace of God' (Philippians 4:7). Peace with God is based on the fact that we have been justified by faith. It is not a state of mind but a secure relationship with God. It is a constant state of acceptance with God based on Christ's work rather than our own efforts. The peace of God floods into our hearts and minds as a consequence of being at peace with God.

And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)

Peace with God reflects our stance. The peace of God reflects our experience. Peace with God is a constant fact for those who have been justified. Such peace exists regardless of our feelings. Our experience of the peace of God may vary, depending on our thoughts. For this reason there are times when we have to labor to find the peace of God. The peace of God is that sense of peace which we experience when our 'mind is stayed on God' (Isaiah 25:3).

And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever. (Isaiah 32:17)

Rather than guilt and fear of God's wrath, the effect of righteousness is to produce quietness and assurance in us. It is only when we know that we have peace with God (based on Christ's work of righteousness) that we will experience the peace of God. This is an inner assurance and confidence.

Many Christians lack the wonderful sense of the peace of God because they don't fully comprehend that they have peace with God. They cannot bring themselves to believe the fact that God accepts them totally - just as He does His Son. It is sad that so many Christians do not experience the effect of righteousness in their lives because they don't fully trust Christ's work of righteousness as the only basis for their acceptance with God.

He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate

Because of their past, many Christians suffer a deep sense of unworthiness. Fears of punishment and rejection are ingrained into their subconscious. When they fail to live as they know that God wants them to, they fear God's retaliation and rejection. They naturally think that God is angry with them. However, despite their fear of retribution they find that they have been declared righteous because they are in Christ. This is true even in spite of their failures. There is no real barrier between them and God – only an imagined one, in their own minds.

This psychological barrier is based on wrong thinking and believing. It is a result of not understanding or accepting the truth that because we have been justified we have peace with God. If we think that our relationship with God is in constant jeopardy because of our failure to always live the Christian life correctly, we will be a nervous wreck. However, if we understand that our relationship with God is secure because we are righteous *in Christ*, we will experience the peace of God, that inner assurance and quiet confidence to which every child of God has a right.

4. Instead of alienation, Justification means we have access to God

Justification brings with it the wonderful privilege of access to God.

In his book "Go Free", Robert M Horn says: "To have access means to be brought into someone's presence, especially to be brought before a King. There are many clubs to which only paid-up members have access. I may pass by their doors and envy their facilities, but I may not enter unless a member signs me in. Then, by his kindness, I can enjoy all they provide. When a member signs me in he says "Put it down to my account" and when I am inside, he introduces me to the other members; 'James, may I introduce my guest...?' Then the others talk among themselves; 'I say, did you see who old Perkins brought in tonight?' I am there always by reference to the one who brought me in."

Justification means that Christ has signed us into His Father's presence. He made the staggering assertion that our names are written in God's family register in Heaven (Luke 10:20). He had the charges against us put down to Him; and He settled that account on The Cross. Now He introduces us to His Father. We are His guests, not there in our own right but only in reference to Him. We are even called by His name: Christians, Christ's people. What an immense privilege this is!

It is a glorious thing to know that because we are the righteousness of God in Christ, we have access to God. It is even more glorious when we realize that this access is not just a fleeting one available on odd occasions. It is our permanent position.

We stand firmly and safely in God's favor. We continually live in the atmosphere of God's grace, His love, acceptance and favor. His favor is always towards us. We have permanent access to "the throne of grace" (Romans 5:2). There is never a time when we cannot approach the Father. Many other verses teach that we who are in Christ, have access to the Father.

By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (Romans 5:2)

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

In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. (Ephesians 3:12)

I Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh. (Hebrews 10:19-20)

He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate

5. Instead of guilt, Justification means no condemnation

Justification is the exact opposite of condemnation. To condemn means 'to declare guilty'. To justify means 'to declare *not* guilty'.

It is a principle in our British based justice system that a person cannot be punished twice for the same crime. When Jesus went to the Cross, He paid the price for our sins. Because we are now *in Christ* the justice of God looks upon The Cross and declares that the punishment for our sins has been met. It would be unjust of God to punish us again because Jesus has born our punishment.

We are justified by His sacrifice. The believer who has been justified cannot possibly be condemned. This is not possible because God does not change. He cannot go back on His Word and He cannot go back on His just nature.

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:1)

The moment we believed, Christ's sacrifice at Calvary became applicable to us and we became justified. This means that right now we are free from guilt and condemnation. This is a present reality and has traction here and now, not just when we get to heaven. There are two ways of viewing guilt:

- LEGAL GUILT is an objective fact. When a person violates the law they are guilty. The judgment of the court doesn't make them guilty. It declares their guilt and pronounces sentence.
- EMOTIONAL GUILT is a subjective feeling. This feeling or emotion of guilt varies with each person depending on their background and their upbringing. Those who have had excessively strict or judgmental parents will suffer more with 'guilty feelings' than others. Emotional guilt is basically a fear of punishment, a sense of unworthiness and deep feelings of alienation and rejection.

Legal guilt and emotional guilt are not necessarily the same. It is possible to be legally guilty but not experience emotional guilt. This is true of a criminal who does not experience the slightest sense of guilt even though he has committed a terrible crime. Such people have what scripture calls a 'seared conscience' (1 Timothy 4:2). However, it is also possible to experience the emotion of guilt but not be legally guilty at all. For this reason many people suffer with feelings of guilt even though there is no real basis for them. This is the sad state of so many Christians. They fail to realize that Jesus has completely taken the cause for their guilt. They haven't grasped that in Christ they are righteous, that in Christ they have been declared not guilty.

All would agree that if a person is not legally guilty then he should not feel guilty. The truth is that every Christian is forensically (legally) not guilty before God. Jesus has removed the source of their guilt. God has justified them. It follows that Christians should not allow themselves to be motivated by guilt. We have been justified.

Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. (Romans 8:33-34)

(See also John 3:18, John 5:24, 1 John 3:19)

6. Justification gives the assurance of glorification

There are many stories of people having feelings of unworthiness or uncleanness because of sin in their lives. This is more than a feeling of guilt because of what they have done or experienced it is a sense of utter worthlessness and deprivation.

Whereas sin leads to a wounded self, God's justification leads to glory. R. W. Stott says in his book "Men made New": "The glory of God for which we hope speaks of the ultimate effect of justification.

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice on the hope of the glory of God. (Romans 5:1-2)

'The glory of God' here means heaven, because in heaven God Himself will be fully revealed ('glory' in biblical language is the manifestation of God). We are going to see God's glory in heaven, and even share in it, since we shall be like Christ (1 John 3:2). Hope is a sure and certain confidence and expectation. Indeed, so sure is this hope of glorification (what J.B. Phillips calls this 'happy certainty') that we can rejoice in it now already. 'We rejoice in our hope (that is in our certain confidence) of . . . The glory of God (Romans 5:1-2)."

But whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, those He also justified. And whom He justified, these He also glorified. (Romans 8:30)

Such glorification is not dependent on our own efforts. It is something that Christ has already done to and for us (Romans 8:30). It is assured and is not dependent on our efforts. We have been predestined, called, justified and glorified.

This is staggering when we realise that glorification is something that happens in the future, yet God declares that those whom He **has** justified He **has already** glorified. Thus to God, my glorification is an accomplished fact (just as is my justification) - only manifestation of it is still future!! It will happen. I can be sure of this.

JUSTIFICATION LEADS TO SANCTIFICATION

Some people imagine that The Cross works like a pair of rose coloured glasses that God wears so that in looking on us, He can call us righteous but can't see our iniquitous behavior in order that we keep sinning. This is not so! Scripture commands of us that "everyone who names the name of Christ departs from iniquity" (2 Timothy 2:19b). Sanctification has to do with the way that we live.

. . . And, Let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity. (2 Timothy 2:19)

Justification is a formal term which speaks of our standing before God because *we are in Christ*. Sanctification is an experiential (or practical) term which speaks of our desires and performance as we aim to please God because *Christ is in us*. Justification is what Christ's death on The Cross does to us. Sanctification is what the Holy Spirit, Christ's resurrection life, does in us. Thus justification works to sanctify us in three ways:

1. **We are dead in Christ** ~ Being identified with Christ's death means that we can reckon ourselves dead to our old self and its fleshly desires toward sin and its carnal appetites

knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, that from now on we should not serve sin. For he who died has been justified from sin (Romans 6:6-7)

(See also Romans 6:11-12, Galatians 2:20, 5:24 & 6:14, Colossians 3:5 and John 8:34-35)

He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate

(Romans 6:6-7). Its former ways of functioning has been dealt a death blow at The Cross. Therefore the carnal desires and sinful attitudes which used to rule are not to reign in our bodies (Romans 6:12) because he that is dead is freed from sin (Romans 6:7)

2. **Our gratitude for Him keeps us from sin** ~ Once we begin to see the severity of the punishment which Jesus bore on our behalf and the completeness of the price that was paid for us, our hearts become touched and amazed at what Christ has done for us. In thankfulness and out of heartfelt debt to Him we are moved to live a life which is pleasing to Him.
3. **Jesus death makes way for His resurrection** ~ In His wisdom and providence, God planned that Jesus should die so that the same Holy Spirit, which raised Christ from the dead, will also become our life and guide. When we are conscious of the Holy Spirit and follow His leadings, we automatically live a life that is pleasing to God. If we understand our flesh to have been crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20) then we can expect to find ourselves more attentive to the voice and guidance of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:5-6).

For they who are according to the flesh mind the things of flesh, but they who are according to the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace (Romans 8:5-6)

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. (Acts 2:38-39)

FAMILY

The fact that God is to be understood by reference to the three-in-one, Trinity, tells us that the gathering of individuals into community is a central aspect of the creation. Since everything reproduces after its own nature (Genesis 1:11, 1:12, 1:21, 1:24 & 1:25), we should not be surprised that God has created the universe and earth such that every element is dependent on another; where symbiotic relationships and collective structures are the norm for plants, birds and animals. It is in God's nature to be a community so He has created the cosmos as a community.

The fact that two persons of the Trinity, Father and Son, are known by titles which are relational elements within family tells us that family is at the centre of God's notion of community. The Nicene Creed presents to us a saviour who was born into a family. As with the disciples of Christ's day we can say; "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brothers, James and Joses and Simon and Judas?" (Matthew 13:35). Jesus is a priest forever after the same order as Melchizedek (Hebrews 6:20), but whereas scripture specifically excludes reference to Melchizedek's parentage (Hebrews 7:2), scripture goes to some lengths to tell us of Jesus' ancestry (Matthew 1:17) and the details of his immediate parents (Matthew 1:18-25).

Clearly a knowledge of family is important to our proper compliance with God's character and our place within His created order. These notes offer some basic concepts and treat the topic as follows:

1. God's purpose in family
 - a) the building of nations
 - b) the preservation of the faith
2. God's purpose in marriage
 - a) marriage as a creation ordinance
 - b) marriage as a covenant agreement
3. God's order in marriage and family
 - a) the husband's role
 - b) the wife's role
 - c) the submissive wife
 - d) the discipline of children
4. Divorce and re-marriage

GOD'S PURPOSE IN FAMILY

Family is such a central aspect of life that we might think it a force of nature, akin to the herding mentality of animals. To do so is incorrect. Family is not the fruit of nature, it is an institution designed by God reflective of His good character and purposed for the exercise of Godly dominion on the earth.

1. Family is for the building of the nations

We live in an age of individualism and yet the independence which this age breeds is not typical of the emphasis of scripture.

He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and was made human

- **Noah and his household** ~ There came a time in the history of man when the earth was filled with violence and only Noah had kept himself from the corruption and violence of the day (Genesis 6:11). God's plan of redemption for mankind did not just come through Noah but through him and his family (Hebrews 11:7), because the ark was the vessel of deliverance for Noah, his three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth and their wives (Genesis 6:12 & 7:13). The Bible goes on to record the sons and families of each of Noah's three sons, in each case observing that the families had become nations (Genesis 10:5, 10:20, 10:31 & 10:32).

These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations. And from these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood. (Genesis 10:32)

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. (Hebrews 11:7)

- **Abraham and his household** ~ Noah's eldest son, Shem was 100 at the time of the flood and lived for 500 years after it (Genesis 11:10-11). Abraham was born into Shem's family/nation some 450 years after the flood (Genesis 11:12-26). So we find that Shem, the father of the nation and a witness to the flood was alive for a significant part of Abraham's adult life. Despite this living witness to God's judgment and mercy, by the time of Abraham being called out from Ur, all his nation had become idolaters (Joshua 24:2). Therefore God's commission to Abraham was that he "shall surely become a great and mighty nation" and be a blessing to other nations (Genesis 18:18). This commission was given to him specifically because "he will command his children and his household after him" (Genesis 18:19).

And Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? (Genesis 18:18)

For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. (Genesis 18:19)

Whereas Shem was the father of a nation but had failed to command his family after him in thankfulness to God, Abraham was called because God foresaw that his family would be a nation which "shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment".

- **Jacob's household** ~ That a nation should be seen as the sum of its families is very clear when considering the nation of Israel, for from Jacob onwards the nation has been known according to its twelve tribes, all the way through the New Testament and into heaven (Revelation 7:4-8) where that nation is still referred to as "the children of Israel".
- **Honour father and mother** ~ The fifth commandment: "Honour your father and your mother" is the first of the commandments which are directed toward our relationships one with another. It is this commandment which provides the basis for the Christian's submission to all legitimate authority, from family through to government. Well ordered families are the basis of a stable society. It is for this reason that God appended a promise to the fifth commandment. If a nation knows how to honour parents and family then it "will live long in the land" (Deuteronomy 5:16).

Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. (Deuteronomy 5:16)

He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and was made human

2. Family is for the preservation of the faith

If a nation is the sum of its families then the strength of The Church is no less than the strength of its families. The centrality of family to the preservation and progress of the faith can be seen in several places in scripture.

- **Abraham as the father of faith** ~ Abraham was father to the nation of Israel but he is also called father to those who are of faith, hence God covenanted with him “to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised” (Romans 4:2). So we see that Abraham is our father in the faith. Being a father who “commands his household after him” we see that God’s purpose was that the faith should be preserved via family relationships.

- **It is a sin not to follow the religion of our fathers** ~ It was the mark of Israel’s holy law that fathers were required to instruct their children (Deuteronomy 11:19) and to hand down the acts of God as part of the traditions of their fathers (Exodus 12:26-27 & 13:14, Joshua 4:21, Isaiah 38:19, Psalm 44:1, 71:8 & 78:3-8). This requirement meant that Israel was able to discern the difference between Yahweh and the gods of surrounding nations.

If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son, or your daughter, or the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is like your own soul, lures you secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods which you have not known, you nor your fathers . . . you shall not consent to him nor listen to him. Nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare, nor shall you hide him. (Deuteronomy 13:6&8)

If anyone, even family, urged another to worship a god of whom their fathers had not taught them, then that person was to be punished (Deuteronomy 13:6-9).

- **Joshua, national head and father of a godly household** ~ There is always the temptation to forget what God has done for us. Not long after Israel had crossed the flooded Jordan and gained initial portions of the promised land, there remained those who had failed to cease with idolatrous habits. Joshua made it clear that the faith of the nation depended on their obedience. As leader of the people he declared before the whole nation: “As for me and my household we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15).

- **Jesus relied on family as a means of propagating the faith** ~ It is significant that amongst the twelve disciples whom Jesus chose there were two sets of brothers, Peter and Andrew and the sons of Zebedee, James and John (Matthew 10:2). Moreover Jesus’ own family was central to the life of the early church. There had been a time when Jesus’ family failed to understand His ministry. They tried to keep Him from preaching because they thought that He was mad (Mark 3:21) and at a later time His own brothers urged Him to go to Jerusalem even though it was unsafe for Him to do so (John 7:1-5). So when Jesus said that a man’s enemies will be those of his own household (Matthew 10:36, Micah 7:6), He was speaking from personal experience.

And the names of the twelve apostles are these: First, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee and John his brother (Matthew 10:2)

Hearing of this, His relatives came to seize Him by force, for they said, “He is out of his mind.” (Mark 3:21)

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Yet we find that following Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, His brother James is a central figure in the early church, so much so that he headed up the church in Jerusalem (Acts 12:17 & 15:13-22) with such an authority that even Paul submitted to him (Galatians 1:18-19 & 2:9, Acts 21:18-26).

- ***You and your household will be saved*** ~ The New Testament records several instances where faith in Jesus came not just to individuals but whole households. There was Stephanas and his household (1 Corinthians 1:16), Cornelius, his kinsmen and his household (Acts 10:24-48), Lydia and her household (Acts 16:14-15), Paul's jailer and his household (Acts 16:31), and Zaccheus the tax collector and his household (Luke 19:9). In these cases it seems that God was pleased to bless the head of the household by covenanting with every member under the one roof. Clearly it is God's intention to advance the gospel via whole families.
- ***Church leaders had to be fathers*** ~ Paul's expectation of elders and deacons was that they would be men who headed their families well (1 Timothy 3:4-5 & 3:12). It would seem that the church, as bastion of the faith, is to be loved, lead, disciplined and nurtured as one would a household.

An elder . . . ruling his own house well, having children in subjection with all honour. For if a man does not know to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? (1 Timothy 3:4-5)

Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and households well. For they having served well gain a good grade for themselves, and much boldness in the faith, those in Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 3:12-13)

GOD'S PURPOSE IN MARRIAGE

Given that God has specific purposes for family we should not be surprised that there is a purpose in God's heart for marriage. It is vital for us to understand that marriage is not a human institution created by society but a creation ordinance ordained of God from the time of Genesis.

1. Marriage is a creation ordinance

Marriage is foundational to God's character and purposes. It is meant to result in:

- ***The perfection of God's image in man*** ~ In Genesis we find that man and woman, together, are created in God's image. Therefore a godly marriage will exhibit attributes of God's Trinitarian nature. When asked about the nature of the marriage union Jesus described it as an accord which is united in the flesh by the man and woman, and sealed in the spirit by God (Matthew 19:6). Paul too said that marriage was a divine mystery in which the "two shall become one flesh" (Ephesians 5:31), by which he was referring to a shared commonality of purpose akin to the shared values and essence which is characteristic of the Trinity.

. . . For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Therefore they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together let no man separate. (Matthew 19:5-6)

In this way men and women learn what it is to be both independent and united at the one time. They learn what it is to live for another and in so doing be entirely fulfilled in themselves.

- ***Dominion*** ~ It is a mark of Trinitarian being that each member of the Godhead lives for the other. Thus to view marriage as an entirely self-serving institution is a great distortion of its

purpose. It is a pietistic error to see marriage as God's means for the sanctification of sex. Marriage is much more. It is God's means for exercising dominion. By it His creation has become populated (Genesis 1:27-28).

Moreover in consequence of faith filled and productive marriages we see generations and dynasties of grace, wealth and blessing. If the state is the sum of its families and the strength of the church is the strength of its families, then marriage not only hallows the union of man and woman but also produces, protects and progresses its offspring.

*And God created man in His image; in the image of God He created him. He created them male and female. And God blessed them. And God said to them, Be fruitful, and multiply and fill the earth, and subdue it. And have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the heavens, and all animals that move upon the earth.
(Genesis 1:27-28)*

- **Progress** ~ Genesis teaches that “ . . . a man shall leave his father and mother and cling to his wife” (Genesis 2:24). This verse is a caution against the damage that interfering parents or parents-in-law can do to a marriage. But this is not the verse's sole or even prime purpose. It is in the first instance informative that this verse is written as an instruction to men. This is because it was never in doubt that a woman would leave her own family for her husband's sake. The woman was expected to be a helper to her husband (Genesis 2:18 7 & 20) and, contrary to much of today's thinking, to derive her identity through him (Genesis 3:16, 1 Corinthians 11:7).

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

This is indeed a difficult teaching by today's standards and needs to be addressed wisely and with gentleness lest it become a means of exploiting wives and denying them honour and an identity of their own, for scripture does not represent wives as subservient dolts, but as women of skill, business acumen, wisdom and honour (Proverbs 31:10-31). To resent the thought that a woman derives her identity through her husband is to abandon the title of Christian. As a follower of Christ, the Church is His bride, thus every believer derives their identity through Christ their head (Ephesians 4:15 & 5:23).

*For a man indeed ought not to have his head covered, because he is the image and glory of God. But the woman is the glory of the man
(1 Corinthians 11:7)*

The fact that a man is to leave home and kindred for the sake of clinging to his wife means that the new family is not to be bound by tribe or clan. Each new married unit is to advance the wisdom, godliness and prosperity of its parents, building on the spiritual, social and financial capital of the preceding generation. For a married couple to remain under the direction of the previous generation is to forsake the innovation and growth in maturity that independence yields. Godly marriage is God's means for progress.

- **Maturity** ~ Genesis teaches that “It is not good for man to be alone” (Genesis 2:18). A person may be physically incapable of marriage, or a person may be called of God to abstain from marriage (Matthew 19:10-12), but for most of us marriage is the normal and desired state of life. To avoid marriage is to avoid responsibility and this is to value childishness ahead of maturity.

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- **Companionship** ~ All of the previously stated reasons for marriage are undoubtedly of sound spiritual relevance, but we must not be too high minded. One of the main reason for marriage is so that a man and a woman can have mutual companionship (Genesis 2:18). This is a basic need which we all have. Many adulterous relationships begin, not because of physical or sexual causes, but because the legitimate marriage has not fulfilled the need for companionship, understanding and the need to have someone to talk to who will listen.

And Jehovah God said, It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him. (Genesis 2:18)

- **Sex** ~ An important aspect of the companionship of marriage and an essential part of the procreation or childbearing is sex. Both men and women have legitimate sexual desires and needs. God created these desires and He has provided marriage for their fulfilment. Sex is not sinful and sexual desires are not wrong (Hebrews 13:4). How could this be when God made us sexual creatures? It is not that sex is sinful, it is just the misuse, abuse or over emphasis on sex which is wrong.

Marriage is honourable in all, and the marriage bed undefiled, but fornicators and adulterers God will judge. (Hebrews 13:4)

Sexual relations between husband and wife are not only for the procreation of children

Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth. Like the loving deer and pleasant doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times, and be ravished always with her love. (Proverbs 5:18-19)

but also for mutual pleasure (Proverbs 5:18-19). For this reason sexual relations between husband and wife are not to be denied (1 Corinthians 7:3-5).

Whilst sexual desires are natural, scripture teaches that sexual relations between a man and woman are only to be within marriage with commitment and fidelity. The Apostle Paul makes no allowances for sexual relations outside of marriage (1 Corinthians 7:1-9). He (and the rest of scripture) is also clear that homosexual sex and lesbian sex are both sinful (Romans 1:24-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9, Leviticus 18:22-24, Deuteronomy 23:18).

2. The covenantal nature of marriage

It is common but unhelpful to speak of marriage as being a contract. A contract is an arm's length agreement between two equals whose purpose is to define the boundaries of behaviour and the terms of exchange for the establishment of an outcome, service or object. This is unhelpful because:

- a married couple should not live at arm's length,
- marriage does not presuppose equality in all aspects of the union,
- the interaction and benefit in marriage are not a matter of exchange since that relegates a marriage partner to the status of commodity provider, not a person,
- the purpose of marriage is that the two become one, which differs to a contract which exists between entities in whom there may be hidden action,
- the fruit of a marriage is itself a shared benefit, not an outcome or service to be possessed or consumed by one member of the union.

Rather it is more appropriate to conceive of marriage as being a covenant. Covenant, like contract, is expressed in terms of expected behaviours such that each party binds themselves to fulfil certain

He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and was made human

conditions and each party is assured of receiving certain advantages, but covenant differs from contract:

- whereas contracts are set on the basis of the exchange, covenant is set on the basis of oath (Deuteronomy 28:9), and
- whereas contract requires payment or a down-payment for the benefits to flow, covenant is based on grace. Husband and wife enjoy the full benefits of marriage from the moment that they take their vows. There is no trial or probationary period, (Deuteronomy 29:13).

Jehovah shall command the blessing on you in your storehouses, and all that you set your hand to. And He shall bless you in the land which Jehovah your God gives you. (Deuteronomy 28:8)

That He may establish you today for a people to Himself, and that He may be a God to you, as He has said to you, and as He has sworn to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. (Deuteronomy 29:13)

With these distinctions in mind we can consider God's design for marriage:

- **Between Christian partners** ~ Scriptures makes it a precondition for marriage that both husband and wife have received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour and are submitted to Him (2 Corinthians 6:14). As the overflow of their relationship with Him they find a greater love for one another. For this reason Paul counsels against marriage of a Christian to a non-Christian. It is a feature of a successful marriage that the closer we come to God the closer we come to each other. It is also true that the quality of a marriage is determined by the extent of sharing that occurs within it. How then can a marriage prosper if the Christian partner is unable to share their faith, desires and aspirations in an intimate and knowledgeable manner with their non-Christian partner?

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship does righteousness have with lawlessness? And what partnership does light have with darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:14)

If however one person within a marriage becomes a Christian and the other is not, the Bible teaches that the Christian partner should remain with the non-Christian and through Christian behaviour, prayer and loving faithfulness within the marriage, win them for the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:17).

- **Monogamous** ~ Christian marriage is a relationship between two people only. The husband is to have one wife; the wife is to have one husband. Bigamist relationships are forbidden (Matthew 19:10, 1 Timothy 3:2).
- **Permanent** ~ Christian marriage is a lifelong relationship, only to be parted by death. The realities of dealing with sin hardened people have caused some exceptions (Mark 10:5) but it is clearly God's will for marriage, once consummated, not to be dissolved (Matthew 19:6, Mark 10:9). The sense of intended permanence is rather beautifully expressed in the Catholic marriage service which includes the following nuptial blessing:

“May the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob be with you and may He fulfil in you His blessing so that you see your children's children to the third and fourth generation and afterwards possess everlasting and boundless life. Through the help of our Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, forever and ever. Amen.”

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- **Fidelity** ~ The seventh of the ten commandments which God gave to Israel opposes adultery. A narrow definition of the sin of adultery is “to partake of sexual relations outside of marriage”. This is accurate but incomplete. Adultery is a matter of the heart before it becomes an act of the flesh. Jesus warned that a lustful heart was as much adultery as is the physical act (Matthew 5:28).

But I say to you that whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:28)

It is important to recall that The Law cuts both ways. Where a sin is forbidden the contrary obligation applies. If The Law prohibits sex outside of marriage then the contrary obligation is that there will be sex within the marriage. It is for this reason, amongst

Let the husband give to the wife proper kindness, and likewise the wife also to the husband. . . . Do not deprive one another, unless it is with consent for a time, so that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer. And come together again so that Satan does not tempt you for your incontinence. (1 Corinthians 7:3&5)

others, that Paul tells the Christians in Corinth that husbands and wives are not to withhold marital sex from each other except if they agree together to do so for a defined period of time (1 Corinthians 7:3-5).

On this basis we find that concerted neglect by a spouse of their partner is a breach of the marriage covenant.

THE STRUCTURE AND ORDER OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Given that family is an expression of the communal nature of God, we can't appreciate the structure of marriage and family without looking at the structure of the Godhead. It is core to the Christian faith that God is three in one. It is understood that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are co-eternal and are equal in all respects. Although each person is one with the other and equal to the other, we see that each member has a different name and with that name a different part to play. Each member is equal in being but different in function.

Thus we find in the Trinity a hierarchy without inequality. It is this hierarchy without inequality that we need to keep before us as we look into structure and order for family and marriage.

1. The Husband's Role

Paul tells the men; “Husbands love your wives, even as Christ loves the church and gave Himself for her” (Ephesians 5:25). From this instruction we can glean several insights.

- **The Husband leads** ~ In the same way that Jesus is the head of the church, His body; the husband is the head of the wife because she too is one body (flesh) with him. In the same way that Christ acts as priest, prophet and king to the church, the husband should:

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it. (Ephesians 5:25)

- (as priest), stand as intermediary before God, pleading the family's cause before Him in prayer and offering instruction within the family concerning the things of God, both formally in family devotions and informally by the example which his life presents,

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- (as prophet), wait on God to know His purposes in the trials and decisions which the family faces, moving boldly in the wisdom of God so as to bring guidance, correction and encouragement to each family member,
- (as king), provide for and protect the family, exercising courage and equity in family matters and applying grace and love for the establishment of a harmonious family life which will undergird the relationships amongst parents and siblings, and act as a foundation of unity and love for the next and further generations.
- **The Husband gives sacrificially** ~ In the same way that Christ laid down his life for the church, the husband must lead and love without regard to his own flesh but always keeping his responsibilities for his wife and children at the forefront of his desires.
- **The Husband initiates reconciliation** ~ Marriages and families are never entirely harmonious. Misunderstanding and selfishness will always interpose themselves in relationships. Even as Christ came to us while we were at war with Him so as to initiate forgiveness and reconciliation (Romans 5:10, Colossians 1:21), so too the husband must take the lead in restoring peace within the marriage and family.

2. The wife's role

The creation account places woman as helper to the husband (Genesis 2:18). Whatever blame may be ascribed to Eve for her role in listening to Satan, she cannot be criticized for providing advice to her husband. God's first job for Adam was an intellectual task. He was called upon to name the animals. Therefore Eve's first competence as helper needs to have been an intellectual one. She needed to have been capable to advise her husband. Alas history and the church's theological position since The Enlightenment have painted the helper role as an inferior and menial assignment.

There are several aspects of the wife's role revealed for us in Proverbs:

- **The Wife as a woman of means**
~ She is the trust and confidant of her husband (Proverbs 31:11). She provides counsel and possesses business acumen which prospers the family, being able to buy and sell at a profit, being able to manage manufacturing business (Proverbs 31:16, 31:18, 31:22 & 31:24, Acts 16:14).

10 Who can find a woman of virtue? For her value is far above rubies.
11 The heart of her husband trusts safely in her, so that he shall have no need of plunder.
12 She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.
13 She seeks wool and flax, and works willingly with her hands.
14 She is like the merchants' ships; she brings her food from afar.
15 She also rises while it is still night, and gives food to her household, and a share to her young women.
16 She considers a field, and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.
17 She binds her loins with strength, and makes her arms strong.
18 She sees that her merchandise is good; her lamp does not go out by night.
19 She lays her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.
20 She stretches out her hand to the poor; yea, she reaches forth her hands to the needy.
21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household; for all her household are clothed with scarlet.
22 She makes herself coverings; her clothing is silk and purple.
23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land.
24 She makes fine linen and sells it, and delivers girdles to the merchants.
25 Strength and honor are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.
26 She opens her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.
27 She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness.
28 Her sons rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her.
29 Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all.
30 Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears Jehovah, she shall be praised.
31 Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates. (Proverbs 31:10-31)

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- **The Wife is a woman of wisdom and honour** ~ She is able to instruct her household in wisdom and godliness (Proverbs 31:25-26 & 28). She is known in society as a woman of hard work (Proverbs 31:29-31, Acts 9:36 & 39).
- **The Wife brings honour to her husband** ~ She adorns her husband with honour because she is so well versed in the things that he does that she is able to carry them forward in his absence (Proverbs 31:27). His honour is her honour (Proverbs 31:23). Her beauty is not that which is outward but that which comes from a virtuous disposition (Proverbs 31:30).
- **The Wife is companion to and lover of her husband** ~ She is one who is capable of holding her husband's affections (Proverbs 2:17 & 5:18).
- **The Wife is a source of compassion and family charity** ~ Whereas men can be hard hearted in the face of difficulty, it is often the wife's role to bring tenderness to those circumstances which call for charity (Proverbs 31:20).

It is noteworthy that we would not have this list of virtues but for a woman's counsel, because these attributes are the insights of King Lemuel based on the words that his mother taught him (Proverbs 31:1)!

The words of king Lemuel; the prophecy which his mother taught him. (Proverbs 31:1)

The Enlightenment period in England and France (1650 - 1790) is also known as The Age of Reason. As such it was a conscious turning away from the things of God and the existing social order. The French Revolution is one of the more violent fruits of that period and, although a philosopher to that revolution and therefore given to violent utterance, the sentiment of The Enlightenment can be gleaned from Frenchman Denis Diderot (1713-1784) who said: "Mankind will never be free until the last noble is strangled with the entrails of the last priest".

Importantly for these notes the Age of Reason placed an extremely high value on reason and argued that all things should be governed by it. Further, this Age saw man as reason incarnate but erred in that it saw woman as substantially an emotional being and therefore inferior. Whereas it was accepted in pre-Enlightenment times that women were capable and prudent contributors in marriage and society, The Age of reason tended to diminish the role of women.

3. The submissive wife

One of the more difficult principles in today's culture is to present the wife as being a woman in submission. The anguish in this regard is in part caused by the failure to understand that men too must be in submission. In the first instance the man is submitted to Christ but such submission is entirely theoretical if the husband does not display his submission to Christ by due regard toward those whom Christ has placed over him. Thus a husband who is not in submission to the shared leadership (elders) of the church, the authoritative expectations of the work place and the legitimate dictates of the law and government, fails to live a life in submission to Christ.

Without labouring the nature of submission we might consider three things in respect of wifely submission:

- **Submission is a source of authority** ~ It is a necessity for victory against the devil that we first be submitted to God (James 4:7). There has been much written about Paul's requirement that women keep their heads covered in church (1 Corinthians 11:1-11). Paul

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says that to do so is a power or authority on their heads. The commentator Adam Clarke (1715-1832) helps us when he explains, that

whilst the wearing of a veil was a sign of subjection: "It is no unusual thing, in the Old and New Testament, for the signs and tokens

That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. (1 Corinthians 11:10)

of things to be called by the names of the things themselves, for thus circumcision is called the covenant (Genesis 17:10 & 17:13), though it was only the sign of it." Thus the veil has the sign of the woman's authority and power because it was an authority gleaned from submission.

- **Submissive wives are courageous wives** ~ The apostle Peter writes to wives whose husbands were not Christians (1 Peter 3:1). These are women who are especially courageous and especially wise, first they have committed to the faith despite opposition from their spouse, and second because they persevere in the face of opposition (Matthew 13:21-22). There are many times in scripture where we see women exercising great courage (Esther 4:16, Judges 4:4-5).
- **Submission does not mean inequality** ~ We commenced these notes about the roles of husbands and wives by reference to the Trinity. We might conclude this section by reminding ourselves that submission does not mean inequality. It is a measure of the sinfulness of our hearts that we find it so difficult to conceive of hierarchy without inequality.

4. The discipline of children

The following list offers a mere sketch concerning those principles which are useful in the exercise of God's kind of discipline for children.

- maintain clear boundaries and limits for the children
- avoid the danger of unannounced rules
- make sure the children understand your rules and regulations
- do not give your children too many rules
- do not make rules that your children cannot keep
- beware of constantly moving the boundaries or changing the rules and regulations
- always establish your rules and regulations on biblical principles
- remember that rules and regulations are for the good of your children
- whenever possible not only tell them what you expect, but show them
- learn to expect immediate obedience
- when the rules are broken, administer the necessary chastisement

It is important that children get the sense that their parents too are in subjection to appropriate authority. In this way the child realizes that they are actually being drawn into adulthood and not merely under constraint until such age as they can do what they want. Failure to set an example of submission means that the child will see discipline as a battle of wills.

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DIVORCE AND RE-MARRIAGE

The church has been quite conflicted concerning whether it is permissible for Christians to divorce and afterwards re-marry. Therefore care must be exercised in speaking of this most horrendous breach in relationship. At the outset it must be said plainly that the grief to spouses and children caused by divorce is much much greater than that of losing a partner in death. This is so much so, that many have said that had they known what pain awaited them, they may have tried harder to save their marriage.

It is not possible to fully address this most painful of matters. Suffice to say only three things:

- **Divorce is not a sin** ~ The Law of Moses acknowledges that there can be grounds for divorce (Deuteronomy 24:1-4) therefore divorce, if granted for reasons consistent with scripture is not sinful. Nor could it be, because God Himself has divorced Israel (Isaiah 50:1, Jeremiah 3:8) because of her adulterous idolatry and Has committed Himself to a new bride, the Church.
- **Adultery and gross neglect as grounds for divorce** ~ One reason that the Church has been conflicted about divorce is because it would seem that Jesus prohibited it (Matthew 19:8-9). These difficult verses have been misunderstood because Jesus was responding to a specific question. The Jews of Christ's day had taken to dismissing a wife because she had become old (Malachi 2:14-16) and Jesus was being asked whether divorce was permissible for just any reason. His response was to make clear that Moses originally meant divorce was as a remedy in severe cases such as adultery or neglect (Exodus 21:11).
- **God hates divorce** ~ God hates divorce (Malachi 2:14-16). This is for three reasons. Firstly whilst divorce is not a sin, legitimate divorce is granted only where there has been sin. Secondly divorce procured in the absence of a legitimate reason is treachery by one partner against the other. Thirdly in either case it is the children who suffer and who are prevented from growing into a godly seed for The Lord (Malachi 2:16).

"When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, and if she goes and becomes another man's wife, and the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife, then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the LORD. And you shall not bring sin upon the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance. (Deuteronomy 24:1-4)

... Jehovah has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your covenant wife. And did He not make you one? Yet the vestige of the Spirit is in him. And what of the one? He was seeking a godly seed. Then guard your spirit, and do not act treacherously with the wife of your youth. Jehovah, the God of Israel, says He hates sending away; and to cover with violence on his garment, says Jehovah of Hosts. Then guard your spirit, and do not act treacherously. (Malachi 2:14-16)

THE DEATH OF CHRIST

The Nicene Creed makes the most simple statement that “Jesus suffered, died and was buried”. Yet this uncomplicated statement is potent with implication and significance for the Christian. Jesus death was a cruel and agonizing injustice. Yet for all of its horrors, The Cross is our redemption and salvation. These notes follow Jesus commitment to The Cross from willingness to endure it, through the injustice of His trials, the agonies of His suffering to the implications of His sacrifice:

1. Christ’s death was voluntary
 - a) Jesus death and resurrection were the reason for His incarnation
 - b) Jesus predicted His own death
2. The centrality of Christ’s death in scripture and church practice
3. Christ’s death was an unjust sentence
 - a) Christ before Annas
 - b) Christ before Caiphas
 - c) Christ before the Sanhedrin
 - d) Christ before Pilate
4. Prophecies and their fulfillment
5. The agonies of crucifixion
6. The meaning and benefits of Christ’s death

CHRIST’S DEATH WAS VOLUNTARY

It is important to note that Jesus was not in any sense coerced to go to The Cross. Scripture is clear that Calvary was The Father’s plan but Jesus was more than willing to undertake this harrowing and cruel death on our behalf. The Cross was the reason for Christ’s coming, the reason for His incarnation.

1. Jesus’ Birth Made His Death Possible

It was through His death that Jesus ‘took away sins’ and thus ‘rendered powerless’ the devil. However, in order to die as man Jesus had first to be born. Thus the incarnation of Jesus (the word incarnation is derived from the Latin word meaning ‘becoming flesh’ or ‘becoming human’) made His death possible. Christ came in to this world to die. We die because we must. Jesus died because He chose to. His death and resurrection were the main features of His life.

*And My soul is troubled, and what shall I say?
Father, save Me from this hour? But for this cause I
came to this hour. (John 12:27)*

*And you know that He was revealed that He might
take away our sins, and in Him is no sin.
(1 John 3:5)*

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2. Jesus Made Predictions of His Own Death

A brief analysis of the Gospel of Mark will indicate how conscious Jesus was of His coming death. Jesus spoke of His death.

- As the Bridegroom being taken away (Mark 2:18-20)
- In Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8:31-33)
- In Galilee (Mark 9:31-32)
- On the way to Jerusalem (Mark 10:32-34)
- To James and John (Mark 10: 38-39)
- To all the Disciples (Mark 10:45)
- When Mary poured perfume on His body (Mark 14:8)
- As 'going' just as it was written of Him (Mark 14:21)
- At the Last Supper (Mark 14:22-25)
- On the Mount of Olives (Mark 14:27-28)
- In Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-42)

I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. (John 10:11)

No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down from Myself. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again. I have received this commandment from My Father. (John 10:18)

Jesus clearly states that His death was voluntary (John 10:11-17). Moreover, the New Testament epistles state six times that Jesus 'gave Himself' (Galatians 1:4 & 2:20, Ephesians 5:2 & 5:25, 1 Timothy 2:6 and Titus 2:14)

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRIST'S DEATH

The importance of the death of Christ can be seen by the prominence given to it in the Scriptures. Christ's death is mentioned more than 175 times in the New Testament. The Gospel records give great importance to the events of the last week of Jesus' life often called the Passion Week.

These events occupy nearly:

- 1/3 of the gospel of Matthew - (8 chapters out of 28)
- 1/5 of the gospel of Mark - (3 chapters out of 16)
- 1/4 of the gospel of Luke - (5½ chapters out of 24)
- 1/2 of the gospel of John - (9 chapters out of 21)

Thus the events of the last week of Jesus' life occupy nearly one-third of the total gospel record (being 25½ chapters out of 89). It is also significant to note that all four gospels omit some events in Jesus' life. For instance Matthew, Mark, Luke and John pass over 30 years of Jesus' life. Mark and John do not bother to relate Jesus' birth, nor do they record the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew, Mark and Luke do not relate the first nine months of Jesus' ministry. However, all four gospels relate in detail the events pertaining to Jesus' death.

Christ's death was of earnest inquiry by the Old Testament prophets and a matter of deep interest to the angels. It was proclaimed by the apostles as the primary truth of the gospel.

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The Old Testament religious laws included numerous feasts and many ceremonial processes. On the other hand the New Testament mandates only two specific observances. Jesus commanded that the church should observe both Baptism and Communion. The fact that these two ordinances both symbolize Christ's death emphasizes to us its centrality and importance to the Christian faith.

About which salvation the prophets sought out and searched out, prophesying concerning the grace for you. (1 Peter 1:10)

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3)

THE INJUSTICE OF CHRIST'S DEATH

It is true to observe that the crucifixion of the wholly innocent and perfectly righteous Jesus was a betrayal of justice but the extent of that travesty is made worse when one considers the four trials or courts that Jesus went through on the night prior to His death. The violations of just legal process are a disgrace to those who gave judgment against Him.

1. The preliminary trial before Annas

The preliminary trial before Annas was illegal (Refer John 18:12-24)

- **No indictment was made** - Jesus was condemned in the minds of His examiners even before a charge had been found to lay against Him. The reason He was arrested was so that the Chief Scribes and Rulers could have Him put to death. The same men who plotted for His death now acted as His judge. This examination was an attempt to draw out of Jesus some statement which would incriminate Him (See John 11:47-57). The trial did not begin with a statement of a definite charge against the accused. In fact Caiaphas and his friends had real difficulty to find any charge at all.
- **No witnesses were presented** - Jewish law maintained that all evidence submitted in court must be guaranteed by two witnesses separately examined and who had no contact with each other. Jesus was in keeping with His legal rights when He refused to answer the questions of the high Priest. They had no right to examine Jesus without first calling in witnesses.

2. The trial before Caiaphas

The trial before Caiaphas was also illegal (Matt 26:57-68). Some of the illegalities included:

- **The Sanhedrin met in the High Priest's House** - No decision of the Sanhedrin was valid unless it met in its proper meeting place, the Hall of Hewn Stone in the Temple precincts.
- **The Court was conducted at night** - Jewish Law forbade criminal cases to be tried at night. They must be begun and completed during the day time.
- **No counsel was provided for the defendant** - The proper procedure was to lay before the court all the evidence for the innocence of the accused, before the evidence for his guilt. No

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evidence for His innocence was ever submitted. In fact no witnesses for the defence were summoned and none had a chance to appear.

- **False witnesses testified** - Jewish Law demanded the death penalty for false witnesses. Members of the Sanhedrin sought out false witnesses to testify against Jesus. When the witnesses disagreed and no charge was forthcoming, it was the court's duty to abandon the case. But this was not done and the proceedings were allowed to drag on. Finally two false witnesses were found who misrepresented what Jesus had said. Even these witnesses did not agree and their testimonies should have been ignored by the court.
- **The High Priest asked incriminating questions** - According to Jewish Law, no person on trial could either be asked or compelled to answer any question which would incriminate him.
- **Jesus was convicted for blasphemy upon His own confession** - Jewish Law stated that no man could be convicted upon his own confession. Even so the statement of Jesus that He was the Son of God was rejected without contrary evidence being sought or presented.
- **The Sanhedrin condemned Jesus corporately** - The law stated that the verdict must not be made in unison. Beginning at the youngest and ending with the oldest, each member of the Sanhedrin must cast his own vote independently.
- **The Sanhedrin condemned Jesus on the same day as His trial** - Only if the verdict was not guilty could a case be finished on the day it began, otherwise a night must elapse before the pronouncement of a verdict. This was to allow time for feelings of mercy to arise.

3. Before the Sanhedrin

Jesus was taken before the Sanhedrin a second time (Luke 22:66-71). This session was probably conducted in order to conform to the daylight ruling of Jewish Law. Again injustices and distortions of indictment are found.

- **The charges against Jesus were modified** - The charge ratified against Jesus was that of blasphemy. However since the Jews had no power to inflict the death penalty they decided to refer Jesus to the Roman Governor in order to have Him crucified. They knew that Pilate would not condemn Jesus to death for the charge of blasphemy so they fabricated three political charges, all of them deliberate lies. They charged Jesus with being a revolutionary; inciting the people not to pay taxes and claiming to be a king (Luke 23:2, 23:5 & 23:14).

This meeting of the Sanhedrin was also in violation of the Jews own laws. - The Sanhedrin met on a day immediately preceding a Sabbath. According to Jewish Law criminal cases were not to be heard at all on the day immediately preceding a Sabbath or one of the great festivals.

- **The haste with which the trial was completed** - The holding of this brief formal meeting at sunrise to ratify the night's work and to give a faint show of legality to what had been done did not alter the fact that the Sanhedrin's midnight investigation was a flagrant breach of its own laws.

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4. Before Pilate

Lastly Jesus is arraigned before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate. This too was a terrible miscarriage of justice.

- **Pilate's failure as a just judge** - Pilate knew that the charges against Jesus were false however, he bowed to the pressure of the crowd and to the stand over tactics of the Scribes and Rulers. He tried to evade his responsibility by referring Jesus to Herod; by having Jesus scourged to arouse pity for Him and lastly by offering the hostile crowd the choice between Jesus and Barabbas. Pilate's final abrogation of responsibility was to appealing to the crowd by washing his hands of Christ's death. Thus Jesus' sentence was the decision of mob rule.

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES AND THEIR FULFILLMENTS

There are many types and prophecies in the Old Testament which predict Jesus Christ's death. The following 27 prophecies from the Old Testament speak of His betrayal, trial, death and burial. They were spoken at various times by many different voices across five centuries from 1000 to 500 B.C. and yet all of them were literally fulfilled in one 24 hour period of time.

