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- IA11-186 The instability of Jacob's family because of not waiting upon the
07-21-02 Lord - the baby boomer passage.
Gen 29:31-30:1; Deu 21:15-17; Jam 3:14-16; Pro 14:30; Pro 27:3-4
- IA11-187 God didn't need Jacob's little plots and plans just like God doesn't need your little plots and
07-30-02 plans.
Deu 32:35-36; Gen 30:25; 2Ti 2:1-5, 2Ti 4:7-8; Eph 6:10-17
- IA11-188 Your own place, your personal sense of destiny, and your own country.
07-31-02 Gen 30:25-26; 1Jo 2:14-17; Mat 6:25-33; 1Ti 4:7-8; Luk 14:25-32
- IA11-189 Your own place, your personal sense of destiny, and your own country, part 2.
08-01-02 1Co 12:18, 2Jo 1:8, Rev 14:1-4, Eph 5:14-17, Zec 3:1-4
- IA11-190 Your own place, your personal sense of destiny, and your own country, part 3.
08-06-02 2Co 12:1-9, 1Jo 2:18-20, Heb 12:1, Jam 1:14-16, Luk 11:21-26
- IA11-191 Your own place, your personal sense of destiny, and your own country, part 4.
08-07-02 Luk 11:21-26, 1Co 14:8, 2Ti 3:16-4:2, Isa 41:10-14

- IA11-192 Jacob begins to take revenge on Uncle Laban.
08-08-02 Gen 30:25-35, Deu 18:10-12, Mat 5:39-42, 1Pe 2:9, Col 3:17
- IA11-193 Jacob begins to take revenge on Uncle Laban, part 2.
08-09-02 Gen 30:25-36; Pro 11:24-26, Pro 23:1-8; Eze 34:1-9; Phi 2:3-5
- IA11-194 Selfishness.
08-11-02 Gen 30:25-36, Ecc 5:8-10, Phi 2:3-5, 2Co 8:1-5, 1Jo 3:17
- IA11-195 Strong impressions are made by the eye.
08-14-02 Gen 30:25-40, Gen 3:1-7; 1Jo 2:15-17; Mat 6:19-23; Deu 32:9-10
- IA11-196 Sometimes going back to a situation is not something any of us like to do, but something we should do.
08-15-02 Gen 30:43-31:2; Psa 7:14-16, Psa 37:1-2; Gen 31
- IA11-197 Jacob's mind is racing in many different directions, and he is filled with fear.
08-16-02 Gen 32:1-7, Gen 27:43-45; Psa 139:7-8; Jer 23:23-24; Mat 5:23-25a
- IA11-198 Jacob reveals that every time fear comes into your life, you are not living the Christian way of life.
08-18-02 Gen 32:1-7; 1Jo 4:18; Eph 1:3-4, Eph 3:20; Psa 11:17, 33:5
- IA11-199 Jacob reveals that every time fear comes into your life, you are not living the Christian way of life, part 2
08-20-02 Gen 32:1-12; Exo 14:13-14; Heb 11:27, Heb 13:6; Jer 23:4
- IA11-200 Any solution you have to your problems apart from doctrine is a manifestation of both arrogance and irrationality.
08-22-02 Gen 32:9-23; 1Co 10:6,11; Exo 14:14; Zec 14:3; Isa 37:36; Rev 19:11
- IA11-201 We all need to have the experience of going through struggles in life alone with God.
08-23-02 Gen 32:24-25; Hos 12:2-5; Psa 86:15, Psa 103:8, Psa 18:35; 1Ti 1:12-16
- IA11-202 We all need to have the experience of going through struggles in life alone with God, part 2.
09-01-02 Gen 32:24-25, Gal 6:1-5, Hos 12:4, Luk 18:1-8, Mat 15:22-28
- IA11-203 Sometimes it's the little things in our life that creep up on us and get the best of us.
09-03-02 Gen 32:24-25; Heb 12:1; Jer 9:23-24, Jer 48:7; 1Co 4:7
- IA11-204 Many times what looks like a defeat can be an incredible blessing from God.
09-04-02 Gen 32:24-26, Jer 48:7, Joh 21:18, Isa 41:14, Psa 20:6-7
- IA11-205 God blessed Jacob in the very place that He disabled him.
09-05-02 Gen 32:24-28, Gen 20:6-7, Gen 33:16-18; Psa 147:10-11; 2Co 12:9-10, 2Co 13:4.
- IA11-206 Cease striving and know that I am God.
09-06-02 Gen 32:24-29, Gen 6:3; Luk 8:11-15; Pro 16:7; 1Co 4:4

- IA11-207 The importance of being alone with God and having Him wrestle with certain areas of your life.
09-08-02 Gen 32:24-29, Luk 8:11-15, Pro 16:7, 1Co 4:4, Eze 8:1-12
- IA11-208 One year later, September 11.
09-11-02 Psa 46:1-11, Lev 26:27-38, Rev 3:1-2, Gen 12:1-3, 2Sa 22:31-35
- IA11-209 How affliction and adversity make us strong.
09-15-02 Gen 32:24-33:3; Joh 13:1-7; Psa 106:7-13, Psa 119:61
- IA11-210 It is one thing to step up to a new spiritual level; it is quite another to maintain it.
09-17-02 Gen 32:24-33:3, Rom 9:15-21, Psa 106:6-13, Heb 10:35-39
- IA11-211 For many, the anticipation of the problem turns out to be much less than anticipated.
09-18-02 Gen 33:1-11; Psa 39:4-6, Psa 56:1-4, Psa 90:1-12, Psa 144:3-4; Mat 17:1-20
- IA11-212 What Jacob anticipated never happened, and that is what fear, worry, and anxiety produce.
09-22-02 Gen 33:1-11; 1Jo 4:18; Heb 4:1-3, Heb 13:6; Exo 14:10-14
- IA11-213 Human viewpoints and fleshly planning and efforts are dishonoring to God.
09-24-02 Gen 33:1-12, Psa 127:1-2, Mat 17:1-20, Luk 8:14-10:41
- IA11-214 Another passage where an unbeliever has more character and integrity than a believer.
09-25-02 Gen 33:1-20, 1 Co 13:4-7
- IA11-215 Few and unpleasant have been the years of my life, but there is hope!
09-29-02 Gen 47:8-10, 1Ti 5:9, Lev 19:32, Pro 23:22, 1Ti 5:1-2
- IA11-216 God's faithfulness to Jacob.
10-01-02 Gen 48:1-15, Heb 11:21, Gen 41:51-52, Lam 3:21-24
- IA11-217 How the angelic conflict relates to Israel.
10-03-02 Psa 8:4-5, Heb 2:7, 2Pe 2:11, Psa 148:2-5, 1Ti 5:21
- IA11-218 How the angelic conflict relates to Israel, part 2.
10-04-02 Gen 1:1-2,9; Job 38:4-7; Jer 4:23-26; Eze 28:11-13
- IA11-219 How the angelic conflict relates to the Lord's Supper, part 3.
10-06-02 1Co 11:23-25; Isa 52:13-15, Isa 53:1-12; Rom 5:8, Rom 8:31-32
- IA11-220 A description of the leader of the angelic rebellion, part 4.
10-08-02 Eze 28:11-19, Rev 12:1-6, Pro 3:13-18
- IA11-221 A description of the leader of the angelic rebellion, part 5.
10-09-02 Eze 28:11-19, Joh 8:44, Gen 1:26, Isa 9:6-7, Heb 2:14-17, Rev 20:1-3
- IA11-222 A description of the original sin among creatures, part 6.
10-10-02 Isa 14:12-14; 2Co 11:3-6,12-15; Rev 22:16, Rev 2:26-29