Prophecy	Fulfillment
1. Betrayed by a friend <hr/> <i>Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me. (Psalms 41:9)</i> <hr/>	<hr/> <i>And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them. (Mark 14:10)</i> <hr/>
2. Sold for 30 pieces of silver <hr/> <i>And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. (Zechariah 11:12)</i> <hr/>	<hr/> <i>And he said to them, What will you give me, and I will betray Him to you? And they appointed to him thirty pieces of silver. (Matthew 26:15)</i> <hr/>
3. Money to be thrown in God's house <hr/> <i>. . . I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of Jehovah. (Zechariah 11:13b)</i> <hr/>	<hr/> <i>And he threw the pieces of silver down in the temple and departed. (Matthew 27:5a)</i> <hr/>
4. Price given for potter's field <hr/> <i>. . . I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of Jehovah. (Zechariah 11:13b)</i> <hr/>	<hr/> <i>And they took counsel and bought the potter's field with them, to bury strangers in. (Matthew 27:7)</i> <hr/>
5. Forsaken by His disciples <hr/> <i>. . . strike the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. And I will turn My hand on the little ones. (Zechariah 13:7b)</i> <hr/>	<hr/> <i>And Jesus said to them, All of you will be offended because of Me this night. For it is written, "I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered" . . . And leaving Him, all fled. (Mark 14:27 & 51)</i> <hr/>

He suffered, died and was buried

Prophecy	Fulfillment
<p>6. Accused by false witnesses</p> <hr/> <p><i>False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not.</i> (Psalms 35:11)</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p><i>Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death.</i> (Matthew 26:59)</p> <hr/>
<p>7. Dumb before accusers</p> <hr/> <p><i>He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.</i> (Isaiah 53:7)</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p><i>And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word . . .</i> (Matthew 27:12-14)</p> <hr/>
<p>8. Wounded and bruised</p> <hr/> <p><i>But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.</i> (Isaiah 53:5) - (See also Zech 13:6)</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p><i>Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.</i> (Matthew 27:27)</p> <hr/>
<p>9. Smitten and spat upon</p> <hr/> <p><i>I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.</i> (Isaiah 50:6)</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p><i>Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands</i> (Matthew 26:67)</p> <hr/>
<p>10. Mocked</p> <hr/> <p><i>All who see Me mock me; they shoot out the lip; they shake the head, saying, He trusted on Jehovah; let Him deliver Him; let Him rescue Him, since He delights in Him!</i> (Psalms 22:7-8)</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p><i>And after they had mocked Him, they took the robe off of Him and put His own clothing on Him and led Him away to crucify Him.</i> (Matthew 27:31)</p> <hr/> <p><i>He saved others, but he cannot save himself. If he is the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.</i> (Matthew 27:42)</p> <hr/>
<p>11. Hands and feet pierced</p> <hr/> <p><i>For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.</i> (Psalms 22:16) - (See also Zechariah 12:10)</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p><i>And when they came to the place which is called Calvary, they crucified Him and the criminals there, one on the right, and one on the left.</i> (Luke 23:33)</p> <hr/>
<p>12. Crucified with thieves</p> <hr/> <p><i>. . . He has poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.</i> (Isaiah 53:12b)</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p><i>And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.</i> (Luke 23:33)</p> <hr/>
<p>13. Made intercession for His persecutors</p> <hr/> <p><i>. . . made intercession for the transgressors.</i> (Isaiah 53:12c)</p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p><i>Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do . . .</i> (Luke 23:34a)</p> <hr/>

He suffered, died and was buried

Prophecy	Fulfillment
<p>14. Rejected by His own people</p> <hr/> <p><i>He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. (Isaiah 53:3)</i> <i>(See also Psalm 69:8 and Psalm 118:22)</i></p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p><i>He came unto his own, and his own received him not. (John 1:11)</i> <i>For neither did his brethren believe in him. (John 7:5)</i> <i>(See also Matt 21:42-43)</i></p> <hr/>
<p>15. Hated without a cause</p> <hr/> <p><i>They who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head; they who would destroy me are mighty, my lying enemies. . . (Psalms 69:4)</i> <i>(See also Isaiah 49:7)</i></p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p><i>If I had not done among them the works which no other did, they would not have had sin. But now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father. But that the Word might be fulfilled that is written in their Law, "They hated Me without a cause." (John 15:24-25)</i></p> <hr/>
<p>16. Friends stood afar off</p> <hr/> <p><i>My lovers and my friends stand apart from my plague; and my neighbors stand far off. (Psalms 38:11)</i></p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p><i>And all those known to Him stood at a distance . . . (Luke 23:49a)</i></p> <hr/>
<p>17. People shook their heads</p> <hr/> <p><i>All who see Me mock me; they shoot out the lip; they shake the head . . . (Psalms 22:7)</i></p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p><i>And those who passed by blasphemed Him, shaking their heads (Matthew 27:39)</i></p> <hr/>
<p>18. Stared upon</p> <hr/> <p><i>I can count all My bones; they look and stare at Me. (Psalms 22:17)</i></p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p><i>And the people stood watching. And also the rulers with them, scoffing . . . (Luke 23:35)</i></p> <hr/>
<p>19. Garments parted and lots cast</p> <hr/> <p><i>They divide My garments among them and cast lots for My clothing. (Psalms 22:18)</i></p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p><i>Then when they had crucified Jesus, the soldiers took His garments and made four parts, one part to each soldier . . . And the tunic was without seam . . . therefore they . . . cast lots for it . . . (John 19:23-24)</i></p> <hr/>
<p>20. Suffered thirst</p> <hr/> <p><i>For they persecute him whom You have stricken, and they talk to the grief of those You pierced. (Psalm 69:26) - (See also Psalm 22:15)</i></p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p><i>After this, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, I thirst. (John 19:28)</i></p> <hr/>
<p>21. Gall and vinegar offered Him</p> <hr/> <p><i>They also gave Me gall for my food; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink. (Psalms 69:21)</i></p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p><i>They gave Him vinegar mixed with gall to drink. (Matthew 27:34)</i></p> <hr/>
<p>22. His forsaken cry</p> <hr/> <p><i>My God, my God, why have You forsaken me, and are far from my deliverance, and from the words of my groaning? (Psalms 22:1)</i></p> <hr/>	<hr/> <p><i>And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying . . . My God, My God, why have You forsaken me? (Matthew 27:46)</i></p> <hr/>

He suffered, died and was buried

Prophecy	Fulfillment
23. Committed Himself to God	
<hr/> <i>Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O Jehovah, the God of truth. (Psalms 31:5)</i> <hr/>	<hr/> <i>And crying with a loud voice, Jesus said, Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit. And when He had said this, He breathed out the spirit. (Luke 23:46)</i> <hr/>
24. Bones not broken	
<hr/> <i>He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken. (Psalms 34:20)</i> <hr/>	<hr/> <i>But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. (John 19:33)</i> <hr/>
25. His side pierced	
<hr/> <i>. . . and they shall look on Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for his only son . . . (Zechariah 12:10b)</i> <hr/>	<hr/> <i>But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a lance, and instantly there came out blood and water. (John 19:34)</i> <hr/>
26. Darkness over the land	
<hr/> <i>And it shall be in that day, says the Lord Jehovah, I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the light of day. (Amos 8:9)</i> <hr/>	<hr/> <i>And from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. (Matthew 27:45)</i> <hr/>
27. Buried in rich man's tomb	
<hr/> <i>And He put His grave with the wicked, and with a rich one in His death; although He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth. (Isaiah 53:9)</i> <hr/>	<hr/> <i>When the evening had come, a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, came, who also himself was Jesus' disciple. (Matthew 27:57)</i> <hr/>

THE AGONIES OF CRUCIFIXION

Crucifixion is one of the most cruel forms of death penalty. It was so abhorrent that the Romans themselves eventually banned it as a form of punishment. To understand the background and depth of Christ's suffering is to be possessed of a gruesome knowledge. But proper acquaintance with the horrors of Christ's sacrifice instructs us both in the sinfulness of sin as can be understood by the horror of the penalty and the extent of love for us.

There were two methods of affixing a living victim to the cross, tying or nailing. Christ underwent the horror of the latter. When nails were driven through the hands and feet they were driven through the places where the most delicate nerves and tendons are. Great suffering for the one on the cross was caused through the abnormal position of the body and the painful but non-serious character of the wounds inflicted. There was no way to ease the body to gain relief from the pain. The longer a man hung the more inflamed his wounds became. The slightest movement would aggravate the wounds and cause additional torture.

F.W. Farrar in his book 'The Life of Christ' gives a vivid description of death by crucifixion: 'For indeed a death by crucifixion seems to include all that pain and death can have of horrible and ghastly – dizziness, cramp, thirst, starvation, sleeplessness, traumatic fever, tetanus, long continuance of torment, horror of anticipation, mortification of untended wounds - all intensified just up to the point at which they can be endured at all, but all stopping just short of the point which

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would give the sufferer the relief of unconsciousness. The unnatural position made every movement painful; the lacerated veins and crushed tendons throbbed with incessant anguish; the wounds, inflamed by exposure, gradually gangrened; the arteries – especially at the head and stomach – became swollen and oppressed with surcharged blood; and while each variety of misery went on gradually increasing there was added to them the intolerable pang of a burning and raging thirst; and all these physical complications caused an internal excitement and anxiety, which made the prospect of death itself – of death, the unknown enemy, at whose approach man usually shudders most – bear the aspect of a delicious and exquisite release’

It is significant that Jesus refused to take the drugged wine offered to Him which would deaden the pain. He was determined to face death at its worst, with a clear mind and senses unclouded. (Matthew 27:34)

SHAME

Not only did Jesus suffer the physical pain of crucifixion, He also endured the shame (Hebrews 12:2). The Cross was a thing of unspeakable shame and degradation. Death by crucifixion was reserved only for slaves and criminals of the worst kind. To the Romans, the one hanging on the Cross was an object of scorn. It was forbidden by law for any Roman citizen to be killed in this way. Cicero said of crucifixion ‘never may it come near the bodies of Roman citizens, never near their thoughts or eyes or ears’. To the Jews, the one hanging on the Cross was accursed. (Deuteronomy 21:23, Galatians 3:13). Thus it is small wonder that when the first Apostles began preaching Christ crucified, they found that the Cross was a stumbling block and an offence (Galatians 5:11; 1 Corinthians 1:23). That Messiah should die was hard enough to credit; but that He should die such a death, was utterly beyond belief.

The shame of crucifixion was emphasized by:

- **The custom of mocking the prisoner before crucifying him** - Compelling the victim to carry his own cross to the place of crucifixion. Before him walked an officer with a placard on which was written the crime for which he was to die. He was led through as many streets as possible so that it could be a public warning and example.
- **Stripping the victim of his clothes** - Leaving the victim to hang naked on the cross added to his humiliation and shame.
- **The place of crucifixion** - The victim was crucified outside the gates which according to the Jews was the place of the outcast and defiled.

THE MEANING OF CHRIST'S DEATH

Christ's death on the cross has profound significance.

1. Christ's death was a substitutionary sacrifice

Foremost amongst the implications of Calvary is that Christ's death represents a substitute for ourselves. The Bible says that the soul which sins must die

Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many. And to those who look for Him He shall appear the second time without sin to salvation (Hebrews 9:28)

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(Ezekiel 18:20). Death is both the consequence and the punishment for sin (Romans 6:23). By His death on The Cross Jesus took our place.

... for also Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. (1 Corinthians 5:7)

This is really the heart of the gospel message. Christ's Death was a sacrifice for sin.

The sacrificial nature of Christ's death is typified in the sacrifice offerings of the Old Testament. Sacrifices were offered by Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Job and Jacob and were an essential part of the Mosaic system of worship instituted by God at Mt Sinai. These offerings always involved the shedding of blood for the remission of sins. (Genesis 4:4, 8:20, 12:7, 26:25 & 33:20, Exodus 12:3-11, Job 1:5 & 42:7-9 and Leviticus 1:7)

Thus Jesus' death was substitutionary. He died for our benefit and He died in our place, The death of Christ was not for Himself—it was for you and me. The death He died we deserved. Since He has died on our behalf we are freed from the penalty of our sins. The full benefit of Christ's substitutionary sacrifice will be discussed later in these notes

2. Christ's death was both revelation and example

The crucifixion was propitiation for our sins. The English word propitiation is only found a few times in the Bible. (There are six occurrences in the KJV: 1 John.2:2, 1 John 4:10, Romans 3:25, Luke 18:13 and Hebrews 2:17 & 8:12.) Although this is a small

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

number of passages, the concept of propitiation is found throughout the Old Testament (usually translated "atonement") and is central to the work of Christ.

- The crucifixion was a revelation of the righteousness of God demanded by Christ's death (Romans 6:23). God would rather sacrifice His Son than compromise His holiness. The Law of God must be satisfied before man can be released from its penalty.
- The crucifixion was a revelation of God's wisdom (Ephesians 1:8)
- The crucifixion was a revelation of God's love (Romans 8:5)
- The crucifixion was a revelation of man's sinfulness (John 1:29)
- The crucifixion was an example of obedience (Matthew 26:39)
- The crucifixion was a revelation of meekness (1 Pet 2:21-24)
- The crucifixion was a revelation an example of love (Eph 5:1-2 1, John 3:16)

THE BENEFITS OF CHRIST'S DEATH

There are three great words in the scripture which need to be understood before we can appreciate the full benefit of Christ's death. They are Propitiation; Redemption and Reconciliation. When the individual believes, these blessings become ours in actual experience.

He suffered, died and was buried

1. Propitiation

Propitiation is the God-ward aspect of Christ's death. To propitiate means 'to turn away wrath'. Christ bore the fury of God's wrath for our sins and thus satisfied God's holiness. The wrath of God is the reaction of God's holiness to sin. Because Christ died, man need no longer be subject to God's wrath. Christ's propitiatory work was typified on the Day of Atonement when the High Priest sacrificed a goat for the sins of the nation and sprinkled the blood on the lid of the Ark of the Covenant. This was situated in the Holy of Holies of the Old Testament Tabernacle. When the blood of the sacrifice was applied it ceased to be a 'Throne of Judgment' and became a 'Mercy Seat'.

And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:2)

2. Redemption

Redemption is the Satan-ward aspect of Christ's death. It means 'to purchase out of slavery, to loose and set free'. Christ paid the price for the sins of the whole world (the ransom) and thus released us from Satan's bondage. Satan holds the world in his power because of its sin. Because Christ died, man need no longer be held in Satan's bondage.

Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. (1 Timothy 2:6)

The classic illustration of redemption in the Old Testament is Israel's deliverance from Egypt, the place of bondage and slavery.

3. Reconciliation

Reconciliation is the Man-ward aspect of Christ's death. It means 'to change from hostility to friendship, to make peace'. Christ took away the barrier of sin and changed man's relationship with God. Man's sin is the barrier that prevents our fellowship with God.

To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:19)

Because Christ died, man need no longer be alienated or separated from God. The parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-24) illustrates the truth that the Father is waiting for us to return to Him. There is no barrier preventing us from coming to Him. We are welcome. If we return to Him He will lovingly receive us!

Thus the Gospel message is this:

- God's wrath has been satisfied - because Christ died, God is free to forgive and receive all who come to Him.
- Satan's power has been broken - because Christ died, all men can be set free from all the works of the devil. This includes all forms of bondage, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.
- Man is invited to come to God - because Christ died all men are welcome to come to God.

SUFFERING & DIVINE HEALING

From the beginning it has been God's intention that the human race would exercise dominion over His creation (Genesis 1:28) but there was another aspirant to this honour. Seeing that man had been created a little lower than the angels (Psalm 8:5), it seemed insulting to Satan that he should not be ruler of the creation and for that matter recipient of worship. Satan's first attack on God's order was to plant a lie in the hearts of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:1-5). His next attack was to promote the murder of the godly Abel by his brother (Genesis 4:1-10). That is why Jesus says that Satan was a murderer and liar from the beginning (John 8:44). So when it became apparent to the enemy of our souls that God's plan of dominion had moved to Christ and His Church (Ephesians 1:20-23), he employed the same devices of lying and murder. From its inception the Church has been confronted with murder, via persecution from without, as well as heresies, or Satan's lies, as attacks from within.

The Nicene Creed was prepared as a defence against error from within. One form of error that it sought to

combat was that of Docetism. This error arose in the New Testament times and taught that the Jesus who died on the cross was not a real person. It taught that the crucified Christ was merely some kind of apparition or ghost. The danger and prevalence of this error was so significant that the apostle John felt compelled to write that he who confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh "is a deceiver and an antichrist" (2 John 1:7). In this and many other places the scriptures affirmed the reality of Christ's humanity. We can perhaps gauge the devastating nature of this error when we recall how Islam teaches that Jesus' crucifixion was an illusion. The Qur'an says, "They did not kill him and they did not crucify him, but it was made to seem so to them . . ." Sura (4:157).

As a defence against this error the Nicene Creed takes particular care to emphasize Christ's human nature by stating that Jesus suffered as well as died. We are about to examine the reality of Christ's sufferings in order that we may then rejoice in His healing power. We do so as follows:

1. The nature of Jesus suffering
 - a) Christ's many sufferings
 - b) Jesus bore our sicknesses
2. The reasons why Jesus suffered
 - a) Jesus suffered because of who He was
 - b) Jesus suffered as our substitute
 - c) Jesus suffered so as to learn obedience
3. Jesus our Healer ~ Why we should pray and believe for healing
4. The Christian's attitude toward suffering and sickness
5. Diversity of view re the acceptability of suffering in the Christian's life
6. Christ's ongoing suffering

20 . . . raising Him from the dead, and He seated Him at His right hand in the heavenlies,

21 far above all principality and authority and power and dominion, and every name being named, not only in this world, but also in the coming age.

22 And He has put all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,

23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (Ephesians 1:20-23)

He is to be worshipped and glorified

THE NATURE OF CHRIST'S SUFFERING

Jesus spoke and ministered from the reality of how He lived. He was no theoretician or academic.

He lived a life of joy, love and suffering the same as any other person. He is familiar with our weaknesses and like us in all things except sin (Hebrews 4:15).

This truth is set down in The Heidelberg Catechism (1563) ~ “That during His whole life on earth, but

especially at the end, Jesus Christ sustained in body and soul the anger of God against the sin of the whole human race” (Qn 37). We observe therefore that Jesus suffered not just at the end of His days upon the cross, but throughout His whole life.

For we do not have a high priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted just as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

1. Christ's many sufferings

What were these sufferings which were over and above Christ's sufferings on the cross?

- **Jesus understood exhaustion** ~ In the first year of His public ministry Jesus was touring Galilee and had need to go through Samaria. When He got to Sychar his disciples went into that town to get food but Jesus was so wearied that He waited for them at the well outside the town (John 4:6). John's account tells us that it was the journey which wearied Jesus but it is certain that the intensity of His ministry also wearied Him since on one other occasion Jesus was so exhausted that He slept through a ferocious storm (Matthew 8:24). The fact that in both these cases Jesus had a need of rest which was beyond that of the disciples suggests that He was extremely exhausted, or at the least, much more tired than His companions.

- **Jesus was familiar with poverty** ~ Scripture tells us that “though He was rich, for our sakes He became poor” (2 Corinthians 8:9). Jesus was familiar with poverty and homelessness (Matthew 8:20). His shortage of funds was so recurrent that on one occasion it required a miracle that He should pay His taxes (Matthew 17:27). It is true that Jesus received gifts from His supporters (Luke 8:3), but the privations and homelessness which were present at His birth (Luke 2:7) seem never to have been far from Him during His life.

And Jesus said to him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head. (Matthew 8:20)

- **Jesus suffered calumny to His name** ~ There were many accusations made against Jesus at His trial, all of them false. But there were also many false and deprecating accusation made of Him during His ministry. Probably the worst of these was that Jesus was accused of being demon possessed (Mark 3:22, John 7:20, John 8:48).

- **Jesus knew the oppression of constant threat** ~ Scripture records many times when attempts were made on Jesus life (Mark 3:6, Luke 4:29, John 5:16-18, 7:1, 8:59, 10:39-40).

There were threats to His life by people from His own town (Luke 4:29), the political leaders of Israel (Mark 3:6 & Luke 13:32-33) as well as the religious leaders (John 11:47-50). There is a sense in which Jesus lived like a bandit on the run since the rage against Him was

And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. (Luke 4:28-29)

unrelenting. Although the prospect of personal violence was real and had to be escaped, it must not be thought that Jesus was afraid to die (Matthew 20:18). He lived the life of a fugitive because it was inappropriate that He should die other than on the cross (John 12:32-33) or somewhere other than in Jerusalem (Luke 13:33).

- **Jesus knew rejection by family** ~ As well as the distress of imminent personal harm, Jesus endured the ache of rejection by His family. The apostle John records that Jesus could not travel in Judea because the Jews wanted to kill Him (John 7:1) and yet immediately following this disclosure, the gospel indicates that Jesus' brothers were urging Him to attend the feast which was held in Jerusalem, the capital city of Judea! His brothers must have known that it would mean great danger for Jesus to go to Jerusalem and yet they urged Him not just that He should go but that He should make Himself known in the feast (John 7:2-4). This was a virtual death sentence writ large by Christ's very own family.

Here and in a number of other places it is evident that Jesus family did not believe on Him as Messiah (John 7:5) and considered Him a shame and reproach upon them and the family name (Mark 3:21 & 31).

After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him. (John 7:1)

His brothers therefore said to him, Move away from here and go into Judaea, so that your disciples also may see the works that you do. For there is no man that does anything in secret, while he himself seeks to be in public. If thou do these things, reveal yourself to the world. (John 7:3-4)

- **Jesus suffered the stigma of being born out of wedlock** ~ Not so long ago it was a social disgrace to conceive a child out of wedlock. This was quite the case when Jesus was born. Even in His adult life He suffered reproach for the fact that a shadow hung over the legitimacy of his parentage (John 8:19 & 39-41).

The Jews asked Jesus, "Where is your father?" (John 8:19). When Jesus, in reply, said of Himself that He was not of this world (John 8:23) and that they did not know Him because His Father was not theirs (John 8:38), they taunted Him by saying, "We be not born of fornication" (John 8:41). The cutting edge of this jibe is the implied accusation that although they were legitimate, Jesus was illegitimate. Later they cast subtlety aside and jeered that He was the offspring not of His legal Jewish father, a well-respected carpenter in Nazareth, but of some unknown Samaritan. The basis of the charge was probably a rumor of Mary's pregnancy out of wedlock. That pregnancy must have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, to conceal from gossiping tongues. The temple officials were happy to believe the innuendo and gossip about Jesus' origin because they said of Jesus that they didn't know where He was from (John 9:29-30) even though His parentage was known (Matthew 13:55, John 7:27). In this way the mob was easily persuaded that Jesus real father was a Samaritan because Nazareth, His home town, was not far from Samaria.

- **Jesus knew rejection because of His appearance** ~ Scripture depicts Christ in the most excellent of terms when it comes to His righteousness, character, power and wisdom but it offers a much less fetching image when speaking of His physical appearance. There is little in the Bible to indicate what Jesus looked like, but what little we have is not very flattering. It says of Jesus that He was not so attractive that men would look to Him as a natural leader.

In fact it goes so far as to say that He was despised and that those who saw Him hid their faces from Him (Isaiah 53:2-3).

The commentator J Gill (1690-1771) says (concerning Isaiah 52:14) that people were astonished at Jesus “ . . . Not so much at the miracles he wrought, the doctrines he taught, and the work he did; or at his greatness and glory, at his exaltation and dignity, though very wonderful; as at his humiliation, the mean appearance he made, the low estate he was brought into; the sufferings and death which he underwent.”

. . . He has no form nor majesty that we should see Him, nor an appearance that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as it were a hiding of faces from Him, He being despised, and we esteemed Him not. (Isaiah 53:2-3)

- **Jesus suffered injustice** ~ The apostle Peter described Jesus as one who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil (Acts 10:38). For these good acts and for His truthful and righteous life Jesus was treated to crucifixion. This was a disgraceful injustice! The extent of injustice in Christ’s cross is revealed by the fact that the cross upon which He died was actually meant for another man. Jesus suffered death on the cross of a thief and murderer (Mark 15:7-11). This horror was the last of the many injustices which Jesus endured during His life. Whatever it is that we may think is unfair in life, compares little to the injustices which Jesus suffered.
- **Jesus suffered sickness** ~ Remembering that the entirety of Christ’s life and ministry was redemptive we might expect to find that His encounter with our fallen condition meant that Jesus became ill. To many Christians this seems an offensive thing to say. They have envisaged such a docetic Christ that it is unthinkable that He would suffer sickness, or that if He did become sick, that He would not use His faith to return to good health. For this reason we will treat the notion of Jesus being sick in some detail.

Just as many were astonished at You (so much was the disfigurement from man, His appearance and His form from the sons of mankind); (Isaiah 52:14)

2. **Jesus’ bore our sicknesses**

It is our solace and joy that Jesus brings us healing of soul and body because of His death on the Cross. In as much as the whole of Christ’s life and walk was redemptive and not just The Cross, as seen through the breadth of things which He suffered, we might wonder whether Jesus suffered sickness as well. The scripture indicates that He did.

The prophet Isaiah writes of Jesus as He who will bare our sins and sicknesses (Isaiah 53:3-5). It is perhaps a tragedy to English speaking Christians that the Authorized Version (1611) translates these verses as:

Surely He has borne our sicknesses, and He carried our pain; yet we esteemed Him plagued, smitten by God, and afflicted. (Isaiah 53:4)

Literal Translation of the Holy Bible, J P Green Sr.

“surely He has borne our griefs”. These days the more modern translations use or indicate sicknesses or diseases in place of “griefs”. In this they follow Martin Luther (1483-1586) who in his translation of the Old Testament into German used the word “sicknesses”.

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM JESUS' SUFFERINGS?

We might ask why it is that Jesus suffered? How is it that He who had all power endured such difficulties of soul and body? Why did Jesus not merely pray and alleviate Himself of all these difficulties?

To pose these questions is to stray into the relationship between The Father and The Son. It is to ponder the sovereignty of God. And yet the answers are important because they inform us of how we should respond to suffering and, in particular, sickness.

1. *Jesus suffered because He was who He was*

Jesus came to the only nation on earth whose history and religious tradition was entirely shaped by the promise of Messiah's appearing. This nation had been shaped for the privilege of receiving Him but instead they denied Him (John 1:11). They did this for two reasons. Firstly they rejected Jesus because they had interpreted the promises of Messiah's kingdom in political terms. They wanted a man who would deliver them from the oppression of the Romans (John 6:15, John 12:12). Jesus did not meet their expectations. Secondly they rejected Jesus because "men love darkness rather than light" and the people preferred their sin instead of Christ.

So Jesus suffered rejection, rebuke and injustice because He failed to meet the expectation of others. It was not because of the good works that He suffered but because He was the Son of God (John 10:32-33).

Or said differently, He suffered simply because He was who He was.

31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, make yourself God. (John 10:31-33)

2. *Jesus suffered as our substitute*

We noted earlier that the Heidelberg Catechism said of Christ's suffering: "Jesus Christ sustained in body and soul the anger of God against the sin of the whole human race". Jesus did not just suffer at the end of His days upon the cross. The whole of Christ's life and ministry was redemptive. Death is sin's ultimate penalty but sickness is sin's immediate penalty. Not only did Jesus pay the ultimate penalty for us but He endured the sum of those afflictions that are ours because of sin.

In this way we might observe that there is a link between sickness and sin. Sin can express itself as sickness of the body but it is also a disease of the soul.

Therefore there are many places where scripture depicts mankind as being diseased in our soul. When the Psalmist urged his soul to bless the Lord, he did so on the basis that his soul had been forgiven and healed. He said "Bless the Lord oh my soul who forgives **your** iniquities, who heals **your** diseases" (Psalm 103:3). Similarly when Jesus was presented with a paralytic man who desired healing, He took opportunity not only to heal but to forgive (Mark 2:3-12). Scripture indicates that to observe the injustice

14 Since then the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise partook of the same; that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death (that is, the Devil), . . .

16 For truly He did not take the nature of angels, but He took hold of the seed of Abraham.

17 Therefore in all things it behoved him to be made like His brothers, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of His people.

Hebrews 2:14 & 16-17

He is to be worshipped and glorified

which was meted out to Jesus on the cross leads us to repentance from sin and that this repentance is a healing of the soul (1 Peter 2:20-24).

Even though sin had no authority over Him, for our sakes He became as we are. He endured the **totality** of sin's impact (Hebrews 2:14-17).

3. Jesus suffered so as to learn obedience

Jesus experienced the pain of being misunderstood. Early in His life Jesus troubled his parents, Mary and Joseph, by failing to return home with them from a festival in Jerusalem (Luke 2:41-52). When they found Him, He pleaded that He was actually being obedient to His heavenly Father. It is likely that after three days of searching and panic that Jesus was scolded for disappearing and for worrying them. Luke concludes this story with the comment

that Jesus increased in wisdom and maturity (Luke 2:52). Jesus was God but, being man also, He still

went through the experience of growing in maturity

and understanding like every other person. In this childhood incident we observe that Jesus experienced the anguish of being misunderstood as part of His development and maturing. Jesus never sinned but there is a sense in which He learned the cost of obedience. In fact scripture says that He learned obedience through the things that He suffered (Hebrews 5:8).

though being a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered (Hebrews 5:8)

JESUS OUR HEALER or WHY WE SHOULD PRAY AND BELIEVE FOR HEALING

We see in Christ's life and in His death, that Jesus bore the sickness and punishment that was our portion. He is the innocent Lamb of God who is the atoning sacrifice for our sins. There are many many accounts of divine healing in the Old Testament. Since God healed in the Old Testament, how much more will God heal today given that Jesus has paid the price for our sin and has carried sickness, sin's consequence at the cross? We are entitled to look to Jesus for divine healing because:

- **Healing the sick was a very prominent part of the ministry of Jesus** ~ The four gospels record 33 outstanding miracles performed by Jesus, with 24 of them miracles of healing.
 - A leper (Matthew 8:1-4, Mark 1:40, Luke 5:12-14)
 - A Centurion's servant (Matthew 8:5-13, Luke 7:1-10)
 - Peter's mother-in-law (Matthew 8:14-15, Mark 1:29-34, Luke 4:38-41)
 - The two Gadarenes (Matthew 8:28-34, Mark 5:1-21, Luke 8:26-40)
 - A palsied man (Matthew 9:1-8, Mark 2:3-12, Luke 5:18-26)
 - A woman with an issue of blood (Matthew 9:18-22, Mark 5:22-43, Luke 8:41-46)
 - A dumb man with a demon (Matthew 9:32-34)
 - A man with a withered hand (Matthew 12:9-13, Mark 3:1-6, Luke 6:6-11)
 - A demon possessed man (Matthew 12:26-30, Mark 3:22-30, Luke 11:14)
 - A lunatic boy (Matthew 17:14-18, Mark 9:14-29, Luke 9:37)
 - Two blind men again (Matthew 20:30-34, Mark 10:46-52)
 - A demon possessed man in Capernaum (Mark 1:21-26, Luke 4:31-37)
 - The Syrophenician woman's daughter (Mark 7:24-30, Matthew 15:21-28)

- A deaf and dumb man (Mark 7:32-35, Matthew 15:29-31)
- The ear of the High Priest's servant (Luke 22:50-51)
- A woman with a spirit of infirmity (Luke 13:10-17)
- Blind man of Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26)
- The man at Bethesda (John 5:3-9)
- Mary Magdalene (Luke 8:2)
- Two blind men (Matthew 9:27:31)
- A man with dropsy (Luke 14:1-4)
- Ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19)
- A man born blind (John 9:1-38)
- A nobleman's son (John 4:46-53)

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. And His fame went throughout all Syria. And they brought to Him all those being badly ill suffering various diseases and torments, and those who had been possessed with demons, and those who had been moonstruck, and paralytics. And He healed them. (Matthew 4:23-24)

Apart from these many miracles of healing

specifically recorded in the gospels, there were many other occasions when Jesus healed all who were brought to Him (Matthew 4:23-24).

- **Jesus is not just able to heal, He is willing to heal** ~ A leper came to Jesus and said: "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean". Jesus stated very definitely that it was His will to heal this man. He said "I am willing"

(Matthew 8:2-3). Since Jesus is no respecter of persons we conclude that it is Jesus' will to heal us too. Moreover it is evident from the gospels that Jesus healed **all** who asked (Matthew 8:16, 9:35, 12:15, 14:14, 14:34-36, Mark 1:34, Luke 4:40)

'And when evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill' (Matthew 8:16)

And many followed Him, and he healed them all (Matthew 12:15)

'... all who had been sick with various diseases were brought to Him; and laying hands on every one of them, He was healing them' (Luke 4:40)

- **Jesus' Name carries healing within it** ~ The name Jesus is a Greek equivalent to the Old Testament name of Joshua (or more correctly Je-Hoshua) which in the Hebrew means "God is salvation" (Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Definitions). Jesus' name also means "God saves" and is a compound of two Greek words (Je-Sozo or Jehovah-Sozo). The Greek word 'sozo' means 'to be made whole' and carries the meaning of physical as well as spiritual healing.

We see it translated that way in: "... as many as touched Him were made whole (sozo)" (Mark 6:56), "thy faith has made thee whole (sozo)" (Luke 17:19) and again "... He that was possessed of devils was healed (sozo)" (Luke 8:36). Thus the word for salvation within Jesus' very name is an all inclusive word meaning wholeness for spirit, soul and body. To pray in that Name is to invite Christ's healing person to be the healer.

- **Jesus' came to destroy the works of the Devil** ~ Sickness came into the world at the same time as sin and yet there are times when sickness is the Devil's doing. That is why there are occasions when the Bible describes sickness as Satanic captivity (Job 2:7 & 42:10), Satanic oppression (Acts 10:38) and Satanic bondage (Luke 13:12-16). Jesus came to destroy the works of the Devil (1 John 3:8). Since sickness

He who practices sin is of the Devil, for the Devil sins from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was revealed, that He might undo the works of the Devil. (1 John 3:8)

is one of the Devil's works we should expect that faith in Christ will deliver from sickness. In fact there are times when our prayer for healing will actually be a prayer of deliverance.

Truly, truly, I say to you, He who believes on Me, the works that I do he shall do also, and greater works than these he shall do, because I go to My Father. (John 14:12)

- **Jesus has placed healing within the Church** ~ Jesus commissioned the disciples to heal the sick (Mark 6:7, 12-13, Luke 9:1-2, 9:49-50, 10:1-9 & 10:17). Not only the apostles but the Church also is commissioned to heal the sick (Mark 16:15-20; 1 Corinthians 12:9; James 5:14-16). Jesus told us that the things He did we would do and greater because He was going to the Father (John 14:12) and for this reason He told us "As the Father sent me so I send you" (John 20:21).

THE CHRISTIAN'S ATTITUDE TOWARD SUFFERING AND SICKNESS

It is clear that Jesus heals. It is also clear that He has sent the church to continue His healing ministry. Therefore our default position should be that of faith. We should face every sickness and suffering with the expectation that God in His love for us will deliver us from our predicament. For this reason Jesus urged us to pray and not faint (Luke 18:1), and Paul too tells us to pray with persistence and in a manner unceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Yet we must deal with the fact that not every prayer is answered? How do we reconcile God's promises with His performance?

And He also spoke a parable to them to teach it is always right to pray, and not to faint (Luke 18:1)

Pray without ceasing. (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

1. God's sovereignty and timing

The first miracle performed by the disciples after Jesus' resurrection was the restoration of a lame man who had all his life sat begging at the Gate Beautiful of the temple in Jerusalem (Acts 3:1-8). This miracle is instructive because it invites us to ask why it was that Jesus, who was regularly in the temple, walked past that man for three years without healing him? The answer lies in Jesus' own words, He only ever did what the Father gave Him to do (John 5:19, John 8:38). So we must assume that Jesus ignored this man because it was not in the Father's sovereignty and timing that the beggar should be healed.

So, remembering that as the Father sent Jesus so He sends us, we need to respect the fact that whilst there is a general principle that healing is ours, there are instances when there is specific timing or specific guidance related to divine healing. Indeed if God seems not to be healing it may be that we need to pay closer attention to how we are to pray:

- **Healing and repentance** ~ Most times the link between illness and sin is of a general nature as is the overall impact of Adam's sin, however sometimes the link between an illness and a specific sin is very direct. For example Paul told the Corinthians that there was sickness amongst them because they had been disrespectful toward the communion table and had been taking communion in presumption, without examining their hearts

So that whoever should eat this bread, or drink the cup of the Lord, unworthily, that one will be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord. . . . For this reason many among you are weak and feeble, and many sleep. (1 Corinthians 11:27 & 30)

to see if there was an area of their lives where they needed to ask for forgiveness prior to participating in the emblems (1 Corinthians 11:27-30). In addition we find the apostle James, whilst urging the elders to pray for the sick, adds that if there is a specific sin which pertains to the sickness that confession should be made and forgiveness ministered (James 5:14-16).

It is wrong to think that because a person is sick that they therefore **must** be in sin but as we come to pray for a sick person, it is important to realize that a direct link **may** exist.

- **Healing and deliverance** ~ We have already noted that there are occasions when the enemy of our souls will use sickness as an attack or a form of oppression. When praying for the sick we must be ready to pray so as to rebuke the Devil. We note that there were times when Jesus healed the deaf (Mark 7:31-34) and there were other times when He rebuked the evil spirit which was causing the deafness (Luke 11:14). It is the leading of the Spirit which alerts us as to which form of prayer is required.
- **Healing and Faith** ~ Scripture tells us that we should pray without doubting (Matthew 21:21, 1 Timothy 2:8, James 1:6-8). This is especially true when it comes to healing. There were times when Jesus met the needs of a person because He saw that they had faith, saying to them “according to your faith be it to you” (Matthew 9:29) or “Go, your faith has healed you” (Mark 10:52). (See also Matthew 15:28 & 8:13.) Yet there were times when Jesus blessed those who were so desperate that they had no strength of faith in them at all (Mark 9:24, Luke 17:5).

Faith is not a force of itself. There are some who would seemingly urge us to have faith in our faith. It is a beneficial step to move from the recognition that God **can** heal to the belief that God **will** heal, but it is a folly to move from the belief that God **will** heal to the position that God **must** heal merely because we have decided to believe. No amount of faith can cause God to relinquish His sovereignty.

2. Why do we suffer?

Earlier we considered various reasons as to why Jesus suffered. Two of those are relevant to ourselves:

- **We suffer because of who we are** ~ In the same way that Jesus suffered simply because of who He was, humans suffer because of who we are. Whether we recognize it or not the world, its inhabitants and its institutions are all subject to the effect of sin. Each and every person, whether they recognize it or not, is at war with God, alienated from Him until the Holy Spirit should lead them to repentance (Ephesians 4:18, Colossians 1:21). In our fallenness and sin we cause and multiply the adverse implications of sin. We are a suffering people prone to contributing to each other’s woes.
- **We suffer in order to learn** ~ It is salutary to realize that the author and the captain of our faith learned obedience through the things that He suffered (Hebrews 5:8). If it pleased the Father to use suffering as a teaching device for Jesus then we ought not complain if He does something similar with us. In fact there are times when it is the compassion, not just the wisdom, of God that we experience the chastening benefits of suffering (Hebrews 12:5-8). It

In addition to Christ's own life, we have other examples of God's chastening leading to benefit. In fact such treatment is common through scripture:

- **Job** suffered greatly and even though he had confidence in his having a living redeemer (Job 19:25) by the end of his trials he had found a new level of repentance declaring that his knowledge of God had grown in the process (Job 42:5).
- **Joseph** underwent abandonment by brethren, slavery and unjust imprisonment. These sufferings transformed Him from a man somewhat over-confident in the gifting and calling on his life to a man competent to lead a nation and humble enough to declare that what his brothers had meant for evil God had meant for good (Genesis 50:20).
- **Israel's** covenant with God was set in terms which expected Godly obedience from that nation. The Lord cautioned the people that, should they fail in their adherence to the covenant, He would allow sickness and adversity to drive them back to Himself (Deuteronomy 30:1-3, Jeremiah 29:14, Lamentation 3:32).
- **The Heroes of Faith** accepted trials and persecutions in order that they may obtain a better resurrection (Hebrews 11:35).
- **Peter** had been destined to endure sifting at Satan's hand, most probably relating to his denial of Jesus at the time of His suffering. Peter wept for the shameful way that he denied Christ. Yet despite this it came to pass as Jesus had promised. Peter was able to strengthen believers through what he had learned in shame (Luke 22:31-32).
- **Paul** was granted a thorn in the flesh, which many think was a painful eye condition, as God's means of keeping him from pride (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

For though He causes grief, yet He will have pity according to the multitude of His kindnesses. (Lamentations 3:32)

NOT ALL AGREE

The truth of Christ's atoning sacrifice on Calvary is so beautiful and so vast in its implications that there is a prevalence for some to believe that for the Christian to accept the legitimacy of suffering and to endure suffering is a negation of the perfection of Christ's Cross. This is an admirable but perhaps narrow reading of the scriptures. It is a reading that denies the sovereignty of God, the testimony of Christ and the nature of God's dealings with the Church throughout the history of the faith.

It is true to observe that the doctrine of divine healing is taught most strongly in Pentecostal churches. Since World War II there has emerged a powerful and influential theology within Pentecostal churches worldwide which in its various guises, has done much to reinstate God's miraculous and healing power as a mainstay of Christian belief. The blessedness and benefit of such reinstatement ought not be denigrated.

He is to be worshipped and glorified

This theology has in various quarters become known as the Word of Faith Movement. The major doctrines of the Faith Movement were developed by Kenneth Hagin (1917-2003) from the teachings of E W Kenyon (1867-1948). Kenyon, gained much of his theology from the mind-science cults, predominantly metaphysics. He synthesized these teachings with his Christian beliefs in an attempt to satisfy the desire for a new type of powerful and blessings-based Christianity which, as he saw it, people had been longing for. Whereas the new thought metaphysics asserted that a person could shape their health and destiny by the power of positive thought, Kenyon insisted that we could shape our health and destiny by transformed thinking wrought from the promises of God's Word. Hagin adopted many of these ideas, adding his own theological views gained from his days in classical Pentecostalism and healing revivalism.

The five central doctrines of the Faith Movement: became: revelation knowledge, identification, faith and, healing and prosperity. By narrowing the reading of scripture to the means of access to blessings, The Word of Faith Movement runs the risk of failing to preach the full counsel of God. Hagin's central doctrines were all taken from Kenyon's writings, a man who often drank from the well of the metaphysical cults, particularly, New Thought and Christian Science.

In light of the overwhelming testimony from scripture showing that God is indeed behind our suffering and has a purpose in it, one might ask where certain brethren get these anti-sovereign views of suffering? It is perhaps an example of cultural ideas and the spirit of the age being allowed to interpret the character of God. Francis Schaeffer comments that our culture, has two dominant values. These are; personal peace and affluence. We see many in the contemporary church catering directly to these values via health wealth and prosperity teaching. Therefore to have a view of God who orders and designs suffering (the destruction of personal peace) is a monstrosity in our cultural environment. So Christians are left with the options of changing God's involvement in suffering (to say that He has none) or being counter cultural. Frankly it's easier to tell people what they want to hear rather than what they need to hear.

PERSECUTION ~ CHRIST'S ONGOING SUFFERING

We opened these notes by reference to the two forms of attack on Christ's church; heresy and persecution. We might conclude our consideration of suffering by having regard to persecution.

Saul (Paul) was on his way to Damascus to continue his murder and imprisonment of the fledgling church when Jesus appeared to him saying "Saul Saul! Why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9:4).

Jesus did not ask "Why do you persecute my church?". He challenged Saul with "Why do you persecute *me*?" Jesus is so identified with His Body, the Church that every attack on upon the Church is an attack on Jesus. It would seem that Jesus, who was identified with our sufferings during His earthly ministry, remains identified with us still especially when we suffer for Him in persecution.

And falling on the earth he heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul! Why do you persecute Me? (Acts 9:4)

Now I am rejoicing while suffering for you as I complete in my flesh whatever remains of the Messiah's sufferings on behalf of his body, which is the church. (Colossians 1:24)

He is to be worshipped and glorified

This experience must have left an impression on Saul (Paul) because years later he tells the Colossians that his suffering for them in ministry and his own persecutions supplement, or continue to add to, those sufferings which Christ experiences via His persecuted Church (Colossians 1:24).

Continue to remember those in prison as if you were in prison with them, as well as those who are mistreated, since they also are only mortal. (Hebrews 13:3)

Now if Paul understands Christ as suffering with His Church because of persecution we might ponder what that means for us. If Christ continues to be identified with His Church as it suffers persecution then we ought be prepared to:

- **Honour our brethren who are being persecuted today** ~ Scripture reminds us that we should remember those who are in chains as though we ourselves were bound with them (Hebrews 13:3). To do so is no less an identification with their suffering than Christ makes. Such care for our persecuted brethren should be in prayer, in financial assistance or practical aid wherever that can be achieved.
- **Honour our brethren from history who have endured persecution** ~ It was the theologian and church father, Tertullian (160-220) who said: “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of The Church”. The array of suffering from persecution is heart rending. Time alone will tell the cost in lives and self-sacrificing resistance which have been made, not only for the principles of the faith but for the very Bible itself. It serves us to remember that men were burned at the stake for their part in the translation of the Bible into English! Today’s Christians owe a vast debt to our predecessors in the faith. For this reason we should reverence the Church’s history, and not trivialize our the faith or The Word, since they have come to us not only via the Blood of Christ but via the blood of His Body our brethren.
- **Honour Christ with our own lives** ~ Many are the wonderful promises of the gospel, but there are some promises which are just as certain but not so wonderful. Jesus promised us that if the world persecuted Him that we should expect that we too will be on the difficult end of persecution (John 15:20).

Remember the word that I said to you, The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they have kept My saying, they will also keep yours. (John 15:20)

The nature and duration of persecution ebbs and flows across time and nations. For most of us the opposition is no more serious comes than being misunderstood or being ridiculed by friends and family. These are small difficulties compared with the privations and sufferings which many of our fellow believers go through, even today. Therefore we should steel our hearts to face whatever opposition, whether mild or serious. To do so is to put a visible and continuing face to Christ’s sufferings. Not only that, but to face persecution is an opportunity to tap into a joy (Matthew 5:10-11) and an identification with Christ which is unique in the realm of human suffering, since when we suffer such things Christ too is identified with us (Acts 5:41).

If believing that God orders and designs suffering is a monstrosity in our cultural environment and if challenging the notion that God has no involvement in our suffering, other than to remove it, is being counter cultural; how much greater an assault on the world’s way of doing things is it to rejoice in the face of opposition as stand in faithfulness to Christ and His sufferings?

THE BIBLE

The Nicene Creed tells us that Jesus rose again “according to the scriptures”. The Christian’s faith is based on two forms of truth. There is the evidentiary or objective truth of the prophecies recorded in the Bible and their accurate fulfillment in history. And there is the experiential or subjective truth of the reality of Jesus’ Spirit dwelling in our heart and lives. The Bible sets down the objective truth of the promise of Christ’s coming and work. This objective truth leads to the formation of a living faith in our hearts.

The Bible’s name comes from the Greek word biblos which means “book”. Ancient books were written on the biblus or papyrus reed and from this custom came the Greek word *biblos*, which finally came to be applied to The Bible.

These notes on The Bible will address the following matters:

- 1) The purpose of The Bible
- 2) The inspiration of The Bible
- 3) The structure of The Bible
- 4) The applicability of The Bible
 - a) God’s word as the foundation of our lives
 - b) God’s word as His love letter to us
 - c) God’s word is food for us
 - d) God’s word as life and medicine
 - e) we grow by God’s word
 - f) we are cleansed and kept by God’s word
 - g) the Devil is defeated God’s word
 - h) faith and healing come God’s word
- 5) How to approach God’s word

THE PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE

God’s sovereign purpose in giving us The Bible is:

- **To reveal Christ** ~ Scripture itself tells us that the things of God can be understood from the creation around us (Romans 1:20). Even so, this general revelation is insufficient to grasp the saving purposes and power of Jesus Christ. We require the Bible in order to gain understanding of Christ (John 5:39) and His redemptive work.

You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life. And they are the ones witnessing of Me (John 5:39)

- **To bring salvation** ~ God’s Word is the instrument by which the hearts of men and women are changed. It is true that many people arrive at a saving trust in Jesus as the result of preaching, but eternity will reveal that there are many who have come to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour because the Holy Spirit has shaped their hearts as they read the Bible.

But these are written so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life in His name. (John 20:31)

The third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures.

- **To create faith in our hearts** ~ Most people are prepared to believe that there is some truth in the Bible. They can believe that Moses lead Israel out of Egypt. They may believe in the historic reality of Christ's existence. Or they may believe that the scriptures represent a form of inspired wisdom. They have faith, but it is not a saving faith (Ephesians 2:8). Such faith comes only from God and He has seen fit to create it in a person's heart as the Word is read or preached (Romans 10:17).

Then faith is of hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. (Romans 10:17)

- **To serve as a standard for faith** ~ We live in an age where people are taught to be true to themselves. Men and women are urged to set their own standards for what is acceptable conduct. Such thinking inevitably fragments the inner workings of a society since the only thing which the society holds in common is the right to be an individual? Moreover such thinking inevitably exalts sin since even where people retain high moral standards, being self-devised standards they are standards which dismiss God and do not acknowledge Him as the ultimate in justice and love. The Bible sets before us the standard by which we should live and believe.

So indeed the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good. (Romans 7:12)

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is the inspired Word of God. This means that it is 'God breathed' or given by God. Men wrote the Bible but God gave them the words to write. Every word written by men was 'breathed out by God'

Divine Inspiration is not mechanical. God did not treat the human authors as dictation machines or as tape recorders. This type of mechanical inspiration (often known as automatic dictation) is found in spiritism and occultism where a demon spirit works by setting aside and excluding the human personality. God does not suppress people and turn them into machines. He desires active men of God not passive 'mediums', not dead tools but living sanctified co-workers with Him.

Divine inspiration means that God moved, both revealing the truth and preserving the human authors from error. God made use of their personality, temperament, background and experience and they wrote in their own literary style and vocabulary. The words were truly their own, but they were also God's word.

- **Every word in The Bible is inspired** ~ This is called verbal inspiration. The words of the Scriptures were recorded by inspiration, but are not necessarily the words that God endorses! For throughout the Bible we have statements from good men, misguided men, demons and even the devil himself. The Bible faithfully records these words as they were spoken and as they apply to the human condition so that The Bible provides a contrast between the heart of God and the human heart. Therefore we must be careful not to attribute to God sentiments and ideas which belong to others. For example parts of the

All Scripture is God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, (2 Timothy 3:16)

For prophecy was not borne at any time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke being borne along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21)

These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (1 Corinthians 2:13)

(See also Isaiah 1:20, Acts 3:21, Luke 2:22, & 2 Peter 1:21)

The third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures.

book of Job record the advice of well meaning but misguided men. God Himself declared that their advice was wrong (Job 42:7-8 & 33:12)! Also in the book of Ecclesiastes, much of what is said by its writer is not the word of God to us, but the thoughts of a man who is trying to find meaning in life without God. Be careful when you use the scriptures.

And Jehovah said to Moses, Write these words for yourself . . . (Exodus 34:27)

So speaks Jehovah, the God of Israel, saying, Write all the Words that I have spoken to you in a book. (Jeremiah 30:2)

- **The Bible is fully inspired** ~ This is called plenary inspiration. Some say that the Bible merely contains the word of God, This is untrue for even the recording of historical events familiar to the authors was inspired so that only the right and necessary things were included, omitting all the irrelevant details (2 Timothy 3:16).

All Scripture is God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16)

- **The Bible is free from error** ~ The Bible is inerrant. God cannot possibly make a mistake. Since the Scripture is given by the inspiration of God, it is free from error. It is “the word of truth”. (Colossians 1:5, 2Timothy 2:15) We must remember however, that the original manuscript is inspired, and so free from error, not necessarily the translation. (Although such care been taken with the translations that the Bibles we have today can be regarded as essentially accurate.) And also, even though the writings are inspired the writers themselves were far from perfect.

Study earnestly to present yourself approved to God, a workman that does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

SOURCE

The Bible was written over a span of about 1600 years by more than 40 different authors from varying walks of life: political leaders (Moses, Daniel), a fisherman (Peter), shepherds (Amos, David), a physician (Luke), a rabbi (Paul). It was also written in different languages and in different forms (law, poetry, history, letters or prophecy) and was scribed in different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek).

Truly The Bible is a literary miracle. For it is a book with its beginning and end written 1600 years apart! Without human planning, The Bible grew part by part, book by book, century by century in an orderly and progressive manner. No other book has been written in this way. Despite its numerous authors, diversity of form and longevity in development, The Bible displays amazing attributes.

- **Unity** ~ From Genesis to Revelation the Bible is united in theme: consistent in concept; logical in development and agreed in doctrine. There is a marvellous unity and harmony right through.
- **Continuity** ~ The historical sequence of the Bible begins with creation of the present world and follows through to the creation of the new heavens and the new earth. The Doctrine of the Bible is progressively presented from its first elementary introduction to its more complex development (Mark 4:28). The seeds of most Bible doctrines are found in Genesis. With each additional book comes further revelation and amplification of these truths which consummate in the last book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation

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Without the possibility of collusion, often with centuries between, one writer of Scripture takes up an earlier revelation adds to it, lays down the pen, and in due time another man moved by the Holy Spirit and another and another add new details till the whole is complete.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BIBLE

When we consider the arrangement of the books of the Bible we discover that it is broken into two main groups, being Old Testament and New Testament and thereafter into book-type by date.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament can be divided into three broad divisions:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. History (17 books) | The Law (5 Books)
Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy |
| | Pre-Exile Records (9 books)
Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings,
1 & 2 Chronicles |
| | Post - Exile Records (3 books)
Nehemiah, Ezra, Esther |
| 2. Experience (5 books) | Wisdom Literature (5 books)
Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs |
| 3. Prophecy (17 books) | Major Prophets (5 books)
Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel |
| | Pre-Exile Minor Prophets (9 books)
Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum,
Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai |
| | Post- Exile Minor Prophets (3 books)
Haggai, Zechariah Malachi |

THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament can be divided into three broad divisions:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Historical (5 books) | Gospels & Acts
Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts |
| 2. Christian Church Epistles (9 books) | Pauls letters to Gentile Regions
Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians,
Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2
Thessalonians |
| 3. Pastoral & Personal Epistles (4 books) | Paul's Letters To Friends
1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon |
| 4. Church Hebrew Epistles (9 books) | Non-Pauline Letters To Jewish Believers
Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John,
3 John, Jude, Revelation |

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When you pick up your Bible each day, please remember that the gospel has come to us at great cost. For some it has cost them their lives, for others their reputations, for others their worldly possessions and many their families.

The price of it in Christ's Blood ought to be enough to make us reverence it and hallow it in our hearts and thinking. Because the Bible has been bought and compiled at a such great cost, it is wrong for us to trivialize it. It is wrong for us to miss-read it as being merely the source of our contentment. The Bible is that which reveals God to the world as well as that which shapes nations.

The history of The Church is the history of a people who have laid down their lives for a book. These are men and women who found The Word of God to be true and worth dying for. This is the tradition of courage and faith upon which The Church is built and from which the Scriptures emerge. This is the tradition which we are called to uphold and honour in the way that we live our lives. If we must fear, may God grant that we will fear the cost of this document and the dangers of taking it lightly.

THE APPLICABILITY OF THE BIBLE

The Bible has had a profound effect on society. It forms the basis of our legal code: promoting marriage and the family: exalting womanhood: guiding childhood: dignifying the aged: bringing compassion to the sick and needy. Its teachings have caused more social reform and encouraged more benevolent enterprises than any other book in history. It has also inspired an immense volume of art, music and literature.

The Bible has withstood the vicious attacks of its enemies as no other book. Many have tried to burn it, ban it and outlaw it from the days of the Roman Emperors to present day Islam and communists. The French philosopher Voltaire once said: "In one hundred years, this book (The Bible) will be forgotten." One hundred years exactly after this boast, Voltaire's house was being used as the headquarters for the Geneva Bible Society!

The Bible has stood the test of scholarship, scrutiny and criticism for centuries. No other book has been so chopped, sifted, scrutinized and vilified. Yet it has withstood all attacks and is still read and loved by millions

1. God's word is the foundation upon which to build our lives

Jesus Himself said that it is a wise man who builds his life upon hearing and obeying the Word of God (Matthew 7:24-27). In his book "Doorways to Discipleship", Winkie Pratney says:

"Nothing should be more important to the Christian than the Word of God. No other book, magazine, newspaper, activity, recreation, friend or loved one will ever have the right to demand so much, or the power to contribute so much in your life, as the Scriptures.

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell – and great was its fall. (Matthew 7:24-27)

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Neglect the Bible and you neglect your own soul. Read it and obey it, and you will enhance your own life while blessing countless others.

There is no way to follow Jesus without also knowing and loving the book He gave us. It is no accident that both Jesus and the Bible are called the Word of God. Both speak with power and authority. Both are fully true and trustworthy.

We do not love Jesus more than we really love his Word. We do not obey Jesus more than we obey His Word. We do not know God any more than we want to know His Word!"

2. God's word is His love letter to us

You may have tried to read the Bible before you became a Christian and found it dull and uninteresting. This is because to the natural person outside of Christ, the Bible is a closed book. It is impossible to understand the Word of God with the natural mind for it needs to be illuminated by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:14).

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. (1 Corinthians 2:14)

When we come to know the Lord however, the Bible opens up to us in a new way. It becomes distinctly personal. If you picked up a letter that was not addressed to you and you didn't know the person who wrote it, it would not mean much to you. However, if the letter is addressed to you and you know and love the one who wrote it, then that letter becomes very valuable and precious to you.

3. God's word is food for us

God's Word is our spiritual food. Jesus said that we live by the Word of God. In other words, it is as necessary to our spiritual life as bread is to our natural life. In almost every culture in the world, people make some kind of 'bread'. Bread is known as a 'staple food'. This gives us some idea of the necessity of the Word to our lives.

... Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4)

Food is a great picture of the Word of God, for just as food must be eaten to be of benefit to us, so it is only as we receive the Word of God and take it into our hearts and minds that we can be nourished by it.

I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food. (Job 23:12)

God's Word is described as being like food (Job 23:12), meat or solid food (1 Corinthians 3:2, Hebrews 5:12), milk (1 Corinthians 3:2, Hebrews 5:12 & 14), bread (Deuteronomy 8:3, Matthew 4:4), and honey (Psalm 19:10, Psalm 119:103, Ezekiel 3:1-4).

4. God's word is life and medicine to us

God's Word is life-giving and medicine. Medicine won't do you any good unless you take it. It won't work unless you get it down inside you! In the same way, we need to get the Word of God into us, into our hearts. We need to get it off the page and into our heart!

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We may read the Bible, discuss it, attend Bible studies and listen to sermons but we need to get it into our hearts. We must deliberately take it into ourselves by owning the truth of it for our own lives (Proverbs 4:20-22). That's when the Word of God will do its work in us.

My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your sight; keep them in the midst of your heart. For they are life to those who find them and health to all their body." (Proverbs 4:20-22)

5. We grow by the Word of God

The Word of God changes and transforms us as we renew our minds to its truths. In as much as Adam and Eve sought revelation knowledge in order to be gods (Genesis 3:5), we now have the privilege of receiving from the revelation knowledge of God. The attitudes we hold about life, about ourselves and others, are made new and adjusted as we take His truth into our lives and own it for our own life. We become less shaped in our own image and more shaped in His image. Nothing will change us more than applying to our own life what we read in God's Word (1 Peter 2:2, Romans 12:2 & James 1:21).

Like new born babies long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation. (1 Peter 2:2)

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind . . . (Romans 12:2)

....in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. (James 1:21)

6. We are cleansed and kept clean by the Word of God

One of the more important functions of the Word is to train us in what is right. Putting to practice what we learn of God's character in His Word will then challenge us and transform us. Remember, the Holy Spirit is always looking to co-operate with The Word in order to bring us closer to the character of God. The challenge is to remember that God's Word is as much about Him as it is a letter to us. Thus when we read of an attribute of His which blesses us, we may in fact be reading of a character trait which the Holy Spirit is wanting to develop in us.

How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to your word . . . Your word have I hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You." (Psalm 119:9 & 11)

(See also John 15:3, John 17:17, Ephesians 5:26)

For example when we read that "He who has begun a good work in you will perform it to the day of Jess Christ" (Philippians 1:6) we are encouraged to see God's faithfulness toward us. And yet if faithfulness in purpose is God's character, then we might expect that faithfulness in purpose and in commitment are attributes which we will expect the Holy Spirit to be developing in ourselves (Matthew 25:21).

He who has begun a good work in you will perform it to the day of Jess Christ" (Philippians 1:6)

His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. (Matthew 25:21)

7. We defeat the Devil by the Word of God

There is a vital lesson for us to learn in the way Jesus dealt with the devil during the time that He was tempted in the wilderness. Each time the devil came to Him with a specific temptation, Jesus responded with the Word of God (Matthew chapter 4:1-11). Three times Satan came against Jesus

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and three times Jesus answered with the Word, saying "It is written . . ." (Matthew 4:4,7 & 11). Eventually the devil left Him. The Devil is persistent but when we come against him by boldly declaring what God's Word says, he will flee from us. But let us be careful, the devil flees not only on the basis of our knowledge of the Word, for we see in Jesus' temptation that the Devil too knows the Bible (Matthew 4:6). Rather we must allow the Holy Spirit to supplement knowledge with experience, which is to say that it is better to submit to the truths in God's Word than it is to know God's Word and live lives which are not subject to it (James 4:7). Jesus was unsullied by Satan's temptations because he had learned to live according to every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4).

Submit yourselves therefore unto God, resist the devil and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

8. Faith and Healing come via the Word of God

Faith in God is faith in Who God is; faith in His character. As we read and study His Word we grow in our knowledge of Him. The more we know Him – the more we trust or have faith in Him. Faith in God then, is simply faith in His Word. The more we know His Word, the stronger our faith in Him becomes.

So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. (Romans 10:17)

He sent His word and healed them. (Psalm 107:20)

My son give attention to my words.....they are life to those who find them and health to all their body. (Proverbs 4:20-23)

HOW TO APPROACH GOD'S WORD

We have seen that God's Word will change our lives if we believe and receive it. How do we approach His Word in such a way that we can really benefit from it? Here are some directions for taking in the Word of God.

- **Pray for understanding** ~ It has been said that God speaks to faith. Therefore it is a wise Christian who prays before reading the scriptures. To commence in prayer is to set our hearts in reliance on God and to approach Him and His Word in faith. Even the Psalmist, whose scriptures we read, considered it necessary to pray for God's assistance for the understanding of His Word (Psalm 119:18).

Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things from Your law. (Psalm 119:18)

(See also John 16:13, Ephesians 1:17-19)

- **Approach the Word with reverence and joy** ~ When we read God's Word we should approach it with a sense of respect and love. There is a saying: "What you feed is what grows". Therefore we can expect that if we approach God's Word with a certain reverence we will find that the Word cultivates a reverence within us. This attitude can be nurtured by reminding ourselves that what we are reading are the thoughts of our great God and our Heavenly Father. And yet we should expect the Word to be a source of joy to us (Jeremiah 15:16). We see this balance of Godly reverence with Godly joy in the apostle Paul when he writes so as to

. . . we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe. (1 Thessalonians 2:13)

Establish your word to Your servant, as that which produces reverence for You. (Psalm 119:38)

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commend the Christians at Thessalonica for their wonderfully healthy attitude to the Word of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

- **Study the Word eagerly read it through** ~ The earnest Christian should be the cleverest of all people. This is so for several reasons. Firstly we are told that the believer “has the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16). Secondly the Christian is encountering the wisdom and truth of God in every verse and chapter of Bible reading. Lastly the Christian cannot read without thinking. For to read any verse or chapter is to ponder the overall contents of the Bible because each book, chapter and verse is part of a whole and it is appropriate, if not necessary, that the Christian ponder their understanding of a verse by asking how that verse fits into the context of the chapter and how that chapter fits into the purpose of the book and how that book fits into the history, culture and context of God’s revelation of Himself.

You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (Deuteronomy 11:18-20)

Clearly the Bible reader has much to ponder when he reads! This is why reading and re-reading the Bible never becomes boring, because each time we re-visit a book or verse we are richer in knowledge and faith and experience than the first time that we read that verse. The Holy Spirit has more material to work with as He seeks to speak to us of His nature and love for us.

- **Meditate on the Word** ~ This is not the meditation of some eastern religions, but is about spending time thinking and pondering on God’s Word. The Hebrew word translated meditate actually means ‘to mutter’, also, to mumble, to muse, to utter, to talk of. It is the same word that is used of a cow ruminating – chewing the cud! We need to turn over God’s Word in our minds and talk the word of God into our hearts by chewing it over and musing on it (Psalm 119:48, 78 & 148). Often you will find that meditation is punctuated by prayer, or changes into prayer almost unconsciously. Think it over and pray it in!

I will lift up my hands toward your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on your statutes. (Psalm 119:48)

Let the insolent be put to shame, because they have wronged me with falsehood; as for me, I will meditate on your precepts. (Psalm 119:78)

My eyes are awake before the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promise. (Psalm 119:148)

- **Obey the Word** ~ When God speaks and tells us to love one another for example - it’s not a suggestion, it’s a command. After all, it’s the Word of the Living God. He doesn’t speak without reason. God’s commands were given that we might live and be blessed. For the Word to enrich our lives we have to respond in obedience to the words that He speaks. Jesus often linked our love for Him with our obedience to what He says (John 14:15, 21 & 23, John 15:10). God doesn’t speak without reason – He always has our welfare at heart. So it makes sense to obey His Word.

If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me . . .

If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word....” (John 14:15, 21 & 23)

If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love . . . (John 15:10)

THE RESURRECTION

As a statement of our faith, The Nicene Creed so as to set down the central beliefs to which all Christians must subscribe. To deny any one of the statements of The Creed is to place oneself outside the realm of orthodoxy and into heresy. This is especially true of the resurrection. If there is no resurrection then there is no Christian gospel.

We shall address the resurrection in terms of:

1. The uniqueness of the resurrection
2. The events of the resurrection and the claims of those who have tried to disprove it
 - a) the scriptures presenting the crucifixion and the resurrection, versus
 - b) the claims of those who seek to disprove the resurrection
3. The force of the resurrection and how it
 - a) validates the Old Testament prophecies which speak of Christ's resurrection
 - b) establishes Christ's deity
 - c) is proof that the work of The Cross is finished
 - d) demonstrates the Jesus' righteousness and office (or roles)
4. The implications to our faith if Christ stayed in the grave
 - a) our faith is vain
 - b) we are still in our sins
 - c) there is no resurrection of the dead
 - d) our faith is based on a lie and a false prophet
 - e) we lose the personhood of Christ

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE RESURRECTION

Christianity is the only religion in the world that claims that its founder is risen from the dead. No other historical religion claims this of its founder. The Buddha is dead. His followers do not claim otherwise. Mohammed is dead. Karl Marx is dead. Confucius is dead. Sai Baba is dead.

Christianity is the only religion in the world that bases its whole claim for acceptance upon the resurrection of its founder. What an extraordinary thing. If you were founding a religion would you make your resurrection the proof of your credibility? When asked for a sign to prove the validity of His claims Jesus Christ gave the sign of His Resurrection. He did this by citing two examples.

The first was the sign of Jonah. In the same way that Jonah was three days and three nights in the fish's belly, Jesus was telling the people that He would be three days and three nights in the belly of the earth. The second sign was the His prophecy concerning Jerusalem's temple. Jesus told those of His day that

But the crowds pressing on Him, He began to say: This is an evil generation. It seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it, except the sign of Jonah the prophet. (Luke 11:29)

Then the Jews answered and said to Him, What sign do you show us, since you do these things? Jesus answered and said to them, Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up. (John 2:18-19)

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He would rebuild the temple in three days (John 2:18-22). They misunderstood Him entirely because they thought that He was talking about the huge temple which King Herod had taken 46 years to refurbish to its then grandeur. Instead Jesus spoke of Himself, since He was the tabernacle (and temple) of God (John 1:14, Revelation 21:3).

Christianity is the only religion in the world that claims that its originator actually comes to live His life in His followers. This is the miracle, the power, the wonder and the extraordinary message of the Gospel. Truly the resurrection of Jesus Christ makes Christianity unique.

THE EVENTS OF THE RESURRECTION AND THE CLAIMS OF THOSE WHO TRY TO DISPROVE IT

We believe in the resurrection of Christ because the Bible says that Christ rose from the dead. This is an objective fact that is testified to by eye witnesses. But the Christian also believes in the resurrection because the experience of Christ's life living in them is real. Our confidence is based on the objective truths of Scripture and the subjective truth of the experience of our own heart and life.

There have been various attempts over the years to discredit the resurrection. These attempts have been based on theorizing either that Jesus did not really die or that if He died that there was a conspiracy to pretend that He had risen. The following table considers the events of Christ's death and resurrection and makes comment concerning the various theories that are offered to discredit the truth of the resurrection.

Event	Claim & Countervailing Truth
Jesus was flogged and beaten by the Roman soldiers prior to His crucifixion and was so weak that He couldn't carry His own cross. (John 19:1-3, Luke 23:26)	It is claimed that Jesus didn't actually die but was merely unconscious when taken down from the cross after which He escaped from the tomb by rolling back the stone from inside. ~ This would be impossible after three hours on the cross especially since He was so weak before His crucifixion that He couldn't even carry His own cross.
The Centurion pronounced Jesus dead. (John 19:33-37)	
The soldiers were told to break the legs of those being crucified to ensure their prompt death. When they came to Jesus they were persuaded then that he was already dead, but to be certain thrust Him through with a spear. (John 19:31)	It is claimed that Jesus didn't actually die. ~ Roman soldiers would have seen many men die on a cross. They would have known with great certainty that Jesus had already died.
Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus was already dead but was assured by the Centurion that this was so. (Matthew 27:57-58, Mark 15:43)	

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Event	Claim & Countervailing Truth
Jesus was pierced through by a Roman soldier's spear, after which blood and water flowed out. (John 19:34)	It is claimed that Jesus didn't actually die. ~ Roman soldiers were very efficient in their handling of weapons. The spear would be enough to have killed Jesus. That blood and water flowed out indicates that Jesus was thrust through into His heart, that He had been dead for some time and that His body was beginning to cool.
Joseph of Arimathea requested permission of Pilate for Jesus' body. (John 19:30-34)	It is claimed that the tomb was empty because Jesus was buried elsewhere. ~ Joseph of Arimathea was a man known to Pilate and wouldn't have been given the body were he not a man to be trusted.
Joseph accompanied by Nicodemus took the body down, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and placed it in a new tomb cut into the rock which was situated in a garden close by. This tomb had never been used before. (Mark 15:44-45, John 19:38-39)	It is claimed that Jesus was not actually buried or that He was buried in the wrong place causing the disciples to think that He'd risen from the dead. ~ All four Gospels record the burial of the body. The Jewish law required the burial of a dead body. Joseph and Nicodemus knew which tomb it was they buried Jesus. The women that discovered the empty tomb watched the burial.
Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jose watched how Jesus' body was laid and then went home to prepare further spices and perfumes. (John 19:40-42)	The apostles' claims, if false, would have lead to a search for the correct tomb as would have disproved the disciples' story.
A stone was rolled over the entrance to the tomb and the entrance sealed. (Matthew 27:61, Mark 15:47)	It is claimed that the disciples stole the body. ~ After the crucifixion the disciples were extremely afraid. They would not have attempted such a dangerous thing as to contest the guards. Neither would they have broken the Roman seal placed upon the tomb because to do so was punishable by death
The Chief Priests and Pharisees requested permission from Pilate for a Roman guard to watch the tomb to prevent any possibility of the body being stolen. (Mark 15:46)	It is claimed that Jesus was not actually entombed. ~ The Roman guard surely proves that the body was in the tomb. (Would Roman soldiers, whose lives depended on not failing whilst on guard, not check the tomb, prior to sealing it, so as to ensure that they were not guarding an empty tomb.)

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Event	Claim & Countervailing Truth
The tomb was sealed and a guard posted. (Matthew 27:62-65)	It is claimed that Jesus' body was stolen while the guards slept. ~ Even if the guards were asleep, the noise caused by rolling the stone away from the entrance of the tomb would have awakened them.
There was an earthquake. An angel of the Lord appeared, rolled the stone away and sat on it. (Matthew 27:66)	
Some women taking spices which they had prepared went to the tomb on the first day of the week and saw that it was empty. The angel spoke to them. (Matthew 28:4)	It is claimed that the resurrection is a fabricated story. ~ The disciples did not expect the resurrection. The women, who went to the tomb, were on their way to finish embalming the body.
Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:1-8, Matthew 28:1-8 and Luke 24:1-8)	It is claimed that the disciples fabricated the story. ~ Women were not considered credible witnesses in the Jewish culture of the day. If the disciples were fabricating a story they'd not have made it reliant on a woman's testimony.
Jesus appeared to the women returning from the tomb (John 20:14, Mark 16:9)	
Peter and the disciples thought that the women were telling stories. They didn't believe them. (John 20:14, Mark 16:9)	It is claimed that the disciples fabricated the story. ~ The disciples were in disbelief. They were not looking for or expecting the resurrection. When told of the empty tomb they were not persuaded.
Some of the guards went into the city to report to the Chief Priests everything that happened. The Chief Priests bribed the guards to spread a false rumor. (Matthew 28:9-10)	It is claimed that the disciples fabricated the resurrection story by taking advantage of the sleeping guards to steal Christ's body. ~ If the soldiers were sleeping, how could they say that the disciples stole the body? The soldiers would not have fallen asleep while on watch because the penalty for doing so was death. If the soldiers were telling the truth why did they need to be bribed?
Peter and John, after hearing from the women that the tomb was empty, ran to the tomb and found the grave clothes neatly folded, but not the body. John believed immediately. (Matthew 28:11-15)	It is claimed that grave robbers removed the body. ~ Grave robbers could not have removed the body. If the body had been stolen surely the grave clothes would have been taken along with the body. Or if the grave clothes had been removed from the body they would not have been left in an orderly fashion.

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Event	Claim & Countervailing Truth
Mary Magdalene thought that someone had removed the body. (John 20:13-15)	Jesus' body was embalmed in about 34kg of spices and wrapped with strips of linen. The wrapping would have clung to the body and the only way to remove them would have been to unwind them or cut them off. Yet the disciples found the wrappings intact but the body missing. It is claimed that the story of the resurrection was fabricated by the disciples. ~ Mary was expecting to complete the embalming and even when she saw that the body was missing, resurrection was not her first thought.
Jesus appeared to Peter. (Luke 24:12, John 20:6)	It is claimed that Jesus did not die on the cross but merely became unconscious. ~ How could Jesus in His weakened condition walk to Emmaus which was seven miles from Jerusalem?
Jesus appeared to two disciples on the way to Emmaus. They return to tell the disciples that He was risen and yet the disciples were still unconvinced. (Luke 24:34)	It is claimed that the disciples fabricated the resurrection story. ~ When the two from Emmaus told the eleven that Jesus had appeared 'neither believed they them'.
Jesus appeared to the Apostles, Thomas absent. (Mark 16:12-13, Luke 24:13-32)	It is claimed that the disciples fabricated the resurrection story. ~ The disciples so misunderstood the idea of the resurrection that when Jesus appeared they thought that He was a ghost. He assured them that He Himself was not a ghost.
Jesus appeared to the disciples to assure them that he was alive and a real person, having the marks of His crucifixion still in Him. (Luke 24:40, John 20:25&27)	It is claimed that the disciples saw an apparition or spirit. ~ Jesus showed them the marks of the cross which remained in His body after His resurrection. He also ate something when with them.
Jesus appeared to the apostles one week later when Thomas was present (Luke 24:36-43, John 20:19-24)	It is claimed that the disciples fabricated the story of the resurrection. ~ Those who first proclaimed the story of Jesus' resurrection were themselves totally unprepared to believe it, to the point seeming almost, determined not to believe it. Yet they and came to believe it in spite of themselves.

The third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures

Event	Claim & Countervailing Truth
Jesus appeared to seven disciples by the sea of Tiberias in Galilee (John 20:26-29)	It is claimed that Jesus was a spirit entity not a real person. ~ When Jesus appeared by the sea of Galilee He had prepared food for the disciples and ate with them.
Jesus appeared to the Apostles, and over five hundred disciples on a Galilean mountain (John 21:1-23)	It is claimed that Jesus' appearance was some manner of apparition. ~ Not only is there abundant testimonial evidence from the 12 disciples but Jesus appeared to many after His resurrection, in one instance up to 500 at once! In courts today; one witness is enough to establish murder, two high treason, three the execution of a will, seven an oral will. Christ had over 500 witnesses.
Jesus appeared to James, the Lord's brother (Mark 16:15-18, Matthew 28:16-20 and 1 Corinthians 15:6)	The disciples fabricated the story. ~ The disciples were men of principle. They could not have stolen the body and fabricated the story of Jesus' resurrection and preached and lived the way they did. If they did steal it then they would have known that they were believing a lie: but men do not die for what they know to be false. How could Jesus allow His disciples to spread the message the He had risen if in fact He had not. He would have been a liar and deceiver to allow His disciples to do so.
Jesus appeared to the Apostles for the last time. Jesus ascended into heaven. (1 Corinthians 15:7, Acts 1:3-12)	

THE FORCE OF THE RESURRECTION

The resurrection of Christ is not only a fact. It is a mighty factor! When understood it becomes a force in our lives. It has dynamic, life changing consequences. The resurrection of Christ is a proof, a power and a promise.

- Related to the Past - It is a Proof
- Related to the Present - It is a Power
- Related to the Future - It is a Promise

As a proof the resurrection points to the predictive reliability of God's Word in the Old Testament, the effectiveness of Christ's ministry and the certainty of His Deity.

The third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures

1. Proof of Old Testament Types and Prophecies

The Old Testament predicts Christ's resurrection by way of types and prophecy. The resurrection fulfilled and thus substantiated them. Some of the prophecies of Christ's resurrection found in the Old Testament are:

- God would not leave Christ's soul in hell - Psalm 16:9-10 (referred to in Acts 2:24-31 & Acts 13: 34-37)
- The measure of God's acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice is the fact that He was raised from the dead - Psalm 118:22-24 (referred to in Acts 4:10-11)
- Even though Jesus was put to death as an offering for sin, He would yet see long life and prolonged days - Is 53:10

A 'type' in scripture is an Old Testament event, person or story which acts as the image or carries the metaphor of an aspect of a New Testament reality or doctrine. The 'type' is limited in its capacity to convey the full extent of the anticipated reality or doctrine but it still serves to alert us to the centrality of a truth. The Old Testament is full of resurrection 'types', many of them touching not only on Christ's resurrection but on the doctrine of Baptism. Some of the types of Christ's resurrection in the Old Testament are:

- Isaac's return from Mt Moriah despite being taken up their by Abraham as a potential sacrifice to God - Gen 22:5, Heb 11:17-19
- Jonah's three days in the whale's belly - Jonah 1:15-17 (referred to in Matthew 12:38-41 & 16:4 and Luke 11:29-30)
- Melchizedek who was made, not after carnal means, but according to the power of an endless life and in whose form of priesthood Jesus serves - Genesis 14:8, Psalm 110 and Heb 7:16
- Aaron's rod that budded, since in the same way that Aaron's lifeless rod bore fruit, Jesus who is the rod of Jesse (Isaiah 11;1) also displays life from death - Numbers 17:8

2. Proof of Christ's Deity

The resurrection of Jesus Christ established beyond doubt that He was the Son of God. During His earthly life Jesus performed many miracles that supported His claim to be the Son of God but the supreme proof of His deity was the miracle of His resurrection. We have already noted that Jesus staked His whole credibility upon His resurrection. When asked for a sign to prove that He was the Son of God, He gave only one - that of His future resurrection (Luke 11:29-30).

Jesus had to rise from the dead. In the first public sermon to be preached concerning Jesus'

resurrection, the apostle Peter declared that "It was impossible for death to keep its hold on Him" (Acts 2:22-24). The High Priest Caiaphas sentenced Jesus to death for claiming to be the Son of God.

Who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 1:4)

{Note that this verse states that by His resurrection Jesus was 'declared' or 'proven' the Son of God. It does not mean that Jesus 'became' the Son of God at the resurrection. Jesus was always The Son.}

The third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures

Given that death is the appropriate punishment for all sin, the grave would have been entitled to retain Jesus had He been lying concerning His divinity. Instead, because He was sinless in all of His life and innocent of the blasphemy with which Caiaphas charged Him, it was impossible that death should retain Him. Christ's resurrection vindicated Him as the Son of God.

Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by them. (Acts 2:24)

Moreover it was impossible that Jesus should remain bound by the claims of death, because of who He was and is. Jesus is the Son of God and therefore He is the Ever Living One, the Author of Life. The Cross was the world's response to Christ's life. The empty tomb was God's answer to His death.

3. Proof of Christ's Offices

Jesus Christ fulfils the three offices of Prophet, Priest and King. The resurrection substantiates this.

- **Prophet** - Moses told the children of Israel that there would arise a prophet after him who was more important than he (Deut 18:18-19). Jesus was that prophet and yet if Jesus did not rise from the dead then He would have been a false prophet, because during His earthly life He predicted many times that He would rise from the dead. Scripture records these prophetic forecasts in many places. (See Matthew 12:38-40, 16:21, 17:9, 17:22-23, 20:18-19, 26:32, & 27:63, Mark 8:31, 9:1, 9:9-10,31, 10:34 & 14:28, Luke 9:22-27 and John 2:19-22 & 10:17-18.)
- **Priest** - In the Old Testament it was predicted that Christ would be a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm Ps 110:4). If Jesus did not rise from the dead then He could not have fulfilled this prophecy because His priestly office would have terminated at His death. Instead the writer of Hebrews assures us that Jesus our High Priest has instituted a new order of priesthood based on a new sacrifice (See Hebrews 7:10, & 7:24-25).
- **King** - King David of Judah was a flawed man but he loved the Lord very much and wanted to replace the tabernacle of Moses by erecting a magnificent temple building for Him. God declined David's offer and instead promised to make an eternal household of him and his family (2 Samuel 7:12-14). Thus it was predicted that Messiah Jesus would be a king and rule on the Throne of David forever and ever. This is only possible because Jesus rose from the dead. David himself reasoned if Christ must die then He must also rise again. (See also Isaiah 9:6-7, Luke 1:31-33 and Acts 2:25-32.)

4. Proof of Christ's Finished Work and Satan's defeat

The supreme value of the resurrection lies in the fact that it was a divine act by which God gave attestation to His perfect satisfaction with the work of Christ. It is proof that God accepts Christ's atoning work on The Cross as a complete and perfect sacrifice for sin (John 19:30). It means that as far as God is concerned, Christ's death was sufficient to atone for, deal with and put away our sins.

This is why the scripture says that it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Jesus (Acts 2:24), for the justice that demanded His death (after He had become sin for us - 1 Corinthians 5:21) also demanded His resurrection (after He had paid the penalty for that sin in full).

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... who (Jesus) was delivered because of our offenses and was raised for our justification. (Romans 4:25)

And if Christ is not raised, your faith is foolish; you are yet in your sins. (1 Corinthians 15:17)

But He whom God raised again saw no corruption. Therefore be it known to you, men, brothers, that through this One the forgiveness of sins is announced to you. And by Him all who believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses. (Acts 13:37-39)

It is on the basis of Christ's finished work of which the resurrection is proof that the believer can be sure of forgiveness and justification before God.

The fact of Christ's resurrection and the eternity of that resurrection is proof not only that God raises from the dead but that He raises us forever. There are many people in scripture who were raised from the dead (1 Kings 17:17-24, 2 Kings 4:32-37, John 11:1-45, Luke 7:11-16, Matthew 9:18-26) but who have since died again. Because we will arise into Jesus' resurrection we can be assured that we will never again taste of death. As such Jesus resurrection displays His total victory over evil and all its consequences. It is proof of Satan's defeat and our justification (Romans 4:25, Acts 13:37-39).

Who (Jesus) was delivered because of our offences, and was raised again for our justification. (Romans 4:25)

And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying to me, Do not fear, I am the First and the Last, and the Living One, and I became dead, and behold, I am alive for ever and ever, Amen. And I have the keys of hell and of death. (Revelation 1:17-18)

Satan was defeated at The Cross (Colossians 2:15). At the resurrection, Christ burst out of the realm of the dead thus proving that Satan who once had the power of death (Hebrews 2:14) was now entirely defeated and totally divested of all authority. By His resurrection Jesus is known to now hold all authority over all of what used to be Satan's domain for even death and hell are in Christ's hands (Revelation 1:17-18).

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESURRECTION

The ramifications of Christ's resurrection are both vast and eternal. If Christ did not rise from the dead then the Christian faith is a lie and meaningless. It is for this reason that so many have attempted to refute the gospel's claims of a risen Lord.

1. Paul's assessment

The apostle Paul had to deal with certain Christians who had an erroneous view on the nature, extent and timing of the resurrection. In order to help them understand the consequences of their error, Paul wrote an extended analysis of the resurrection's implications (1 Corinthians 15:1-58). Paul's argument is just as vital today as it was when he first wrote it.

- **Our faith is empty or vain** (1 Corinthians 15:14) - If Christ has not been raised, then not only our believing but our witness and preaching is in vain. Have you ever heard people say 'It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you believe in something'. This is a silly statement because faith must be founded on facts. Faith is only as valid as the object in which it is placed.
- **The Apostles are false witnesses** (1 Corinthians 15:14) - More than that, if Christ be not risen, then the apostles (and we ourselves) are found to be false witnesses about God. For we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. If Christ's resurrection is

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not true how can we rely on anything else which the apostles taught and wrote. We might as well throw the Bible away.

- **Our Preaching is useless** (1 Corinthians 15:14) - If Christ be not risen then there is no life in the Christian faith and there is little difference between it and every other moralizing religion of self-effort. What is there to preach? What is the good news that we can declare? It's on the fact of The resurrection all the other doctrines of our faith depend. If Christ is not risen, then He is not now alive. If He is not now alive then Christianity cannot be a living relationship with a Living Lord.

If Christ is not risen, then He is not reigning. If Christ is not risen, then He is not returning. How can we preach deliverance to the captives and proclaim liberty to those who are bound if Jesus Christ Himself is still bound by death?

- **There is no Resurrection of the dead for Believers** (1 Corinthians 15:16) - If Christ didn't rise from the dead then we who believe have no hope of Resurrection either. The hope that has sustained the martyrs and strengthened all those who have died in the faith (Hebrews 11:35) and comforted those that have remained is false.
- **We are still in our sins** (1 Corinthians 15:16-17) - If Christ did not rise from the dead it means that God did not accept His sacrifice as complete payment for our sins. It means that we ourselves will have to answer for them. It means there is no forgiveness; no justification. It means that sin's consequences (death and sickness) remain in place. We are still in our sins.
- **Those who have died believing in Christ are lost** (1 Corinthians 15:18) - If Christ be not risen then all those who have died having their hope in Him will not know eternal life. They will remain forever outside God's embrace. But because He has risen all those who died in faith will be perfected together in Him (Hebrews 11:13 & 39-40).
- **Those who believe in Christ are to be pitied** (1 Corinthians 15:18-19) - If Christ be not risen then we are deceived and misguided. Believers are to be pitied for they have put their hope in a delusion.
- **Sacrifice for Christ will not be rewarded** (1 Corinthians 15:30-32) - If Christ be not risen then His life of selfless love was futile because He too has hoped for no reason. He who had his eyes set on eternity and looked forward to the establishment of an eternal kingdom is also disappointed. On this basis His sacrifice was useless. Similarly any denial of ourselves in gratitude to Him or expectation of a place in the kingdom will be a waste of time. We may as well live according to the pagan values of 'eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we die'.

2. The Personhood of Christ

It is vital to remember that The Resurrection is not just an event it is a person. The Resurrection is not merely something that happened in the past to Jesus. Neither is it only an event that will happen to us in the future. The Resurrection is a person (John 11:25). Which is to say that in the same way as Jesus now lives, The Resurrection now continues. It is for this reason that Jesus says of Himself "Behold I *am making* all things new" (Revelation 21:5). Resurrection or renewal is a

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continuing process. Jesus is working in our lives to transform us from obdurate hard hearted sinners who were at war with God into loving gracious sons of God who rejoice to be obedient to Him. It is an interesting thing to consider that if The Resurrection is a person, the person of Jesus Christ, and not just an event then the resurrection principle existed in eternity past. Perhaps it is for this reason that Jesus is described as The Lamb who was slain even from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8).

Jesus said to her, I am the Resurrection and the Life! He who believes in Me, though he die, yet he shall live. (John 11:25)

And He sitting on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said to me, Write, for these words are true and faithful. (Revelation 21:5)

This is a deep mystery and beyond the scope of these foundational notes, but it is beneficial for us always to remember that the principle of renewing or newness lies at the heart of the whole of scripture. Therefore we must expect that Christ's Spirit will be constantly working in us to bring change and growth in godliness to us. There are many times in life when we would like to wipe our lives clean from all that we have done. We are ashamed of our sin and appalling performance so we desire to go back to the start and recommence. This is not how God works. Jesus is in the resurrection business. He IS The Resurrection and so we can expect that He will take our failures and replace or renew them or re-create them into something good.

There was a time when the brothers of the patriarch Joseph tried to kill him. Many years later Joseph reminded them that what they meant for harm God used for good (Genesis 50:20). So too with us. Jesus, The Resurrection, does not merely wipe us free from sin He renews, re-creates and changes us into His glorious image.

THY KINGDOM COME

There came a time when the disciples asked Jesus how they should pray. Jesus gave them a model prayer that has become known as The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13, Luke 11:2-4). A central element to this model prayer was the hope that the kingdom of heaven would be manifest on earth. Jesus taught us to pray "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." The need for Christ's kingdom to come is evident. Sin and death exercise vast influence amongst us. The hope of Christ's kingdom brings with it the expectation of righteousness, health and long life.

Whilst the benefits are clear to all Christians, the timing of the kingdom's appearance is not. The diversity of view about the timing of the kingdom is linked to differences in understanding of a stanza of scripture in The Book of Revelation (Revelation 20:1-6) and the nature of Christ's final return. Because of the diversity of view centres on how the 1,000 year reign is to be understood, whether literally or figuratively, the differences in view are classified according to their treatment of this 1,000 years or "millennium" (from the Latin word for 1,000). There are three views most common:

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast nor his image, nor had received his mark on their foreheads, nor in their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (Revelation 20:4)

- a) **Pre Millennial** ~ meaning that Christ returns prior to a literal 1,000 year kingdom reign,
- b) **Post Millennial** ~ meaning that Christ returns at the end of a figurative 1,000 year kingdom reign
- c) **Amillennial** ~ meaning that Christ's return is not associated with an observable kingdom, nor a 1,000 year period, but that things remain largely as they exist at present.

(It should be noted that there are numerous variations within each of these three schools of interpretation. In particular Pre-Millennial thought has two major expressions. These are; Historic Pre-Millennialism and Dispensational Pre-Millennialism. For the sake of brevity, these notes will present Dispensational Pre-Millennialism as being representative of the Pre-Millennial position.)

Adherents to each of these three interpretations will differ among themselves as to details of their system. Not only is it beyond the scope of these notes to address each system in detail but it is unlikely that all from within any particular system will be fully satisfied with what is here presented concerning their perspective. Therefore the notes should be seen as indicative rather than definitive. They consider the millennium in three parts:

- 1) An overview and comparison of the main constructs/ideas of these three main systems
- 2) A consideration and comparison of how these three main constructs handle those scriptures which are critical to their position.
- 3) Implications to our daily lives of this doctrine
 - a) the relationship of this doctrine to other doctrines
 - b) the practical reality/implications for the doctrine.

Because each system makes differing use of the same scriptures, we will in the first section layout the three systems without regard to the scriptures and then in the second section attempts to explain how each system makes use of key scriptures.

He shall come again in glory . . . and of His Kingdom there will be no end

COMPARISON OF THE MAIN CONSTRUCTS OF THREE KINGDOM SCENARIOS

If you asked a group of people to recount the joys of an evening together at the circus, they would probably all say that the event started with the Ring Master and ended with the grand parade, but one person would speak of the clowns, the lion-tamer and the juggler, another would tell you of the trapeze artists, clowns and gymnast, whilst a third person would enthuse over the lion-tamer and the trapeze artists and the lady performing on horseback. All have seen the same thing but although they remember some events in common each person remembers them in a different order. Indeed there will be some recollections that are entirely unique to a person's understanding of what was pleasing about the circus.

This is true of a end-times and kingdom scriptures. Each school of interpretation comes to the same scriptures from a different perspective and therefore emphasizes different aspects of Christ's kingdom. Moreover the order in which the data is presented tends to vary as well. Therefore it can be hard to get an exact comparison between the three on the same matters. To do so we will offer nine aspects for consideration. Whether explicit or otherwise, each school of interpretation takes a position concerning:

- **Basic Millennial concept** ~ Although there can be numerous complexities associated with each millennial vision, all of them can be summarized in a broad sense.
- **Attitude toward The Book of Revelation** ~ Because one's view on the millennium, by necessity, depends on how Revelation 20:1-6 is interpreted, each school has a basic view on the purpose and intended readership of The Book of Revelation (or The Apocalypse).
- **Focus of the Millennium** ~ Each millennial view makes core assumptions about God's purposes in Christ and the essential nature of His redeeming work. Being foundational, these assumptions frame the focus and applicability of Christ's Kingdom.
- **Current Age** ~ Because each school has a different notion about the applicability of and starting point for the millennium, they are not only saying something different about the millennium, they are necessarily saying something different about the current age.
- **Commencement of The Kingdom** ~ Since the millennium is a defined period pertaining to Christ's reign a millennial view must say something about The Kingdom and its starting point.
- **What happens during the Millennium/Age** ~ Since the millennium is a defined period within history, we can expect that certain things will be known to happen during that time. (Because the Amillennial interpretation is largely a "Non-Millennial" view we will defer to their perspective by referring to the millennium as an "Age".)
- **Satan's presence during the Millennium/Age** ~ The binding of Satan is an important aspect of the millennial period.
- **End of the Millennium/Age** ~ Since the millennium is a defined period having a commencement, it's close needs also to be considered.
- **Objections** ~ The assumptions inherent in each position make it subject to certain criticisms.

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Perspective	Amillennial View	Pre Millennial View	Post-Millennial View
Basic Millennial concept	Christ's return is not associated with an observable kingdom or a defined 1,000 year period.	Christ returns prior to a literal 1,000 year kingdom reign.	Christ returns at the end of a figurative 1,000 year kingdom reign.
Attitude toward The Book of Revelation	John's Apocalypse is a vision of suffering and persecution which is indicative of the fate of the Church at various times throughout history. It's prophetic element is of a broad illustrative sense only.	John's Apocalypse is a prophetic vision of those things which characterize the end times, especially that which is called The Tribulation, and what precedes Christ's 1,000 year reign. Its prophetic element can in part be understood by reference to current events.	John's Apocalypse was written as encouragement for the early church which had to endure persecution by Jews for their belief that Jesus was Messiah and by Rome for their belief that He is Lord of all, even Caesar. It prophesies the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 69 in terms which indicate the termination of the Old Covenant and God's judgment against Israel for apostasy.
Focus of the Millennium		The millennium focuses on the completion of God's covenant promises to Abraham and David in particular those concerning the possession of a land or territory in the Middle East.	The millennium reveals the sovereignty of Christ and His Gospel over all nations. It displays Christ's power to redress all damage caused by the sin of Adam and Eve.
Current Age	Ours is a Church Age in which the gospel is preached. The times are times of both blessings and suffering, without any observable tendency for improvement or decline.	Ours is an Age of Grace in which The Church has, for the moment, replaced Israel; but which age will close when a time of persecution commences (Tribulation); Israel again becoming a nation and the rebuilding of The Temple in Jerusalem.	Ours is a Kingdom Age during which time the gospel is preached with success. Little by little with both advances and retreats, the nations become 'Christianized' as their peoples and cultures absorb the beneficial effects of Christ's current reign.
Commencement of The Kingdom	The Kingdom was at hand and commenced at the time of Christ's earthly ministry. The Kingdom is substantially spiritual in nature.	The Kingdom will commence with Christ's return. This return will be at a time of persecution for The Church but believers are 'raptured' to meet Jesus in the air and return with Him for the millennial reign.	The Kingdom was at hand and commenced at the time of Christ's earthly ministry.