- IA11-223 Satan wants the glory, but he doesn't have the ability, part 7.
10-11-02 Isa 14:12-14; Rom 1:18-25; Isa 42:8, Isa 48:11
- IA11-224 Meet the servants and ministers of Satan in the angelic conflict, part 8.
10-13-02 2Co 11:13-15, 2Co 4:3-4; Joh 15:18-21, Joh 16:1-3; Gen 3:1-5
- IA11-225 All the counterfeit systems Satan has simply reveal his desire to be like the Most High, part 9.
10-15-02 Isa 14:12-17, Mat 12:43-45, Rev 13:11-15, Eph 4:2-9
- IA11-226 All the counterfeit systems Satan has simply reveal his desire to be like the Most High, part 10.
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- IA11-227 The divine restriction placed upon the Tribulation period, part 11.
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10-20-02 Gen 6:1-4, Rev 9:1-8, Jer 49:16, Oba 1:3
- IA11-229 Meet the demon assault army led by Abaddon, part 13.
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- IA11-251 The attacks on the messengers of God. Angelic Conflict, part 35.
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- IA11-252 The Perfect Tree.
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- IA11-253 Angelic Observation and Opposition in Human History.
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- IA11-255 Our victorious Lord has received a title higher than the angels, which He shares with us.
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130:3

The Omnipotence and Authority of the Lord Jesus Christ

01/06/02

We have been noting the importance of the authority and the power of God and how it relates to Gen 16:9 *"Then the angel of the Lord [Jesus Christ] said to her [Hagar], Return to your mistress [Sarai], and submit yourself to her authority."* Remember, this was said to a woman who had been abused by authority.

We noted that we couldn't have a correct understanding of the importance of authority unless we have a right understanding of the Essence of God and our Lord as the all-powerful one, having all authority. *Omnipotence* gives life and action to all of the divine attributes. For example, Omnipotence gives the *Sovereignty* of God the power and authority to make any decisions that He desires to. Without Omnipotence, His *love and mercy* would be just weak pity, His *Veracity* and therefore His promises would be empty and His *Omniscience* wouldn't have the power to provide what He knows His people need. Without Omnipotence, it would be no use for His *Omnipresence* to never leave us or forsake us, His *Immutability* would not have the power to never change and His *Righteousness* would not have the power to always be right. Without Omniscience, His eternal life would not have the power to give us that life forever and ever. However, God's power does exist and because of that, whatever He says, He is able to perform. For example, consider the power behind nature.

In Job 38, Satan is through with his cross-examination of Job and now we are going to have some questions from the Lord to reveal to Job the importance of authority. First in Job 38:1-2 *"Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, who is this that darkens counsel [or distorts My doctrine] by words without knowledge?"* God asks Job *"Who is this that darkens counsel by words or doctrines without knowledge?"* In this context, God means that Job has the doctrine but has made the wrong application. Remember one can perceive and metabolize doctrine and still refuse to apply it. In verse 3, God announces His intention to interrogate and examine Job and to reveal the importance of having all power and all authority. Job 38:3 *"Now gird up your loins like a man,"* One of the biggest difficulties with believers when they get into suffering is that they lose the valiant principle of being courageous. This is when they whine about everything that's going on in their life and they start to blame others. Job, like all of us, must stop whining about his suffering because we can't whine about the past and serve the Lord in the present. We have to understand the power and authority of God. This is a command for Job to face the truth to get back in fellowship with God and forget about his suffering. In order to *"be a man"* you have to face the fact that you are responsible for your own failures.

In every generation God is looking for men and women who will be men and women and who can stand in the gap and handle pressure. In Eze 22:29-30 *"The people of the land have practiced oppression and committed robbery, and they have wronged the poor and needy and have oppressed the sojourner without justice. And I searched for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one."*

Most believers say in their heart and in their actions, Luk 14:18b-20 *"I have bought a piece of real estate and I need to take care of it; please consider me excused. I have a business and I am going to invest in it; please consider me excused. I'm married, and for that reason I am too busy, therefore, I cannot come."* David said to his son Solomon just before he died, 1Ki 2:2 *"Be strong therefore and show yourself a man."* A man is someone with strength, a woman is someone with virtue. Joab, David's general said to his soldiers who were out-numbered and the odds were against them in 2Sa 10:12 *"Be of good courage and let us play the men for our people."* The apostle Paul said to the believers at Corinth concerning false doctrine and apostate teaching, 1Co 16:13 *"Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong."* A real man is someone who is on the alert, and who stands firm in

doctrine and is strong. In verses 4-11 of Job 38, we have the first question: Was Job present at the creation of planet earth when the authority and the power of Almighty God was present? Of course the answer to that is No! So we have a beautiful description of creation. The Lord says to Job in verse 4 *"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding,"* That takes power that takes authority! Verse 5 *"Who set its measurements, since you know? Or who stretched the line on it?"* God is saying to Job, "I know what I'm doing! I have all power and all authority."

Job had a plan that he was going to have prosperity for all of his life and he thought he was all set for life, however, that was Job's plan not God's! God's plan was to bring some adversity into his life whereby Job could glorify Him in the angelic conflict. Spirituality does not guarantee a life without problems and difficulties! As the apostle Paul said in 2Ti 3:12 *"And indeed, all who desire to live godly [eusebos-spiritual] in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."*

If man doesn't know what God is doing it is simply because he doesn't need to know or because he is not oriented to God's plan. None of us can fully comprehend the adversities and the sufferings, which come into our lives, and why they do but in the end we will discover that God knew all along exactly what we needed and what was best for us.

Remember what The Lord Jesus Christ said to Peter in Joh 13:7 *"What I do you do not realize now, but you shall understand hereafter."* No one in the human race can ever really understand in depth the principle of the authority and the power and omniscience of God...and the fact that God knows all things and has everything under control.

Job is about to learn that some of the greatest blessings you can have in this life comes through suffering not through prosperity and trusting and relying on the power and the authority of God. Job 38:6 *"On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone,"* When God laid the foundation of the earth the angels were there.

Job 38:7 *"When the morning stars [the angels with authority] sang together, And all the sons of God [beni ha Elohim, the angels] shouted for joy?"* The sons of God are the *beni ha Elohim*, the sons of the gods referring to the angels. When God started to restore the earth for man's existence on it, there were angels there during the restoration of the earth but Job wasn't there. Remember that Gen 1 is not a record of the creation of the earth but a record of the restoration of the earth! These were elect angels and that is why it says in verse 7 that they shouted for joy, because God was going to take a new type of creature called man, give him a free will, and prove to the fallen angels that they were out of line in their decision to follow Satan.

Job 38: 9-11 *"Or where were you Job when I God, with power and authority enclosed the sea with doors, When, bursting forth, it went out from the womb; When I made a cloud its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, And I placed boundaries on it and I set a bolt and doors, And I said, Thus far you shall come, but no farther; And here shall your proud waves stop?"* Consider God's power in preservation. No creature has power to preserve itself. Both man and beast would perish if there were not herbs for food, and herbs would wither and die if the earth was not refreshed with rain. It is impossible for God to do anything that is imperfect since He is perfect and He has all authority and the power. The second question is found in verses 12-15. In effect, the question is to Job, Can Job rotate planet earth on its axis and produce a sequence of day and night?

Job 38:12-15 *"Have you ever in your life commanded the morning and caused the dawn to know its place; That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, And the wicked be shaken out of it? It is changed like clay under the seal and they stand forth like a garment. And from the wicked their light is withheld, And the uplifted arm is broken."*

The third question: Does Job know anything about death and can Job guarantee the function of the so-called scientific laws regarding weather, verses 16-30.

Job 38:16-30 "Have you entered into the springs of the sea? Or have you walked in the recesses of the deep? Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Or have you seen the gates of deep darkness? Have you understood the expanse of the earth? Tell Me, if you know all this. Where is the way to the dwelling of light? And darkness, where is its place, That you may take it to its territory and that you may discern the paths to its home? You know, for you were born then, And the number of your days is great! Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, Or have you seen the storehouses of the hail, Which I have reserved for the time of distress, For the day of war and battle? Where is the way that the light is divided or the east wind scattered on the earth? Who has cleft a channel for the flood or a way for the thunderbolt; To bring rain on a land without people, On a desert without a man in it, To satisfy the waste and desolate land and to make the seeds of grass to sprout? Has the rain a father? Or who has begotten the drops of dew? From whose womb has come the ice? And the frost of heaven, who has given it birth? Water becomes hard like stone, And the surface of the deep is imprisoned."

God is revealing His majesty and magnificence through knowledge. In verses 31-33, a fourth question: Can Job handle the universe outside of planet earth?