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Perspective	Amillennial View	Pre Millennial View	Post-Millennial View
What happens during the Millennium/Age	The victorious Christ rules His church via Word and Spirit but outside The Church there is no difference between millennial life and the current age.	The earth is populated by converted Jews. Non-Jews continue to become Christian, but not everyone is converted, even though Jesus is personally and physically enthroned in Jerusalem as King governing via the resurrected believers. Jerusalem possesses a (re-built) temple wherein animal sacrifices are made.	The Gospel becomes the source of wisdom and justice for the nations. All peoples resort to The Law/Word of God as the basis for their culture and laws. The Church offers guidance to The State in the application of God’s testimonies but there is no confusion of roles.
Satan’s presence during the Millennium/Age	Satan continues to persecute The Church with perhaps a significant increase of torment just prior to Christ’s return.	Satan is bound at the time of The Rapture and Christ’s return. He is entirely powerless for 1,000 years.	The binding of Satan commenced with Christ’s gospel and preaching. Satan is active to tempt and persecute The Church during the millennium but is prevented from deceiving all nations (as was the case during the Old Testament period at which time only Israel believed in the One True God).
End of the Millennium/Age	The current age (for there is no period identifiable as a millennium) closes at the time of Christ’s return but without there having been any change in circumstance, either for the world or for national/ethnic Israel. After the final judgment the Church will enter the eternal state of heaven.	At the end of the 1,000 years Satan will be released from his bondage, lead a rebellion of those who have been born during the kingdom era, but are yet unsaved. Christ will destroy the rebellion, and after the final judgment the Church will enter the eternal state of heaven.	The millennium closes with Christ’s return following the restoration of all things, including longevity of life, peace between the nations and a just society. After the final judgment the Church will enter the eternal state of heaven.
Objections	By confining Christ’s reign to a spiritual kingdom, amillennialism infers that the material world, man’s institutions and history are not part of God’s redemptive order.	By emphasizing Christ’s physical presence as the key to the re-establishment of a Davidic throne which is accompanied by a return to animal sacrifices, pre-millennialism infers that Christ’s Cross and the Holy Spirit are insufficient to complete the work of redemption, and that the Church is an interim entity separate to God’s purposes for ethnic Israel.	By anticipating an ever increasing effectiveness of the Gospel, post-millennialism shifts the impact of The Cross from personal salvation to a concept of societal improvement as the goal for, and indicator of success.

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Scripture Reference

And I saw an angel come down from Heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. (Revelation 20:1-2)

But each in his own order: Christ the first-fruit, and afterward they who are Christ's at His coming; then is the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He makes to cease all rule and all authority and power. for it is right for Him to reign until He has put all the enemies under His feet. (1 Corinthians 15:23-25)

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (Revelation 20:5)

Amillennial View

(The current Church age)

Satan has been defeated and will be bound for eternity on the end of time.

The Resurrections of the Just and the Unjust occur simultaneously to the return of Christ, which is the end of all things.

This is the proceedings prior to the final judgement.

Pre Millennial View

(A literal 1,000 year earthly reign of Christ with The Church as focal point of dominion)

Satan is locked in the abyss for a set period (Rev 20:1-2) and all his power is taken from him.

Because there are two Resurrections in Revelation 20 these who are raised at the handing over of the kingdom are those who became Christian during the millennium.

Those who have endured the Tribulation and all Christians prior to that time (1Thess 4:17) are raised from the grave having resurrection bodies and join with Christ to reign with Him on earth.

Post-Millennial View

(A figurative 1,000 years of increasing Gospel triumph in the world)

At His resurrection Jesus was given the key to death and hell (Rev 1:18). Hence this angel acts in the power of The Cross (Col 2:14-15). Satan started to be bound at the commencement of Christ's ministry and was bound from deceiving the nations because of Calvary.

The Resurrections of the Just and the Unjust occur simultaneously to the return of Christ, which is the end of all things.

Those who have endured persecution at the hand of Rome have evidenced their saving faith through their martyrdom. They and all Christians who have been born again enjoy eternal life in heaven and reign with Christ as the cloud of witnesses (Heb 12:1) who reign in life (Rom 5:17) with Christ until he comes again for the final judgement.

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Scripture Reference

*Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And so we shall ever be with the Lord.
(1 Thessalonians 4:17)*

But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. (Revelation 20:4)

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. (Isaiah 9:7)

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

Amillennial View

(The current Church age)

Believers meet with Christ upon His return. This is the final (and only) physical resurrection (1Cor 15:23).

The world goes up and down in righteousness but no ultimate victory for the gospel.

The kingdom of which Christ spoke is a spiritual entity.

Pre Millennial View

(A literal 1,000 year earthly reign of Christ with The Church as focal point of dominion)

Christ returns at a time of Tribulation before the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom. The 'meet' means to 'meet and return'. In this way believers experience are 'raptured' to return with Jesus for millennial rule.

Unbelievers remain dead until after the 1,000 year reign at which time they are judged.

Jesus returns at a time of great defeat for The Church Jesus. He establishes a physical kingdom in Jerusalem and sets about taking land that had been promised to David (1Chron 17:9).

The Kingdom has a spiritual element which is what was at hand but the real kingdom is yet to come.

Post-Millennial View

(A figurative 1,000 years of increasing Gospel triumph in the world)

Believers meet with Christ upon His return. This is the final (and only) physical resurrection (1Cor 15:23). The sense of 'meet and return' is not mentioned in any other scripture.

Whereas believers, by their faith in Christ, have already been raised to life (John 5:25), unbelievers remain dead in their sins until they awake to judgement on the last day (John 5:28-29).

Christ's kingdom is a government of increasing influence which succeeds beyond the temporal promises to David.

The Kingdom (both spiritual and temporal) had come. The fact that Jesus cast out Satan was indication of its presence (Matt 12:25&28).

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Scripture Reference

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would fight so that I might not be delivered to the Jews. But now My kingdom is not from here. (John 18:36)

Let not anyone deceive you by any means. For that Day shall not come unless there first comes a falling away, and the man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition, (2 Thessalonians 2:3)

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso reads, let him understand:) (Matthew 24:15)

Rom 9 & 11

Amillennial View

(The current Church age)

The kingdom of which Christ spoke is a spiritual entity. It is not of this world.

There is always the harbinger of persecution in the world but this is especially evident in the last days.

The Church is the succession of Israel in God's plans.

Pre Millennial View

(A literal 1,000 year earthly reign of Christ with The Church as focal point of dominion)

The kingdom of which Christ spoke is a spiritual entity. It is not of this world until Jesus returns at which time He will by force subdue the nations.

The Man of Sin is the Anti-Christ, the Beast and is yet to come at which time Tribulation will commence.

The Jerusalem temple which was destroyed in AD 69 will be rebuilt after which time the Anti-Christ arises to desecrate it.

The Jews will be converted nationally and restored to their land. They will occupy a special place in a national sense, but spiritually will be part of the Church

Post-Millennial View

(A figurative 1,000 years of increasing Gospel triumph in the world)

Christ's kingdom is not based on the world's way of power and might. It is based on truth and love, if this were not so then angels would have fought for Him to reign (Matt 26:53).

Nero was the Man of Sin whose name matches the numerical clue of '666' (Rev 13:6) and who instigated the fiercest of persecutions on the early church.

When speaking of temple desecration Jesus was referring only to second temple and an event which occurred with the sack of Jerusalem. No rebuilding of the temple is to be expected.

In the same way that the New Covenant in Christ's blood was built on, but replaced the Old Covenant. The Church commenced with but has replaced Israel as the God's covenant people. However there still remains a time of national or racial conversion of Israel.

He shall come again in glory . . . and of His Kingdom there will be no end

Scripture Reference

You, son of man, declare to the house of Israel, the temple house, so that they may be ashamed of their iniquities. And let them measure its size. (Ezekiel 43:10)

Amillennial View

(The current Church age)

Pre Millennial View

(A literal 1,000 year earthly reign of Christ with
The Church as focal point of dominion)

The millennium will see the rebuilding of a new temple (Ezek 40) which will see the reinstatement of animal sacrifices during the millennium (Ezek 40:42).

Post-Millennial View

(A figurative 1,000 years of increasing Gospel
triumph in the world)

Ezekiel's vision of a new temple is part of a prophetic pattern of a restoration so total that it replaces the ceremonial structure of the old system. Jesus Himself and the Church are God's temple in the millennium (John 1:14, 2Cor 6:16).

He shall come again in glory . . . and of His Kingdom there will be no end

VITAL RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER DOCTRINES

The doctrine of the second coming of Christ is important because it is vitally connected with other fundamental doctrines. So interwoven are these doctrines that one cannot be denied without denying the other. The doctrine of the second coming is bound up with:

- **The Doctrine of the Resurrection** ~ Christ's return brings with it the promise of resurrection for believers (John 5:28-29, 1 Corinthians 15:23, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18). For the Christian this resurrection will mean the completion of the redemption which commenced in the spiritual realm and is brought to fruition in the physical realm. Our bodies are raised incorruptible (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And so we shall ever be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)

- **The Doctrine of Sonship** ~ Scripture tells us that because of the Holy Spirit within us we are, even now, sons of God (Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6), but scripture further promises that when Jesus appears we shall be like Him as sons (1 John 3:1-2).

Now there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that Day; and not to me only, but also to all those who love His appearing. (2 Timothy 4:8)

- **The Doctrine of Rewards** ~ One might think that the benefits of redemption, being saved from hell, and the privileges of sonship, being granted favour to our prayers, are blessings enough. But scriptures affirms that there are rewards for those who have lived faithfully to Christ. These rewards, so blessed and yet so undeserved, are presented at the time of Christ's return (2 Timothy 4:7-8, Revelation 22:12, 1 Peter 5:4).

so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many. And to those who look for Him He shall appear the second time without sin to salvation. (Hebrews 9:28)

- **The Doctrine of Atonement** ~ It is an expectation of scripture that the Christian will have a godly longing to see the completion of their redemption by looking to the Christ's return. It is as if the joy of what Christ has done in our immediate, temporal lives is so excellent that His return is something to be greatly anticipated. Thus Christ's return is an extension of blessings of His atoning work on The Cross (1 Thessalonians 1:10, Hebrews 9:28).

And may the Lord make you to increase and abound in love toward one another and toward all, even as we also toward you, in order to establish your hearts blameless in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints. (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13)

- **The Doctrine of Future Judgement and Sanctification** ~ Because Christ's return is a defining aspect of His Kingship and the righteousness of His dominion rule, we see from scripture that it is accompanied by expressions of judgement and reward (2 Timothy 4:1). The prospect of Christ's return therefore is to act as a sobering influence on our lives, as contributes to our living holy, sanctified lives (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 & 5:23).

He shall come again in glory . . . and of His Kingdom there will be no end

PRACTICAL VALUE

The doctrine of the second coming of Christ is important because it is very practical. It is the basis of many practical instructions in scripture. It is accompanied with the exhortation:

- **To meet together** ~ The saints are urged not to forsake one another because they need each other especially at times of persecution or trouble (Hebrews 10:25). This gathering together has a purpose beyond mutual encouragement. It is an assembling in order to observe the Lord's Supper, an activity which Christians everywhere will perform until He comes (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:25)

- **To love one another** ~ Recognizing that Christ will return, we are to love one another (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13). We are to be patient and not to grumble (James 5:7-9). As such we are to comfort one another (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
- **To live holy lives** ~ The hope of Christ's return is to cause us to live holy lives (1 John 3:3). This is not only because of the promise of rewards for holy living but because Christ's resurrection and the promise of His triumphant, righteous return is indication that righteousness is our obligation before Christ for love toward us (Titus 2:11-13). We who were once dead in our sins and are now alive in Christ are obligated to Him and the essence of the life which He has given us to remove all uncleanness and sin from our lives (Colossians 3:3-5).

For you died, and your life has been hidden with Christ in God. When Christ our Life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness (which is idolatry) (Colossians 3:3-5)

- **To be serious and faithful in service** ~ Our joy at the good things which are to take place at Christ's return are to be tempered by a certain sobriety in this life (1 Thessalonians 5:2&6 and 1 Peter 1:13). This is a watchfulness given to prayer (1 Peter 4:7) and to faithfulness in service (Luke 12:42-44, Luke 19:12-13, Matthew 25:19-21, Romans 13:11-12) since we know that whether we are here at Christ's return or die beforehand, compared with our time with Him in eternity, our time here to serve Him in faithfulness and complete the destiny and tasks He has assigned to us, is short.

For you yourselves know accurately that the day of the Lord comes like a thief in the night. . . . Therefore let us not sleep as the rest do, but let us watch and be calm. (1 Thessalonians 5:2&6)

- **To be focused on Christ** ~ Scripture tells us to set our affections on the things which are above (Colossians 3:1). Yet there is a natural tendency to focus on those things which are of immediate concern and bring immediate enjoyment. Jesus knew how readily we are distracted by the things of this world so He cautioned that to gain the whole world was useless if a man lost his soul or his reward before Christ at His coming (Matthew 16:26-27).

For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He shall reward each one according to his works. (Matthew 16:27)

He shall come again in glory . . . and of His Kingdom there will be no end

- **To endurance** ~ Knowing that our brethren before us (or after us) have/will endure(d) much suffering for the sake of Christ's advent, we too ought not grow weary. Rather we should be reminded by the sufferings associated with Christ's coming that we ought expect to press on in patient endurance, no matter what our difficulties (1 Pet 1:6-7, 4:13 & Hebrews 10:36-37).

For you have need of patience, so that after you have done the will of God you might receive the promise. For "yet a little while, and He who shall come will come and will not delay."
(Hebrews 10:36-37)

- **To abide in Him** ~ Because the prospect of Christ's appearing is based on the fact of His resurrection, we are reminded that Jesus is alive today and thus we can and should abide in Him (1 John 2:28).
- **Not to judge one another** ~ It was an error of Adam and Eve in Eden that they wanted to decide for themselves what was good and what was bad. This tendency to act as God in the life of others continues with us today. Christ's return advises us that all judgement will be expedited then in total justice and equity. For this reason we are not to take vengeance against those who harm us but leave such things to God who will judge everyone according to their works with equity and indisputable justice. Additionally the promise of Christ's return means that we ought not pass a harsh opinion on the conduct of anyone else (1 Corinthians 4:4-5), "since there are so many things that go to make up their character which we cannot know, and so many secret failings and motives which are all concealed from us." (Albert Barnes ~ 1798-1870).

For what is our hope or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are you not even to be in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy. (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20)

- **To zeal in soul winning** ~ The prospect of Christ's return is to motivate us in seeing others come to Christ (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, 2:19-20) since His return will be accompanied by the most frightful judgments against sinners. It was in prospect of His return that Peter preached that men and women should repent (Acts 3:19-21).
- **To pastoral fidelity** ~ Leaders have particular responsibility in Christ. They are to watch over the souls of those whom God has placed in their charge (Hebrews 13:17). It is essential therefore that those having such responsibilities carefully feed and care for the ones assigned to them, recognizing that God will require an account of their ministry of them (2 Timothy 4:1-2, 1 Peter 5:2-4).

Feed the flock of God among you, taking the oversight, not by compulsion, but willingly; nor for base gain, but readily; nor as lording it over those allotted to you by God, but becoming examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a never-fading crown of glory. (1 Peter 5:2-4)

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Nicene Creed was written as a statement of our Trinitarian faith. For this reason The Creed is careful to assign God status to the Holy Spirit. The Creed defines a particular relationship wherein the Holy Spirit “proceeds from The Father and The Son” and yet is to be “equally worshipped with The Father and The Son”. In this we see a concept which is difficult for the human mind to grasp. There is an order or hierarchy in the Trinity but this hierarchy in no way compromises the equality of the Godhead or the authority of each member.

Thus to understand the Holy Spirit is to understand the spirit of submission. There are many times in life when the Christian establishes his authority by acts of loving and humble service. To grasp how to do this is to understand something of what it means to walk in The Spirit (Romans 8:4).

We will be considering this blessed member of the Godhead along the following lines:

1. The distinctiveness of the Holy Spirit across the Old and New Testaments
2. The personhood of the Holy Spirit
 - a) reasons why the personhood has been misunderstood
 - b) the necessity of His personhood as Comforter
3. The attributes and actions of the Holy Spirit as a person
 - a) personal characteristics as ascribed to the Holy Spirit
 - b) the actions of the Holy Spirit as being those of a person
4. The consequence to the Christian of The Spirit being a person

THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ACROSS THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

There can be much confusion and error concerning the personality, operations and manifestations of the Holy Spirit. It is vital to the faith of every Christian that the nature and role of the Holy Spirit be seen in its true light and held in right proportion. In seeking for an understanding of the person and work of the Holy Spirit, we contrast the facts concerning Him into two covenants, the Old Testament and the New Testament.

1. Old Testament

The Old Testament period was one of preparation and of waiting. The truths known were important ones but they often came by way of type or imagery. They often expressed themselves as object lessons in the lives of the Old Testament saints. To read the Old Testament scriptures it appears that there was little personal contact between man and God. For the most part interaction with God was expressed through the agency of priests or prophets. Only occasionally a patriarch or a prophet spoke face to face with God.

Even so, the Holy Spirit was active in this period, but the number of times He is mentioned in the Old Testament as contrasted with the number of times in the New, show us the marked difference in His ministrations. The Spirit is spoken of eighty-eight times in the Old Testament and more than half as

We believe in the Holy Spirit

many times in the Books of Acts alone; while in the entire New Testament He is mentioned more than three times for every reference to Him in the Old.

It has been said that during the Old Testament period the Holy Spirit came *upon* men (1 Samuel 19:20) temporarily only, to inspire them for special service and then left them when the particular task was ended. He did not abide with or dwell in them.

And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. (1 Samuel 19:20)

2. New Testament

The New Testament witnessed an advent of the Holy Spirit which has proceeded to the present day. This era may truly be termed the dispensation of the Spirit. The outpouring of The Holy Spirit at Pentecost marked the dawning of a new day in the Spirit's relationship with mankind. He came to inhabit the Church. All the effectual work which the Church has done has been wrought in the power of the Spirit. Unbelief, doubt, criticism and persecution may attack it, but not overwhelm it. The Church, the true body of Christ, as indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God, is as indestructible as is the Throne of God.

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. (Acts 2:38-39)

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A PERSON

Not everyone readily accepts that there is personality or personhood in the Holy Spirit. It is vital to His ministry as proceeding from The Father and The Son and to His function as giver of life and inspirer of the sacred scriptures that He possesses or contains in Himself the elements of personhood or personal existence. Without such He cannot relate comprehensively either to the other members of the Godhead or to mankind.

Yet, it is a matter of historical record that the personhood of the Holy Spirit has been disputed and denied. While the Scriptures furnish no ground for such disputation or denial, there are some possible explanations of the manner by which these errors of interpretation arose. "Various manifestations of God the Father make it comparatively easy to conceive of His Fatherhood in terms of personality; The Incarnation makes it almost, if not altogether, impossible to disbelieve in the personality of Jesus Christ; but the acts and workings of the Holy Spirit are so secret and mystical, so much is said of His influence, grace, power and gifts, that we are prone to think of Him as an influence, a power, a manifestation or emanation of the divine nature rather than as a person" – Evans.

Thus it may be that people have struggled to accept the personhood of the Spirit because:

- the Holy Spirit is not always associated with the Father and the Son in the salutations and greetings of the New Testament (1 Thessalonians 3:11),

Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. (1 Thessalonians 3:11)

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- the word or name “spirit” is neuter in the Greek (pneuma), or
- contrasted with God The Father and Jesus, The Spirit seems impersonal especially since the names and symbols used for the Holy Spirit, which are suggestive of Him being impersonal, such as: breath (Job 33:4), wind (John 3:8), fire (Revelation 4:5), oil (Exodus 29:7) and water (John 7:37-39). Yet Jesus is referred to as a door (John 10:9), a light (John 9:5), a rock (Matthew 16:18) and a lamb (John 1:29) but there is no doubt about His personhood.

Even so, the evidence that Scripture counts the Holy Spirit as a person is clear in that:

- masculine personal pronouns are routinely (if not universally) applied to the Holy Spirit. (John 15:26 & John 16:7-8, 13, 14), and
- there are numerous associations of the Holy Spirit with the Father, the Son and with individuals. (Matthew 28:19, 2 Corinthians 12:14) and such associations, which are personal, can only be understood in relation to personalities.

Moreover we see Christ’s use of the masculine noun ‘parakletos’ at the last supper when referring to the Spirit (John 14:16-17). In fact Jesus Himself was a Comforter (1 John 2:2) to the disciples, and at the last supper was offering the consolation that, although He was about to depart, the disciples should expect another Comforter (parakletos). Thus everything Jesus was to the disciples, the other Comforter was to be, and more. A Person was coming to take the place of a Person.

1. Personal characteristics ascribed to the Holy Spirit

By characteristics we do not mean hands, feet, or eyes, for these denote bodily attributes. Rather we mean qualities such as knowledge, feeling and will, which denotes personhood. The Holy Spirit may be considered a person because He is depicted as possessing:

- Intelligence ~ The Holy Spirit is not merely an illuminating power or influence, but is a Person, possessed of intellect, who knows the deep things of God and reveals them to us (Romans 8:27, 1 Corinthians 2:10-11).

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

- Love ~ “We owe our salvation just as truly to the love of the Spirit as we do to the love of the Father and the love of the Son” – Torrey. It is the Spirit’s ministry to impact us with God’s love (Romans 5:5 & 15:5).

And hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (Romans 5:5)

- Will ~ An ‘it’, that which is impersonal, is not possessed of volition yet we read that the Holy Spirit moves according as He wills (1 Corinthians 12:11).

But all these work that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. (1 Corinthians 12:11)

- Grief ~ One cannot grieve the law of gravity nor cause the wind to mourn. Therefore, unless the Holy Spirit is a person, Paul’s injunction not to grieve the Holy Spirit is meaningless (Ephesians 4:30).

We believe in the Holy Spirit

2. Personal acts ascribed to the Holy Spirit

Not only are The Spirit's characteristics that of a person but His actions and way of behaving speak of personhood. Throughout the Scriptures the Holy Spirit is represented as a personal agent, performing acts attributable only to a person.

- He speaks ~ The Spirit is spoken of as crying out (Gal 4:6), as bearing testimony (John 15:26) and as speaking to the church (Revelation 2:7)
- He makes intercession ~ The Spirit leads in prayer and causes us to intercede in a manner appropriate to the circumstances (Romans 8:26)
- He teaches ~ (John 11:26 & 16:12-14, and Nehemiah 9:20)
- He leads and guides ~ (Romans 8:14, Acts 16:6-7)
- He calls and commissions men ~ (Acts 13:2 & 20:28)

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SPIRIT BEING A PERSON

There is a sense in which we may believe all of this but not have it impact our lives. We should enquire of ourselves whether in our real thought of Him, or in our practical attitude toward Him, do we treat the Holy Spirit as a person? Do we indeed regard Him as real a person as Jesus Christ; as loving, wise and strong, as worthy of our confidence and love and surrender as He? The Spirit came to be to the disciples, and to us, so what Christ had been to them during the days of His personal companionship with them. (John 14:16-17). He would be again via the Spirit, the Comforter.

To know 'the communion and fellowship of the Holy Ghost?' (2 Corinthians 13:14) will result in changes in ourselves:

- **Concerning worship** ~ If the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person and yet is unknown or ignored as such, He is being deprived and robbed of the love and adoration which are His due. If, on the other hand, however, He is only an influence, force or power emanating from God, we are practicing idolatry or false worship.
- **Concerning our heart of service** ~ It is necessary to decide whether the Holy Spirit is a power or force that we are to get hold of and use, or whether He is a Person, who is to control and use us. The one conception leads to self-exaltation and self assertion, the other to self-abasement and self-renunciation.
- **Concerning our understanding of Christian experience** ~ It is of the highest experimental value that we know whether the Holy Spirit is only a mere influence and impersonal force, or whether He is an ever present Friend and Helper, a Divine Companion and Guide.

THE HOLY SPIRIT ~ THE GIVER OF LIFE

Without doubt the most recurring theme of the Bible is the notion of life. The first chapter opens with the creation account of life having originated with God. The creation account then moves to the tragedy of Adam's neglect of the Tree of Life (Genesis 2:9) resulting to death entering via man's sin (Genesis 2:16-17). The Book of Genesis then offers Jesus, the promised seed (Genesis 3:15), as the life-remedy to our folly and death. Finally the Book of Revelation closes with mankind being granted access to the tree of life and the water of life (Revelation 22:14 & 17). So as the Nicene Creed considers the essence of the faith it necessarily addresses itself to the source of all life, the Holy Spirit. These notes will show that God's Spirit is the source of created life as well as the source of eternal life. It is a significant truth to declare that the Holy Spirit is The Giver of life.

We will be considering this the Holy Spirit along the following lines:

1. The Holy Spirit is God
 - a) The Spirit has eternal and divine characteristics
 - b) The Holy Spirit is coupled in equality with that of God and of Christ
2. The names and images of the Holy Spirit as indicative of His nature
3. The work and ministry of the Holy Spirit
 - a) His ministry in relation to the cosmos
 - b) His ministry in relation to the unbeliever
 - c) His ministry in relation to the believer

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD

The Nicene Creed tells us that the Holy Spirit is Lord as well as giver of life. It tells us that He is equal with The Father and The Son in that He too is to be worshipped and glorified. Since all life comes from God it is appropriate to first consider the sense in which the Holy Spirit is God.

1. The Spirit has eternal and divine characteristics

We can see that The Spirit is God because He is:

- Eternal ~ The Spirit has neither beginning nor end. He cohabits eternity with The Father and The Son (Hebrews 9:14)
- Omnipresent ~ The Spirit knows no boundaries. There is no place we can flee from God's face or Spirit Psalm 139:7-10
- Omnipotent ~ The Holy Spirit is not merely the conduit for God's power, He is and has that power in and of Himself (Luke 1:35).

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:14)

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. (Psalms 139:7-8)

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- Omniscience ~ The Spirit of God searches all things even the deep things of the heart and mind of God (1 Corinthians 2:10-11). Given that God is infinite the deep things of God must be very deep. Yet the Holy Spirit knows and understands them all!

God has revealed them to us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, yea the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God. (1 Corinthians 2:10-11)

(See also John 14:26 and John 16:12-1)

2. The Holy Spirit is coupled in equality with that of God and of Christ

The scriptures frequently associate The Spirit with tasks that are achievable by God only or the scriptures speak of Him as Lord or as being co-equal with the others in the Godhead. The Holy Spirit can be seen as God in that:

- He is included in the Godhead when Christ makes the declaration that the gospel will ultimately tame and bless all nations (Matthew 28:19).
- He called God and Lord when spoken of as He who administers all spiritual gifts in the Church (1 Corinthians 12:44-46)
- He is included as part of the Godhead In the apostolic benedictions which are so often included in their New Testament letters (2 Corinthians 13:14).

Now there are diversities of gifts but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which works all in all (1 Corinthians 12:44)

Thus In many unmistakable ways, God, in His word, distinctly proclaims that the Holy Spirit is not only a person, but a divine person.

THE NAMES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Scripture offers many names for the Holy Spirit. Each name or image reveals various aspects of His person and work. Whilst the numerousness of these titles might warrant detailed study of them, it would seem that we are best served to consider that by which He is most commonly known. He is the *Holy Spirit*.

Mankind is so well acquainted with sin and so fallen that it can be hard for us to understand that holiness is a life and death matter. Adam and Eve's unholy act brought death into the world. Christ's holy life and self-sacrificing crucifixion paved the way for our forgiveness and return to a holiness which is acceptable to God. Scripture can appear brutally frank in its assessments concerning the centrality of holiness. It tells us that the soul that sins shall die (Ezekiel 18:4). Thus for the Holy Spirit to do His life-giving work He must not only create life but operate so as to prevent death, or said differently; He must lead in the life giving, life affirming steps of holiness.

Holiness and life are inseparable in the Holy Spirit's life-giving role. The Holy Spirit was the means by which the cosmos and life was first created (Genesis 1:2) and we are told with each creation activity that the Spirit's output was 'good' (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25 & 31). In this way we see that holiness was the hallmark of The Spirit's first creative endeavors. Similarly when a person is born again of The Spirit, we must expect to find that The Spirit's fruit in that person will be a fruit unto life and goodness and holiness.

The Lord and giver of life

Let us now consider the names and images used for the Holy Spirit in the Bible and in each instance we will note that there is an association with 'life'.

- **As 'breath' we see the Holy Spirit undertaking to breathe life** into Adam (Genesis 2:7), into the resurrected Israel (Ezekiel 37:1-10). It is the Spirit who Job declares has created him (Job 33:4). The Spirit is the out-breathing of God, the life of God going forth to quicken.

The Spirit of God made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life. Job 33:4

- **As 'wind' we see the Holy Spirit depicted as a moving force** who acts in power (Acts 2.2) and mystery (John 3:6-8). It is good for us to recall that the wind is detected both as a string gale force and a gentle zephyr breeze. So too the Holy Spirit is known to move in might and gentleness.

The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit. John 3:7

- **As the 'Holy' Spirit we see God's Spirit working in the hearts of mankind** to bring them to faith in Christ and then to lead them on in righteousness. There is a tendency to think of holiness in terms of 'moral excellence'. This is only one sense of its meaning. The word 'holy' means 'other'. Thus God is holy because there is no other thing in the creation that is like Him. So the Christian, being lead by the Holy Spirit into 'holiness', will find themselves doing things in a manner different to the way men and women in the world act. The Christian is being 'otherly' compared with how those in the world behave.

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

The Holy Spirit is not called Holy with more frequency than the Father and the Son because He is more holy, for infinite holiness does not admit of degrees. He is designated thus because it is His work to make holy.

- **As 'The Spirit of the Living God' the Holy Spirit working to fulfill the New Covenant** in Christ's blood (Matthew 26:28) as He writes God's Law on our hearts (Jeremiah 31:33). Thus He is portrayed as the One Who writes the image of Christ upon the 'Fleshy tables of the hearts'. In this way, the believer becomes a living epistle whose life of dedication to Christ can be read by all (2 Corinthians 3:3).

- **As the 'Spirit of Truth' makes the Bible alive to us.** Being the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17), the Holy Spirit inspired the Bible writers so that they would write of Christ (1 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21). He then assists us that we can understand the Word of God. Being the Spirit of Truth, He is also the author of The Word of Truth for all scripture is given by the inspiration of God.

Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. 2 Corinthians 3:3

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Many are the works and ministries of the Holy Spirit. Whilst the full extent of His works is wide and varied we can perhaps summarize them with the observation that their primary function centres on

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the creation of life for we find that the Holy Spirit was present at creation (Genesis 1:2), He contributed to the creation of Adam's life (Genesis 2:7), He was the means by which Jesus Christ was conceived in Mary's womb (Matthew 1:18), He raised Jesus Christ from the dead (Romans 8:11), He is the means by which the unbeliever is born again (John 3:5-8) and He guides the Christian to walk in the character of Christ (Romans 8:3-4) and He blesses the Christian with abundant life (John 7:38).

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

(See also Genesis 2:7, John 3:5-8, John 6:63, Titus 3:5, James 1:18)

In taking up the work of the Holy Spirit we need to bear in mind the truth that the Father, the Son and the Spirit are active in the work of each individual person. The Father is the Author, the Son is the Executor and the Spirit is the Energizer. The Spirit is the one who energizes and brings to completion the acts begun.

1. In Relation to the material Universe

- **With regard to its creation** ~ It is clear from scripture that the Holy Spirit figures prominently in the creation of the universe (Psalm 33:6) and in the formation of each human life (Job 33:4). There is no person on earth who has the power of life within themselves. It is God only who gives life and thus every person alive owes God all homage and all worship for their existence.

By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth Psalm 33:6

The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life Job 33:4

That is why to first commandment with a promise is that we should honour our father and mother (Ephesians 6:2). The commandment is that we will honour those from whom we derived life and the promise is that by so doing we will live long (Deuteronomy 5:16). This commandment is basic to the whole of the Bible's story. God was Adam's maker. If Adam had obeyed God, his Maker, then he would have lived.

- **With regard to its restoration and preservation** ~ Life is at the centre of the Holy Spirit's ministry. Not only is He the one who instills it in the creation, but He also restores it and preserves it.

We lament what has become of the universe because of Adam's sin, but the promise of scripture is the restoration of all things (Psalm 104:29-30, Acts 3:21). It would be unseemly to imagine that Christ was impotent to redress what Satan has done. It would be an offence to consider that power of Adam's sin is greater than the power of Christ's righteousness! Therefore as Christians we look for the day when the restoration of all things will be completed (Romans 8:23) and death itself will be swallowed up in life (1 Corinthians 15:26)!

You hide Your face, they are troubled; You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the earth.
(Psalms 104:29-30)

Charles Spurgeon had an abiding confidence not only in the Holy Spirit's creative force but in His re-creative force. He said: "I expect the same power which turned the World upside down once, will still continue to do it. The Holy Ghost would never suffer the imputation to rest upon His Holy Name that He was not able to convert the World. Christ will have the whole Earth . . . God will not be disappointed of His purpose. This ruined World shall yet sing His praises. . . . The whole of His creatures shall magnify His Holy Name."

2. In relation to unregenerate men

The principal work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the unsaved is that of conviction concerning sin. We should draw a distinction between the conviction of conscience and that of the Holy Spirit. Conscience convicts of wrong doing. The Spirit convicts of wrong being. Conscience can be likened to a courtroom - judge, jury and witnesses - all dealing with the wrong done, and from which there is no escape. The Spirit convicts and at the same time, brings a ray of light by revealing a solution and way of escape. This is sometimes called 'Evangelical conviction'

- ***The Holy Spirit strives with sinners***

The Spirit strives with men; seeking to restrain them from a course of lawlessness and godlessness. This striving is done through the medium of human instrumentalities, such as Enoch, Noah (Genesis 6:3) and all believers.

Jesus said "Ye are the salt of the earth". It is the function of light hold back or restrain darkness, and that of salt to preserve from

corruption. So the Holy Spirit, through the Church and individual believers, by influence, example and testimony, strives with men against courses of sin and iniquity.

And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years Genesis 6:3

- ***The Holy Spirit witnesses to sinners***

The Spirit witnesses to the unsaved by means of the truth concerning Jesus Christ. Very occasionally we find the Holy Spirit witnessing concerning Christ without the agency of men (Acts 9:4). But most of the time the Holy Spirit uses Christians who share their faith and the life of Christ with others (Acts 1:8, 1 Peter 3:15). Witnessing can be daunting to some people because they think that they have to win the argument with the unbeliever. In the courtroom it is the function of the barrister to pose the argument and it is the task of the witness to present the facts. So too when we witness; we are to share the fact of Christ's life and leave it to the Holy Spirit to shape that witness into an argument which will convict the sinner of their sin and unbelief.

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, He shall testify of Me John 15:26

(See also Acts 5:30-32)

- ***The Holy Spirit convicts or convinces sinners***

The Spirit convicts or reproves the world of sin, righteousness and judgment.

The first proposition which Satan put to Eve in the Garden of Eden was to enquire: "Has God said?" (Genesis 3:1). Satan's first attack was an attack on faith. In making this assault we find that Satan was successful in luring mankind to death (John 8:44). Thus we see that all sin and death have their root in unbelief. The most grievous form of unbelief is the rejection of Christ. For this reason The Spirit, convicts, not only of the sin of lawbreaking, but of the sin of unbelief; 'of sin, because they believe not on me' (John 16:9).

And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgement. Of sin, because they believe not on me, Of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see me no more. Of judgement, because the prince of this world is judged John 16:8-11

By fastening the truth of Christ as King and Redeemer upon the sinner's conscience, the Holy Spirit does not extinguish, but, on the contrary, consummates and intensifies the sense of all other sins. As the Spirit's conviction does it work, it drives men and women to yield to Christ's Cross as their only hope of salvation. The Spirit brings, faith (Ephesians 2:8, Galatians 5:22) to the unbeliever and the unbeliever comes alive since he has a lively faith, being as how "The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17)

He convicts the world of judgment made certain by reason of the judgment of Satan already accomplished. In it all other judgments were decided and are grounded. This judgment of Satan was secured at the Cross and he was potentially rendered powerless. This, together with the judgment of those who choose to remain allied to Satan, will be consummated at the Great Day.

In this three-fold work, the Spirit is glorifying Christ. He shows us that it is sin not to believe in Christ, reveals to us the righteousness of Christ, and the victorious work of Christ in relation to Satan. Our task is only to preach the word of truth, looking to the Holy Spirit to produce the conviction. (Acts 2:4:37)

3. In relation to believers

The Spirit's ministry to the believer is on a vast scale. It is a measure of our fallenness that we should see the problem between ourselves and God as being our sin. Without doubt, our sins are an offence to God, but the root of offence lies not in the sins that we do but the sinners that we are. This is one of the many reasons why Christ's Cross had to be followed by His Resurrection. Without the resurrection, the Holy Spirit would not have become available to revive us who were dead in our sins (Ephesians 2:1).

Dead things smell! No matter how much you forgive them for being dead they continue to smell. And even when they get past the stinking stage they are of no value for relationship. Thus it is the Holy Spirit's role to stop the stench and to make us attractive to God for relationship by reviving us. He brings eternal life to us that we may be pleasing to God.

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins Ephesians 2:1

Make no mistake that it is a commandment of God that mankind will possess continuing, permanent, eternal life. His first commandment to us is not a commandment about "doing" but about "being". It is required of us that we will . . . "love the Lord our God with all of our heart, mind and strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5, Mark 12:30). In this we see God's expectation that every moment, both our

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waking moments and our sleeping moments, will be engaged in total heartfelt, intellectual and physical commitment to Him. Clearly this is not a matter of “doing” it is a matter of “being”. And it is impossible to achieve, unless the eternal and timeless being, God Himself, helps us. This is the role of the Holy Spirit. He brings eternal life to us and indwells us so that He who neither slumbers nor sleeps will ensure that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts (Romans 5:5).

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. Mark 12:30

The Devil’s temptation of Eve in Eden was the inversion of a divine truth about ‘being’. He told her that if she knew about good and evil that she could be as God. His inversion or reversal of truth was to have Eve believe that if she knew everything that she would be as God. She agreed with Satan that “knowledge” precedes “being”. The fact is that “being” precedes “knowledge”, especially the knowledge of what is good and bad. Many is the time that we set out to do a good thing only to have events or new information reveal to us that our good thing was actually quite a silly plan. We all live with the expression: “It seemed like a good idea at the time”.

God is the only one competent to judge right from wrong because, being eternal in character and thus living outside of time, He sees the end from the beginning. He is the only one who knows all the facts of our lives and thus is the only one competent to judge.

See now that we have three matters pertaining to the Spirit’s ministry to the Christian:

- He revives the Christian so that we can relate to God in life,
- He becomes the life force within us that we will love God from deep within our being,
- He brings the wisdom of God’s eternal being to us so that we can rest in His experience and knowledge so as to know how to choose and do right from wrong.

See too that the prime focus of His ministry is “life”. As we consider the Spirit’s role in our lives we should look to the centrality of His task of being our being. Or said differently that we should focus on the life-giving elements of His ministry. The Spirit’s ministries to the Christian are:

- ***The Holy Spirit regenerates***

In the same way that Jesus was begotten of the Holy Spirit, so every man who becomes a child of God, must be begotten of the Spirit of God (John 3:3-6).

It is an observable fact that dead people tend not to speak very much. Nor are they able to believe anything. So if we are spiritually dead toward God before becoming born again then we might ask ourselves the question: Does a person have to believe in order to be born again? Or being dead in the first place, must a person be born again in order to believe?

Jesus answered and said unto him, ‘Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God’ Nicodemus said unto Him ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God John 3:3-6

See also Titus 3:5, John 6:63, 1 Peter 1:23, Ephesians 5:25&26.

This question constitutes a matter of earnest debate within the Church which has proceeded for hundreds of years. At the heart of the debate lies the sovereignty of God. These notes are not the place to pursue that debate, but the question does cause us to recognize that when the Holy Spirit leads a sinner to Christ's Cross to seek forgiveness He brings both faith and life. This intimacy between faith and life can be seen in the scripture "the just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrew 10:38, John 3:36).

- ***The Holy Spirit Baptizes into the body of Christ***

Being dead in our sins Jesus Christ, in His Resurrection and Ascension, assumed His full prerogative as life-giver to His mystical body, the Church. The new birth or the regenerative act, therefore, is the imparting of the divine nature to man (2 Peter 1:4). Rather than a change of nature, the Holy Spirit being the medium of the transmitting of the new nature.

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.
1 Corinthians 12:12-13

- ***The Holy Spirit indwells***

The Spirit comes to indwell or take up His abode in the life of the believer at regeneration and abides there, no matter how imperfect or immature that life may be. The indwelling of the Spirit is an advance upon the work of regeneration. He thus enables growth, in the new life begun. We need to realize and recognize His abiding presence in the temple of our bodies. This recognition should make them hallowed and lead us to keep them undefiled and free from sin. Recognition of His presence is also the secret of the realization of His Power (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's

- ***The Holy Spirit seals***

In that the Holy Spirit seals, He makes the believer His own (Ephesians 1:13-14 & 4:30).

The Ephesians well understood the figure of

See also Romans 8:9 & 1 Corinthians 3:16

the seal, for Ephesus was a seaport, carrying on an extensive lumber business. The lumber merchant came to Ephesus, selected and purchased his timber and stamped it with the acknowledged sign of ownership, the signet. Oftentimes he left his purchase in the harbor with other floats and sometime later sent a trusted agent, who compared the impress with the signet and took away the lumber belonging to his master. The Spirit is the signet seal of ownership which God places upon the life. He is the Divine imprint and pledge of the everlasting inheritance.

- ***The Holy Spirit gives assurance***

The Spirit gives the assurance and confidence which are necessary to the peace and quiet rest promised to the Child of God. He witnesses to the fact of the Sonship of the believer. "The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). (See also 2 Corinthians 1:12&22).

It is important to note that Jesus is declared to be the son of God according to the spirit of holiness and the resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:4). Given that Jesus' sonship is attested to by the spirit of holiness and the life, we should not be surprised that the Third Person of the Trinity will remind and assure us that we are God's sons according to that same spirit of holiness and resurrection life.

- ***The Holy Spirit strengthens***

The Holy Spirit is our strength and ability to live the Christian life (Ephesians 3:16). The Spirit's power becomes operative in our lives in the actual embodiment and enthronement of Christ, described as His dwelling (permanently settling) in our hearts, being rooted and grounded in love, made strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, resulting in our being filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:17-19).

That He would grant you according to the riches of His Glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man Ephesians 3:16

- ***The Holy Spirit liberates***

In the Book of Romans The Apostle Paul wrote extensively about being a zombie! Well not exactly, but there is a certain similarity between the unsaved person and these mythical Hollywood creatures. In horror films a zombie is represented as the "living dead". There is a sense in which an unregenerate or unsaved person is also a member of the "living dead". The sinner is alive to the power of sin but dead to God.

Even after being born again, the Christian is deeply aware of the residual power of sin that abides in their flesh or carnal nature. This power of sin is so pervasive that Paul refers to it as being "a body of death". Paul sees in himself some desire to serve God but is deeply aware that every attempt to honour that desire results in failure because the power of death in his flesh wreaks havoc of his intentions. In desperation he cries out "Who will deliver me from this body of death?" After which he answer his own question "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 7:24-25). Following this Paul declares that the body of death has been overcome by "the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus which has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2).

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2)

- ***The Holy Spirit empowers***

'More power' is the universal cry, and it is the purpose and provision of God that His children should be adequately and permanently empowered. On the day of Pentecost the mighty gift was brought in fulfillment so that men who were weak and timid before, became strong and bold for Christ. No limit is known to that power. It is still 'The exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think' that God would have us to expect and receive' - Soltau

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

(See also Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 2:1-5)

- ***The Holy Spirit produces the Fruit of Christlike graces***

Even though the cry of this age may well be “More power!”, the message of the gospel and of Christ’s life is “More principle!”. We are reminded of this when we see Christ as Lamb upon the throne. The elders and angels declare that power and honour and might belong to Jesus because He is *worthy*. English preacher Paul Scanlon says: “Never let your gifting take you further than your character can sustain”.

Mankind’s most desperate need is not for power but for righteousness. It is the Spirit’s prime desire to grow us in character even more than in power.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law Galatians 5:22-23

(See also Romans 5:5, 14:17 & 15:13)

Thus all real beauty of character, all real

Christ-likeness in us, is the Holy Spirit’s work. He is to the Christian what the sap is to the tree, the source of productive life and power. The Scripture speaks of character attributes such as love, peace, joy, patience, gentleness, righteousness, faith, meekness and temperance as being the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). This fruit is not service or soul winning, though this needs to be emphasized. Instead they are the fruit of Christian character. “Fruit does not consist in some strenuous exercise. It is not a laborious performance to bring forth some excellence. It is a natural normal result of a healthy condition. If the soul is in health, and the Spirit fills it, there will be fruit”. - O’Rear

The fruit of the Spirit as here described is really a portrayal of the character of Jesus Christ. We have here in substance that which Paul states in Gal 2:20, ‘Christ liveth in me’.

- ***The Holy Spirit makes possible all forms of communion with God.***

“The Holy Spirit is the great Director of prayer, and only prayer in the Spirit is accepted and answered. He examines and tests the motives for our asking. He suggests the subjects for our petitions. He undertakes all the wonderful

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost Jude 20

(See also Ephesians 6:18, Romans 8:26-27)

mystery of prayer from within expressed in words, or in groanings that are unutterable. He understands the will of God for us, the plans designed for us by God; the service we can acceptable render to God. To us the next day or hour is veiled but not to Him, therefore, He loves and longs to have such control of our thoughts and desires, as to be able, unhindered, to indite prayer, and such prayer as He knows is according to the will of God, and so must be answered’ – Soltau

“It is Christ’s mediatorship with the Father and the Holy Spirit mediatorship with us that gives us this high privilege of praying in the name of Jesus, as it is written ‘For through Him we both have access in one Spirit unto the Father’ – Gordon

CONCERNING PRAYER

The Nicene Creed is a statement of belief. It defines the faith as resting on approximately 30 articles and it speaks of the many things which God, as God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, has done. Yet it includes only one direct statement concerning what a Christian is required to do. Its one directive is that God is to be “worshipped and glorified”. Of all the things which the Creed might require of us, this is the one explicit obligation placed upon the Christian. The Creed does not call us to walk in holiness. It doesn’t mandate that we should give to the poor. It doesn’t even say that we must read our Bibles. Its one injunction is that we worship God.

On the face of it this might seem a limited obligation. A selfish and superficial understanding might permit us to imagine that for as long as we go to church on Sunday or read a Psalm each day, that we have met our obligation. This is very far from the

truth. Scripture requires that the Christian lives life entirely unto The Lord. We are to love Him with all of our heart, mind and strength (Deuteronomy 6:5) because He is our Maker. We should live entirely unto Him because it was He who died for us (2 Corinthians 5:15). The Creed’s expectation as stated is only brief, but it is an obligation which impacts the whole of our life and being.

And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. (Deuteronomy 6:5)

and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. (2 Corinthians 5:15)

We are about to consider prayer, which is a most important aspect of our worship. But even though prayer is important, it is only one aspect of that which required of us to “worship and glorify” Him. We will address prayer along the following lines:

1. Reasons for praying
 - a) we pray because we are needy
 - b) we pray because God answers prayer
 - c) we pray because prayer and answered prayer draws us closer to God
2. Instructions concerning prayer
 - a) Jesus’ instruction concerning prayer
 - b) types of prayer
 - c) those things which are fitting objects for our prayers
3. Hindrances to answered prayer

REASONS FOR PRAYING

The circumstances of our prayer will change according to the situation in which we find ourselves. Sometimes we will be praying for guidance or for provision or for health or for blessing. On other occasions we will be less self-focused and be praying for the needs of others or for those in authority or for missions or those in the persecuted church. On other occasions we will be less man-centered and lift our hearts toward the God of heaven who loves us with an undying love. Whatever the focus of our prayer it is prudent to consider the reasons for praying.

And he spoke a parable to them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint (Luke 18:1)

He is to be worshipped and glorified

Because prayer is so widely acknowledged as a necessity to the Christian life it would be natural to think that we are commanded to pray. The scriptures are clear in their expectation that we ought always to pray (Luke 18:1) in a manner unceasing (Luke 18:1 & 21:36, Romans 12:12; Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2) but this expectation is never stated as a commandment. The Law is remarkably silent about personal prayer. Its main guidance lies in the area of public worship and temple ceremonies. Therefore let us observe from the outset that we can come to prayer without condemnation and in acknowledgement that it is as much our personal need as it is our love for God that leads us to pray.