Job 38:31 "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, Or loose the cords of Orion? Can you lead forth a constellation in its season, And guide the Bear with her satellites? Do you know the ordinances or the laws of the heavens, Or fix their rule over the earth?"

How minute our problems must seem to God. Yet His love for us is manifested by such passages as Luk 12:6-7, "Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? And yet not one of them is forgotten before God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows."

The fifth question: Can Job operate the laws of meteorology such as directing wind, rain, and thunderstorms, found in verses 34-38, "Can you lift up your voice to the clouds so that an abundance of water may cover you? Can you send forth lightnings that they may go And say to you, Here we are? Who has put wisdom in the innermost being, or has given understanding to the mind? Who can count the clouds by wisdom or tip the water jars of the heavens, When the dust hardens into a mass and the clods stick together?" The continuation of the universe and all of its creatures and the stable state of the atmosphere depends on the omnipotence and immutability of Jesus Christ, Col 1:17; Heb 1:3. When we think about the magnitude of His power and His love for us and the ability that He has to come through for us, we should never even worry for a moment!

Jer 32:17 "Ah Lord God! Behold, Thou hast made the heavens and the earth by Thy great power and by Thine outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for Thee,"

Scientific laws, as such, do not exist, because science did not develop them, nor does science enforce them, God does!

These so-called scientific laws are based on the statistical assumption that the universe, which operates according to a fixed norm, will continue to do so. Science can observe and apply, but the speculation of science is what is often in conflict with the Bible. Science can observe certain laws, but cannot guarantee their continuance. The universe with its matter, energy, and operating laws of God will not always exist as it does at the present time, 2Pe 3:10-12; Rev 20:11.

Every discovery of the pattern of the universe is a treatise on the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, who at the present time is guaranteeing the function of every bona fide scientific law, Col 1:17; Heb 13:8. Christ is holding the universe together is to resolve the angelic conflict in human history and to bring many sons into glory, Heb 2:10. Occasionally these laws have been overruled by the sovereignty of God. For example, the day the sun stood still for Joshua in battle,

Jos 10:12-13. Power and authority belongs to the Lord! Consider God's power in government. Think of the restraining hand of God limiting Satan from taking over the earth. The devil as a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom he may devour. Satan is filled with hatred against God and against those

believers who love the Lord. If he had his way he would treat every growing believer the same way he treated Job. He would send fire down from heaven to destroy our fruit; destroy our cattle and cause the wind to overthrow our houses and cover our bodies with boils. Consider God's power in judgment. When He smites, none can resist Him.

Eze 22:14 *"Can your heart endure, or can your hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with you? I, the Lord, have spoken and shall act."*

Think of His power when He opened the windows of heaven and poured fountains upon the world so that only those inside of the ark were safe from his omnipotence. Consider Pharaoh and his entire army, which at the time was considered to be the greatest military in the world. However, when they ran into divine omnipotence at the red sea, they were destroyed in an instant.

Consider God's omnipotence on the unbelievers and the reprobate. God is going to display His mighty power upon them not merely by incarcerating them in Gehenna, known to many as hell, but by supernaturally preserving their bodies as well as their souls in the midst of the eternal lake of fire, which burns forever and ever. That is power and authority. That is why we should all obey and recognize authority. It should be very comforting to you to know that this same authority and omnipotence keeps us saved and protects us. This power should lead us to worship and adore such a wondrous, infinite perfect God who along with this power loves us with a divine love, which will never change. As a member of the Royal Family of God and the future bride of Jesus Christ, your worship and respect toward God is revealed by your confidence you have as a believer. He is clothed with omnipotence; therefore no prayer is too hard for Him to answer.

No need to great for Him to supply.

No passion too strong for Him to subdue.

No temptation too powerful for Him to deliver from.

No misery too deep for Him to relieve.

God has allowed both angels and mankind to possess a free-will or volition and both angels and mankind have used that volition in a negative way. Therefore, when we understand the omnipotence of God, we will be assured that nothing is too difficult for Him.