1. We pray out of need and thankfulness

If scripture exhorts but does not command us to pray then why should we pray? The Heidelberg Catechism (1563) posed the same question (Qn 116) and concluded that the Christian needs to pray:

“Because prayer is the most important part of thankfulness God requires of us. And also because God gives His grace and Holy Spirit only to those who pray continually and groan inwardly, asking God for these gifts and thanking Him for them.”

In this way, prayer comes from our hearts as an acknowledgement that we need help (Psalm 50:15) and as an expression of our obligation to be thankful in the light of God’s many past helps to us. As one other Catechism puts it: “Prayer is an offering up of our desires to God, in the name of Christ, by the help of His Spirit; with confession of our sins and thankful acknowledgement of His mercies” (Westminster Larger Catechism - Qn 178).

Offer to God thanksgiving; and pay your vows to the Most High; and call on Me in the day of trouble; and I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me. (Psalms 50:14-15)

2. We pray because God answers prayer

God is not a waster of time. He did not tarry in His creation activities but concluded all things within six days. The tendency to idleness is an attribute despised by scripture (Proverbs 20:13 & 24:33-34, Matthew 20:6). Instead scripture urges us to “redeem the time” (Ephesians 5:26, Colossians 4:5). Therefore God would not have us spend time in prayer and petition if there were no prospect of fruit or answers. We should pray because God answers prayer (Matthew 7:7-8). Again the Heidelberg Catechism alerts us to the extent of God’s attentiveness to our prayers when, in explaining the reason for the word ‘Amen’ at our prayer’s end, it says (Qn 129):

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you: For every one that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened. (Matthew 7:7-8)

“ ‘Amen’ means, This is sure to be! It is even more sure that God listens to my prayer than that I really desire what I pray for.”

3. We pray because answered prayer draws us closer to God

We worship a God who is both transcendent (far above our capacity to understand or relate to Him) and yet imminent (closely at hand and keenly intimate). Prayer is that moment when we engage

He is to be worshipped and glorified

God at both ends of this spectrum of being. We come to a God who cares for us and is keen to engage with our desires and every need. And yet even in the very act of presenting our petitions or thanksgiving to Him, we are acknowledging that He is sovereign and, being able to aid us, possessed of a power beyond that of our mortal existence.

Thus prayer is meant to lead us to a place of joyous humility before a God who demonstrates His attentiveness to our prayers by answering them. The Psalmist declares that his love for the Lord, his sense

I love the LORD, because he has heard my voice and my supplications. Because he has inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. (Psalms 116:1-2)

of intimacy with Him, is based on the fact that God hears his cries (Psalms 116:1). There are two lessons that we can draw from this verse. Firstly how would the Psalmist know that His prayers are heard except that God answered them? Secondly the fact of God's responsiveness created a thankfulness in David which in turn caused him to lead a life committed to God (Psalms 116:2). Prayer was not just a means of David getting his own way and having his needs met. God is not to be exploited! We cannot allow ourselves to imagine His imminence takes precedence over His transcendence.

INSTRUCTION CONCERNING PRAYER

Prayer is a matter both of form and of content. We will consider the form of prayer by considering Jesus' instructions as to how prayers should be offered. After that we will consider the types of prayers which we are to offer.

1. Jesus' instruction concerning prayer

Jesus was a man of prayer. There are many accounts of Him withdrawing from ministry and friends so as to engage in prayer (Mark 6:46, Matthew 14:4 & 26:36, Luke 6:12). Not only did He live a life of prayer but He gave much useful instruction to us as to how we should pray. Jesus taught that:

- **Prayer must be accompanied by faith** ~ For prayer to be effective it must be rest on faith as its foundation (Matthew 21:21-22). We are told that it is futile to place our requests before God if we do not ask in faith, believing that God will respond (James 1:6).
- **Prayer must be offered in Jesus' Name** ~ To pray in the Name of Jesus is to use that Name which is "above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Ephesians 1:21). Praying in Jesus Name is to call upon Him who possesses the ultimate in power and authority. And yet there is a more earnest reason that we should pray in Jesus Name.

The sinfulness of man and his distance from God as a result of that sinfulness is so great that we can have no access into God's presence except there be a mediator. Jesus Christ being both God and man, and having paid the price for our sins, is the only one in heaven or on earth appointed to, or fit for, that glorious role. For this reason we are to pray in His Name and His Name only (John 16:23).

And in that day you shall ask Me nothing. Truly, truly, I say to you, Whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He will give you. (John 16:23)

- **Prayer must be simple in its format** ~ We must remember that God does not answer prayers according to our intelligence but according to His. The simpler we are in prayer the more blessed the exercise becomes. God is not impressed by the eloquence or quantity of our words (Matthew 6:7, Luke 20:47).

But when you pray, do not babble vain words, as the nations. For they think that in their much speaking they shall be heard. (Matthew 6:7)

- **Prayer should be in secret** ~ There are many times when Christians are exhorted to meet together for the sake of corporate prayer or combined worship (1 Corinthians 14:26, Colossians 3:16, Hebrews 10:25) but there are other times when we should pray one on one with God. Such personal prayer times are best conducted in private as will pose a minimum of disruption to our thoughts and as will ensure that we are not making a show of our spirituality (Matthew 6:5-6).

And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward. But you, when you pray, enter into your room. And shutting your door, pray to your Father in secret; and your Father who sees in secret shall reward you openly. (Matthew 6:5-6)

- **Pray with persistence** ~ God is not unwilling to bless us, but there are times when we must persist in prayer. There are times when we tire too easily. God has His own timing for our blessings so we need to continue steadfast in our desire and constant in our faith (Hebrews 35-36).

Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great recompense of reward. For you have need of patience, so that after you have done the will of God you might receive the promise. (Hebrews 10:35-36)

(See also Psalm 88:1, Habakkuk 2:3)

- **Prayer must be of a humble and sincere heart** ~ Jesus told the parable of two men who went to the temple to pray. One man was very religious and confident in his personal achievements. Rather than seek God's grace, he recited the benefits of his own efforts. The other man was humble and penitent. He based his prayer on the confession of sin and the hope of God's forgiveness (Luke 18:10-14). Jesus described the first man as praying with himself (rather than to God)! He described the second man as having been heard/justified.

Because of Christ we can have a great boldness before God, knowing that through Him we have access to the very throne room of God. And yet there is a sense in which we must still approach that throne with fear and trembling.

The Book of Revelation places twenty four elders on thrones before God's own throne (Revelation 4:4) but when it comes time to pray these champions and heroes of the faith cast off their crowns and fall on their faces before God (Revelation 4:10). These who had access to the throne did not allow their own

And around the throne I saw twenty-four thrones. And on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white clothing. And they had crowns of gold on their heads. . . . The twenty-four elders fell down before the One sitting on the throne. And they worshiped Him who lives forever and ever, and threw their crowns before the throne, . . .

(Revelation 4:4 & 10)

enthronement to breed familiarity and flippancy before God in their prayer. They were earnest and humble in their worship of Him. If that is true of these who are elders of the faith, how much more should we approach God's throne with humility and repentance.

Neither is there place for insincerity in our prayer. Acceptable prayer must be sincere (Hebrews 10:22), offered with reverence and godly fear, with a humble sense of our own insignificance as creatures and of our own unworthiness as sinners, with earnest importunity, and with unhesitating submission to the divine will.

2. Types of Prayer

Prayer takes several forms. The full array of prayer is as diverse as there are prayer warriors in the scriptures. Let us consider the following:

- **Prayers of Communion or Meditation** ~ The Psalmist did not just offer his prayers to God but also the meditations of his heart also (Psalm 5:1-2 & Psalm 19:14). There are times when our prayers consist of waiting on God, to meditate on His word and character. To commune with God in this way is to value God for who He is and not for what He can do for us. God Himself longs for such fellowship (Lamentations 3:25).

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in Your sight, O Jehovah, my Rock and my Redeemer. (Psalms 19:14)

- **Prayers of Confession** ~ Confession of sin is essential if we are to continue in prayerful fellowship with God (Psalm 23:3-4). In fact unconfessed sin is one reason that prayers go unanswered (Psalm 66:18) but there is a certainty that God will forgive us as we prayerfully acknowledge our faults and ask His forgiveness (1 John 1:9).
- **Prayers of Adoration** ~ Our prayers to God should be seasoned with healthy amounts of adoration. Typically such prayers may be of thankfulness for what He has done, what He has given or who He is (Psalm 100:4). For those who find it difficult to access God in praise, it can be useful to accept a staggered or stepped approach. We enter His courts with thanks for what He has done or given and thereafter move forward into praise for who He is.

Enter His gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name (Psalm 100:4)

- **Prayers of Petition** ~ To petition is to ask. God invites us to seek Him for all things even “our daily bread” (Luke 11:3). God is a practical God and knows of our need even before we have asked for it. Nonetheless He enjoys responding to our petitions and blessing our faith in Him.
- **Prayer in The Spirit** ~ To pray ‘in the Spirit’ is to pray the prayers that the Holy Spirit guides us to pray. So often we ‘rush in’ and pray for the things we want to pray about instead of waiting on God and allowing Him to use us to pray for what He wants. We need to wait on the Holy Spirit and to be led by Him, Who knows the will of God.

There are times when, as we wait on God, He will place a burden on our heart. Watchman Nee says ‘Let us recognize this one thing; burden is the secret of prayer. If a person does not feel within him a burden for a particular matter he can hardly succeed in prayer’. Praying with a burden will lead us into an earnestness in prayer which is beyond our normal selves. It can involve tears, travelling

Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. (Romans 8:26)

and even groaning (Romans 8:26, Galatians 4:19).

- **Praying in Tongues** ~ God has granted to the His saints opportunity to receive an empowerment of the Holy Spirit that is known as the 'Baptism in the Holy Spirit'. (Refer module on this topic elsewhere in these notes.) One feature of this experience is the out-flowing of the Holy Spirit in a spiritual language known as tongues. Praying in tongues is a useful aspect of prayer because it creates a flow of God's divine presence which builds us up in our faith (Ephesians 6:18, Jude 1:20) and because it engages our spirit with the Holy Spirit to pray about those things which are dearest to the Spirit's heart. To pray in tongues is to build ourselves up in God (1 Corinthians 14:4) and to pray according to the mind of the Spirit.

praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching to this very thing with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. (Ephesians 6:18)

But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit (Jude 1:20)

3. **Those things for which we are commended to pray**

It goes without saying that the best model for prayer is the prayer which Jesus Himself gave us (Matthew 6:9-13). Careful attention to the format of that prayer will yield much benefit as to the appropriate content of our prayers. Yet because prayer is the communication to God of our needs and joys as we journey through life with Him and because there are a myriad of lives each having a multitude of needs, we can readily say that the range of prayer needs being presented before God is enormous. Following are some of the many matters which are presented in scripture as legitimate needs or prayers of petition:

- **For family members** ~ Abraham interceded for Lot (Genesis 18:20-33). Jesus prayed for Peter's for mother-in-law (Matthew 8:14).
- **For the nation in which we live** ~ Moses and Aaron prays for the Children of Israel (Numbers 16:41-50, Psalm 106:16-23). Paul urged that we pray for those in authority and those in government (1 Timothy 2:1-4).
- **For those who are imprisoned for their faith** ~ Daniel interceded for the captives in Babylon (Daniel 9:2-3). The Hebrews were urged to remember those that are imprisoned (Hebrews 13:3).
- **For men and women prepared to commit themselves to the ministry** ~ Jesus urged that we pray for laborers for the harvest (Matthew 9:38).
- **For those in ministry and responsible for The Church** ~ Nehemiah interceded for the remnant who had returned to rebuild Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1:3-11). Paul often sought prayer for the ministry (Ephesians 6:19, Colossians 4:3, 1 Thessalonians 5:25, 2 Thessalonians 3:1, Hebrews 13:18).
- **For those who are on the missions field** ~ Paul routinely sought such prayer support (Colossians 4:3, 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2).

9 Therefore pray in this way: Our Father, who is in Heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

10 Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread;

12 and forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil. For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen. (Matthew 6:9-13)

He is to be worshipped and glorified

- **For one another** ~ This includes those who are sick (James 5:14-16 (James 5:16) and any of those who are ensnared by sin (1 John 5:16).
- **For our daily needs** ~ It is Jesus' encouragement in The Lord's prayer that we should petition The Father for those things essentials to our lives (Luke 11:3, Matthew 6:11)

HINDERANCES TO PRAYER

God is not some sugar-daddy who will grant our every wish. God's righteousness and character place constraints as to the things concerning in which we can pray. Prayer is unanswered when it:

- is substituted for necessary action (Exodus 14:15, Joshua 7:7-15),
- seeks to change God's declared decrees and will (Deuteronomy 3:23-27, 1 Samuel 8:9-10),
- ascends from an unclean heart (Psalm 66:18, Lamentations 3:8, 40-44),
- is offered in arrogance or foolish pride (Proverbs 8:13, 1 Peter 3:12),
- is prompted by selfish or carnal motives (Matthew 6:5, James 4:2-3),
- arises out of a heart full of ill-will and hatred toward another (Matthew 5:24),
- lacks sincerity and faith (Matthew 6:5-7, Hebrews 11:6, James 1:6-7),
- is offered by a person who despises God's law (Proverbs 15:8, Proverbs 28:9),
- arises midst an embittered household or from a hard hearted husband (1 Peter 3:7),
- comes from a heart committed to covetousness or idolatry (Exodus 14:3).

Perhaps the final word about prayer might be left to Martin Luther. Such was his devotion to prayer and the span of those things which his prayers encompassed that he is quoted as saying:

“When I fail to pray for one day I feel it.

Should I fail to pray for two days The Church feels it.

Should I fail to pray for three days the nation feels it.”

WE BELIEVE ~ CONCERNING FAITH

In a statement as short as the Nicene Creed there is little opportunity to be repetitive and yet the words “We believe” appear three times! And whilst the word appears three times, the way the Creed is written, it actually calls us to believe more than 30 things. Believing is therefore central to the Creed’s message. Since we have arrived at the third occurrence of ‘Believe’ we should take the time to consider faith.

The Atheist’s faith v’s The Christian’s faith

Faith is the essence of life. All people, even atheists exercise faith. Indeed all truth is built on faith. Philosophers sometimes refer to such foundational faith as a person’s presuppositions. People are inclined to accept certain assumptions/axioms/presuppositions as foundational and build their worldview on such assumptions.

The atheist lives life based on that which is empirically verifiable. As such they would claim that their position rests on fact and not on faith. But inherent in this position is the assumption (belief?) that those things which are observable is the sum of all things which exist. There are several problems with this presupposition. Firstly the only knowledge which can demonstrate unequivocally that something doesn’t exist is a knowledge that knows all things in all of time. No person has such a knowledge. Moreover the scientific method which is so dear to the reasoning of many atheists routinely improves itself by developing new theories (based on observation) which demonstrate that previously held ideas are inadequate. The scientific method is ongoing daily evidence that we don’t know or understand all things and as such affords something of a support for belief in God rather than a refuting of Him.

Os Guinness described truth for the atheist as: “. . . reality known too late”. Denying the existence of Cpt. Cook because we’ve only read about him and haven’t met him, doesn’t alter the fact that he existed. Denying that God exists because we’ve only read about Him in the Bible doesn’t alter the fact that He exists. The atheist *will* encounter the reality of God and His righteousness but it will be at a time when they are unable to change the consequences of their presuppositions and faith.

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ lie at the centre of the Christian life. We live life in a certain way because we understand not only that the unseen non-empirical realm exists, but that unseen realm came into our time and space in the person of Jesus Christ, whose lineage was not only known but predicted (2 Samuel 7:12-16). His form of death and time of death were not only recorded but accurately predicted (Zechariah 12:10 & Daniel 9:26). Unlike the atheist who has no person of absolute experience and knowledge who can prove the presuppositions of his truth, the Christian life and truth is based on One who claims to be just that; God the I AM, the fully Self-Existent-One. For God knows the end from the beginning and is competent by His knowledge, by His presence in this world and by His victory in life over death to be the basis of the presuppositions (faith) that shape truth and life (Romans 1:3-4).

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

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Recognizing that all truth is based on presuppositions or faith, we will consider faith from the Christian perspective along three lines. We will discuss what faith achieves, how it can be preserved and lastly why faith is important. These notes are presented as follows:

1. The nature and benefits of Christian faith
 - a) the fruits of faith
 - b) the nature of faith as it pertains to repentance
2. Keeping and growing faith
 - a) faith and feelings
 - b) the centrality of mind and positive confession to apprehending faith's promises
 - c) God's ordained means for growing in faith
3. Why faith is important to God
 - a) faith, life and the resurrection
 - b) Christ's faith
 - c) faith and righteousness in Christ

THE NATURE AND BENEFITS OF FAITH

Faith yields many wonderful outcomes and blessings. Yet there is no virtue in faith itself. Imagine that you possessed a map to a hidden treasure. The map is of great worth, but only if you use it to recover the treasure. So too faith is a great thing to possess, but unless it is applied then it is not really such a great blessing. But there is another aspect to consider. A treasure map is the result of the mapmaker's art, knowledge and effort. The treasure map is only valuable if the mapmaker is trustworthy and has done his job accurately. In the same way that looking for treasure means trusting in the mapmaker's work, the benefits of faith mean that we must trust in the perfect work of Christ's Cross.

There is no virtue, merit or glory in our having faith. The only things that faith can achieve are those which Christ has already achieved for us at Calvary.

1. The Fruit of Faith

As you read of the following blessings which accrue to us because of faith, please remember that it is faith in the Cross which yields the fruit, not faith of itself.

- ***We are saved by faith*** ~ Scripture tells us that we have been saved through faith. Least we should think that there is something worthy or meritorious about such faith we are reminded that the saving faith which causes us to rest in Christ is actually a gift from God (Ephesians 2:9). No man can boast in the strength or efficacy of their faith for salvation is something granted to us by God.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8-9)

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- **We are forgiven by believing in Christ's Cross**

~ Forgiveness flows into our lives because of faith in Jesus (Acts 10:43). Jesus has paid the price for our sin and offence.

To Him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins" (Acts 10:43)

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

- **We receive justification by faith** ~ To be

justified means to be released from the guilt

of sin (Romans 5:1). Through faith in Christ we are set free from the guilt of our sins.

- **We receive propitiation by faith** ~ Propitiation means to 'turn away wrath'. Through faith

in Christ's atoning death for our sins we have protection from God's wrath. His wrath will not come upon those who believe (Romans 3:25) because it has already been spent on Christ.

whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. (Romans 3:25)

- **Faith secures our sanctification** ~ Sanctification involves more than a moral reformation of character. It is the work of the Holy Spirit bringing the whole of our nature more and more under the influences of the Christ's character and word. In other words, sanctification is the carrying on to completion and maturity that work which was begun when Christ first came into our lives. It extends to the whole man.

Faith is instrumental in securing sanctification, in as much as it secures our union to Christ (Galatians 2:20), and brings the believer into living contact with the truth, whereby he is led to yield obedience (Acts 15:9).

To open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light from the dominion of satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among these who have been sanctified by faith. (Acts 15:9)

- **Faith acts as the means of our Eternal Life** ~ Scripture tells us that the just shall live by faith

(Romans 1:17). Jesus promised that as many as believed on Him would have eternal life (John 3:15-16). The apostle John wrote for the very purpose that those who believe in Jesus would know that they have eternal life (1 John 5:13).

But these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. (1 John 5:13)

(See also 1 John 5:21, 2 Peter 1:4, John 20:31)

- **We overcome the ways of the world by faith** ~ On the night before Jesus died He prayed

for the church that we would be in the world but not of the world (John 17:15-18). Jesus knows that there is tribulation in the world and the world's way of doing things (John 16:33). Whereas Christ's kingdom is built on love, grace, truth and liberty; the kingdom of the world is built on bondage, lying, striving and selfishness. Thus the world, its ways and its god (2 Corinthians 4:4) take hold and leave scars on the life of the believer. In place of this we find that the Christian life is a life of faith which is a life of overcoming (1 John 5:4).

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this the victory that has overcome the world - our faith. (1 John 5:4)

(See also 1 Pet 5:8-9)

2. Faith and Repentance

Repentance and faith are companions. Repentance can be defined as a change of mind or purpose regarding sin. Such a change of mind flows from a “ . . . sorrow or deep contrition for sin, as an offense and dishonour to God, a violation of His holy law, and the basest ingratitude towards a Being of infinite benevolence” (Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary of American English). It is a decision to *turn from* sin. As someone has put it – it is being sorry enough to quit!

Faith, on the other hand, is a trust in and total commitment to God. It is the act of *turning to* God. We could say – it is believing enough to commit! The true penitent is conscious of guilt (Psalm 51:4, & 51:9), of pollution (Psalm 51:5, 51:7 & 51:10), and of helplessness before God (Psalm 51:11, Psalm 109:21-22). Repentance entails the person seeing themselves to be just what God has always seen them to be and declares them to be. But repentance realizes not only a sense of sin, but also a taking hold of mercy, without which there can be no true repentance (Psalm 51:1).

Not only are repentance and faith closely linked, but they come in a definite order. Repentance always precedes faith. This sequence is instructive as to the nature of faith. It shows us that it is not possible to have true faith without repentance. There are many people who speak of having faith but have not come to repentance. Such people may well believe that God exists but the lack of repentance indicates that they have not encountered Him as He truly is. To see God as He truly exists will result in us becoming deeply aware of our own sinfulness.

True repentance does not just recognize that we are horribly sinful in comparison to His holiness, neither does it just quake at the realization of His anger and disapproval toward our sin (Job 42:5-6, Isaiah 6:5). True repentance goes further. It goes on to recognize that God is totally just to judge against us for our wilful rebellion toward Him. True repentance acknowledges that we are indebted to God our Maker for our very existence and that we have repaid that debt with ingratitude toward Him and the pollution of our lives and community with sin. To have faith without repentance is to have settled on a harmless god who is as comfortable with sin as we are. It is to have faith in a god of our own making or imagination, a mere idol.

As you read the following scriptures, please note that repentance always precedes faith.

1 *To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your loving-kindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.*

2 *Wash me completely from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*

3 *For I confess my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me.*

4 *Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight; that You might be justified when You speak, and be clear when You judge.*

5 *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

6 *Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom.*

7 *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

8 *Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which You have broken may rejoice.*

9 *Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.*

10 *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.*

11 *Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. (Psalm 51:1-11)*

I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye has seen You. Therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes. (Job 42:5-6)

"REPENT and BELIEVE in the gospel..." (Mark 1:15)

"...I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable and teaching you publicly and from house to house, solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks OF REPENTANCE TOWARDS GOD and FAITH IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST." (Acts 20:20, 21)

"...and how you TURNED TO GOD (faith) FROM IDOLS (repentance) to serve a living and true God," (1 Thessalonians 1:9)
Words in parenthesis added.

"Therefore, having left the discourse of the beginning of Christ, let us go on to full growth, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God (Hebrews 6:1)"

3. Turning from something must also mean turning to something else

When it comes to our salvation we must understand that without true repentance there cannot be true faith. It is impossible to truly believe in God for salvation without repenting from our sin. Saving faith and repentance cannot exist without each other. They are two sides of the same coin!

We may illustrate that you can't have faith without repentance by the simple act of turning ourselves about face. Notice that as you turn *towards* something you also turn *away* from the thing you previously faced! Similarly the decision to turn towards Jesus also involves a decision to turn away from sin. The only way to stay committed to complete opposites is that we live lives which are two faced (like the Roman god Janis). Two faced people live lives which are schizophrenic, in which case they are a problem to themselves, or they live lives which are hypocritical in which case they are a pain to everyone else.

KEEPING AND GROWING FAITH

When Paul writes to the church in Colosse he tells them that he has been appointed an apostle; "by the will of God" (Colossians 1:1). The Greek word for 'will' is *thelema*. It carries with it a twofold meaning. It implies both a sense of reason and of emotion. Thus Paul was appointed by that which was God's purposive, reasoned and foreordained plan but Paul was also appointed because it was God's joyous, benevolent and loving plan to establish him. We see that both feelings and thinking reside in the word *thelema*.

Because we are created in God's image we too have this blend of feelings and reasoning in the exercise of our will and faith.

1. Faith is not feeling

People often confuse faith and feeling. One of the most important lessons for us to learn is that there is a vital difference between the two. Faith in God is not necessarily feeling the presence of God. In fact, there are many times in the Christian life when we do not feel God's presence. This absolutely does not mean that He is not with us - for He has promised never to leave us nor in anyway forsake us.

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He has promised to us in Hebrews that He is wholeheartedly committed to staying with us (Hebrews 13:5). In the original Greek, the writer of the letter to the Hebrews put God's commitment of abiding with us in very strong and very definite language. He gives it a threefold emphasis so that we might be completely assured that God would indeed never leave us, saying; "I will not, I will not, I will not cease to sustain you and uphold you. I will not, I will not, I will not let you down."

"For He Himself has said, and the statement is on record, 'I will not, I will not, I will not cease to sustain you and uphold you. I will not, I will not, I will not let you down.'" (Hebrews 13:5 ~ Kenneth Wuest Translation)

Jesus' expressed God's commitment to us with the words: ". . . and be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). To become a strong, stable believer in Christ, we need to learn to walk by faith and not by feeling, "for we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7).

A science experiment often performed by young students illustrates this well.

The teacher places three beakers of water in front of the class. One beaker is full of hot water, another of lukewarm water, and the other, of cold water. Two students are chosen. One is told to dip one hand into the hot water and the other told to dip their hand into the cold water. Then both students are to quickly remove their hands and plunge them into the lukewarm water. The students are then asked to describe what they felt! Of course, one hand feels hot and the other hand feels cold! Yet both students were wrong! Taking a thermometer and holding it up before the class, the teacher instructs them that temperature should always be measured with a thermometer. The thermometer is always objective and correct, whereas as feelings are subjective and sometimes proved wrong!

Our faith needs to be based on the objective truth of God's Word. The reliability of that truth is evidenced by the many historical facts that it reveals. (For example for many years archeologists represented the Bible as fable because it spoke of a nation called the Hittites. Because they had not encountered such a people they claimed the scriptures to be in error. Discoveries by William Wright (1884) and Hugo Winckler (1906) confirmed the existence of exactly that nation.) The reliability of that truth also is evidenced by the many prophecies and promises concerning Christ's appearing, death and resurrection which have been uniquely fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth. (For details refer to the notes on "The Death of Christ" in this series.)

2. Faith and our thinking

Leo Harris, in his book "Your Faith is Power" gives sound advice concerning the taming of our minds when it comes to faith. We will quote him at length.

"The greatest discovery I have ever made was that we are believing something all the time. Even our unbelief is really a form of belief. Unbelief is not non-belief, but wrong belief.

*When the Bible speaks of human unbelief, it is spoken from God's point of view. Unbelief is a failure to believe God, or His Word, or His Gospel. But man is still believing even when he is not believing God's way. God's way is the **right way** to believe, but unbelief is believing the **wrong way** . . . And this is the way most of us*

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have been believing most of our lives. God's biggest work in the life of a Christian is to get him to change his believing.

There is no neutrality in our believing. We are believing all the time . . . either the right way or wrong way. We are either believing according to God's Word or contrary to God's Word. We are engaged in either right-believing or wrong-believing. And believing, whether right or wrong, is always an active power in our lives. Believing, whether right or wrong, is always influencing, producing, creating and bringing to pass.

*Our believing-power is always active and productive- whether we are using it rightly or wrongly. Right-believing brings its results, and so does wrong-believing. **Faith** is using one's believing power the right way. It is believing what God says. It is believing God means what He says, and that what He has promised He will perform. It is taking God at His word. If right-believing is faith and confidence in God and His Word, what are the manifestations of wrong-believing? Here are a few.*

** **Fear** is a form of wrong-belief. Fear is believing in harm, danger, difficulty, failure and other unpleasant possibilities. The answer to the wrong-believing of fear is the right-believing of faith. Faith in God's promises to keep us, protect us, provide for us, and bless us.*

** **Doubt** is another form of wrong-believing. Doubt is not merely an absence of faith. It is wrong-belief. For example, if you doubt you are saved, you believe you are lost. If you doubt your healing, you believe in your symptoms. If you doubt the certainty of success you believe in the possibility of failure.*

** **Resentment** is wrong-belief. It is belief in the possibility that you can be hurt or harmed. Right-believing says, 'The Lord is the strength of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid?'*

** **Self-pity** is wrong-believing. It is believing in your difficulties, or sickness, or failure. One cannot have self-pity (wrong-believing) if he has faith in God (right-believing), because faith sees only God's all-sufficiency."*

Let us check on our believing from time to time. Let us ask ourselves whether our believing is right – whether it is in line with God's promises, in accord with His Word.

3. Nurturing your faith

There are many things which help to grow our faith and for that matter, not a few things which can damage it. Let us consider just a few of the things which will assist us to grow in faith.

- **Meditating on the word of God** ~ The Word of God is food for our faith. Scripture tells us that faith comes by hearing and hearing by The Word of God. So faith and The Word are intimately linked (John 15:7).

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. (John 15:7)

See also Romans 10:17, Psalm 1

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- **Yielding to the Holy Spirit** ~ Faith grows as we yield to the Holy Spirit within us for faith is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. It is a fruit that occurs within the trials and challenges of life. Never be afraid to do something that you think you are incapable of if someone asks you. Moses thought that he couldn't lead Israel because he was a stammerer. So God sent Aaron to help him. For all of that Moses did all of the talking! By taking up God's challenge he received the ability he needed. Faith in the face of challenge changed him. Sloth has no need of faith. Impassivity and self-content have no need of faith. Faith's is exercised when we find ourselves taking on tasks of prayer, leadership or mercy (James 2:18).

But someone will say, You have faith, and I have works. Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith from my works. (James 2:18)

- **Moving in love and hope** ~ There are three things which are often found together in the New Testament epistles. These are faith, hope and love. (See Hebrews 6:10-12, Romans 5:1-5, 1 Corinthians 13:13, Ephesians 4:2-5, 1 Thessalonians 1:3, & 1 Peter 1:21-22.) Thus we might expect that; moving in love will involve faith and cause it to grow; hoping in the face of adversity will involve faith and cause it to grow.

For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shown toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. (Hebrews 6:10-12)

- **Guarding our heart by guarding our mouth** ~ What we say can influence our faith. For this reason we should listen to what we say about ourselves or a circumstance that we are in. If we keep saying negative things, it is an indication that we have not encouraged faith to rule but have let our unbelieving self to control. For this reason scripture encourages us to pray in the Holy Spirit so as to build up faith. (See Psalm 37:310-31, Proverbs 15:4, Colossians 3:16)

A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings out good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings out evil things. (Matthew 12:35)

- **Not giving place to sin or heresy** ~ Paul cautioned his protégé Timothy that he should hold to a good conscience because to neglect it is to make a shipwreck of one's faith (1 Timothy 1:19). Paul extended this caution as to matters of doctrine as well (1 Timothy 1:20). It is well to remember that "whatever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). Given this, we see that sin and faith are opposed to each other. This is something of an oversimplification of what is being said in this verse but even so it serves to remind us that sin will harm our faith.
- **Not neglecting the benefit of fellowship** ~ God, as Trinity, is an eternal community. He is so committed to community that the first thing recorded in scripture as 'not good' is Adam's plight prior to Eve's creation. Having described all of the creation as good, God sees Adam by himself and says: "It is not good that man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18). It is God's expectation that we will live in the community of His church, for in that we are protected from doubt and instead are provoked to good works (Hebrews 10:24-25).

And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: (Hebrews 10:24-25)

WHY FAITH IS IMPORTANT TO GOD

Thus far we have considered the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of faith. It will assist us in our walk in Christ if we understand something of the ‘why’ of faith. To do this we will follow a line of argument that leads us past the nature of faith, to the faith of Jesus Himself, to aspects of the relationship within the Godhead itself, on to the Cross and Resurrection and lastly to faith and righteousness.

1. Faith, Life and The Resurrection

We have learned already that faith and eternal life are linked. Scriptures such as: “The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11 & Hebrews 10:38), “as many as believed on Him would have eternal life (John 3:15-16) and “believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name” (1 John 5:13) instruct us that faith and life are linked. Scripture also tells us that faith and the resurrection are linked.

The book of Hebrews says that “faith is the substance of things hoped for” (Hebrews 11:1). This is exciting because we all have many hopes and aspirations in

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

our lives. So this scripture might console us that all of our hopes will be met if we have faith in God. Yet before launching out in such confidence it would be prudent to establish what scripture means by “things hoped for”. Does the Bible share my hope of being wealthy? Does the Bible share my hope of being irresistibly popular, or mightily anointed, or outrageously successful? Are these the things which the Bible presents as “things hoped for”?

Well not quite. Without doubt the promises of scripture include these things, but at this point in Hebrews the author is using “things hoped for” as a somewhat technical term. The Israelites (i.e. the Hebrews to which the book is written) had a number of specific hopes which were based on the promises of God in the Old Testament. They

especially hoped for a Messiah who would bring the resurrection from the dead and usher in an age of eternal life. We find many places in scripture where the word hope is associated with the resurrection (Acts 23:6, 24:15 & 26:6-8, 1 Thessalonians 4:13, Titus 2:13, 1 Peter 1:3, 1 John 3:2-3).

But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. (Acts 23:6)

And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. (Acts 24:15)

Knowing that the resurrection was Israel's hope, we can start to place Hebrews 11, that chapter known as the honour role of faith (Heb 11:1-40) into a better perspective. This is more than the honour role of

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13)

faith. It is the honour role of the resurrection. It is a list of those ancients in the faith who did what they did because they anticipated resurrection to eternal life. It explains why the chapter tells us that even though these Old Testament saints achieved remarkable outcomes in their lives by their faith, that “these all died not having received the promise” (Hebrews 11:13 & 39). It tells us that some suffered unseemly and unjust treatment in order that “they may obtain a better resurrection” (Hebrews 11:35).

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So now we find not only that faith and eternal life are linked, and because faith is the substance of the resurrection (aka “things hoped for”), faith and the resurrection are linked.

The close association between life and the resurrection is hardly surprising since we know from the Gospel that Jesus is both life (John 14:6) and the resurrection (John 11:25). But if life and resurrection are linked in faith, and life and resurrection are linked in Christ, might we find that Christ and faith are linked together? The answer is yes, for the dissertation on faith and resurrection in Hebrews, concludes with the injunction that we are to look to Jesus “who is the author and the perfecter of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2).

looking to Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2)

2. Christ's faith

If Jesus is the author and the perfecter of our faith then we might assume that He is intimately acquainted with faith. Jesus can hardly have created something that He Himself doesn't understand. But can we do better than assume that Jesus acted in faith? Can we be certain from scripture that faith was an essential element of Jesus' life and ministry?

Indeed we can, for if we make further use of Hebrews 11 we find an important correlation. Hebrews tells us that “Without faith it is impossible to please God” (Hebrews 11:6). And yet scripture records that on two occasions God the Father spoke from heaven declaring Jesus as “My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17, 17:5, Mark 1:11, Luke 3:22). Since faith is essential to pleasing God and since Jesus was pleasing to God, we can say that Jesus had faith. (This concept seems strange to some Christians because they are given to the idea that since Jesus was God, He had all power and knowledge and therefore had no need of faith. We will yet find that faith is an aspect of the relationship in the Godhead.)

So the question now presents as to when Jesus moved in faith. The Father's statement as to His Son's being pleasing to Him came once at Christ's baptism, (being the start of His ministry and before He had performed any miracles) and it came again at His transfiguration, (being at the conclusion of His ministry). We could safely say therefore that the whole of Christ's life and ministry was undertaken in faith. And yet there is an instruction for us in these events. Baptism is a symbolic form of death and resurrection (Romans 6:4, Colossians 2:12) and the transfiguration saw Jesus speaking of His death and resurrection (Luke 9:33, Matthew 17:9). If Hebrew's places the author of our faith at the end of a discussion of the resurrection and The Father makes public endorsement of Jesus' faith at times indicative of His resurrection, it would seem that we might expect that Christ's faith was present in His resurrection.

How is it that Jesus, who Himself *is* The Resurrection as well as being The Author of Faith, should require faith at the time of His own resurrection? At this point it serves us to recall two important doctrines which are central to the Christian faith; the Incarnation and The Trinity. Jesus was/is both God and man and, being God, He is part of the Godhead.

As man Jesus lacked any power or strength *in Himself* beyond that which any of us have. Indeed He had no more power over death than any other person. Therefore as a man Jesus was reliant on God

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to raise Him from the dead (Acts 2:24, 2:32, 3:26, 4:10, Romans 10:9, Galatians 1:1 and 1 Peter 1:21). As a man Jesus lay for three days in the grave believing that God would raise Him from the dead.

As God, Jesus is a member of The Trinity and thus unwilling to do anything that the other members of the Godhead would not also participate in. Jesus has life within Himself (John 5:26) and yet was reliant on the other members of the Trinity to co-operate in His resurrection. For this reason we see that the resurrection was a Trinitarian act. Jesus was raised by the glory of the Father (Rom 6:4), by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:11) and according to the authority which He Himself had to take up His life again (John 10:18). It is perhaps in recognition that

Jesus as God awaited the due interplay of the Godhead for His resurrection that Peter accuses the Jews of having “killed the Prince of life, whom God has raised from the dead” (Acts 3:15).

But you denied the Holy and Just One and desired a murderer to be given to you. And you killed the Prince of Life, whom God has raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. (Acts 3:14-15)

As an aside it ought be noted that the Greek word *arkhaygos* is used only four times in the New Testament (Acts 3:15 & 5:31 and Hebrews 2:10 & 12:2) and only ever to speak of Jesus. It appears as “Prince (*arkhaygos*) of life” and “Author (*arkhaygos*) of our faith”. Truly faith and life are linked together in Christ who is Prince and Author of both.

We see now that both as God and as man, Jesus trusted in the eternal plan and faithfulness of the Godhead that He should be raised. Faith lies at the core of who Jesus is and is the basis of the Trinity’s very relationship. The selflessness of Christ is depicted not only in His love for mankind but in His preparedness to rest in God.

If faith is at that core of relationship for Christ, how much more should it be the basis of our lives? If faith is at the core of the Self-Existent-One, then it lies at the basis of the fullness of what is. To live without faith in God is to try to escape reality. A life without faith in God is dead.

3. Faith and righteousness in Christ

We come now to one last development in our thinking but before we embark into this head, let’s just review where we are so far:

- Faith and eternal life are linked (Romans 1:17)
- Faith is the substance or basis of the resurrection (Hebrews 11:1)
- Jesus is the Author/Prince of our faith (Hebrews 12:2) and Himself had faith (Hebrews 11:6 & Mark 1:11)
- Jesus applied His faith when, as the Prince/Author of life (Acts 3:15), He was raised from the dead by trusting in The Father (Romans 6:4) and Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11) to fulfill His resurrection ministry (John 11:25)
- Faith is of the essence in the Godhead
- A life without faith in God is dead

We could perhaps leave our study at this stage and content ourselves that the ‘why’ faith is to be found in the fact that it is part of the whatisness of what is. Faith matters because it is lodged in the reality of God and life. Faith matters because it is the ultimate antidote to selfishness. Faith matters because without it love cannot bring forth its fruit of trust. But there remains the matter of faith’s

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'why' as pertains to righteousness. We know that the Christian is reckoned as righteous because of faith in The Cross of Christ. How are faith and Christ's faith linked through The Cross?

As Christians we should never allow our thankfulness for The Cross cause us to lose sight of its horror and injustice. In Calvary we see Jesus, the perfect, sinless Holy One of Israel put to death for a cause not pertaining to Himself. Jesus, the excellence of God, was hung up naked and tortured as the innocent Lamb of God. He who had gone about only doing good (Acts 10:38), died the death of a criminal even though He was blameless.

Death is a just punishment for us all. Scripture tells us that the soul which sins shall die (Ezekiel 18:4) and death is the wages of sin (Romans 6:23). But where there is no sin any form of punishment is inappropriate, let alone that of death. Jesus died on our account but for Him to die was a thwarting of that which was just.

Christ's time in the grave was in some sense a time of trial. A battle was waged between the power of death and the principle of justice. Would death, which has vast and real power, maintain its hold over Jesus in the grave even though it had no right to do so? Would power succeed against principle? Would injustice outwit justice?

Today the answer is clear but for three days the outcome was not evident. But since Christ's resurrection we can now know for certain that principle is always victorious over power. Justice will always triumph over injustice. That is why on Pentecost morning Peter preached that it was not possible that Jesus should be held by death, that God would not allow His Holy One to see corruption (Acts 2:23-26 & 31).

This One given to you by the before-determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken and by lawless hands, crucifying Him, you put Him to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. For David speaks concerning Him, "I foresaw the Lord always before me, because He is at my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore my heart rejoiced and my tongue was glad; and also My flesh shall rest in hope (Acts 2:23-26)

All of this offers an insight into the Christ's faith whilst in the grave. Jesus' faith was not only to believe that He would be raised but to believe that the injustice of His death would be reversed. Christ's faith was to believe unto justice. It was to believe unto the righteousness of The Father. In as much as the just shall live by faith, we see that Jesus too arose by faith. Jesus exercised faith in The Father's promise that eternal life could be wrought by trusting in the justice and righteousness of God.

It is true to say that Jesus died for our sins. But He also died for the sin of Adam. Whereas Adam sinned by wanting to be God and deciding for himself what was right and wrong, we see Jesus resting in The Father's decision as to what is just. Christ's faith was to believe unto righteousness. Christ's faith divorced mankind from Adam's self-determination. Every person who places their faith in Christ is also placing their faith in that which God says is righteous. Even as faith wrought a victory for righteousness, so too today every believer in Christ casts themselves on Him, not having any confidence in their own ability to decide for or live for righteousness and thus shares with Christ in that righteousness which is by faith.

THE HOLY AND CATHOLIC CHURCH

Some denominational Protestant churches keep Bibles and Prayer Books in their pews as an aid to the parishioners or visitors who want to follow the order of service. Such books will often include the Nicene Creed for use on those occasions when it is to be recited by the entire congregation. It is not unusual to turn to the Creed and find that some earnest parishioner has scribbled across the word “catholic”, least fellow worshippers make a declaration of faith as contravenes The Reformation spirit which generated the Protestant church’s great split with Rome in the 1500’s!

Such revisions are as ill-informed as they are well intentioned. The word catholic means universal. Thus whilst the Roman Catholic Church may have appropriated the word into its title, it cannot rightly say that it is the sum of all believers in all locations across all time. By using the word catholic the Nicene Creed urges believers to see themselves as part of that universal body of saints whose faith and first allegiance is to Christ The King.

These notes will address The Church as follows:

1. The universal nature of The Church
 - a) the mystery of The Church
 - b) the origin and durability of The Church Local
2. The Church defined
 - a) the meaning of ‘ekklesia’ in the Old and New Testaments
 - b) The Church militant and The Church as worshippers
 - c) the purpose of The Church
3. Titles given to The Church in scripture
 - a) The Church as God’s means for advancing His Kingdom
 - b) The Church as a house of worship
 - c) The Church as it relates to Israel
4. The nature of Church government
 - a) elders and the plurality of leadership
 - b) The Church in the city
5. The Church as a Protestant entity
 - a) the five ‘Sola’s’ of The Reformation
 - b) the marks of a true church
 - c) the importance of Church membership

THE UNIVERSAL NATURE OF THE CHURCH

The apostle Paul tells us that The Church, the household of God is built on the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Himself being its head and chief corner stone (Ephesians 2:20). In light of this we might assume that The Church commenced with the apostolic age, that it commenced on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38-47). Indeed, since apostles and prophets are ministry gifts which were

only granted after Christ's ascension (Ephesians 4:11-13) it would seem that The Church could only have life and existence after Christ had risen.

Care is required before we arrive at such a conclusion.

1. The mystery of The Church

Surely the hallmark of The Church is set, not by its ministry gifts, but by its head and master. In as much as Jesus is the head of The Church, we must acknowledge that all those who look to Him as Lord and Master are indeed part of The Church. On this basis The Church includes those who believed in (or anticipated) Messiah Christ before His arrival, as well as those who have believed in Him since His arrival. It includes those believing Hebrews, who in like-faith with Abraham are counted righteous (Galatians 3:6), as well as believing non-Hebrews such as Abel who is counted by Jesus both as righteous by faith and a foundational prophet (Matthew 23:34-35, Hebrews 11:4).

Even as Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. (Galatians 3:6)

By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts. And by it he, being dead, yet speaks. (Hebrews 11:4)

Along with the apostle Paul, we must acknowledge that The Church is a mystery (Ephesians 3:1-10). It is an institution whose exact nature and membership angels have longed to know about (1 Peter 1:12-13). The Church is God's plan in Christ to fill all in all (Ephesians 1:22-23) and as such is referred to as The Church Universal (catholic). It is made up of all believers who are alive today as well as those believers who have walked the earth and now dwell with Christ in paradise. It crosses boundaries of time, space, location, race and nationality.

And He has put all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (Ephesians 1:22-23)

Christians now have the benefit of God's truth revealed in the New Testament. This depiction of the majesty and ministry of Christ, is much clearer than His ministry as presented via Old Testament prophecy, types and liturgical observances. The New Testament makes clear that the Gospel pertains to all nations (Matthew 28:19, Ephesians 2:13-16). Yet this truth of a cross-cultural gospel was not at all obvious to the Christians of The Church's initial decades. The real mystery to the first believers was the inclusion of non-Jews in The Church. It was this truth which made Paul realize that Christ's Church is both universal and a mystery.

- **The Church Universal** ~ The Universal Church (catholic) is the whole body of true believers in Christ the world over and across all of time. Christians of all denominations and races are part of The Church Universal. These are they who have been called out of the world to be the people of God (1 Corinthians 10:32 & 12:28, Hebrews 12:23).

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are written in Heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect (Hebrews 12:22-23)

- **The Church Local** ~ But while each believer is at one with The Church Universal, scripture also indicates that there are many local bodies of believers who unite together to form local churches (Romans 16:1, 1 Corinthians 1:2, Galatians 1:2). In the New Testament period local

churches usually gathered in homes (Romans 16:5, 1 Corinthians 16:9, Colossians 4:15) because, being a persecuted religion, Christians were not permitted by Rome to build places of public worship. Thus The Church is not a building but people.

2. The origin and durability of The Church

If we understand that believing Israel is as much part of The Church as are today's believing Christian and if we accept that The Church is The Church Universal as well as The Church Local, we can gain a better grasp on the origins and durability of The Church.

Israel is often referred to as God's "chosen people". Her history tells us that God called Abraham out from an idolatrous people (Joshua 24:2) in order that he would become a nation of God's choosing (Genesis 18:18). This choice was made entirely on the basis of God's love and sovereignty (Deuteronomy 7:6-8). So too today's church is called the "elect" (Romans 8:33, Colossians 3:12, Revelation 17:14, 2 Timothy 2:10).

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God who justifies. (Romans 8:33)

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender feelings of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering (Colossians 3:12)

Thus The Church has its origins in God. It is not a scheme of man's doing for it is comprised of the elect of God and is not based on man's efforts but is the fruit of Christ's building endeavours (Matthew 16:18, 1 Corinthians 3:6-7, Acts 2:47). The Church has experienced times of great harvest and times of great dearth. Whether blessed or (seemingly) otherwise, Jesus will never forsake His Church (Matthew 28:20). Whilst The Church Universal will always prosper and reign, The Church Local may not always mirror what is happening in The Church Universal. Scripture speaks of many local churches which now no longer exist. The local churches in the districts of Ephesus or Thyatira or Colossae to which the apostles John and Paul wrote can no longer be found, and yet Christ's purposes in His Church continue to be manifest.

THE CHURCH DEFINED

The derivation of the Anglo-Saxon word "church" is generally said to be from the Greek *kuriakon*, which means "belonging to the Lord". But this derivation has been too hastily assumed. "Church" is more probably connected with the Celtic (Scottish) word *kirk*, from the Latin for circus (a round or circular theatre), because the congregations were gathered in circles or because the word was derived from the Druid practice of building their temples in circular form (Smith's Bible Dictionary).

1. The meaning of 'ekklesia' in the Old and New Testaments

That which English Bibles translates as church is the Greek word *ekklesia*. In its composition or root, the word means called (*kelsia*) out (*ek*). In consequence many view The Church as those who have been called out of the world into relationship with Christ and other Christians (Matthew 16:17), but to the Greeks the word had a more pragmatic meaning. For the Greeks the *ekklesia* was the regular description for an assembly of the citizens in a free state who had been "called out" by a herald for discussion and decision concerning public business (Acts 19:32-41).

The Bible translator William Barclay¹ (1907-1978) explains:

“The *ecclesia* [*ekklesia*] was the convened assembly of the people [in the Greek city-states]. It consisted of all the citizens of the city who had not lost their civic rights. Apart from the fact that its decisions must conform to the laws of the state, its powers were to all intents and purposes unlimited . . . Two things are interesting to note: First all meetings began with prayer and a sacrifice. Second it was a true democracy. Its great watchwords were “equality” and “freedom”. It was an assembly where everyone had an equal right and an equal duty to take part.” ~ (William Barclay, *New Testament Words*, SCM Press 1964)

Thus in its use *ekklesia* represented the congregation of those who decided concerning matters of law and civic relations. Although civic in its purpose it was nonetheless a religious gathering because it began with prayer and worship, and because it addressed hallowed matters since to the Greeks the city-state was a divine entity.

This use of *ekklesia* as a decision making body is entirely consistent with how Jesus used the term (Matthew 18:17).

But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican (Matthew 18:16-17)

The Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament translates the phrase “the congregation of the Lord”

as *ekklesia kyriou* which when literally rendered means; “the church of The Lord”. Thus we find that the congregation of Israel is the forerunner of the New Testament church. Under Moses, the Israelite congregations were summoned (or called out) by the use of trumpets (Numbers 10:2-4).

Two trumpet blasts were a call to the whole nation for worship. One blast was a call to the elders for the purpose of decision making. This latter congregation “ . . . was a national parliament, with legislative and judicial powers” (Fausset’s Bible Dictionary). Thus to the Israelite church meant a theocratic society whose members were the subject of the heavenly King. To the Greek, church meant a self-governing democratic society.

Make two trumpets of silver for yourself. You shall make them of beaten work. And they shall be used for the calling of the assembly and for causing the camps to go forward. And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall gather themselves to you at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And if they blow with one, then the rulers who are heads of the thousands of Israel shall gather themselves to you. (Numbers 10:2-4)

2. The Church militant and The Church as worshippers

In the light of all of this we can define church as being that body of believers whose twofold purpose is to worship King Jesus and aid in the advancement of His Kingdom. As such, Christ’s church looks inwardly to govern herself in compliance with Biblical standards for adoration and godly living, (the Church Worshipful) but she also looks outwardly to express her worship of the King by the demonstration and advocacy of His laws in society (the Church Militant).

¹ Whilst Barclay’s views on the virgin birth, Christ’s miracles and the Saviour’s death as substitutionary atonement for our sins do not comply with the truths set forth in the Nicene Creed, his work as a student of the antiquities (especially his *New Testament Words*) is warmly regarded by even the most conservative of Christians.

TITLES GIVEN TO THE CHURCH BY SCRIPTURE

The idea of Church Militant and Church Worshipful offers us a means of understanding the various titles which scripture assigns to The Church.

1. The Church Militant

- **One New Man** ~ Up until Christ at Calvary and Pentecost, God had relied on the nation of Israel as His main means of revealing Himself and speaking to the nations of the world. But Jesus died for all men so that salvation would be by grace and not according to race. Moreover at Pentecost we see the nations being told of God's grace and mercy in their own languages (Acts 2:5-12). Thus whereas there had been a barrier between Jew and non-Jew, that prevented the non-Jew from receiving God's forgiveness, this barrier has been removed and we are brought together as "one new man" (Ephesians 2:14-15).

For He is our peace, He making us both one, and He has broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in His flesh the enmity (the Law of commandments contained in ordinances) so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, making peace between them (Ephesians 2:14-15)

This new man is an entirely new humanity. The old humanity has the first man Adam as its head. Every person born is a part of this 'old man'. The new humanity has Jesus as its head. Jesus is the last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45-49). All those who are 'born again' are in Christ and so are part of this New Man.

- **The Body of Christ** ~ Not only is Christ our new head, but every Christian is deemed part of Christ's Body (Romans 12:5).

The Church is an organism just as the human body is an organism. Christ is the head and individual believers are members of the body (1 Corinthians 12:17-17, Ephesians 4:4, 12, 16). Being a Christian means that we are united to Christ; we belong to Him (Ephesians 1:23).

So we the many are one body in Christ, and each one members of one another. (Romans 12:5)

We are part of His body. This was never made clearer than at the time of Paul's encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. On that occasion Paul was on his way to persecute

"... and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church the church which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:23)

The Church. Jesus asked Paul "Why do you persecute Me?" (Acts 9:4, 22:7 & 26:14). To persecute The Church is to persecute Jesus.

In the body, the head rules. Jesus is to have first place in our lives. We are to live according to His will. This new humanity will ultimately replaces all vestiges of the failed Adamic race. God will again have for Himself a race, now born again and incorruptible (1 Peter 1:23) which will faithfully exercise His goal of righteous reign (Genesis 1:27-28).

- **The Pillar of Truth** ~ The Church is the pillar and ground of truth (1 Timothy 3:15). It is The Church's task to be the interpreter of the truth of God to the world and to defend this truth by its teaching, its witness and its testimony. There are many difficult issues which society must face every day. Christ's Church is meant to have practical wisdom for the community's present concerns in matters of justice, equity and relationships; as well as possess spiritual

But if I should delay, that you may know how you ought to behave in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:15)

truth for healing and salvation. The Church is to guard truth from corruption and mixture (1 Timothy 6:20-21; 2 Timothy 1:12-14). It is to teach unadulterated truth to its members and the world.

The Apostle Paul was deeply offended when members of the Corinthian church considered that the church's courts were incapable of settling a dispute amongst them (1 Corinthians 6:2-8). He challenged the Corinthians that since they would ultimately be judging angels, there should be wisdom, righteousness and integrity enough for them to judge between each other. History proves Paul's expectation correct because ultimately there came a time in pagan Rome when non-Christian citizens would take their disputes to Church courts because they knew that those deciding were wise, just and free of corruption. The Church as "pillar of truth" transformed the society where she found herself.

- **The Household of God** ~ Christ's Church is His Household (Ephesians 2:19). When Moses lead Israel out of Egypt and travelled through the wilderness, they encamped around the presence of God in a prescribed manner. Moses built Israel as a house in the presence of God. Israel's camp layout was similar to the way in which kings would set their army around them as they travelled on a military campaign.

God's journey through the wilderness was meant to take only a few days, but because of unbelief an entire generation of Israelites failed to exercise conquest of the promised land (Hebrews 3:7-11). The house which Moses built foundered because of its unbelief.

But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. (Hebrews 3:6)

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

Jesus tells us that unless we are born again we cannot see or enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3 & 3:5). Jesus is building His house, a glorious faith-filled army of regenerate believers to aid Him in His conquest.

As part of Him who fills all in all, as the Body of Christ, The One who replaces the old man and as the Pillar of Truth we see The Church as a society whose members are subjects of the heavenly King and whose lives serve to advance His Kingdom.

2. The Church Worshipful

Those who aspire to rule must be able to demonstrate rule over themselves, otherwise the house is divided against itself and cannot stand (Matthew 12:25, Mark 3:25 & Luke 11:17). The Church Worshipful is more than the household of God. It is the temple of God and as such it has precepts of truth, holiness and service which it maintains.

- **The Fullness of Christ** ~ The Church's exercise of worship is not confined to times of prayer and praise which occur as part of a church service. Our worship includes all things since it is our "... reasonable service to present our bodies as a living sacrifice ..." before the Lord (Romans 12:1). Christ's Church recognizes that whatever our task we are to do it as unto the Lord with thanksgiving (Colossians 3:17).

"... the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that fills all in all." (Ephesians 1:23)

Whether making sandwiches for the family, calculating the loads and stresses in a bridge

design or repairing a customer's faulty motor, the Christian does all things unto Christ and worships Christ in all things. In this way the life of Christ can be seen to fill all in all (Ephesians 1:23, Romans 11:36, 1 Corinthians 8:6).

- **The Temple of God** ~ The Christian is a member of the New Covenant in Christ's Blood. This new covenant calls for a new law, the Law of The Spirit (Romans 8:4); a new priesthood, the priesthood of all believers (Revelation 1:6) having Jesus as the new High Priest (Hebrews 3:1 & 4:14); and a new temple, wherein Jesus is the chief corner stone (Ephesians 2:20).

God no longer requires a temple building. He has chosen to dwell in the lives of His Church (1 Corinthians 3:9-17). Thus God's new temple is said to be built up of living stones (1 Peter 2:5) and offers God the worship of praise and obedience.

And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:20-22)

- **Christ's Bride** ~ It is a pleasant thing to see a man and a woman who are deeply in love with one another. They treat each other with a tenderness and consideration which is akin to adoration. We are engaged (espoused) to Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2) and are destined to be married to Him at the end of days (Revelation 21:2).

Every bride has at least one maid whose job it is to prepare the bride for the wedding. In some senses Jesus is both groom and bridesmaid, for it is He who is preparing His bride for Himself (Ephesians 5:25-27). The bridesmaid can lay out the wedding garment but the bride must put it on. Even so Jesus has prepared works of righteousness that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10) and it is our privilege to adorn ourselves in these works. Therefore we too have a role to play in the wedding preparation, since Christ's bride adorns herself with acts of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10, Revelation 19:7-8) permitted us according to His ordination.

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. (2 Corinthians 11:2)

For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called. (Isaiah 54:5)

Let us be glad and rejoice and we will give glory to Him. For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has prepared herself. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. For the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. (Revelation 19:7-8)

- **The City of God** ~ The Church is God's dwelling place (John 14:23), His tabernacle (Revelation 21:3). The Psalms often speak of God having a tabernacle and dwelling place in Zion (Psalm 2:6, 50:2, 74:2, 76:2, 99:2 & 132:13). But under the New Covenant God no longer confines Himself to one physical location. His dwelling place is with His Church. For this reason scripture assigns The Church the status of a city. We are the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2), the Zion where God now dwells (Hebrew 12:22).

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels (Hebrews 12:22)

- **God's Elect** ~ As God's bride, city, household, dwelling place, pillar of truth and holy nation, The Church clearly has the most privileged of positions. Only God could conceive to lavish

on the redeemed such favourable status. Left to ourselves we would remain dead in our sins (Ephesians 2:1), objects of God's anger (Ephesians 2:3) and at war with Him (Colossians 1:21). But God who is rich in His mercy, while we were yet enemies reconciled us to Himself by the death of His Son (Romans 5:10). While we were dead in our sins He made us alive in Christ (Ephesians 2:5).

Thus we find ourselves totally indebted to God. We have been saved by an act of His choosing (John 15:16) and we have been blessed and loved to a degree beyond that which any person could imagine (Ephesians 3:19).

For these reasons scripture refers to The Church as God's elect (Isaiah 65:22, Mark 13:27, Romans 11:5, 2 Timothy 2:10, Titus 1:1, 2 Peter 1:10) . He who chose Israel from amongst the nations has chosen The Church as His habitation. But with every privilege comes obligation and The Church is expected

to respond to such grace, calling and election by living a holy life before God (Ephesians 4:1, Colossians 3:12).

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender feelings of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering (Colossians 3:12)

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the calling with which you are called (Ephesians 4:1)

THE NATURE OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The Church is a self-governing body whose decisions must conform to the law of God. The Church owes much of her structure in governance to the customs of Old Testament Israel because as has been mentioned, that nation was the "church of The Lord" (being the literal rendering for "the congregation of the Lord", which in the Greek is *ekklesia kyriou*). The priesthood was especially important to the congregation of the Lord because it was the priests' role, as students of The Law, to inform Israel's elders and judges concerning The Law's requirements and precepts (Deuteronomy 17:9 & 19:17, Joshua 8:33). In this way the *ekklesia* was assured of making decisions which were consistent with God's Law.

When it comes to decision making in the New Testament church we find a similar pattern but with certain revisions.

1. Elders and Plurality in Leadership

God has placed in The Church both offices and ministries.

The ministry gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher (Ephesians 4:11) are important and are used of God to exercise authority, but they are not the fullness of God's means for church government, since government is primarily exercised by elders. Thus we find Paul, an apostle (Romans 1:1) and Timothy an evangelist (2 Timothy 4:5), were not released into their gifting-ministry until they had been appointed by elders (Acts 13:2-3 & 1 Timothy 4:14). Moreover when these men, as Christ's ministry gift to The Church, wrote to the church in Philippi, they addressed themselves to the church's elders (Philippians 1:1).

This is not to say that those with one of the five-fold ministry gifts cannot themselves move in authority. Paul was called into ministry via both elders and apostles (Acts 15:22). And it was Paul (as

an apostle in the midst of the elders) who called Timothy into ministry (2 Timothy 1:6). However we do a disservice to both the New Testament and church history if we confuse offices of government with ministry gifting.

The 'ekklesia' drew its structure from that which had existed in Israel's congregation or synagogue. Each synagogue had a chief ruler (Acts 18:8 & 18:17) and subordinate rulers with him. "It belonged to the chief or ruler of the synagogue to preside in all the assemblies, interpret the law, decide concerning things lawful and unlawful, punish the refractory, excommunicate the rebellious, solemnize marriages, and issue divorces." (Adam Clarke's Commentary). The ruler of the synagogue was aided in the administration of Jewish community by the elders of the community. Thus it was "the council" (or Sanhedrin), composed of chief priests and elders, which conspired against Jesus (Matthew 26:3-4), which passed judgment against Him (Matthew 27:1) and which persuaded the people to reject Him as Messiah (Matthew 27:20).

And it becoming early morning, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put Him to death. (Matthew 27:1)

But the chief priests and elders persuaded the crowd that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. (Matthew 27:20)

Clearly the priests or clerics of Christ's day were important in matters of communal justice and decision making. But with the New Testament came a new priesthood. Jesus is the new High Priest (Hebrews 3:1 & 7:24-26) and all believers are now members of a new priestly order (1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 1:6 & 5:10). Despite this change in priesthood, elders still require the word of God expounded to them as will assist them in their decisions. Jesus therefore granted the five-fold ministry gifts of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers as those ministries having a God-ordained special commitment to expounding The Word in a way which ensures that The Church lives in conformity to God's good pleasure and revealed purposes (Acts 6:2). The legitimacy for equating the five-fold ministry as the New Testament equivalent to the Old Testament priesthood seems apparent when it is realized that the Levitical priests too were a gift from God (Numbers 18:6).

... He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is able also to save to the uttermost those who come unto God by Him, since He ever lives to make intercession for them. For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens (Hebrews 7:24-26)

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for possession, so that you might speak of the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9)

And You made us kings and priests to our God, and we will reign over the earth. (Revelation 5:10)

Thus we see that the chief form of government for The Church Local is via an eldership aided by those whose gifting/ministry it is to inform concerning the Word of God. Such eldership preserves a plurality of leadership so that no one person can dominate the life of the church and it also preserves a plurality of skills/perspectives so that The Church Local can engage in all aspects of the society or city where God has placed it.

2. The Church in the city

The first Christians met in houses (Romans 16:5, 1 Corinthians 16:19, Philippians 4:22) and yet the New Testament speaks to the church in a city (Romans 1:7, 1 Corinthians 1:2, Galatians 1:2, Ephesians 1:1, Philippians 1:1, Colossians 1:2). The city church was the sum of its Christian

households. The authority of an eldership appears to have extended across a defined geographic range (Titus 1:5).

The profusion of denominations and church groups in our modern community has lead to

- **Ineffective Church Discipline** ~ Having only one church in a city, meant that if a Christian brother were cut off from fellowship because of unrepentant sin in his life (Matthew 18:17, 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15, 1 Timothy 1:20) he would be cut off from across the whole city. Having several churches in a city, as we do now, in many cases means that a person who has been disciplined by one fellowship need not repent but can join themselves to another group. This is not good for the individual and it weakens church discipline.
- **Unreliable Church Doctrine** ~ As gentiles started to become Christians there arose confusion in the church about whether they had to be circumcised. It was a council in Jerusalem, convened by apostles and elders, which decided the matter (Acts 15:1-30). Thus the church in one city was able to assist the church in another city to arrive at God's truth and wisdom. When John wrote to the seven churches in Asia (Revelation 2:1-3:22) he passed comment on the doctrine which was believed in that church as being a city-wide doctrine. Today's church administers doctrinal integrity through denominations but this means that it is harder for the non-Christian community to observe the unity of believing and behaviour by Christians in a city or community.

And if he refuses to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican. (Matthew 18:17)

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

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (Revelation 21:2)

It will take an astounding move of God to create a unity of believing (Ephesians 4:13) and to re-establish The Church Local as 'church in a city' but we must not lose sight of this as being God's ultimate goal. It is perhaps for this reason that The Church enjoys the title of "City of God" (Revelation 21:3).

3. The Purpose of The Church

Jesus told us that The Church was His means of taking the gates of hell (Matthew 16:18). Thus The Church is Christ's vehicle for prosecuting His redemption plan for the earth and mankind. Jesus won the battle against Satan at the Cross and He is using His Church as his effective means for mopping up the harm which sin has wrought in the world. Hence the whole of creation groans in travail waiting for the completion of God's church plan (Romans 8:19-23). God's purpose for The Church includes:

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matthew 16:18)

- **To constitute a dwelling place for God** ~ We are God's house and temple. We are that which God now inhabits (Ephesians 2:20-22).

- **To worship God and glorify Him on earth** ~ Christ's lament when He was in Jerusalem was that God's house had ceased to be a house of prayer but had become a place of commerce and a den of thieves (Mark 11:17). The Church now is God's prayerful and worshipping habitation (Ephesians 1:4-6, 3:20-21).
- **To develop each individual Christian** ~ Christ's Church has work to do, therefore it is necessary that each member will develop the attributes and ministries commensurate with their destiny in Christ (Ephesians 4:11-15, Hebrews 10:25-28, 1 Thessalonians 5:11). For this reason The Church is to edify, care for, teach and disciple its members.

Pilate then said to Him, Are you a king then? Jesus answered, You say it that I am a king. To this end I was born, and for this cause I came into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice. (John 18:37)

- **To bear witness to the truth** ~ Jesus told Pontius Pilate that He had come to bear witness to the truth (John 18:37). The Church continues to carry that ministry forward (1 Timothy 3:15).
- **To uphold a moral standard** ~ In a world afflicted with sin it is easy to observe people dragging others off into erroneous life styles. For this reason The Church is to be in the world but not of the world (John 17:15). It is The Church's task to uphold godly standards within the community (Philippians 2:14-15).
- **To evangelize and disciple the world** ~ History and personal experience demonstrates the transformative power of the gospel for individuals and for nations. It is the duty and joy of The Church to tell of that power (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, 5:42, 6:5-8, 8:1-4 & 15:7, Ephesians 3:8).

Therefore go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things, whatever I commanded you. And, behold, I am with you all the days until the end of the world. (Matthew 28:19-20)

- **To make known the manifold wisdom of God**
~ Paul tells us that God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise (1 Corinthians 1:27). Thus it falls to The Church to reveal the wisdom of God as revealed in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 3:10).

THE CHURCH AS A PROTESTANT ENTITY

These notes opened by drawing a distinction between the catholic church and the Roman Catholic Church. The gospel as defined by the Roman Catholic Church and that of evangelical or reformed Protestantism differs across a broad array of doctrine. There is little purpose in trying to deal with these differences in any detail, but there is great worth in understanding the mindset which characterized the reformation period and culminated in the split between Rome and the Protestant faith.

1. The five *sola's* of The Reformation

The essence of the split can be summed up by five *Sola's*. (*Sola* being Latin for 'only'.) The reformers came to realize that they differed with Rome over the centrality of scripture (*Sola Scriptura*), the fact that God and God alone receives all glory and that worship of Him is not to be

shared with saints or angels (*Sola Deo gloria*). They also differed from Rome in that they saw Jesus alone is the means of our salvation (*Sola Christus*), since it was by His grace alone (*Sola gratum*) and faith alone (*Sola fide*) in His finished work at Calvary that we are redeemed.

Thus to share in the spirit of the historic faith which is the hallmark of the protestant Christian life we must affirm:

- ***Sola scriptura*** ~ Salvation is to be understood according to scripture alone (Galatians 1:8-9). Scripture is our starting point and only reference for the deciding what is God's perfect will and plan in Christ for mankind. No church tradition, no personal experience, no confessional statement and no creed (even the Nicene Creed) can supplant the authority of scripture as the basis of our faith and salvation.
- ***Sola Deo gloria*** ~ The glory for mankind's salvation is ascribed to God alone (Romans 11:36) No one will have anything to boast of when we stand before God at the last judgment, for our good works are of Him. Even our faith is a gift from Him (Ephesians 2:8-10).

For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things; to Him be glory forever! Amen.
(Romans 11:36)

- ***Sola Christus*** ~ Our redemption was accomplished via the sacrificial death of Christ alone (1 Timothy 2:5). There is no other mediator, saint, church or system which can add to Christ's finished work on The Cross.
- ***Sola gratum*** ~ This blessing of salvation is given to us by grace alone (Ephesians 2:8). There was nothing winsome in us, nothing meritorious about the nature of our repentance and nothing special about our destiny or faith that warranted any favour from God in the granting to us of a knowledge of Christ's saving work.
- ***Sola fide*** ~ We receive this salvation through the instrument of faith alone (Romans 1:17), which is to say that there is no means for us to earn our salvation. No manner of good works, generous giving, earnest prayer-life, life of service nor a life of faith can win or earn us salvation. Indeed we are saved **by** faith not **because of** faith. Jesus' Cross is the means by which we are saved. Therefore faith is not the means of our salvation it is the instrument by which we are saved.

2. The marks of the true church

Given the profusion of churches in any one city, town or suburb some Christians choose a church to attend on the basis of convenience, worship style, friendliness or diversity of ancillary ministries. These may be relevant criteria but only after four decisive criteria are met. A true church is characterized by:

- clear, Christ-centered, Bible-based preaching of truth,
- a holiness which encourages believers to be in the world but not of the world,
- correct administration of the sacraments (ordinances) of the Lord's Table and Baptism, and
- the capacity to exercise discipline.

3. Church membership

Given the centrality of The Church in God's plan for His Kingdom we should wonder how any Believer would contemplate calling themselves Christian but not participate in a local church. Jonathan Wesley once said: "The Bible knows of no such thing as the solitary Christian". It is as if those outside The Church are devoid of a proper grasp of the work of salvation. And yet we affirm that salvation is through Christ and not any church (*Sola Christum*).

How then are we to assess those who willfully, either because of hurt, laziness or disinterest remain outside The Church?

One of the historic confessional standards, the Belgic Confession (1567), allocates considerable thought to the obligations of church membership (Articles 28) and the nature of the true church (Article 29). In a day when Christendom was the only worldview known to Europe, the Confession urged that:

“ . . . all people are obliged to join and unite with it [The Church],
keeping the unity of the church
by submitting to its instruction and discipline
by bending their necks under the yoke of Christ
and by serving to build one another up
as members of each other in the same body“

Then with some earnestness the Confession states:

“And in order to preserve this unity the more effectively
it is the duty of all believers,
according to God's Word,
to separate themselves from those who do not belong to the church“

Without doubt this is harsh by today's standards. Whether or not such strictures should again be practiced it seems that we can at the least agree with the Confession's concluding remarks on this matter:

“And so,
all who withdraw from the church
or do not join it
act contrary to God's ordinance.”

CHURCH & STATE

The Council of Nicaea (325 AD), that which gave rise to the Nicene Creed, was convened so as to settle certain matters of doctrine, particularly the doctrine of The Incarnation. Of interest to this section of the notes is the fact that the Council was not called by church officials but convened by order of Constantine (272-337), Emperor of Rome. Thus this Creed which has so influenced and blessed The Church owes its existence as much to a civil ruler as it does to the churchmen who wrote it.

Other historic church documents to which these notes have had recourse also owe their existence to civil authority; the Heidelberg Catechism (1563) was prepared at the request of Elector Fredrick III (1515-1576), who ruled The Palatinate, an influential province in Germany; the Belgic Confession (1561) was prepared for (but did not receive) the approval of King Phillip II of Spain (1527-1598), and the Westminster Catechisms were the work of the Westminster Assembly (1643-1649) being an assembly called and authorized by the English Parliament.

Whereas history teaches us that the state has acted to support and clarify church doctrine, history also reveals that Western governments are indebted to The Church for their development. For example the Magna Carta (1215), a treaty between the King of England and its nobles as defines limits to the King's authority, has been seminal to the exercise of representative government on four continents and was drafted by Stephen Langdon (1150-1228), the then Archbishop of Canterbury. The church's contribution to USA's Declaration of Independence was so important, particularly that of Rev John Witherspoon (1723-1794), that a member of Britain's House of Lords said, "Our American cousin has run off with a Presbyterian parson" while King George III called the insurrection in the Americas "that Presbyterian revolt." Amongst the first voice calling for federation in Australia, along with Sir Henry Parkes, was that of Presbyterian minister, John Dunmore-Lang (1799-1888).

The relationship between church and state is a matter of vast significance and the diversity of views is enormous. These notes offer some basic concepts and treat the topic as follows:

1. The nature of law
 - a) law as inherently religious
 - b) on the separation of powers
 - c) the role of government
 - d) a definition of government
2. The Church's obligation toward The Sate
 - a) discipling the nations
 - b) praying for those in authority
 - c) sanctuary
3. The State's obligations toward The Church
 - a) The Coronation Oath
 - b) on becoming god (or the state as saviour)
 - c) the legitimacy of church involvement in public debate

4. The Christian's obligations toward The State
 - a) the place for obedience
 - b) Christians as office bearers in civil government
 - c) the place of civil disobedience

THE NATURE OF LAW

It is said that the wise preacher will not talk about politics in the pulpit. Any preacher who is seeking to shape his hearers' attitudes and behavior toward what is right and wrong is in effect behaving as all governments do. By framing laws, all governments are seeking to shape their constituents' attitudes and behavior concerning what is right and wrong. Given that preachers and governments share the same goals, it emerges that law is inherently religious in its nature. Conversely because the gospel is purposed to shape the whole world, preaching is inherently political in its nature.

On this basis we will find that the Bible has much to say about the religious nature of government and the political nature of the church.

1. Law as inherently religious

There are several ways in which the Bible leads us to see that all law, even civil law, is religious in its nature.

- ***It is the prerogative of gods to set law*** ~ Governments are expected to aid in the smooth running of society by establishing laws. There are laws which constrain citizens from evil behaviour, such as laws against theft or murder, and there are laws which urge citizens toward good behaviour, such as tax deductions for charitable donations. By making laws, governments are deciding between what is right and what is wrong. Satan was correct when he told Eve that to decide between good and bad was a divine activity (Genesis 3:5) because the truth in his temptation was affirmed by God (Genesis 3:22). Thus all law making is a religious act.

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever (Genesis 3:22)

- ***Israel's quest for worship resulted in law*** ~ When Moses first approached Pharaoh it was to ask that Israel could have time away from her tasks in order to worship (Exodus 3:18). The relationship between law and religion in this episode can be seen in several ways. Firstly Moses' words to Pharaoh were a request to a civil authority who saw himself as god; secondly Pharaoh refused to legislate for Israel's temporary release because being god in Egypt he assumed that he (and not Jehovah) was God over this enslaved people; and third what started out as a request for worship culminated in Israel being set free under a new covenant and law.

. . . And you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt. And you shall say to him, Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews has met with us. And now let us go, we beseech you, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to Jehovah our God. (Exodus 3:18)

- **Israel's law was entirely worship** ~ The ten commandments given to Israel at Sinai dealt with their responsibilities toward God (One God, No idols, Holy Name, Holy day) and their responsibilities toward each other (Honour parents, Don't kill, Stay married, Don't steal, Don't lie, Don't Envy). But since all ten commandments were from God, the Israelites' responsibilities toward each other came as part of their responsibilities toward God. Thus the commandment that called on them not to steal is no less an act of worship than the commandment which specifically required them to worship only God. The entirety of The Law was worship.
 - **Authority for law making is divine** ~ Jesus' has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). Therefore all and every government rules according to that authority which Jesus has granted them. Any government which makes laws contrary to Christ's precepts does not merely breach moral principle or human rights. Such governments commit a *religious* error. They sin. Jesus made this clear at the time of His crucifixion for He reminded Pilate that Pilate had no authority except that which God had given him (John 19:11) and that to condemn Jesus to death, as He was an innocent man, was not just a miscarriage of justice but a sin (John 19:11).

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority is given to Me in Heaven and in earth. (Matthew 28:18)

Jesus answered, You could have no authority against Me unless it were given to you from above. Therefore he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin. (John 19:11)

 - **We are to obey for conscience's sake** ~ To possess a clear conscience is a statement of religious observance as well as a statement of personal integrity (Acts 24:16, 1 Peter 2:19 & 1 Peter 3:16). The apostle Paul unabashedly presents food choices as acts of a religious kind. Having urged prayer before we eat and care in our food choices for faith and love's sake, Paul concludes by saying that such prayerful, faith-filled loving choices are for the sake of a good conscience. In this Paul demonstrates that a good conscience and religion are linked.

Therefore you must be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. (Romans 13:5)

And in this I exercise myself, always to have a blameless conscience toward God and men. (Acts 24:16)

- Similarly, Paul wrote that we are to obey civil authority not just because they can punish disobedience but for the sake of good conscience (Romans 13:5). If the decision to obey civil law for conscience sake is a religious act then the decision as to the content of civil law must also be an inherently religious act.

2. On the separation of powers

If law is inherently religious in nature what is the correct way to understand the separation of powers between church and state? The structure of government in Israel allows us some insight to this question.

- **The King was subject to The Law** ~ God required that every king of Israel should know The Law by writing out his own copy of it (Deuteronomy 17:18-19). In this way the king would recall that he himself was subject to The Law and that he was required to rule the nation according to The Law and not according to his own whim. The king's study of The Law was

not only for the nation but it was for his own long life and humility “so that his heart may not be lifted above his brothers”.

- **Priests and Kings were from different tribes** ~

The nation of Israel when founded had the tribe of Levi as its priests (Numbers 18:6-7) and in the providence of God, the tribe of Judah became the regal household in whose lineage Jesus Christ came (Genesis 49:8-10).

Thus while kings made laws, their laws had to be within the boundaries of the national constitution, which was The Law of God. It became the priests’ role to aid the king and the elders by helping them apply The Law and its precepts to the day to day decisions which were required for the nation.

- **Kings could not be Priests** ~

If there was one sin which lead to swift judgment in Old Testament Israel it was when a king took on the function of a priest. King Jeroboam was given the ten northern tribes of Israel when the nation was split as a result of the foolishness of Solomon’s successor King Rehoboam (1 Kings 12:1-24). So as to prevent the ten northern tribes from having to return to Jerusalem for the prescribed festivals each year, Jeroboam set up his own altar, making sacrifice and burning incense to The Lord on it. God’s judgment against Jeroboam was immediate (1 Kings 13:1-6). Many years later Uzziah, king of Judah, went into the temple in Jerusalem to burn incense. His heart had become lifted up. His judgment was also swift (2 Chronicles 26:17-21).

And it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write a copy of this Law in a book from before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, so that he may learn to fear Jehovah his God, to keep all the words of this Law, and these statutes, to do them, so that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he does not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left, so that he may make his days longer in his kingdom, he and his sons, in the midst of Israel. (Deuteronomy 17:18-20)

Judah, may your brothers praise you. May your hand be in the neck of your enemies. May your father's sons bow before you. . . . The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come. And the obedience of the peoples to him. (Genesis 49:8&10)

But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to ruin. For he sinned against Jehovah his God, and went into the temple of Jehovah to burn incense on the altar of incense. And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him eighty priests of Jehovah, mighty men. And they withstood Uzziah the king and said to him, It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron who are consecrated to burn incense. Go out of the temple, for you have sinned. Nor shall it be for your honor from Jehovah God. (2 Chronicles 26:16-18)

Kings were not permitted to be priests lest they begin to lead the worship and in leading the worship claim an affinity with God that authorized them to present their own laws as being divinely inspired.

These three observations instruct us concerning the separation of powers:

- a) Kings are not above the law. They could make laws, within the ambit of the constitution. It was the priests’ role to constrain the king’s law-making if he strayed outside God’s constitutional principles as revealed in The Law. And it was the priest’s role to correct the king if the king’s own life did not meet God’s righteous requirements.
- b) Kings held executive powers of law-making but their judicial powers of law enforcement were constrained by the priesthood. Kings held control of government but not full control of the courts.

- c) Priests could not be kings. The priests could lead in worship but they did not have civil authority to enforce worship. If the nation were to remain faithful to God then it had to flow from the hearts of the people not by coercion.
- d) Kings could not become priests. Kings stood outside the temple's Holy Place along with the rest of the nation, therefore they could not claim that their laws were divinely inspired. They could not use their civil power to enforce worship.

Israel had a state religion but it was a religion which was wrought by God in their midst. Neither king nor priest could impose a religion of their own devising. The separation of powers is built on mutual help. The king could not establish a civil religion but was expected to prosper, protect and conform to God's law and religious institutions. The priests could not establish a civil religion but were expected to counsel, correct and pray for the king.

3. The role of government

What then is the role of government in the civil state? We live in a day when the western world is moving away from the biblical values which have undergirded our success and equity as a civilized society. The contribution of men such as Stephen Langdon, John Witherspoon and John Dunmore-Lang is being forgotten. To address the role of government in today's secular and humanistic society means a challenge to our thinking. But if it's a challenge for us in a society of declining Christian values how must it have been for the apostle Paul who lived under Nero, a pagan emperor who actively persecuted the church?

Paul's instructions to our brethren in Rome (Romans 13:1-10) are important to us today. According to Paul it is the role of government:

- **To bear the sword and execute wrath on evildoers** ~ Paul expects that governments will act as God's ministers for righteousness. They are to minister God's wrath against evil (Romans 13:3-4). But what does Paul see as that which deserves governmental wrath? His definition of that which warrants God's wrath has already been stated earlier in the book of Romans. God's wrath (Romans 1:18) pertains to inordinate lusts, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, strife, disobedience to parents, covenant-breaking and mercilessness (Romans 1:24-32).

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness (Romans 1:18)

- **Not to be a terror to good works** ~ Government has a twofold task. On the one hand it is to be a terror to those who do evil, and it is not to be a terror to those who do good (Romans 13:3). It is contrary to the purposes of good government to restrain those who would bless the nation. When governments seek to prevent Christians from doing good within society they exceed their authority.

For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. (Romans 13:3)

- **To defend the state** ~ Roman society did not have a police force. It was the soldiers who bore the sword (Romans 13:4). The soldiers had the task of protecting the state against attack from within by maintaining internal order and to protect the state against attack from without by being war-ready. In Israel, the authority for national defence was vested in the

king but was somewhat constrained. It was contrary to the Mosaic law for a king to have a standing army and a military establishment (Deuteronomy 17:16). In this way war was not to be an act of aggression and personal self-aggrandizement. It was to be a community based action for the purposes of national self-defence when under attack.

4. A definition of government

The Christian's attitude to government differs from that of other worldviews. The non-Christian sees government as being a thing of man's contrivance and necessity. Thus for the non-Christian, government becomes the servant of the people (or those in power) and is able to determine for itself what is right and wrong since its purpose is the preservation or defence of certain rights.

On the other hand, the Christian sees government as a gift from God, operating within the constraints of His character and values, for the orderly progress and equitable dealings of men one with another.

For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be on His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. There is no end of the increase of His government and peace on the throne of David, and on His kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from now on, even forever. The zeal of Jehovah of Hosts will do this. (Isaiah 9:6-7)

THE CHURCH'S OBLIGATION TOWARD THE STATE

Having separated the powers of priest and king, it is important to recall that both church and state owe adoration to Christ, for He alone is both Priest and King, being a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 6:20 & 7:1). Thus the church's first obligation is not to the state nor to herself but to King Jesus, He on whose shoulders the government rests (Isaiah 9:6) and whose kingdom will ever be increased (Isaiah 9:7). Because of this, our obligations to the state need to be interpreted within the light of Christ's dominion.

. . . even Jesus, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek . . . For this Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. (Hebrews 6:20 & 7:1)

1. Discipling the Nations

Jesus' great commission was that we should baptize nations and disciple them toward adherence to Christ's commandments (Matthew 28:19-20). It is a sadness that most translations of Jesus' commandment render the verse as "make disciples of all the nations", whereas the correct rendering is "disciple all the nations"¹. The incorrect rendering is deficient because it leads English speaking believers to think that we are called to individual disciples from each and every nation, whereas the verse actually means that we are called to disciple whole nations.

¹ The problem has arisen in part because of a misreading of Christ's Kingdom as being a spiritual kingdom only, but it has also arisen because of Bible translations. The Greek clearly places 'nations' as the accusative case to the verb 'disciple' hence in the original Christ's statement reads as "disciple all the nations" but the practice in many translations has been to treat the word 'disciple' as a noun and by preceding it with the verb 'to make' infer that the word 'nation' is in the genitive case. Hence the statement is rendered as "make disciples of all the nations". This allows for the misconception that our role is to make disciples from amongst the nations. Young's Literal Translation comes closest to the mark with . . . "having gone, then, disciple all the nations, baptizing them to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all, whatever I did command you." (Matt 28:19-20)

The experience of Israel in exile under pagan kings, in particular as found in the book of Daniel, instructs as to the power and means of discipling of nations.

- ***A great nation is a godly nation*** ~ The prophet Daniel was called upon to interpret a vision which King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had received. The vision was of a metal man whose head was gold, chest was silver, legs were bronze and feet were iron (Daniel 2:26-46). Daniel's God-given interpretation of the dream was to explain the future of national reign in the Mediterranean for the next 500 years. King Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, Babylon was the head of a gold and the greatest of all (Daniel 2:38-39), after this would come the lesser kingdom of the Medes and Persians, then the Greeks and then lastly and least the Roman empire.

Daniel declares Babylon the greatest kingdom and yet historians tell us that Babylon's dominion was lesser than the Medo-Persians, was lesser than the Greeks was lesser than the Roman empire? The discrepancy occurs because Daniel is interpreting the dream from God's perspective and not that of the world. Babylon was greatest, not because she was the greatest militarily or geographically, but because she was the most used of God to bless Israel and prosper His plan of dominion in Christ.

- ***A godly head of state prospers the things of God*** ~ Consider the actions of the leaders of these nations across time and contrast their attitudes toward Israel and the things of God:
 - a) Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was called God's servant (Jeremiah 27:6) because he was used of God to both judge Judah and to protect her in exile (Jeremiah 25:9-11). After much chastisement and correction by God, Nebuchadnezzar declared that The Lord was God over all (Daniel 4:34-37).
 - b) Cyrus (~600BC-530BC) the king of the Medes was called God's anointed (Isaiah 45:1) and was used of God to shepherd Israel whilst in exile and to lay the foundation for a re-built temple in Jerusalem (Isaiah 44:28). (Being that which Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed!)
 - c) Artaxerxes (~500BC-425BC), the Persian king, was used by God to furnish the re-building of the temple and to prosper the study of The Law (Ezra 7:11-26).
 - d) Antiochus Epiphanes (215BC-164BC), king within the Greek empire, although not named in scripture, is clearly described. He profaned the temple sanctuary and removed the daily sacrifice as was prophesied of him (Daniel 11:21-35). He also persecuted many faithful Jews.
 - e) Nero (37AD-68AD), emperor of Rome, instigated the most virulent and sinful persecution of Christ's church.
- ***A potent church is one which challenges ungodly leaders*** ~ There is a correlation to be observed in history as revealed by Daniel. Firstly we see that as the nations became more politically powerful they also become more opposed to the God's people. Alas the history of Israel at this times also instructs us, for as Israel came less and less to challenge her ungodly rulers she became less and was godly in herself. Consider:

- a) Daniel was used of God to resist the Babylonian culture (Daniel 1:8) to aid the king in godly government but also to correct Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:19-27).
- b) Nehemiah sought the welfare of Artaxerxes and was such a trusted court member that he was the king's cup bearer (Nehemiah 1:11). In this way he and Ezra blessed both nation and temple.
- c) Under the Greeks however, certain godless Jews gained charge of the temple, and abandoned Hebrew values and The Law. They promoted the Greek worldview to such an extent that there was barely any interest in the temple worship or sacrifices. They allied themselves with Antiochus Epiphanes without objection when he banned circumcision and burned the Torah. In this instance Jewish deliverance did not come via prophet or priest. It came as result of military action under the Maccabean revolt.
- d) The Jews' ultimate shame was to deny their Messiah and called for Caesar Tiberius (42BC-37AD) to be their king (John 19:15). Thereafter they continued their political machinations to gain the endorsement of emperor Nero (37AD-68AD) for the persecution of Christ's church.

From this history we learn that the church serves her nation and community best when she flees worldliness and any sin-ridden Christ-denying culture of her time. The government serves itself and its nation best when it heeds the church's call to righteousness and equity (Proverbs 14:34).

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. (Proverbs 14:34)

The church is at her best when she serves her civil rulers in righteousness but remains courageous to challenge those rulers when they veer from godliness. For this reason it has been said that the strength of a nation is determined by the soundness of her pulpits. But not only her pulpits, for the church must relate to the government with the wisdom and courage of Daniel, the service and trustworthiness of Nehemiah, the respectfulness of Ezra and the prayerfulness of all three.

2. Praying for those in authority

Given that the church is to revere her government, and given that the government is best served when the gospel is correctly ministered, it makes sense that the apostle Paul should urge us to pray for those in authority.

- **Pray for all in authority that they will grant peace to The Church** ~ To uphold those in authority is to continue the practice of Ezra (Ezra 6:10) and follow the urgings of Paul. Our prayer should be for their safekeeping and that they will not harm the gospel by allowing the church to live in peace and dignity (1 Timothy 2:1-3).

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior (1 Timothy 2:1-3)

- **Pray for those in authority that they will not be found to be resisting God** ~ When Christians first appeared in Jerusalem one councilor, Gamaliel, recommended against punishing the disciples because this new movement may be a Godly thing and the council may find itself inadvertently opposing God (Acts 5:34-39). Similarly Artaxerxes sought to prosper the things of God lest “there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons” (Ezra 7:23).

... that they may offer pleasing sacrifices to the God of heaven and pray for the life of the king and his sons. (Ezra 6:10)

- **Pray for the city where God has placed us** ~ The Christian’s values can be very different to that of our neighbours. And as with Israel there are times when we can feel as though we are foreigners in our own city. Even so we are to pray for the peace and welfare of the community in which God has placed us (Jeremiah 29:7).

But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. (Jeremiah 29:7)

3. Sanctuary

When Moses gave Israel The Law, he set aside certain cities of refuge (Deuteronomy 19:1-7 & Numbers 35:15). These were cities that an innocent person could flee to and seek sanctuary. The elders of the city would hear the claims of the one seeking sanctuary and that of his accusers. If the elders were satisfied that justice was best served by continuing to provide sanctuary, then the innocent person would remain until the passing away of the High Priest (Numbers 35:25). The cities of refuge were also cities where the Levites had their inheritance assigned (Numbers 35:2). Thus the priests who served the elders in the cities of refuge helped to keep the nation free from a miscarriage of justice.

These six cities shall be for refuge for the people of Israel, and for the stranger and for the sojourner among them, that anyone who kills any person without intent may flee there. (Numbers 35:15)

The practice of sanctuary no longer exists. The church is no longer able to prevent the institutions of

Command the people of Israel to give to the Levites some of the inheritance of their possession as cities for them to dwell in. And you shall give to the Levites pasturelands around the cities. (Numbers 35:2)

officialdom from pursuing its claims. Despite this, the church today still has a role to represent and protect the interests of individuals where injustice is being done.

THE STATE’S OBLIGATION TOWARD THE CHURCH

We live in a day when governments feel at liberty to frame laws without any regard to God or to the Christian gospel. Governments behave as if God is dead. To commence a discussion about the state’s obligations to The Church is for most politicians a waste of time. Today’s governments see The Church as having no particular authority but as being akin to any other welfare group or service group such as The Lions or Rotary. So rather than speak in theoretical terms we might consider the current constitutional realities of Australia’s government.

1. The Monarch's Oath of Office

Australia is, at present, a constitutional monarchy, having Queen Elizabeth II as ultimate sovereign and under the Governor General as head of state. In former times the power of government in England rested in the King. The King was regarded as God's representative for ruling the nation. He was not unfettered in this authority but was required to govern lawfully, justly and mercifully, to maintain God's law and to regard the Bible as the rule for the whole of life and government. These requirements, though often forgotten or disregarded, were incorporated into the 'coronation oath' at least by 973 AD and have remained as part of the coronation ceremony ever since. In 1688 these requirements were entrenched in the law by statute (Coronation Oath Act). These promises were incorporated into the undertakings given on oath by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as part of her coronation ceremony:

Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. (Psalms 2:10-11)

The Archbishop of Canterbury: "Will you solemnly promise and swear to govern the Peoples of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, Pakistan and Ceylon, and of your Possessions and other Territories belonging or pertaining to any of them, according to their respective laws and customs?"

The Queen: "I solemnly promise so to do."

The Archbishop of Canterbury: "Will you to the utmost of your power cause Law and Justice, in Mercy, to be executed in all your judgments?"

The Queen: "I will."

The Archbishop of Canterbury: "Will you to the utmost of your power maintain the Laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel? Will you to the utmost of your power maintain in the United Kingdom the Protestant Reformed Religion established by law? Will you maintain and preserve inviolable the settlement of the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, as by law established in England? And will you preserve unto the Bishops and Clergy of England, and to the Churches there committed to their charge, all such rights and privileges, as by law do or shall appertain to them or any of them?"

The Queen: "All this I promise to do. The things which I have here before promised, I will perform, and keep. So help me God."

The Coronation Oath instructs us that it is the responsibilities of a monarch and governments to:

- rule with justice and mercy (Matthew 23:23, Romans 13:3),
- live lives consistent with God's righteousness (Romans 2:14-15),
- protect and preserve the church (1 Timothy 2:1-2), and
- acknowledge their need of God's help to exercise the responsibilities of their office.

2. The state as Saviour

The first city to appear in the Bible record is that which was built by Cain (Genesis 4:17). It is instructive that the first city in scripture was built following the murder of one brother by another, as an act of rebellion against the judgments of God (since part of God's judgment was that Cain should be a nomad (Genesis 4:12)) and as a monument to self for the preservation of a posterity.

And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch. (Genesis 4:17)

This bares a strange resemblance to the fable of the founding of Rome, which was built following a dispute between two brothers, wherein Romulus killed Remus, and named the city after himself for a posterity. Thus we are constrained to see both from scripture and from within the heart of man, that the city and sovereign state can tend to become a place of rebellion against God.

St Augustine of Hippo (354 - 430) wrote in defence of the Christian faith against the claims of Rome. He spoke of the relationship between the kingdom of man and the kingdom of God after the manner of two cities, each contrary in their laws because they were striving for contrary objects. With a subtle brevity he expressed the cause of each in these words:

“Two loves formed two cities: the love of self, reaching even to contempt of God, an earthly city; and the love of God, reaching to contempt of self, a heavenly one.”

The contempt for God which St Augustine identified was never so evident as it had been at the time of Christ’s birth. Jesus was born during the reign of Caesar Augustus (Luke 2:1). This Caesar, was the son (by adoption) of his great-uncle, Gaius Julius Caesar and ruled the empire from 44BC to 14AD. His family name was Gaius Octavius Thurinus. The title Augustus was not part of his original name but an honorific that was added. Augustus meant “worthy of praise”. This praiseworthy Caesar Augustus was referred to as; "the god Caesar, the son of god, Augustus, and saviour of freedom." Whereas the early church proclaimed Jesus as God, son of God and Saviour, the religion of the Roman state viewed the emperor as god, the son of a god who was both lord and savior.