Consider the sovereignty of God. Sovereignty means that God is supreme in rule and has authority over all things. However, in harmony with His divine essence it's important to note that God will never use His sovereignty to coerce human volition. This means that God honors our decisions, whether they are for Him or against Him. This also means that we cannot blame God for anything that happens.

The sovereign will of God for mankind is expressed entirely in one verse in the Bible, 1Ti 2:4 *"He desires all men to be saved and to come unto the epignosis knowledge of the truth."*

The very fact that all men are not saved and that all believers do not come unto the epignosis knowledge of the truth reveals That although God is sovereign, He will not violate or coerce human volition.

In our verse in Gen 16:9 the principle is that only the will of God can solve our problems. Regardless of how hard it seems to be, God's way is the best way. God's will is the only way to meet and to solve the problems of life. God's will must be communicated, and then there must be positive response to it. Positive response to it means recognition of the authority and then the function of execution.

The time will come for Hagar to leave Abram's household, in Genesis 21, but not at this moment. At this moment, it is the will of God for her to stay. Eventually, it will be the will of God to separate from Abram and Sarai, they will have to be separated eventually, but right now Hagar's responsibility is to go back under the authority of Sarai. God's timing must be related to God's will and God's timing is perfect, no other time is right. To function under the will of God, is to have God's correct timing for your life. Hagar's return to Sarai, her mistress, is tantamount to adjusting to the

justice of God. This brings into focus one more principle we need to note, and that is the doctrine of divine guidance.

For the first time now Sarai is faced with the issue of the will of God....and obedience to the divine will. At this time it is the will of God that she go back to the point where the problem began, and divine guidance calls for recognition of human authority whether it has been distorted, or not.

The principle of authority is one, which is absolutely necessary for the continued outcome and the perpetuation of the angelic conflict in history. Divine guidance is the doctrine of determining the will of God for the life of the believer. Divine guidance is the communication of divine will through divine revelation. Today that divine revelation is confined to the canon of scripture and, of course, the alternative, Divine discipline. Divine discipline and human disaster as a classification of guidance from God is limited to the negative aspects of God's will. Discipline and disaster most frequently is God saying, "No, you are not in My will." Therefore divine discipline is limited to warning that believer that he is not in the will of God. We cannot know the will of God apart from the word of God.

The Characteristics and Order of the Divine Decrees

01/13/02

We started this study with a definition: The Decree of God refers to His Eternal (always existed), Holy (perfect integrity), Wise (the application of Omniscience to creation), and Sovereign purpose, comprehending simultaneously all things that ever were or will be in their causes, conditions (status), successions (interaction with others that leads to certain decisions), relations, and determining the certainty of their future.

Isa 46:8–11 says *“Remember this, and be assured; Recall it to mind, you transgressors. Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; {I am} God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure; Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned {it, surely} I will do it.”*

Notice the phrase in Isa 46:10 *“Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done,”* This is a reference to the fact that God decreed and determined all things to happen. The Omniscience of God knew everything in relation to all of the things pertaining to it. Although we classify the Decrees as being plural, in reality it is all one decree. All of this is very technical but it is very important to understand. It is a reminder to us all that billions and billions of years ago before man existed God had us all personally in mind. This entire principle is discussed in Ephesians 1, verses 3-6 *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love, He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”*

Eph 1:11 *“also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,”*

And Eph 3:11 says *“This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,”* The Decrees of God then are His eternal and immutable will regarding the future existence of all events which will happen in time and the precise manner and order of their occurrence. This means the eternal plan by which God has rendered certain all of the events of the universe, both angelic history and human history, past, present, and future. The Decrees of God are the chosen and adopted plan of God for all of His works.

The Decrees of God are also His eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will whereby for His own glory He has foreordained whatever comes to pass. The Decrees are the all-inclusive will and purpose of God concerning all that ever was or ever will be. Because God is Omniscient, He knew everything that would ever happen and He knew it in one moment of time. These Decrees originate wholly with God and He alone objectively designed them for His own glory and for His satisfaction. The fact that our life hangs by a very fine thread for His glory and for His satisfaction ought to cause all believers to take their calling and election seriously.