We cannot properly understand Rome’s persecution of the early church until we see that our brethren were persecuted for their statement that “Jesus is Lord”. Their faith was a direct affront to the faith of Rome which saw itself as the divine state and eternal city. With its conquest of so many other nations, Rome had become the repository of more religions than any other city in antiquity. These religions were not persecuted as was The Church because they were prepared to burn incense to the genius and divinity of the emperor. But the Christians’ certainty that Jesus was Lord, even over Caesar (Romans 14:11, Philippians 2:10 & Isaiah 45:23), made it impossible for them to subscribe to the worship of the state. Thus The Church was persecuted for reasons of politics as much as it was for religious convictions (Psalm 2:2-4 & 12).

For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. (Romans 14:11)

(See also Philippians 2:10 & Isaiah 45:23)

Rome was correct to adopt the stance that she did. She understood more clearly what was at stake than do most preachers today. She understood that salvation cannot be separated from lordship. If Jesus is Saviour then He must also be Lord of all things. If He is not Lord of all things then He is not competent to save. If we reduce Christ to being the saviour of men’s souls only, then He becomes Lord of heaven but ceases to be Lord of heaven and earth! If He is Lord of heaven only then He cannot save men and women on earth. But if He is Lord of all things then Caesar must bow to Him. Not only Caesar but all earthly government belong to and must do obeisance to Him!

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. . . . Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. (Psalms 2:2-4 & 12)

It might be said that the idea of the state as divine is past. In today's rational world people are not inclined toward matters divine and salvific. Yet consider Fredrick Hegel (1770–1831). It has been said that one cannot understand Marx and socialism unless one understands Hegel. Indeed one cannot grasp that which is called post-modernism without an appreciation of Hegel. For one of the major contributors to post modern thought tells us: "We will never be finished with reading and rereading Hegel." ~ Jacques Derrida (1930 - 2004).

Hegel expresses great confidence in the divinity and saving power of the state²:

"It must be understood that the State is the realization of Freedom, that is of the absolute final aim, and that it exists for its own sake. It must further be understood that all the worth which the human being possesses - all spiritual reality, he possesses only through the State. ... For Truth is the Unity of the universal and subjective Will; and The Universal is to be found in the State, in its laws, its universal and rational arrangements. The State is the Divine Idea as it exists on earth. We have in it, therefore, the object of History in a more definite shape than before; that in which Freedom obtains objectivity, and lives in the enjoyment of this objectivity"
~ G.W.F. Hegel, Philosophy of History in Jacob Loewenberg (ed.), Hegel: Selections (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1929), pp. 388-89.

And again:

"We must ... worship the State as the manifestation of the Divine on Earth."
~ G.W.F. Hegel, Philosophy of Law in Jacob Loewenberg (ed.), Hegel: Selections (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1929), pp. 443-444, 447.

Because of Marx's interpretation of Hegel it must be said that for as long as socialism exists it will have recourse to the state as the world's great hope and divine saviour.

Astute readers of these notes will have observed that the notes have ascribed a somewhat limited function to the role of government. The state has been confined largely to the task as minister of justice. The state has been denied that which is more commonly found in the portfolio of the modern governmental responsibilities; education, health and welfare. This is because the Bible does not place these as the responsibility of the state but of the church and family.

- **Education - a family responsibility with church input** ~ Scripture charges parents with the responsibility of teaching children concerning the things of God (Deuteronomy 6:7). But such instruction cannot be confined to religious education only. The whole of life is subject to God, therefore God instructed parents to inform their children concerning their history and heritage (Deuteronomy 6:20-25) as well as how to conduct business and understand the natural world (Proverbs 4:1, 6:6-10, 26:2, 26:3, 26:11, 26:17 & 27:8). Such

You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. (Deuteronomy 6:7)

² Hegel was not without his detractors:

"The height of audacity in serving up pure nonsense, in stringing together senseless and extravagant mazes of words, such as had been only previously known in madhouses, was finally reached in Hegel, and became the instrument of the most barefaced, general mystification that has ever taken place, with a result which will appear fabulous to posterity, as a monument to German stupidity." ~ Arthur Schopenhauer (1788 – 1860)

"Hegel's philosophy is so odd that no one would have expected him to be able to get sane men to accept it, but he did. He set it out with so much obscurity that people thought it must be profound." ~ Bertrand Russell (1872 – 1970)

instruction was not solely the task of family, for the priests were important to the education process. The tribe of Levi acted as educators to the people, to the civil authorities and to the congregation at large (Leviticus 10:11, Deuteronomy 17:18, 31:9-13, 2 Chronicles 17:7-9, Nehemiah 8-9).

- **Health - a church responsibility** ~ Because we live in a moral universe and because to the Christian the entirety of life is worship, we might understand that health and well-being are related to sin and righteousness (Deuteronomy 28:14-68, Mark 2:9). Therefore the church has the ministry of healing via the preaching of the gospel which brings forgiveness for sin as well as the ministry of prayer for the sick. Traditionally the church has also had responsibility for the administration of institutions such as infirmaries and hospitals which were also to be sources of healing of the sick.
- **Welfare - a family responsibility with church input** ~ The Law gave Israel clear guidance in the administration of her tithes. The Law included that which was known as the poor tithe (Deuteronomy 14:28-29 & 26:11-15). That tithe was part of a system of the Levitical revenue and was administered at a local level. In this way the community, knowing the character and behavior of those in need, was able to care for those who were genuinely poor and deny the malingerer reward for his indigence. But relief of poverty was a family responsibility before it was a communal responsibility. Thus Paul counsels Timothy that the church's relief should go to those who were 'widows indeed', telling him that the family which failed to care for its own poor was of a very degenerate nature (1 Timothy 5:8 & 5:16).

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. (1 Timothy 5:8)

If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed. (1 Timothy 5:16)

Our current government's provision of universal education, universal healthcare and widespread welfare support is so much an important part of our lives that it seems impossible to conduct an equitable society without it. Even so we must observe that under Christ, these functions are meant to be administered by family and church. In this way the traditions of family and the charity of church take precedence. Government involvement in these matters merely allows the state to facilitate the breakdown of family, to divert the church's moral authority and to reinforce its self-appointed function of saviour to society.

Lest it seem extremism to assert the messianic nature of modern government let us conclude with the Preamble to the United Nations Charter. Note its redemptive language:

WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED

* to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind,

* to regain faith in fundamental human rights . . .

* to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and

* to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

It would seem that justice and freedom are to be wrought via a saving faith in the United Nations? There is no place for Christ in today's humanistic thinking.

3. The legitimacy of church involvement in public debate

We find ourselves in a society which sins continually. Foremost amongst it's sins is that of forgetfulness. Moses commanded Israel that they should remember The Law and their history (Deuteronomy 11:18). Israel's failure to remember was an exercise in disobedience and as with all disobedience it carried with it penalties.

Many in today's society are keen to tell the church that public policy is a public matter and therefore ought not be influenced by the requirements of religion, which is after, all a private matter. Aside from the fact that all lawmaking is an inherently religious act, aside from the fact that secular humanism is itself a non-theistic faith based religion

You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. (Deuteronomy 11:18-19)

(stated as such by "The Humanist Manifesto I and II"), and aside from the fact that such doctrinaire secularism amounts to the promotion of a type of atheism as the unofficial state religion; to hold such a radical and inflexible position is to deny the basis of its origin. It is to forget that the separation of powers came from scriptures itself.

Those who argue such an extreme view of the separation between church and state sin in their forgetfulness. It was under Moses that priesthood was confined to Levi and it was under Samuel that monarchy was confined to Judah. Were it not for the precedence of the Bible there would be no awareness in Western society of the idea of separation of powers. Thus those who try to silence the church in the public square are disingenuous and unthankful to the very source of their argument. This is forgetfulness and ingratitude toward God. This is sin and the penalty for such sin is tyranny.

THE CHRISTIAN'S OBLIGATION TO THE STATE

Having observed that Rome's insistence on total and saving sovereignty meant that the good character and obedience of the early Christians saints could not stay the force and terror of persecution, we might ask what are our obligations to the state?

1. The place of obedience

Scripture points to obligations toward the state for the Christian as well as for The Church. Jesus told those of His day that they should render to Caesar the things which are Caesar's. The immediate context of this statement was a discussion about taxes (Mark 12:17), but state authorities are due more than just taxes:

- **Obey and bless those in authority** ~ Paul makes it clear to us that we are to obey those in authority (Romans 13:1-2, 1 Peter 2:13). Jesus takes it one step further. The Romans and some Eastern nations, when government dispatches had to be forwarded, obliged the

people not only to furnish horses and carriages, but to accompany them as well. Speaking in this regard Jesus urged that we bless those in authority, telling us that if we are compelled to walk one mile that we should volunteer to walk two (Matthew 5:41)! Thus we are to obey and bless those in authority.

- **Render honour** ~ It is well that we should pray for those in authority (1 Timothy 2:1) but we are to do more than that. We are to give them the honour due to their office or position (1 Peter 2:17).

Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. (1 Peter 2:17)

- **Pay the state its taxes** ~ Jesus was adamant that all due taxes must be payable to state authorities (Matthew 22:19-22). Paul too required that the saints would pay their taxes (Romans 13:6-7). To do otherwise is theft.
- **Recognize the customs of a society** ~ It seems strange to us that the New Testament should appear to be at ease with slavery. Paul actually took the step of returning a slave to his owner (Philemon 1:11-15). Furthermore even where a master was a Christian, Paul did not require that they must release their slaves (1 Timothy 6:1-2). And yet Paul forbade a Christian from becoming a slave and urged that slaves should get free (1 Corinthians 7:20-23) if the opportunity presented. Christians are called to be radically non-conformist but the history of the church is that it has done its best reform when it has acted in service and not in revolt.

2. Christians as office bearers in civil government

There have been times when Christians are uneasy about participating in the civil service, either as officials, soldiers or police, because they feel that they are advancing the unrighteous activities of ungodly government. Clearly it is a matter of personal conscience as to when a Christian finds themselves at odds with the government as their employer. Even so it is useful to recall that repentant tax officials and repentant soldiers were not told to depart their calling (Luke 3:12-14), but to be honest and just in their dealings. Also the early church included some who were actually members of Caesar's household, (Philippians 4:22). Thus there is no formal expectation in scripture that Christians will avoid civil service.

Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Collect no more than you are authorized to do." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages." (Luke 3:12-13)

Moreover it should be asked whether the absence of Christians from sectors of government will mean the total absence of any godly restraint.

All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household. (Philippians 4:22)

3. The place for civil disobedience

There are two principles worthy of recall when handling The Law of God.

- 1) Firstly The Law requires where the sin is forbidden the contrary obligation is required. Thus The Law not only mandates that we don't steal (Deuteronomy 5:19). It also

expects that we will work and be generous (Ephesians 4:28). In this way The Law commands us to do good to the same extent that it commands us to refrain from evil.

- 2) Secondly you cannot use The Law to break The Law. Thus although The Law requires a child to honour their parent, this requirement cannot be used to compel the child to return home to a violent abusive father, else we are using one law; Honour parents, to facilitate the breaking of another law; Don't kill (Deuteronomy 5:16 & 5:17).

With these two principles in mind we can consider the place of, and need for, civil disobedience. The state enjoys the blessing of God and the expectation that it will be obeyed because it possesses its authority from God (Romans 13:1, 2 Peter 13-17). However the state too is subject to The Law of God and it exceeds its bounds if it legislates for the conduct of evil or for the prohibition of good.

The state does not have to be obeyed in all things. Its authority is not absolute. The state cannot make lawful that which God says is unlawful. Thus the state cannot legislate that a doctor must advise a woman to have an abortion. This is an abuse of its authority and Christian doctors are entitled to resist such laws.

Neither can the state make unlawful that which God intends for good. It is for this reason that Jesus healed on the Sabbath. It was an act of civil disobedience because the religious leaders' application of Sabbath laws worked in such a way as to prevent good from being done. This was contrary to The Law, for The Law was meant for our good (Psalm 119:68) and liberty (Psalm 119:45).

Acknowledgements

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WATER BAPTISM

In the nearly 2,000 years since Christ's crucifixion, His followers have expressed their faith and obedience in a vast number of ways. We've built cathedrals and monasteries. We've sung chants, hymns and choruses. We've emphasized different doctrine in different ways. We've had numerous church councils, creeds of various kinds and confessional statements ranging from the simple to the complex. Yet throughout the ages the importance of baptism as a rite of admission to the faith has never diminished. To be certain, there have been (and still are) numerous forms for the conduct of baptism, but they have all seen the remission (or sending away) of sin as a key element of this sacrament/ordinance.

As the Nicene Creed says: "We affirm one baptism for the remission of sin"

We will discuss the Baptism along the following lines:

1. Why we should be baptized
 - a) the relevance of Jesus' example and commandment
 - b) baptism as a public declaration of faith
2. Who should be baptized and when
3. The scope of baptism defined
4. The nature of baptism as demonstrated by its scope
 - a) baptism into God's Trinitarian Name
 - b) baptism as washing with water
 - c) baptism as resurrection
 - d) baptism as regeneration
 - e) baptism as the remission of sins
 - f) baptism as admission to Christ's church
 - g) baptism as engrafting into Christ
 - h) baptism as a declaration of being wholly Christ's
5. The mode of baptism

WHY SHOULD WE BE BAPTISED?

There are many times in life where we do things because we have been taught to do them without really understanding the implications of what we do. As children we are taught first that we should wash our hands before we eat and only later do we gain a real appreciation of the reasons for that most basic act of hygiene. Thus before we try to understand baptism and its implications let us content ourselves with commitment to baptism based on obedience. We should get baptized:

- ***To follow the example of Jesus*** ~ As disciples of the Lord Jesus our desire is to emulate Him in every way. Jesus came to John the Baptist and requested that He be baptized in the River Jordan. The Baptism of John was an expression of repentance (Matthew 3:1-2). Knowing Jesus to be the most righteous of men, John was puzzled by Jesus' request.

We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins

Jesus told John that for righteousness' sake He had come to be baptized (Matthew 3:15) meaning, not that He had come to be baptized with a view to His own justification but to fulfill the task which The Father had given Him which was to live His life as our perfect example.

In consequence of this obedience Jesus was sealed with the Holy Spirit and revealed as the Son of God (Matthew 3:16-17).

- **Because Jesus commanded it** ~ Jesus final words as recorded by Matthew are that disciples should be baptized "in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19).

- **Because the apostles commanded it** ~ On the day of Pentecost Peter said to them, 'Repent and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ . . . So then, those who had received his word were baptized" (Acts 2:38, 41). And later when Cornelius and those in his house came to faith Peter "ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:48).

- **Because it shows that we are believers** ~ Paul preached for some time in the synagogue in Corinth until one day the Jews expelled him. He left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshipper of God, whose house was next to the synagogue. "Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard, were believing and being baptized" (Acts 18:8-9).

We see from God's Word that the first way a new believer is to acknowledge his new-found faith in Christ is to be publicly baptized in water. The New Testament depicts water baptism as a bold, open testimony to others – not a secret thing. This public statement of faith in Jesus Christ encourages and strengthens our commitment to follow Him for the rest of our lives.

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED AND WHEN?

Everyone who has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation should be baptized. For this reason we call it 'believer's baptism'. Scripture indicates that new Christians were baptized immediately or as soon as possible after they believed.

- **On the day of Pentecost**, those who received the word were baptized 'that day'. Acts 2:41
- **The Samaritan** believers were baptized 'when they believed' (Acts 8:12).
- **The eunuch** was baptized at the first sight of water (Acts 8:35-37).
- **Saul** (who became Paul) was baptized by the first Christian he met (Acts 9:17, 18).
- **Cornelius and his household** were baptized the same day that he was saved (Acts 10:48).

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to Jordan, to John, to be baptized by him.

14 But John restrained Him, saying, I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?

15 And answering Jesus said to him, Allow it now, for it is becoming to us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he allowed Him.

16 And Jesus, when He had been baptized, went up immediately out of the water. And lo, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him.

17 And lo, a voice from Heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. (Matthew 3:13-17)

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- **The disciples at Ephesus** were baptized when they heard that they needed to be. (Acts 19:5).
- **The Philippian jailer and his household** were baptized about midnight immediately after he believed (Acts 16:22-34)

Some churches practice 'infant baptism' or christening. This they do because they see baptism as the rite of admission to the new covenant in Christ's blood and a New Testament replacement for circumcision. We respect that custom but find the Bible's emphasis as presenting baptism to be in consequence of an informed decision for Christ. Therefore those being baptized must be old enough to have made that very deliberate choice to believe on the Lord for salvation and to follow Him.

A DEFINITION OF BAPTISM

In October 1517 a German monk named Martin Luther published a list of objections to the teachings of the Catholic Church. That act was used by God to force a break with the Catholic Church of Rome. The split, which became known as The Reformation, involved those believers who wanted a more Biblically based expression of the faith and certain monarchs and princes who wanted to free themselves from the political authority of the Roman Church. In 1534 King Henry VIII, for reasons political rather than spiritual, broke with Rome and established a national church under the authority of the English throne. Three kings, two queens, a civil war and much persecution of both Catholics and Protestants later, the English Parliament appointed a committee of clerics (about 120 in number) and non-clerical observers (about 30 in number) to continue the reform of The Church of England in the area of doctrine.

The committee met across the road from the Parliament in Westminster Abbey and became known as the Westminster Assembly. It commenced its work in 1643 and met for varying amounts of time over the next 6 years. Amongst the documents prepared by the committee was "The Westminster Larger Catechism" whose purpose was for instruction concerning the faith. We will make use of the definition for baptism offered in this document, not because of its antiquity but because it addresses so many aspects of baptism.

"Qn 165: What is Baptism?"

Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament wherein Christ has ordained the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, to be a sign and a seal of engrafting into himself, of remission of sins by His blood, and regeneration by his Spirit; of adoption, and resurrection unto everlasting life; and whereby the persons baptized are solemnly admitted to the visible church, and enter into an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only The LORD'S."

Clearly the definition is a long one! It offers many insights to the purpose and blessings of baptism. We will consider only eight aspects of the definition, but for the purposes of our notes we will not take them in the order that they are presented by The Catechism.

NATURE OF BAPTISM

It is a remarkable thing that after all the complex, detailed and numerous religious rites of the Jewish temple sacrifices and feasts in the Old Testament that the New Testament requires of the Christian only two ordinances or sacraments. These are baptism, a public rite of initiation into the faith and communion, a public rite of continuation in the faith. Much of the Jews' religious symbolism pointed forward to Jesus Christ. On the other hand Christian symbolism points both forward and backwards. It points backward to Christ's sacrifice and His resurrection and it points forward to His return and the resurrection of the dead. It is appropriate therefore that our definition for baptism should be a long one since it is in the efficiency of God that He should pack much meaning into fewer symbols.

1. Baptism into God's Trinitarian Name

Christians are baptized into God's Trinitarian name because Jesus commanded that baptism be made according to that formula (Matthew 28:19).

There are other wordings depicted in the New Testament, all of which make reference to Jesus by name and these are acceptable, but there are sound reasons for employing the form of words set down in the Matthew's gospel.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19)

- **Baptism acknowledges the lordship of Christ** ~ There are many who claim entitlement to recognition as Lord. Some religions, such as Hinduism, are happy to recognize many lords.

Jesus Christ alone is lord of heaven and earth because He alone is a sufficient mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5). Only Jesus is effective as mediator because He alone is both God and man. By His death Jesus showed that He was fully man subject even to the worst of our frailties. By His status as the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, He shows that He is fully God. To baptize someone into Christ's death is to identify them with the office of Jesus' humanity. To baptize someone into the three names of the Trinity is to identify that person with Christ's divinity.

For God is one, and there is one Mediator of God and of men, the Man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5)

Thus to baptize someone "in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" is to ensure that the person being baptized acknowledges that Christ alone is mediator and Lord. It is a solemn profession that the God of The Bible is the only One who has a right to all obedience and worship.

- **Baptism is an expression of submission to Christ** ~ The scriptures indicate that baptism is an act of submission to the teachings of a certain person. It speaks of Israel being "baptized into Moses" (1 Corinthians 10:2) and refers to men having received "the baptism of John" (Matthew 21:25, Acts 1:22, 18:25 & 19:4).

And all were baptized to Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1 Corinthians 10:2)

The Christian is baptized into Christ's name and into Christ's doctrine. Since Christ is at one with the other members of the Godhead, we can't take on His Name and doctrine without also receiving the name of the other members of the Godhead.

We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins

- **Baptism portrays transition out of the death to life** ~ Failure to acknowledge the truth of the Trinity adversely impacts our understanding of life and love. It is recognized, even by sinful men, that there is more to life than wealth and power. Life's most valuable attributes are abstract or intangible things such as love, joy, truth and wisdom. But love, joy, truth, wisdom, humility and trust are not creations of the human mind and spirit. These entities existed within the Godhead for an eternity prior to them emerging as the concepts or desires of the human heart. The Trinity is, was and always will be a community and these attributes, which are the essence of life, have their very origin in the personhood and inter-relatedness of God, the Three-in-One. Therefore because baptism symbolizes the transition out of death into life, it is appropriate to call upon God by His Trinitarian name at baptism because in this way we are being baptized into that which is truly eternal about life.

2. Baptism as Remission of Sin

There are severe adverse consequences to criminal offences. A thief or murderer will go to prison because of their crime but the adverse consequences don't stop there. Many former prisoners find that even though they have "done their time" there remains a stigma and ongoing negative impact on their lives. They may be unable to get a job, or their families may choose to avoid shame by disowning them or any number of other unhappy effects. Their crime has been dealt with but the consequences linger on.

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

When Peter preached on Pentecost morning he urged those listening to him that they should "Repent and

be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ to remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). The Greek the word remission (*aphesis*) means: "a) release from bondage or imprisonment, and/or b) forgiveness or pardon, of sins by letting them go as if they had never been committed, remission of the penalty" (Thayer's Greek Definitions). We see therefore that the remission of sin means a sending away not only of the sin but all of sins' consequences. It is a pardon but much more than that, it is a letting go of sins "as if they had never been committed". This makes baptism as the sending away or remission of sin a very wonderful thing.

3. Baptism as Washing with Water

Old Testament scripture includes a large array of ceremonial washings as indicators of the need to be clean before The LORD. At times of national sin, God sent prophets to Israel who called the nation to be washed. Sometimes the prophet called for Israel to wash themselves (Isaiah 1:16, Jeremiah 4:14). At other times the prophet promised that God would do the cleansing (Ezekiel 36:25). We might wonder therefore whether baptism is something that we do or whether it is something that God does? The answer is yes to both.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. (Psalms 51:2)

... but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:11)

Baptism is an act of obedience undertaken in faith. In as much as the Christian humbles himself to submit to Christ's commandment for baptism, it is something that we ourselves do. But in as much as we know that

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

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we are unable to purge ourselves from sin's pollution, it is something that Christ does. Thus, as in all aspects of the Christian life, when we go through the waters of baptism, we act by faith.

4. Baptism as Resurrection

Most people think that heaven can only be accessed if we live a holy life. It is common to see sin as the primary barrier which stands between ourselves and eternal life. Such thinking neglects an important aspect of God's moral cosmos. It is to forget that sin has an effect. Sin's consequence or effect is death. In Eden Adam was told that if he ate from the forbidden tree, "In the day you eat of it, you will surely die" (Genesis 2:17). Paul tells us that we are "dead in our sins" (Ephesians 2:1 & 2:5).

And He has made you alive, who were once dead in trespasses and sins, (Ephesians 2:1)

(even when we were dead in sins) has made us alive together with Christ (by grace you are saved), (Ephesians 2:5)

Death and taxes are said to be two of the absolute certainties of life. We might add to this the certainty that dead people don't sin. In fact they don't do anything much! Yet for all of the fact that they don't sin, a dead person can't display any righteousness either because . . . well . . . because they're dead? So when a sinner tries to put on righteousness without putting on the atoning death of Jesus Christ and His resurrection, they are trying to rid themselves of sin but are unable to rid themselves of sin's effect.

This is why baptism needs to symbolize more than just washing. Baptism symbolizes the Christian's transition out of sin *and* death into life *and* righteousness.

- **Baptism as an escape from death** ~ Sin causes death therefore every person who turns to Christ is like the prodigal son returning to his father. When that son returned, the father declared "my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found" (Luke 15:24 & 15:32). Jesus said that everyone who hears His words and believes "has passed from death to life" (John 5:24). The apostles also understood faith in Christ as being an escape from death (Colossians 2:13, 1 Peter 2:24).

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, (Colossians 2:13)

- **Baptism as entry into a life of righteousness** ~ Jesus died for our sins but He rose in order to substantiate His claim as Son of God having pre-eminence amongst both living and dead (Romans 1:4, Colossians 1:18). By faith in the risen Lord Jesus Christ we are now not only forgiven and justified (Romans 4:25), we are now not only dead to sin and death, we are alive to newness of life and to righteousness (Romans 6:4). We have within us the essence of that life and holiness which is thoroughly pleasing to God

Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. (Romans 4:25)

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4)

- **Baptism as liberation from sin's power** ~ Sin causes death but sin is like a canker or a virus because it also causes further sin. We all know what it is like to tell a lie. Having initiated an untruth we have to keep telling other lies to cover up the first one. Sin leads to further sinning. For this reason we need to be set free not only from sin but from sin's power.

- **Baptism as evidence of our inclusion in the resurrection** ~ The principle message of baptism is our identification with Christ. Therefore baptism not only symbolizes our arrival into the newness of a righteous life, but it speaks of our confidence that we will rise again in Christ on the last day (Romans 6:5).

For if we have been joined together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection (Romans 6:5)

5. Baptism as Regeneration

To a certain degree all through the Old Testament, religion is looked at and spoken of as a national possession, the benefits of which are largely visible and tangible blessings. Israel was known as a nation belonging to Yahweh and her neighboring nations were also defined by the gods which they worshipped. Indeed, it used be that Europe was known by the title of 'Christendom'. Thus we see that religion and nationhood are strongly linked. With this in mind we might better understand why Jesus linked regeneration with the ability to see and enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3 & 3:5).

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:3-5)

Jesus told Nicodemus that except a person was born of water and Spirit they could not see or enter the kingdom of God. Baptism is intrinsically linked with Christ's Kingdom. Water baptism expresses the Holy Spirit's act of regeneration in the heart of us as individuals (John 3:5-6) in order that we might take our part in Christ's Kingdom. In this way baptism is an indicator of thorough personal regeneration as well as regeneration into a new nation. The apostle Peter testifies to the Christian being part of a new nation when he tells us that we are a "royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God" (1 Peter 2:9).

There are many types or examples of baptism to be found in the Old Testament and if there is one concept which is common to them all it is that of regeneration. Sometimes this regeneration is at a personal level but often it has a kingdom implication as well. Frequently in Old Testament types we will find water and imagery consistent with that of the Holy Spirit. Remembering that Jesus said that regeneration by the Spirit and water are requisites for entry into a kingdom or dominion (and remembering that dove, wind and water are all Old Testament images for the Holy Spirit) consider:

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for possession, so that you might speak of the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9)

- **Noah and the flood** ~ Noah is delivered from death by building an ark. After being adrift in floodwaters and once the dove indicates that the waters have subsided, he settles into a new land and a new covenant (Genesis 9).
- **Joseph in the Pit** ~ Joseph is removed from the pit (a Hebrew word also translated as grave) at Dothan (meaning a place of water) and after numerous trials emerges as Prime Minister of Egypt to usher his brothers into a new land called Goshen (Genesis 37 to 50).

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- **Moses and the Red Sea** ~ Moses (whose name means water) leads Israel out of the death-loving culture of Egypt through the Red Sea, which was parted for Israel by a great wind, and into a new covenant and ultimately a new land.
- **Joshua and the River Jordan** ~ Joshua carries the Ark of God's presence across the River Jordan (an Old Testament image for death since it flows into the Dead Sea) into the nation's possession of the land of Canaan.
- **Naaman and his cleansing in Jordan** ~ The Syrian general Naaman bathes seven times in the Jordan and emerges cleansed from leprosy (a disease often known as the 'living death') and following his return to Syria there is a period of extended peace between the two nations.
- **Ezekiel's valley of dry bones** ~ Ezekiel sees a valley of bones brought to life after the Word of the Lord is spoken over them and the Spirit enters into them. God then declares that there will be a restoration of Israel to its land.

In all of these examples we see figures of regeneration or resurrection accompanied by images of the Holy Spirit and water. In all of these stories we become aware that the regeneration or resurrection has a kingdom implication. Baptism in water is a sign of a personal regeneration which places us in Christ's kingdom for the purpose of extending His dominion.

The fact that regeneration is not only a matter of personal salvation (Titus 3:5, Ephesians 5:26) but an orientation to Christ's kingdom should cause us to ponder the enormity of its effect. As born again, water baptized Christians we are not cosseted together in a holy huddle, safe from the world and protected by fortress church. Instead we are called to be salt and light that brings a Godly transformation to our community.

having gone, then, disciple all the nations, baptizing them--to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19 ~ Young's Literal Translation by J. N. Young 1862)

Then having gone, disciple all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (Matthew 28:19 ~ Literal Translation of the Holy Bible by Jay P. Green Snr 1976)

This is consistent with Jesus' great commission to baptize nations "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" as declared in Matthew's gospel (Matthew 28:19). It is a sadness that most translations of Jesus' commandment render the verse as "make disciples of all the nations", whereas the correct rendering is "disciple all the nations". The incorrect rendering is deficient because it leads English speaking believers to think that we are called to individual disciples from each and every nation, whereas the verse actually means that we are called to disciple whole nations.

6. Baptism as admission to Christ's Church

Regeneration and water baptism not only re-position us into Christ's holy nation and kingdom, they place us into a royal priesthood and special people.

This means two things for us:

- **We are baptized into The Church** ~ Jonathan Wesley once said: "The Bible knows of no such thing as the solitary Christian". The baptized Christian is baptized into Christ and

For as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For also by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, even all were made to drink into one Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)

as such is baptized into His Body, the Church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). Christians in the Western world have been so impacted by a self-oriented consumerist mindset that there is a tendency to view The Church as that entity whose function it is to serve our needs, assist in our self-fulfillment and advance our personal spirituality. Author Jim Wallace wrote a book which he titled "Christianity is personal but it is never private". It is a deceit on a vast scale that many believers imagine that they can fulfill their baptismal obligations by private devotions without being a meaningful contributor to Christ's Church.

- **We are baptized into a unity which is of worldwide diversity** ~ Being one *with* Christ in baptism, each of us are also one *in* Christ through baptism. It was an astounding thing to the early Christians that God should choose to include Gentiles (non-Jews) into the faith. Some time after the Holy Spirit fell on the Jews in Jerusalem, Peter was lead by the Spirit to visit the home of a Gentile called Cornelius. As Peter spoke about Jesus the Holy Spirit fell on those listening. Peter, seeing that the Holy Spirit had done His work of regeneration, then took the step to complete the regeneration requirements by baptizing them all in water (Acts 10:47-48).

This lead to a realization that the Old Testament ordinances (such as those about feast days and food and head coverings), which had been a barrier between Jew and Gentile, no longer applied. Paul, whose ministry was largely amongst non-Jewish people, presented the gospel as being a message which made one new man from what was previously two irreconcilable types of people (Ephesians 2:11-15, Romans 10:12, Galatians 3:28).

having abolished in His flesh the enmity (the Law of commandments contained in ordinances) so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, making peace between them (Ephesians 2:15)

The Christian then must have a large heart toward all fellow believers, no matter what their ethnic origin or cultural background, since we all share the same thankfulness to Christ for His death on our behalf and since we are all pressing toward the same high calling of a life of obedience to Him. This is not to say that all cultural distinctives and diversity will disappear. God has seen fit to preserve the diversity of our ethnicity and languages even in heaven (Revelation 5:9 & 7:9).

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation (Revelation 5:9)

7. Baptism as Engrafting into Christ

To be baptized is to take on Christ's Name, to be washed by Christ's Blood, to be raised to newness of life and righteousness in Christ, to be part of Christ's kingdom and to be at one with Him and all others whom He has saved. In short by baptism we are engrafted into Christ. Our lives are intimately, inextricably and eternally linked into all that He has, is, does and wants to do. We are His and He is ours (Song of Songs 6:3). Scripture describes the unity between Christ and the Christian as being akin to the marriage relationship. The Church is Christ's bride (2 Corinthians 11:2).

8. Baptism as a declaration of being Wholly Christ's

The symbolism and consequences of baptism are profound. Obedience to baptism so vastly alters the Christian's status that all things in the Christian's life are (or should be) shaped by being wholly

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Christ's. Moreover because baptism is a public declaration of commitment to Christ, the baptized person must recognize that, Christ being their Lord and King, they represent Him and all others who call on the

Name of Christ. As representative of King Jesus, His Kingdom and all others that go by the title of Christian, the baptized person is obligated to live a life worthy of their new citizenship and calling (Ephesians 4:1, Colossians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 2:12). They are obligated to Christ, as Head, and to their brethren, as fellow Christians, to live as though love, righteousness and faith matter.

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the calling with which you are called (Ephesians 4:1)

THE FORM OR MODE OF BAPTISM

Given that Christians have been celebrating baptism for 2,000 years and given that baptism represents such a vast array consequences, it is not surprising that there should be some differences in how it is understood and practiced across Christendom's various traditions. There are different ideas about whether baptism should be applied to infants or only to believers. There are differences about whether we should be baptized into God's Trinitarian Name or some other formula and there are differences about whether people should be sprinkled with water or immersed in it.

The word '*baptizo*' means 'to immerse or dip under water' or 'to plunge under'. Compliance with this dictionary definition would compel us to baptize by immersion only. However there are many places in the Old Testament (Septuagint) and the New Testament where this Greek word relays a sense of pouring rather than immersion (Numbers 8:7, 19:13, 19:18-20, Psalm 51:7, Ezekiel 36:25, Hebrews 9:10, Mark 7:3-4, Luke 11:37-38). A more significant application for the word is its use by Greeks to signify the dyeing of a garment by immersing or dipping it into the dye. In fact there is evidence to suggest that

And as He spoke, a certain Pharisee asked Him to dine with him. And He went in and reclined. And when the Pharisee saw it, he was amazed that He had not first washed (baptizo) before dinner. And the Lord said to him, Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and the platter clean, but your inward part is full of plunder and wickedness. (Luke 11:37-39)

the act of dyeing is the root or foundation of '*baptizo*'. (Refer L Berkhoff's 'Systematic Theology'.) In this sense the thing which '*baptizo*' really communicates is the sense of transformation and change consequent on contact with water. In light of numerous and extensive kinds of transition which our study of baptism has revealed, we might content ourselves with the view that whilst form matters, the communication of change is the most significant aspect of baptism.

As a representation of the washing or purification aspects of baptism, it would seem that baptism via effusion or the pouring of water would be adequate symbolism. However, we have learned that baptism in water symbolizes our death, burial and resurrection with Christ. And given that resurrection and regeneration are such potent images, baptism by full immersion then, would seem the best way to depict this.

The fact that there are often sound Biblical arguments for each of the many forms which baptism takes is indication that, as with all things in the Gospel, God places more importance on faith than He does on the way in which the rite is administered.

ANOTHER BAPTISM

We are about to consider a foundational doctrine known in Pentecostal circles as “The Baptism in the Holy Spirit”. On the face of it this would seem to controvert the Nicene Creed’s statement that there is one baptism. Without seeking to split hairs we might note that The Creed reads: “We believe in one baptism for the remission of sins”. The one baptism to which The Creed refers is the baptism which follows after repentance and faith in Jesus as Saviour. It is a baptism in water which is for the remission or sending away of sins (Acts 22:16, Acts 2:38 & Titus 3:5). This baptism is an essential aspect of the faith.

... not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5)

Water baptism is a Christian’s public declaration of repentance from sin and of faith in Jesus as Saviour. It is a step of faith and obedience in which the Holy Spirit’s unction and leading is essential. But there is another baptism which may be understood as a baptism in power. This “Baptism in the Holy Spirit” ushers the believer into an encounter with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is a manifestation of The Spirit which is very evident in the New Testament church and which has occurred varyingly at different times throughout church history. By God’s grace and ordination it has become quite common in today’s church and is that which distinguishes Pentecostal or Charismatic fellowships from other parts of Christ’s Body. Whilst The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a highly desirable manifestation of God’s Spirit, it is not essential for salvation, whereas baptism unto repentance and remission of sins is essential.

We will discuss the Baptism in the Holy Spirit along the following lines:

1. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit
 - a) the Holy Spirit baptism as a second encounter following conversion
 - b) speaking in tongues as evidence of the Holy Spirit baptism
 - c) the benefits of and reasons for the Holy Spirit baptism
2. Jesus and the Gifts of The Spirit
 - a) the nine Gifts of The Spirit enumerated and grouped as three groups of three
 - b) Jesus and the Thinking Gifts
 - c) Jesus and the Doing Gifts
 - d) Jesus and the Speaking Gifts
3. Gifts as a means of edifying self and edifying others
4. Distinctions between Gifts & Ministries and Gifts & Fruit

THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a second encounter with God (the first being our conversion). It is an encounter in which the Christian receives the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit into his life. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the equipping of the Christian with God’s power for service and witness (Acts 1:8). This double encounter with the Holy Spirit

I indeed have baptized you with water: but he (Jesus) shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost. (Mark 1:8)

is seen in several places in the New Testament. We see it in Christ, with the apostle Paul and in the lives of the Christians in Samaria. It is Jesus who baptizes in The Spirit (Mark 1:8).

- **Jesus was born of the Spirit and also baptized in the Spirit** ~ Whilst it is Christ who baptizes us in the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8), we nonetheless find that He sets the precedent in the notion of a twofold encounter with the Holy Spirit. We find that Jesus was 'born of the Spirit' from His mother's womb being conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18 & 20). This notion is reinforced when scripture tells us that Jesus

grew in spirit (Luke 2:40).

Yet thirty years later, before He began His public ministry, Jesus was baptized in water by John the Baptist at which time He was 'anointed with the Holy Spirit and power'. John saw the Spirit of God descending upon Jesus like a dove, and settling upon Him (Matthew 3:16).

Not only in His life but in His teaching Jesus

taught that there were two different experiences in the Holy Spirit. He told His disciples that salvation is like 'a well of water springing up into eternal life' (John 4:14) and later He speaks of 'rivers of living water' flowing from our innermost being (John 7:37-39). We believe that Jesus was referring to the baptism in the Holy Spirit (John 7:39).

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was this way (for His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph) before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. . . . And as he thought upon these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take to you Mary as your wife. For that in her is fathered of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:18-20)

And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom. And the grace of God was on Him. (Luke 2:40)

- **Paul the Apostle was born of The Spirit and also baptized in the Holy Spirit** ~ Paul was saved on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-5 & 26:16) and was filled with the Holy Spirit three days later (Acts 9:17-18).

Later during his care for the saints in Corinth, Paul wrote: "I thank God that I speak in tongues more than you all" (1 Corinthians 14:18). From this it is fair to assume that Paul

encountered the Holy Spirit in his conversion on the Damascus Road and afterward received the Holy Spirit when Ananias laid hands upon him and prayed for him. While tongues are not mentioned in the record of that event, we know by his own testimony that Paul regularly spoke in tongues. Paul clearly became an enthusiastic tongue-speaker!

But rise and stand on your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of what you saw, and in what I shall appear to you. (Acts 26:16)

- **The Samaritans were born of The Spirit and also baptized in the Holy Spirit** ~ The Samaritan Christians had received the word unto faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 8:14-16). They had responded to the word with repentance unto baptism in water. Therefore they had had an initial encounter with the Holy Spirit since we know from Peter that to receive the word is to be born again by The Spirit (1 Peter 1:23). But they still needed to receive the Holy Spirit. The manifestation of the Spirit, when they received it, was so astounding that Simon the Sorcerer desired to possess the ability of conveying such power (Acts 8:17-20)!

Even though the Bible doesn't record that they spoke in tongues, there is evidence here to suggest that they did. Simon the magician saw something that made him want to purchase

from the apostles the ability to transmit the Holy Spirit. Most Biblical authorities agree that what Simon saw was speaking in tongues.

1. Tongues as evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit

The Book of Acts records various separate occasions when the Holy Spirit was received. We will consider three of these to see what occurred. In each instance we find that the Holy Spirit brings the gift of 'speaking in tongues' with His coming. Far from being strange, speaking in tongues is a wonderful gift especially designed by our Heavenly Father for us.

- **The 120 Disciples in the Upper Room** ~ Jesus had told the disciples to return to Jerusalem and to await the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. When it came at Pentecost they were all filled and all spoke in tongues (Acts 2:1-4). Note that this speaking in 'other tongues' was not so that the astonished Jews from different nations could hear the Gospel. Peter went on to preach to them in the language of the day (Acts 2:6-23). The tongues were a miraculous sign that the disciples had been baptized in the Spirit.

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

- **The Household of Cornelius** ~ The apostle Peter was led by the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel in the home of Cornelius, a Gentile living in Joppa. As he spoke the Holy Spirit fell upon those listening (Acts 10:1-48). The Jewish Christians who were with Peter were amazed because the Holy Spirit had been poured out on these Gentile believers. They were convinced that this had happened, 'for (or because) they were hearing them speaking with tongues' (Acts 10:45-46).

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God . . ." (Acts 10:44-46)

- **The Ephesians** ~ Twenty years or more after the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the 120 disciples, Paul encountered believers in Ephesus who had a clear understanding of the need for repentance but had not properly understood about Jesus nor had they heard about the Holy Spirit. Their faith was based on the ministry of John the Baptist only. Paul baptized these believers into the Christ and thereafter laid his hands upon them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. As they received The Spirit they all began to speak tongues (Acts 19:1-6).

Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples. He said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' And they said to him, 'No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.' And he said, 'Into what then were you baptized' and they said, 'Into John's baptism.' Paul said, 'John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.' When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying. (Acts 19:1-6)

These three occasions and the instances of Paul and the Samaritans indicate that when people were filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues is either specifically mentioned or strongly inferred as the initial sign of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. As Jesus promised: "These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues" (Mark 16:17).

2. Benefits of and Reasons for speaking in tongues

Speaking in Tongues is not the sum of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Neither is it the totality of those gifts which the Holy Spirit ministers. In all there are nine gifts of the Holy Spirit and tongues is only one of them, but because it is so prevalent, we will take time to consider it at length. Scripture records four reasons or benefits associated with speaking in tongues.

- ***It builds up our faith*** ~ Because tongues is a gift of the Holy Spirit it is natural to find that speaking in tongues will enlarge our hearts to believe the things which He believes. In addition we also find that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us (Romans 5:5).

Therefore we find that praying in tongues will often enlarge our hearts with faith and love in a way that causes us to be built-up or edified in Christ (1 Corinthians 14:4, Jude 1:20).

the one who speaks in a tongue edifies himself . . .
(1 Corinthians 14:4)

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.
(Jude1: 20)

- ***It enables us to pray according to God's will*** ~ When we pray in tongues, it is our spirit that prays by the Holy Spirit within us. In this way we can be assured that our prayers are in line with God's will. Sometimes the Spirit's stirring of tongues within us is so earnest that our prayers come from a broken or burdened heart. Paul writes that the Holy Spirit's assistance in prayer will at times cause us to groan in prayer (Romans 8:26-27). Jesus knew of such earnest prayer for He groaned in His spirit at the time of raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11:33).

This is an amazing gift! When we don't know how or what to pray, as we speak in tongues, the Holy Spirit prays through us exactly what needs to be prayed. We now can pray comprehensively for people and situations about which we have no knowledge when we pray "in the Spirit".

"For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays...."
(1 Corinthians 14:14)

In the same way the Spirit also helps our weaknesses; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groaning too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (Romans 8:26-27)

- ***To bless others and to bless God in thanks and praise*** ~ It is a feature of a loving relationship that as a person helps and blesses their friend, they themselves are also blessed and encouraged. The selflessness of life in the Spirit is the same. We find that The Spirit is given for edification of the individual (1 Corinthians 14:4) and at the same time is given to profit others (1 Corinthians 12:7).

Even our praises can be a blessing to others as well as to God. How many times have you found yourself encouraged by the truth revealed in a hymn or scripture sung? Paul teaches that when a person speaks in tongues

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:7)

The one speaking in a tongue builds himself up, but he prophesying builds up a church.
(1 Corinthians 14:4)

he is praising and giving thanks to the Lord. Such praise however has a further function. It ministers encouragement to those that hear honours and might ascribed to God. Indeed when others are present who do not understand, we should be ready (in faith) to follow our

Spirit-lead prayer with prayer in the language we all know. In this way everyone can be encouraged (1 Corinthians 14:14-19).

I will pray in the Spirit, and I will pray in words I understand. I will sing in the Spirit, and I will also sing in words I understand. For if you praise God only in the Spirit, how can those who don't understand you praise God along with you? How can they join you in giving thanks when they don't understand what you are saying? You will be giving thanks very well, but it won't strengthen the people who hear you. I thank God that I speak in tongues more than any of you. But in a church meeting I would rather speak five understandable words to help others than ten thousand words in an unknown language. (1 Corinthians 14:15-19)

- **To help us in our witnessing** ~ Jesus' promise to the disciples was that the coming of the Spirit would give them power to be witnesses to Him (Acts 1:8). It is a wonderful thing to remember that Jesus is committed to miracles, healing and empowered testimony as a means of demonstrating the reality of His resurrection and authority.

JESUS AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS

There are many instances when The Apostle Paul encourages us to be imitators of him. So when he explains that he spoke in tongues more than all those in the church at Corinth, (1 Corinthians 14:18) it would be fair for us to aim at emulating him and exercise similar spiritual gifts. Whilst Paul is a good role model, the standard for our Christian behavior must be Jesus.

Jesus is both our example and our ability. He said of Himself that He only ever did what He saw the Father do. It is wise therefore if we learn to do what Jesus did. If we can observe from scripture that Jesus flowed in spiritual gifts then we would be well instructed to emulate Him in the exercise of such gifts. If Jesus learned to be led by the Holy Spirit then we also need to learn to do the same.

1. What are Spiritual Gifts?

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are given both for the edifying of the individual and of the Church (1 Corinthians 14:4). Yet gifts, whilst beneficial, are secondary in importance to the Spirit's work of bringing repentance and sanctification into the life of the believer. At times spiritual gifts can be very spectacular in their application and effect. For this reason it can become easy to give them an unhealthy or undue emphasis. Wonderful and encouraging as gifts are, they are always of secondary importance compared with the Holy Spirit's role of leading us in righteousness and growing within us the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

Hence Jesus was careful to warn us that it is by fruit that we will be able to identify a fellow believer not by their gifts (Matthew 7:16). Spiritual gifts are not a measure of our spirituality.

There are numerous gifts of the Holy Spirit. For the purpose of this study we will be looking at those which are described by Pentecostal believers as The Gifts of The Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4-11). Paul lists these as nine gifts. For ease of recall we will describe the gifts in three groups of three.

But to each one is given the showing forth of the Spirit to our profit. For through the Spirit is given to one a word of wisdom; and to another a word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; and to another faith by the same Spirit; and to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; and to another workings of powers, to another prophecy; and to another discerning of spirits; and to another kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues. But the one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing separately to each one as He desires. (1 Corinthians 12:7-11)

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There are the three Thinking Gifts:

- **Wisdom** - is a supernatural revelation, by the Holy Spirit, of God's plans and purposes.
- **Knowledge** - is a supernatural revelation of facts known to God. It is a miraculous flash of knowledge given by the Holy Spirit, of things hidden from the human senses or mind.
- **Discernment** - is supernatural insight into the spirit world. It is the revelation of the Holy Spirit which tells us whether the Spirit of God or an evil spirit is at work.

There are the three Doing Gifts:

- **Miracles** - is a supernatural intervention in the ordinary course of nature by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **Healing** - is supernatural unction to heal the sick, by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **Faith** - is supernatural trust in God, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

There are the three Speaking Gifts:

- **Prophecy** - is a supernatural utterance in a known tongue.
- **Tongues** - is a supernatural utterance in a tongue unknown to the speaker, as the Holy Spirit gives the words.
- **Interpretation** - is supernatural showing forth of the meaning of what is spoken in other tongues, as the Holy Spirit gives the meaning in the known language.

2. The Thinking Gifts

Remembering that Jesus is our example, we see from the following scriptures that He used the Thinking Gifts. By looking to Jesus we can learn something of how this Gift Group works.

- **Gift of Knowledge** ~ Jesus' use of the Gift of Knowledge is apparent with the Samaritan Woman at the well (John 4:13-18). Jesus was flowing in this gift when He asked the woman about her marital status. Knowledge by the Holy Spirit may be described as an unusual insight into the background or reasons for a situation. It is sometimes manifest to reveal the secrets of a man's heart or it can be given so as to assist in knowing how to pray for the sick.
- **Gift of Wisdom** ~ It is one thing to have the insight that comes with Knowledge, but it is another thing to know how to apply that insight. Sometimes we get so excited that the Holy Spirit has shown us something about a situation or person, that we assume that His blessing will be on everything that we say. We blunder into someone's life speaking the truth in love but alas not as a word in season. It is at these times that we need the Gift of Wisdom (Proverbs 25:11-12, Isaiah 50:4).

The Lord Jehovah has given Me the tongue of the learned, to know to help the weary with a word. He wakens morning by morning, He wakens the ear to hear as the learned. (Isaiah 50:4)

Wisdom shows us how to act and when. Jesus foresaw that Peter was going to betray Him, but He did not race off to Peter to tell him of the upcoming mistake. Rather Jesus moved in Wisdom praying for Peter that he'd not fail entirely. At the appropriate time Jesus warned

Peter of what would happen (Luke 22:31-32). Wisdom may be described as the Holy Spirit guidance as to how to act in a certain circumstance.

- **Gift of Discernment** ~ Of the many occasions where Jesus dealt with the deaf we are interested to draw a contrast between two particular instances (Luke 11:14 & Mark 7:31-34). In each of these scriptures we see Jesus dealing with the problem of deafness. In the one instance He prays for healing. In the other instance Jesus casts out the dumb spirit. How did Jesus know that the first case was a matter of physical deficiency and the second case was a matter of demonic oppression? It is because He flowed in the Gift of Discernment that He was able to tell the situation aright.
Discernment may be described as the ability to assess whether a thing is of the Devil or not.

And they brought a deaf one to Him, hardly speaking. And they begged Him to put His hand on him. . . . And looking up to Heaven, He sighed and said to him, Ephphatha! (that is, Be opened!) And instantly his ears were opened and the bond of his tongue was loosened, and he spoke plainly. (Mark 7:32-34)

And He was casting out a demon, and it was dumb. And it happened as the demon was going out, the dumb one spoke. And the people marveled. (Luke 11:14)

3. The Doing Gifts

Remembering that Jesus is our example we see from the following scriptures how this Gift Group works and that He used them.

- **Gift of Healing** ~ Whilst there are many accounts within the Gospels of Jesus healing people it is helpful to recall that Jesus never moved in His own power to perform miracles or to heal. In fact the call for Him to move alone in His own authority and power lay at the heart of Christ's first temptation in the desert. Satan was not tempting Jesus to break his fast for the 40 days of fasting were already over. Rather Satan's temptation was that Jesus should handle the need to resolve His hunger via His own power (Luke 4:1-4). If Jesus had used His own power He would not have been an adequate substitute for us, because it could be said that He was something other than thoroughly human. Jesus was so dependent on The Father and so given to walking by faith (as we have to do) that Luke makes the point that Jesus healed because "the power of The LORD to heal was present in that place" (Luke 5:17). Thus we see that Christ moved not in His own abilities but he moved in the Gift of Healing.

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness forty days, being tempted by the Devil. And in those days He ate nothing. And they being ended, He afterward was hungry. And the Devil said to Him, If you are the Son of God, speak to this stone that it might become bread. And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God." (Luke 4:1-4)

We might also note that Jesus did not see the Gift of Healing as a replacement for the medical profession. It is true that He was pleased to heal in instances where doctors had failed (Mark 5:26-29) and yet Jesus seemed to expect that those who were sick to make use of medical profession (Mark 2:17, Matthew 9:12, Luke 5:31).

And Jesus answered and said to them, Those who are sound do not need a physician, but those who are sick. (Luke 5:31)

Healing may be said to be that especial assurance of the Holy Spirit that a person's physical ailment will be remedied supernaturally.

- **The Gift of Faith** ~ Jesus' walk was a faith walk. At Jesus' baptism The Father speaks from the heavens declaring: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17) and we read in Hebrews that: "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6). Therefore we can be consoled that for Jesus to have greatly pleased The Father, He must have moved by faith. Jesus walked in the Holy Spirit's Gift of Faith.

So much of Jesus' ministry was a faith ministry that it is hard to point to an exceptional manifestation of faith which is not in itself either a miracle or a healing. Perhaps the most remarkable example of the faith in Christ's time amongst us was His preparedness to leave His ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18) in the hands of eleven very flawed and fearful men. Jesus left this earth trusting that The Word, via its Old Testament promises of His kingdom, and the Holy Spirit would combine to empower and lead His disciples in a way which ensured that the message of salvation was not lost and His suffering, death and resurrection had not been in vain.

- **The Gift of Miracles** ~ One of Christ's more astonishing miracles was to raise Lazarus from the dead (John 11:23-43). Thus we observe Jesus moving in the Holy Spirit Gift of Miracles. There are numerous other instances of Christ's astounding miracles. True to scripture, Jesus did not perform the miracles for the sake of His own reputation. Always His miracles were to "profit withal". In particular they were done so as to bring glory to The Father.

4. The Speaking Gifts

Remembering that Jesus is our example we see from the following scriptures how this Gift Group works and that He used them.

- **The Gift of Prophecy** ~ Jesus prophesied many things. These prophecies applied to His day and to ours. There are prophecies of Jesus which have been fulfilled and many which are yet to be fulfilled. We see that He moved in the Holy Spirit's Gift of Prophecy. For example in saying that He would be lifted up from the earth (John 12:32-33), we see that Jesus accurately predicted the method of His death as well as the consequences which would follow His death.

And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all to Myself. But He said this, signifying what kind of death He was about to die. (John 12:32-33)

However for the sake of church life, we need to draw a distinction in the form in which Prophecy is used. There are instances today, as was the case with Agabus (Acts 11:28) in the New Testament Church, that the Holy Spirit will speak in a manner which foretells what is going to happen. Jesus moved in this predictive or foretelling form of prophecy.

But there is a sense in which the word of prophecy can be forthtelling. When Jesus spoke to Peter at the last supper He gave indication of an event that was to occur but also of a change that would come into Peter's life (Luke 22:32). The prediction concerning the change is really to set the scene for Peter's general ministry. Jesus' prophecy was both a foretelling and forthtelling. Paul tells us that such prophecies are also capable of revealing the secrets

of a man's heart (1 Corinthians 14:25). Such prophecies can also be Holy Spirit lead utterances which encourage or provide broad guidance (as distinct from specific direction).

The three verses from the end of John's gospel are prophetic words from Jesus to Peter indicating the general nature of ministry which he was to have, as well as the nature of death that he would die (John 21:14-18).

We see that Jesus moved in specific foretelling and non-specific forthtelling in His exercise of the Gift of Prophecy.

He said to him the third time, Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me? Peter was grieved because He said to him a third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things, You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep. Truly, truly, I say to you, When you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you wished. But when you grow old, you shall stretch forth your hands and another shall gird you and carry you where you do not wish. (John 21:17-18)

The most common Holy Spirit Gift amongst believers today is the Gift of Tongues. Being so much a speaking gift it would seem almost impossible to demonstrate that Jesus spoke in tongues. There is no definitive proof that Jesus spoke in tongues, but there is indication within the gospels that His utterances were not always those of the common tongue or of the language of those with Him.

- **Gift of Tongues** ~ We need to understand that the Gift of Tongues is primarily a praying gift. Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit will cause us to groan in prayer and so help us to pray as we ought (Romans 8:26). Prior to raising Lazarus, Jesus can be seen to be in some sort of emotional agitation (John 11:33 & 38). The Greek in these two verses indicate that this state was not so much reactive {meaning that Jesus was overcome with grief - after all He knew that He knew that it was The Father's will that He should raise Lazarus from the dead? (John 11:11-15)} but that Jesus "troubled Himself". It would seem that Jesus stirred His own spirit to reach out to the Holy Spirit for power in the miracle that He was about to perform and as He did, He groaned in prayer. Jesus' prayers came from a long way within Him. Furthermore Mark tells us that before healing the deaf man, Jesus "sighed" (Mark 7:34). The word sigh in this verse is the same Greek root as the word used for groaning in prayer (Romans 8:36).

Then when He saw her weeping, and also the Jews who came with her weeping, Jesus groaned in the spirit and troubled Himself. (John 11:33)

Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. (Romans 8:26)

So now we have some indication that Jesus prayed in the Holy Spirit. This should not be surprising to us! But can we adduce that He spoke in tongues?

The Holy Spirit seems to have left us a clue or a hint from within Mark's gospel. Mark is the only one of the four gospels to mention the Gift of Tongues. It is in Mark that Jesus indicates that believers will possess a number of unusual attributes. Amongst these is the ability to speak in tongues (Mark 16:17).

And miraculous signs will follow to those believing these things: in My name they will cast out demons; they will speak new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will be well. (Mark 16:17-18)

Mark also records three separate instances of utterances by Jesus in Aramaic. The gospel departs from the Greek to include: 'ephaphtha'

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(Mark 7:34), 'talacathumi' (Mark 5:41) and 'eloi eloi lama sabachthani' (Mark 15:34). In each case the Holy Spirit is consistent with Paul's instruction that any strange tongue publicly uttered should be followed by the interpretation (1 Corinthians 14:27), for in each case the Aramaic is followed by the words: "which means . . ."

Thus far we have an indication that Jesus prayed in the Spirit and that He may have spoken in a language different to that which His hearers expected. But is this enough to infer that He spoke in an unknown language? In the final instance of Aramaic (Mark 15:34), Mark gives us the proper interpretation of Jesus' utterance as "My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?" He then goes on to point out that those around The Cross did not understand what Jesus had said, for they assumed Him to be calling out to Elijah?

Here we have a further hint that Jesus spoke in a language unknown to those around Him. There are other possible explanations as to why those at The Cross did not understand, but it seems reasonable, if not compelling, to assume that Jesus had a prayer language similar to that which so many believers today enjoy.

- **Gift of Interpretation** ~ There remains one more speaking gift: the Gift of Interpretation. Interpretation occurs when the public exercise of a Tongue in a meeting is then interpreted for the sake of those present in the meeting (1 Corinthians 14:23, 27 & 28). In the absence of another person to speak in an unknown tongue, it can hardly be expected that Jesus will be seen to have moved in Interpretation. Even so, the Holy Spirit seems true to His own character and instruction because in each instance which we have referred to a Christ's *possible* utterance in tongues, we find that the Holy Spirit uses the Gospel writer to bring the interpretation or explanation.

A TWOFOLD USE MEANS A TWOFOLD MANIFESTATION

We have noted that speaking in tongues has a twofold purpose. Tongues are a source of edification for the individual and they are a source of encouragement for the church. These two reasons will often mean that the gift is applied or manifest in two different ways. On some occasions tongues operate as a personal prayer language in our times of private prayer within our personal prayer closet or as an expression of personal worship in a public meeting. Whether in private as part of personal prayer or in public as part of general worship, such speaking in tongues is for personal edification and building up of one's spirit. In such cases tongues do not require interpretation.

There are other times when tongues are manifest in a public meeting as part of the Holy Spirit's desire to communicate encouragement or edification to the church. In such instances tongues require interpretation so that all may understand and apprehend the message with their mind.

Thus there is a difference between speaking in tongues for personal edification and speaking in tongues which is for the edification of the church. Tongues as an expression of private prayer or corporate worship in a meeting do not need to be interpreted. Tongues as a message to the church does require interpretation.

In the Book of Acts we find no restriction or limitations placed on tongues as the free expression of corporate worship.

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When the one hundred and twenty disciples spoke in tongues together as an act of corporate worship (Acts 2:4), it was a sign to unbelievers because the languages which the Holy Spirit gave were languages known to those present. Because these tongues were worship, they were not followed by an interpretation. In fact it was Peter's preaching that explained to those present what was happening. Peter's preaching was not an interpretation of what was being spoken in tongues. (Compare Acts 2:11 with Acts 2:17-23).

Similarly it is recorded that Cornelius, his relatives and close friends spoke in tongues and exalted God together in corporate worship without there being any interpretation (Acts 10:46). We also read that the group of twelve disciples in Ephesus spoke in tongues and prophesied but there was no record of the 'gift of interpretation of tongues' because the tongues were an expression of corporate worship (Acts 19:6).

When the 'gift of tongues' is being exercised as a ministry to the Church however, there must be a Holy Spirit inspired interpretation to follow (1 Corinthians 14:27-28).

CONCERNING GIFTS, FRUIT AND MINISTRIES

1. Gifting and Ministries

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit. They are distributed to various persons as the Holy Spirit wills (1 Corinthians 12:8-10). It often happens that a person can become familiar with moving in a certain gift and thus have a strength, skill or facility in receiving God's anointing in that area. But even where such a strength exists, it cannot be assumed that the person has a ministry in that area, for there is a difference between gifts of The Spirit and ministry gifts which Christ provides to the church.

Whereas gifts in The Spirit are evidenced at particular times or on certain occasions, ministry gifts are permanent offices in the church. These ministry gifts (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) are not manifestations of the Spirit. They are men or women anointed by the Spirit, whom God has set in the church to fulfill certain functions. (Ephesians 4:11).

The spiritual gifts are available to everyone, however not everyone has the same ministry gift.

2. Gifting and Fruit

Spiritual gifts are not 'merit badges' for spiritual achievement. They are gifts received by faith not because of merit. (You can't earn a gift.) Spiritual gifts do not reflect the character of a person.

They simply show that the person has faith to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in a certain way. For example the Corinthian Christians were a very carnal and immature church (1 Corinthians 3:1) and yet they were not lacking in spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 1:7)!

The Corinthians were so enamoured of their gifts that they became proud. Much of the instruction that we

so that you come behind in no gift, waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 1:7)

And I, brothers, could not speak to you as to spiritual ones, but as to fleshly, as to babes in Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:1)

have about the use of Spiritual Gifts has come to us because Paul was correcting their error. That is why the middle chapter in 1 Corinthians's three chapters which deal with spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12-14) is about love (1 Corinthians 13). Paul was reinforcing the fact that character was more

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important than gifts. Gifts and sound character are not necessarily linked. There have been many people over the years who have moved astoundingly in gifts but have been deeply flawed in their character. To be certain, their character flaws have tainted the way that the gifts have operated, but these flaws have not prevented the person accessing the Holy Spirit for gifting. They have however tended to yield results which are not fully sponsored by the Holy Spirit. That's why Paul Scanlon says: "Never let your gifting take you further than your character can sustain".

Jesus warned about the difference between gifts and character. He prophesied that there would be many come to Him on judgment day who had done powerful works and miracles but whom He classed as sinners (Matthew 7:22)! That is why Jesus told us to look for the fruit of a person's life and ministry not just the gifting (Matthew 7:16). Indeed the fruit of The Spirit is the character of the Holy Spirit. Every Christian is indwelt by the Spirit and should display these fruit of the Spirit. This fruit must grow and mature (Galatians 5:22-23).

Many will say to Me in that day, Lord! Lord! Did we not prophesy in Your name, and through Your name throw out demons, and through Your name do many wonderful works? (Matthew 7:22)

God intends that every Christian should display the fruit of the Spirit and desires that every Christian will exercise the gifts of the Spirit. One manifests character, the other power.

3. Liberty

We close with one further aspect of the Holy Spirit's ministry; liberty! The desire for self-justification in the heart of man is very strong. This originated all the way back in Eden when we decided that we would like to be God and decide for ourselves what constitutes good and evil (Genesis 3:5-6). This trait shapes the bedrock of pride, legalism, self-effort and perfectionism in us all. But this tendency also means that we become tied up in our own vanity and self-effort as we monitor our performance and keep count concerning our exactitude in things holy. In this way we follow the letter of God's precepts but may easily miss the spirit and purpose of them. It is the Holy Spirit's ministry to bring us to the point of life and surrender in which we no longer to try to 'do' holiness but from a glad, wise and loving heart are able to 'be' holy. The Spirit's work in us is to grant us a liberty and joy which striving and self-effort cannot achieve. Where The Spirit is, there is liberty (2 Corinthians 3:17).

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. (2 Corinthians 3:17)

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (Galatians 5:1)

Not only does the Holy Spirit grant us liberty from self-effort and legalism, He grants us liberty from the sins which so easily beset us. To look into the perfect law of liberty which we have in Christ (Galatians 2:4, James 2:12) is not license to ignore the holiness of God. Rather, it is the Spirit's very ministry to set us

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

As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. (1 Peter 2:16-17)

free from those things which defile our obedience. To walk in the spirit of the law rather than the letter of the law means that we will enthusiastically keep and even exceed the law's requirements because we are free from the those things that had previously held us bound in sin and antagonistic toward God's standards. In this way we use our liberty for increasing righteousness in love toward each other and not for increasing sinfulness (1 Peter 2:16-17, Galatians 5:13).

DEATH & RESURRECTION

The Nicene Creed served to confirm the essentials of the faith. In saying “We look forward to the resurrection of the dead” it speaks of the resurrection as an essential of the faith and an event to be anticipated. There is a certain logic to The Creed for it does not speak of the Christian’s resurrection until it has first spoken of Christ’s death and glorious resurrection. Our confidence in there being life after death is based on the precedent of Jesus rising from the dead. Our confidence that our sins are forgiven is based on the fact that death could not retain Jesus in the grave.

It is common to speak of death as being one of life’s certainties, as though death were a natural thing. It is our sinfulness which causes us to forget that death is actually an unnatural event. Death was not part of the cosmos as God first created it. Death intruded into the cosmos. It came into being because of sin. Death is a punishment attributable to our reckless abandonment of God’s order and ways.

Jesus was the Holy One of Israel. He was innocent and without guile in all His ways and yet He died just like all sinners do. Even worse than that, He did not die an ordinary death; slipping away quietly in His old age as

but as regards the holiness of His Spirit was decisively proved by His Resurrection to be the Son of God (Romans 1:4)

many men do. He died in public shame enduring a criminal’s death of a most heinous and cruel kind. But the grave was unable to hold Him because it would have been an act of eternal injustice if Jesus had remained dead. Rather we see that Jesus arose after three days. Thus in Christ’s resurrection we have the certainty that His life was indeed sinless and that He therefore was an acceptable sacrifice for our sins (Romans 1:4). In Christ’s resurrection we see the power of death broken, the certainty of our sins atoned for and thus the hope of our own resurrection.

We will approach this topic along the following lines:

1. Death defined
2. The nature of death and how it originated
 - a) the nature of physical death
 - b) the nature of spiritual death
 - c) the nature of eternal death
3. The Resurrection
 - a) Jesus teaching concerning the resurrection(s)
 - b) the twofold resurrection of believers
4. Jesus, the Conqueror of death
 - a) how death was defeated
 - b) eternal life
 - c) resurrection body
5. The afterlife and it’s locations

DEATH DEFINED

Luke's gospel tells us that on The Cross Jesus ". . . cried with a loud voice. He said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" and having said thus, He gave up the ghost" (Luke 23:46). From this account of Christ's death we observe that physical death is a form of separation. It is the separation of spirit from body. Further we know that while dead, Jesus preached to those souls which were detained in Hades (1 Peter 3:19). In the light of there being both a preacher and listeners in the grave, we can know that there is a form of life after death.

Jesus' life and teachings indicate that there is life after death in a number of ways:

- **Jesus' correction of the Sadducees** ~ There was a school of Jews in Jesus' day who argued that there was no life after death. These were referred to in the gospels as Sadducees. Jesus corrected their error by reminding them that God referred to Himself as "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob" and that since God was God of the living, then these too must still be alive (Luke 20:37-38).

Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him. (Luke 20:37-38)

- **Jesus' transfiguration and appearance with Moses and Elijah** ~ On one occasion Jesus took three of the disciples aside for a time of prayer. As they were praying Jesus was changed in appearance and there appeared before them Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus (Matthew 17:3). For Moses and Elijah to appear well over a thousand years after their death (in Elijah's case translation) proves that they continued to exist.
- **Jesus parable concerning Lazarus and the Rich Man** ~ Jesus used a parable concerning two men to shed light on what happens in the grave (Luke 16:19-31). For Lazarus, who suffered much and lived in poverty during his earthly life, the grave meant rest and peace. To the Rich Man, who had live life only for himself, the grave meant suffering. This parable clearly shows that there is not only continued existence but also consciousness beyond the grave.

We find then that life and death are just different modes of existence. Death does not mean annihilation or the cessation of being. Rather it means separation of the soul from the body. As has been said: "Everyone has eternal life - the question is, where will they spend it?"

Thinking of death as a form of separation, we see from scripture that there are three types of death:

- a) **Physical Death** which is the separation of the spirit and soul from the body,
- b) **Spiritual Death** which is the separation of the spirit and soul from God, and
- c) **Eternal Death** which is the separation of the reunited spirit, soul and body from God permanently.

Before considering each of these deaths in turn we need to consider where death came from.

THE SOURCE OF DEATH

The Bible traces the origin of both spiritual and physical death to the first sin. Paul says of Adam “through one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed on all men inasmuch as all have sinned” (Romans 5:12). Paul’s explanation is instructive because he did not define death as physical failure rather, he defines physical death as the consequence of a moral failure. Death entered in because of sin. But according to Paul this first sin has had a secondary impact. Because of Adam’s first moral failure not only death but the proclivity toward sin has come upon all men, for; “all have sinned”. Which is to say that all have been impacted by the blight of sin’s power to separate. Adam’s sin has caused us to be separated from God (spiritual death), the canker of which ultimately results in a separation of body from soul (physical death).

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Genesis 2:16-17)

God warned Adam of these separations in Eden. God warned Adam concerning the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil that “in the day you eat thereof you will die” (Genesis 2:17). The moment that Adam sinned he died spiritually (he was cut off from fellowship with God) and some 930 years later he died physically (Genesis 5:5). Because Adam was the head of the human race and we have all descended from him we have all inherited both spiritual and physical death. Every descendant of Adam is born spiritually dead, being separated from God (Ephesians 2:1). Every descendant of Adam dies physically.

THE NATURE OF DEATH

Recognizing that death means separation, we can start to grasp its meaning and nature.

1. Physical Death

Scripture uses several terms for physical death. Of these the following examples provide insight as to the nature of death:

- **God requiring the soul** ~ We are all beholden to God for our life. Having been granted the gift of existence, we are each accountable to God for how we use the life which He has given us. So death, when it comes, is described as God “requiring our soul” of us (Luke 12:20). None of us asked to be born. In the same way that we are not master of our arrival we are not masters of our death. It is God’s right to choose when we die.
- **Returning to dust** ~ Death as the separation of body and soul means that something happens to both components. The soul continues on in existence and consciousness. The body, having been formed from the elements of the earth, returns again to the earth (Genesis 3:19). For this reason death is also termed as one’s “earthly house being dissolved” (2 Corinthians 5:1).
- **Feeling as a shadow** ~ Although existence continues after physical death, it is a form of life which is much diminished. The Hebrews described it as being bound by the “snares of

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. (Genesis 3:19)

death” (Psalm 18:5, Psalm 116:3). Death has to it a sense of pain (Acts 2:24) as well as a sense of depleted being or “feeling as a shadow” (Job 14:2).

- **Asleep** ~ The New Testament frequently represents the state of death as “sleeping,” and the act of dying as a “falling asleep” (Matthew 9:24; John 9:4; John 11:11; 1 Corinthians 7:39, 11:30 & 15:6, 2 Peter 3:4). This notion is most often used in reference to the righteous dead and has with it the thought of their awaking in the resurrection, whereas in the Old Testament it is indiscriminately applied to all the dead and without association with such hope. Because the dead are asleep to our earthly life, it does not follow that they are asleep in all other things as well. There is ample evidence to indicate that the dead are not asleep to the life of the other world and that their spirits are not unconscious (Luke 16:23, Luke 23:43, John 11:25-26, Acts 7:59).

And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep. (Acts 7:59-60)

Jesus’ parable concerning the death of Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) teaches that there is a difference between the experience of the righteous in death and that of the sinner. Other scriptures teach the same thing.

The righteous in death have nothing to fear (Psalm 23:4, Hebrews 2:14-15). Their state is described as peaceful (Isaiah 57:2), restful (Daniel 12:13), precious to God (Psalm 116:15) and full of hope (Proverbs 14:32). On the other hand the death of the wicked is described as terrifying (Job 18:5-21 & 27:19-23) and without hope (Proverbs 11:7).

Whilst there is existence in death, life after death does not mean reincarnation. Scripture says that we all pass through this earthly existence once only. After that comes judgement (Hebrews 9:27).

The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death (Proverbs 14:32)

When a wicked man dies, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perishes (Proverbs 11:7)

2. Spiritual Death

The warnings of a death which would come upon Adam pertained not only to physical death but to spiritual death as well. We have been separated from God, and in our ignorance and selfishness pursue a lifestyle of rebellion against Him.

Scripture uses several terms for spiritual death. Of these the following examples provide insight as to the nature of this death:

- **Alienation from God** ~ Because Jesus is The Way, the Truth and The Life (John 14:6), to be dead is to be alienated from God’s truth and wisdom. It means a kind of ignorance and blindness which leaves us persuaded that the works of the flesh are the best way to live (Ephesians 4:18). It is an ignorance which allows us to think that God is as equally blind as we are and that in His shortsightedness He can turn a blind eye to our sin.
- **At war with God** ~ The human body is designed so as to fight infection. The body’s resistance to bacteria is going on all the time, often without our knowing. There is a quiet but constant war taking place which does not require conscious planning on our part because we intuitively resist infection. The alien bacteria don’t see themselves as being at

war with our immune system. They are just trying to grow as seems appropriate to them. Yet the war is real and must be won for us to stay alive.

Death is an alien thing to God. It is a malignancy which was vanquished at the Cross but which fights on in the agency of we humans who carry it as a defiling bacteria which contends with God's good order and truth. Many people would be surprised to learn that they are at war with God. For the most part they imagine God as non-existent or irrelevant. People may not see themselves as purposely opposed to Him, but just like the debilitating self-oriented bacteria, they are an alien opposed to the health of God's creation. To be spiritually dead is also to be an object of God's opposition and wrath (Ephesians 2:3), an enemy with God (Colossians 1:21).

And you, who were once alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled (Colossians 1:21)

- **Walking in trespasses and sins** ~ Dead bodies are buried because they have no life in them to resist decay. In time the rotting body smells because of its inability to resist those micro organisms which now putrefy the remains. So too the spiritually dead have no means of offering resistances to the forces of sin and spiritual decay in the world. They remain captive to the Devil, that spirit who works in the children of disobedience (Ephesians 2:2). For this reason to be spiritually dead is seen as being dead in trespasses and sin (Ephesians 2:1, Colossians 2:13).

And He has made you alive, who were once dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience (Ephesians 2:1-2)

- **Dead while yet alive** ~ Jesus' parable of the prodigal son tells the story of a young man who wasted his life and money in dissipation and lust. When he eventually returns to his father's household, the father in the parable refers to him as the son who was dead but has come back to life (Luke 15:24 & 32). Similarly Paul describes certain self-pleasing women as dead yet alive (1 Timothy 5:6). In both instances the one dead is a person who is consumed by the pleasures of the world. It is an unwise Christian who imagines that they can abandon themselves to the ways of the world and not be infected with its death contagion.

But she who lives in self-pleasure has died while living. (1 Timothy 5:6)

It is a universal fact that dead people tend not to make very good decisions. In fact they are unable to make any decisions at all! Knowing that the sinner is spiritually dead in his/her sins it is important to understand that, in the final analysis, they are unable to choose for good. It is indication of the astounding grace of God that He should send His Holy Spirit to us that we might hear, understand and respond to the truth of Christ's saving work at Calvary. Well did Jesus say that he who is born again is not born by the will of the flesh but by the will of the Holy Spirit (John 3:6 & 8).

3. Eternal Death

Because the human capacity to think and reason is so powerful, it is assumed by some that the human brain and thought-life is the source of our life and consciousness. Such people are mentally aware but spiritually dead. This vast reverence afforded to the power of rational thought as the means for processing or creating of life's experiences causes us to assume that when the brain

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ceases to function that life ceases to exist. As a result many go to the grave unprepared for life after death.

For those who pass into death in a condition of spiritual separation from God (i.e. spiritually dead, unregenerate or not born again), their after death experience is an eternity of separation from God.

It is a condition which scripture refers to as the second death (Revelation 2:11 & 21:8). The Bible speaks of a day when all will be judged, after which those who have remained separated from God in their sin and unbelief will pass to a place of banishment from God (2 Thessalonians 1:9). Scripture does not depict this banishment as a benign restful condition. Instead it is represented as a place of everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46), shame (Daniel 12:2) and suffering (Isaiah 66:24, Mark 9:44).

... those who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting shame. (Daniel 12:2)

THE RESURRECTION

If there are three forms of death then might we expect that there are three forms of resurrection? Indeed there are. Scripture teaches:

- a) ***Spiritual Resurrection*** which is the regeneration of the Sinner which occurs when the Holy Spirit brings faith in Christ and forgiveness to them such that Christ's life becomes our life and there is a reconnection of the Believers' spirit and soul to God,
- b) ***Resurrection of Believers*** which is the reconnection of the Believer's quickened spirit and soul to their transformed, incorruptible body and their presentation before the judgement bar of God for the receiving of eternal rewards,
- c) ***Resurrection of Unbelievers*** which is the raising of the Unbelievers, in their continuing separation from God, for presentation before the judgement bar of God and the receipt of sentence for their sins. This is then followed by the second death (Revelation 20:14) which is a return to ongoing separation from God and eternal punishment (Revelation 21:8).

1. Jesus' teaching concerning the threefold nature of resurrection

It is Jesus' entitlement and right as the Prince of Life (Acts 3:15), the First Born from the dead, who in all things has the preeminence (Colossians 1: 18), that He be the author and the means of the resurrection. Each of these three resurrections are brought into being at the sound of His voice and Word.

Jesus explained the threefold nature of this resurrection in two verses from John's gospel (John 5:24 & 29). In this stanza of scripture (John 5:21-29) Jesus first indicates that it is The Father who will raise Jesus from the grave after the crucifixion (John 5:21, Romans 6:4, Acts 2:24) after which it is Christ's prerogative to grant life to whom He chooses, in the manner He chooses. There will be those to who hear

For, as the Father doth raise the dead, and doth make alive, so also the Son doth make alive whom He wills

(John 5:21 ~ Young's Literal translation)

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His Word and are born again (1 Peter 1:23), receiving eternal life (John 5:24). These are those who hear and live (John 5:25). They have participated in that spiritual resurrection which “is now here” (John 5:25).

This resurrection “now here” will be followed by a further resurrection which will be at an hour which “is coming” (John 5:28). It is a resurrection in two parts. On this occasion all who are in the grave will hear Christ’s voice. All will arise “those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment” (John 5:29).

Truly, truly, I say to you, He who hears My Word and believes on Him who sent Me has everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but has passed from death to life. Truly, truly, I say to you, The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they who hear shall live. (John 5:24-25)

2. The double resurrection of believers

Whilst there are three resurrections in total, the unbeliever experiences only one of them, whereas the believer experiences two. The Bible is an unfolding revelation of God’s character and plan. Thus there are things which are clear to us from the New Testament which we can see as only hinted at in the Old Testament. Let us consider some Old Testament imagery as well as some New Testament instruction about this double resurrection motif.

- **Cleansing of those who touch dead bodies** ~ The Law provides instruction to those who have had contact with a dead body (Numbers 19:11-22). Any person handling the body of a dead person was deemed unclean for seven days. As an unclean person they were not permitted into the presence of God, neither were they at liberty to move amongst the community. This uncleanness could only be remedied with two ceremonial washings. These washings were to be administered to the unclean person on the third day and on the seventh day of their uncleanness. The washings had to be performed on both of these days. The Law specifically states that failure to perform the washing on the third day left the unclean person without remedy. They would be permanently isolated.

Interestingly the waters which were used for cleansing were called “the waters of separation” (Numbers 19:9).

The two days are significant because in combination they speak in the same resurrection terms as does Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit’s Old Testament imagery is not hard to decipher. An Israelite who failed to receive the restorative powers of the “waters of separation” (cleansing) on the third day could not then be restored by any amount of washing on the seventh day. Similarly any person who is not possessed of Christ’s life, which has been made available to us because of His resurrection on the third day, will in the resurrection on the last (or seventh) day remain tainted by death and be unable to enter into eternal life with God midst the community of the faithful.

- **The Resurrection is a Person** ~ The resurrection is not just an event, it’s a person. Jesus is the resurrection and the life (John 11:23-27). At the time of raising his friend Lazarus from the dead, Jesus told Martha that whoever believed in Him would never die (John 11:26). He also said that when a believer dies that they will yet live again (John 11:25). This

Jesus said to her, I am the Resurrection and the Life! He who believes in Me, though he die, yet he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this? (John 11:25-26)

Christ's riddle only makes sense if we understand Him to be speaking of two resurrections. There is the spiritual resurrection of the believer (from sin and unbelief to life in Christ). Those who are born again will never again die spiritually (Romans 6:22). But, unless they are present at Christ's return, a believer can still die physically. Thus one who has been raised from sin and spiritual death will die (spiritually) no more and will be raised (physically) on the last day to continuing eternal life in Christ.

- ***The Millennium and the Double Resurrection of Believers*** ~ The Book of Revelation concludes with an account of two resurrections and the promise that Christ will abolish death to the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:14). This is the concluding act of Christ's reign. As such it can seem that Christ's return will be accompanied by two resurrections. It appears that the first resurrection is of believers who die in Christ, whilst the second will involve all other persons who will arise to be judged. A fixed period of a 1000 year kingdom reign is thought to sit between these two resurrections. This is a readily accepted way to interpret this fairly obscure passage but relies on itself as the only reference to a physical resurrection of saints ahead of a physical resurrection of all.

We have already observed that the writer of Revelation, the apostle John, is much given to the concept of two resurrections. We saw it twice in his gospel (John 5:24-29 & 11:23-26).

In light of this it is also possible to view the first resurrection of Revelation 20 as applying to those Believers who have, during their physical existence, experienced the spiritual resurrection of regeneration and have passed from the death of sin into life in the Saviour.

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

These reign in life with Christ now (Romans 5:17) across a long duration which is figuratively represented as a period of 1,000 years. The second resurrection is that same general resurrection which all humanity face. Death, the final judgment, has no power over those who were part of the first resurrection. This also is an accepted way to handle this segment of The Book of Revelation

The Bible holds no hope for those who are banished to eternal death. The only hope of escape is in this life. The only Saviour is Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:27, John 14:6).

DEATH CONQUERED

Jesus told His disciples that the gates of hell would not prevail against His church (Matthew 16:18). Unlike our modern cities which have multiple and open means of access to them, ancient cities were protected by walls which surrounded them. Access could only be gained by the gates which were both; part of the city's fortifications, and the main places for deciding judicial matters, transacting business, and deliberating on public matters. Hell's gates therefore are the counsels and plans for evil as purposed by wicked spirits and the enemies of the church, as well as its defences against the church's endeavours to advance Christ's kingdom.

We look forward to the resurrection of the dead

Given that we have authority over these gates we might be lured into assuming that our valiant efforts to storm the enemy's gates via our faith and persistence will reap rewards. They will and they do, but such valiant endeavours to accost the enemy's gates are in fact a waste of effort. Why battle to break down gates when all the while we hold the key? Jesus the Captain of our salvation (Hebrews 2:10) and faith (Hebrews 12:2) by the victory of His resurrection has become possessor of the keys to death and hell (Revelation 1:17-18). We do not have to battle hell's gates. We don't even have to knock. We just have to pray to the keyholder!

And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying to me, Do not fear, I am the First and the Last, and the Living One, and I became dead, and behold, I am alive for ever and ever, Amen. And I have the keys of hell and of death. (Revelation 1:17-18)

1. The nature of Eternal Life

Because we are human, we are bound by time and because we are human, we are subject to death. As a consequence we often describe death in terms of time. We use euphemisms such as: "His time has come" or "It was his time" or "an untimely death". In consequence when we think of eternal life we tend to think of it in terms of time. We see it as; 'forever life' or unending future existence.

There is a difference between eternal life and unending life.

There are many times when the gospels depict eternal life as equating to heaven or that age which is to come (Matthew 25:46, Mark 10:30, Luke 18:30), but the word 'eternal' does not just mean 'without end', it also means 'without beginning'. Eternal life is not just eternal future it is eternal past. The Bible's promise of eternal life is the promise of the "Life of the Ages". It is that life which existed in an age which was prior to the beginning of time. In short, to possess eternal life is to possess the very being and character of God. In as much as death came in by sin, eternal life continues because of righteousness.

He who believes in the Son has the Life of the Ages; he who disobeys the Son will not enter into Life, but God's anger remains upon him. (John 3:36)

In most solemn truth I tell you that he who listens to my teaching and believes Him who sent me, has the Life of the Ages, and does not come under judgement, but has passed over out of death into Life. (John 5:24)

as sin has exercised kingly sway in inflicting death, so grace, too, may exercise kingly sway in bestowing a righteousness which results in the Life of the Ages through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 5:21)

I write all this to you in order that you who believe in the Son of God may know for certain that you already have the Life of the Ages. (1 John 5:13)

R Weymouth's ~ "New Testament in Modern Speech"

It has been said that you can't beat something with nothing. If death is a power (Hosea 13:14, Hebrew 2:14) and sin is its sting (1 Corinthians 15:26), then it must be defeated by something which is real. It must be overcome by life, that life which is righteousness itself.

2. The extent of death's defeat

There are numerous consequences to Christ's cross and resurrection:

- **Death is an enemy defeated** ~ The apostle Paul tells us (1 Corinthians 15:26) that death (physical death) is finally defeated at Christ's return. Death's ultimate fate is that it too will be destroyed. This is because death is an enemy of mankind. Death was never God's plan, it entered in because of sin (Romans 5:12).

The last enemy made to cease is death (1 Corinthians 15:26)

We look forward to the resurrection of the dead

- **Jesus Christ has abolished death** ~ Jesus Christ came to set mankind free from the curse of sin and death. He has conquered and destroyed death (2 Timothy 1:10). The word translated 'destroyed' means to annul or negate. Because of Jesus, the power of death has been made void. Separation from God cripples us. Separation of body from soul will not endure.

But it is now having been manifested by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has made death of no effect, bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Timothy 1:10)

- **Death has lost its sting** ~ Because Jesus has dealt with our sin through His death on the Cross, death no longer is a threat to us (1 Corinthians 15:55). When we die we will not face punishment for our sins. They have already been judged by God on the Cross of Calvary! Since there is no punishment of sin for the Christian after death, there is nothing to fear (Hebrews 2:14). So completely has Jesus set us free from the sting of death that the Christian's death is referred to as merely falling asleep (Acts 7:60, 1 Corinthians 11:30, 1 Thessalonians 4:13).

O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory? 1 Corinthians 15:55

3. A new body

It is tempting at times to look back with fondness to Eden's perfection and to desire a return to that time of rest, excellence and intimacy with God. No matter how excellent Eden may have been, it wasn't perfect. It is a folly to desire a return to Eden because however beautiful and sublime Eden may have been; it was corruptible. That this was the case is evidenced by that fact that it was indeed corrupted by sin.

There are many joys which await us in the resurrection. It will exceed anything attainable on earth, even Eden. One of its many wonders will be that we will receive a resurrected body. This will be a body raised in glory and in incorruption (1 Corinthians 15:52-53). Whereas Adam was vulnerable to temptation, no such prospect will exist when in our new estate. Whereas the threat of death hung over Eden for as long as the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil existed, the resurrection will see us raised incorruptible and immortal. Death and the prospect of its return will have been forever done away with.

... For a trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. (1 Corinthians 15:52-53)

THE PLACE OF THE DEAD

The Bible is a book whose main focus is to address those things that we require for "life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). It is offered to us for our time of life on earth. The Bible is clear in its assertions that heaven and hell exist and it is unmistakable that the rewards and punishments of those realms are eternal. But the Bible is surprisingly (and perhaps a little annoyingly) scant with precise details about both these realms. We need to be especially cautious when asserting exact circumstances concerning the condition of those who have died and await the final judgment. What we do know is that Christ's death and resurrection made a difference to those in this intermediate condition.

We look forward to the resurrection of the dead

1. Before Christ's Resurrection

The Old Testament Hebrews uses the word 'sheol' as the location for the afterlife. The word means "the abode of the dead" or "the place of no return". It occurs 65 times in the Old Testament and has been variously translated in our Bibles (in the KJV it is translated hell 31 times, grave 31 times, pit 3 times). However sheol should never be confused with the literal grave nor with hell, the place of final and eternal punishment. The Hebrew word 'qeber' refers to the grave whereas sheol doesn't.

About 300 years before Christ's birth, the Old Testament was translated from the Hebrew into Greek by 70 Jewish scholars who were careful to ensure that the Greek words used were as close to the Hebrew meaning as possible. This translation, known as The Septuagint, applied the Greek word 'hades' as the word most closely corresponding to sheol. Hades in its basic structure (etymology) means "unseen" (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionary 1890), but by means of Greek mythology acquired a more definitive sense of location coming to be known as the "place of the dead" or "the underworld". Whilst there is debate about the derivation (etymology) of the Hebrew word 'sheol', both Strong and Brown-Driver-Briggs (Brown-Driver-Briggs' Hebrew Definitions) indicate that its origin lies with the word 'shaal' meaning "to demand, enquire or lay to charge". It seems that as much as can be known of 'sheol' is that it is a place where men and women are held to give an immediate account of their lives, waiting until such times as a full account is rendered at God's judgment bar.

Because the Greeks had a very strongly formed concept of the underworld, it is possible that much of the certainty which commentators feel about the nature of the intermediate state is drawn from the Greek way of thinking, rather than from the Hebrew. The word hades appears only 11 times in the New Testament.

Just as the word sheol must be distinguished from the word qeber in the Hebrew Old Testament, so the Greek word hades must be distinguished from the word 'mnaymion' (which is the correct word for grave) in the New Testament.

By examining the scripture we find that Sheol-Hades was thought to be:

- a place where both the righteous and the unrighteous went (Psalm 16:10, Numbers 16:33),
- located downwards or below the earth (Matthew 12:40, Job 26:5),
- a place of oblivion for the dead but even so a place of rest for the believer (Job 3:13-19),
- a place of conscious existence (1 Samuel 28, Ezekiel 32:21-31, Luke 16:19-31),
- a temporary abode (Psalm 16:9-11, Psalm 17:15, Daniel 12:13).

The Jews came to distinguish two separate parts within Sheol-Hades; one being reserved for the wicked, who were tormented from the moment of their departure from this world, and the other prepared for the righteous. This latter place Jesus seems to have referred to as Abraham's bosom (Lu 16:22-23 & 26) or paradise (Luke 23:43).

2. After the resurrection of Christ

At the death of Christ He descended to Sheol-Hades (Acts 2:24). There He made proclamation of His great victory on the Cross (1 Peter 3:19). It is thought that Christ did not descend to the part of

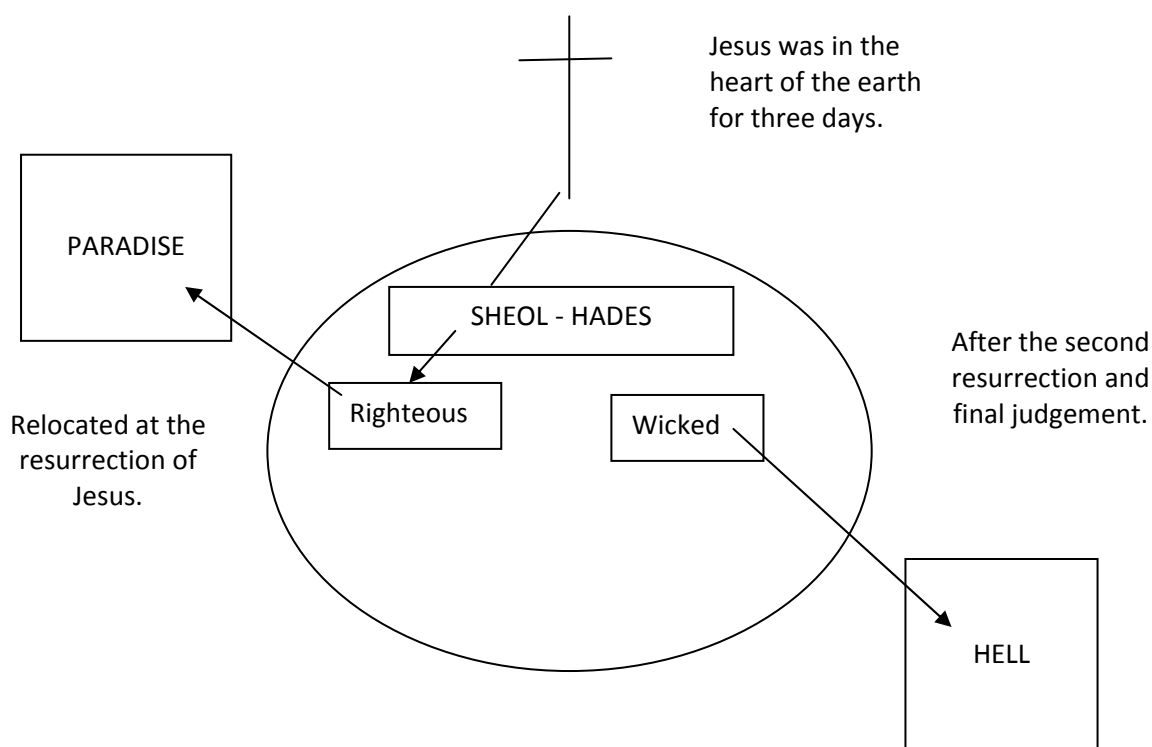
We look forward to the resurrection of the dead

Sheol-Hades where the wicked are in torment, but He did descend with the repentant thief to the place of the righteous dead in paradise. After three days Christ rose from the dead thus proving His great victory over sin, Satan and death itself.

Many commentators believe that when Christ rose from the dead He liberated the believing dead from Sheol-Hades and ascended with them into Heaven. This is because Matthew (only) includes an account of certain saints who were raised from the dead and were seen in Jerusalem at the time of His resurrection (Matthew 27:52, Isaiah 25:8) and because Paul quotes Psalms to indicate that Jesus took that place from which no one returns (captivity) captive (Ephesians 4:8-10).

It is thought therefore that from the time of Christ's resurrection all those who die in the faith, no longer go down into Sheol-Hades, but go directly into the presence of the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:6-8, Philippians 1:23). Whether believers still go to Sheol-Hades or not, one thing is certain that when they die they go to be with the Lord.

The following diagram gives an indication of the relationship between Sheol-Hades, Heaven and Hell.



The Bible teaches that the righteous do not enter into their final reward and the wicked do not enter into their final punishment until after their respective resurrections. Whatever may be the state of the Believer in death, however sublime and beautiful, it is nothing compared to the rewards and perfection that await the final resurrection (1 Corinthians 2:9, Hebrews 11:39-40).

But as it is written, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard," nor has it entered into the heart of man, "the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." (1 Corinthians 2:9

And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, did not receive the promise, for God had provided some better thing for us, that they should not be made perfect without us. (Hebrews 11:39-40