All decrees were simultaneous; God did not give them by stages. However our finite mind must understand them by stages rather than as one Divine Decree, we must perceive them by logical and chronological progression. All decrees are efficacious, in that they determine all that ever was, all that is, and all that ever will be, but the Decrees are viewed by man from two standpoints. First, from this standpoint of *efficacious* which means that which is accomplished directly by God from His sovereignty. Secondly, from the standpoint of *permissiveness* which means that which is appointed by God to be accomplished by secondary causes or by the free will and action of agents. From this comes

the concept that the Sovereignty of God and the free will of man co-exist in human history by Divine Decree.

Point 2. There are five characteristics of the Divine Decrees.

First, the Decrees are all comprehensive. That means that not the slightest uncertainty could ever exist as to one of the smallest or most insignificant of events without confusion to all. Therefore, all events in the life of every person are interwoven and interdependent. God is not the author of confusion and God is never caught off guard not knowing something. Everything we think, why we think it, and the environment in which we think it, was all known to God in eternity past. This also says everything in life is a chain of cause and effect events. This is one of the meanings behind such passages as; Luk 12:6-7 *"Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? And {yet} not one of them is forgotten before God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows."* Although it may not seem to us that our life has been blended perfectly together by God, in heaven we will understand that it was! God is perfect and therefore He gave each of us life at the exact time that He knew would be best. This includes the environment that is best for each of us. God also picked our parents, the color of our skin, our gender, He picked what genes we would have. So, God has always known everything that anyone has ever done or will ever do and God has decreed for all these things to exist.

Secondly, the Divine Decrees are eternal. God is not gaining in knowledge, what God has known at any time He has always known. Omniscience means God knew simultaneously everything that ever was or will be. God knew every event, complete in their causes, conditions, successions, and relations. Understanding the omniscience of God is a great factor in understanding the Divine Decrees. Therefore, the Decrees are the eternal and simultaneous knowledge of Omniscience expressing the will of God by which all things are brought into being and controlled and are made subject to His Divine pleasure, and result in His eternal glory.

Thirdly, God is perfect; therefore, His Decrees are perfect. They are not perfect in content, because they include evil, sin, failure, etc. But, everything that would ever happen was always known to God, His is a perfect system of comprehension. It may not always appear that way to us because we have a tendency to be relative and temporal and not realize that God sees the end of what He's doing!

Deu 32:4 *"The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He."*

The fourth characteristic is that the Decrees are unchangeable and certain. Nothing can possibly occur to necessitate a change, God is never caught "not knowing" something. God has never had to make any changes or any adjustments in the Divine Decrees.

The fifth characteristic is that the Decrees are the free choice of God in eternity past. God is not bound to follow any necessary path. This is the most important point, one that many Theologians do not understand. Everything in the Divine Decrees ultimately will bring glory to God. Whether the agents are the elect Angels like Michael and Gabriel or fallen angels like Satan and Abaddon or whether the agents are believers or unbelievers, the Divine Decrees have been ultimately designed to bring glory to God. God is going to be glorified with or without us.

Isa 43:7 *"Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made."*

Isa 48:11 *"For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; For how can {My name} be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another."*

Our sufferings and heartaches will bring glory to God, Rom 8:18 *"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."*

Speaking of our Lord's suffering and death on the cross, Heb 2:9 *"But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, {namely,} Jesus, because of the suffering of death*

crowned with glory and honor." Speaking of the betrayal by Judas Iscariot and handing our Lord over to the Romans to be crucified, our Lord said in Joh 12:23 *"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."* God, from His own sovereign volition, invented free will in two categories of creatures, angels and mankind, so that both categories can choose for or against God. However, both categories of creatures were created for God's glory!

Rev 4:11 *"Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created."*

It is because of the will of God that we were created and it is why we exist and it is also because of the will of God that we possess a free will.

Pro 16:4 *"The Lord has made everything for its own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil."*

This does not mean that He made the wicked, wicked. It simply means that ultimately God will be glorified either by the positive volition of His creatures or through negative volition. The Decrees of God are the adopted and chosen plan of God for all His works. Even the plan to crucify The Lord Jesus Christ was a part of the Divine Decrees, Act 4:27-28, *"For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur."* God the Father did not violate their free will and make them crucify His Son and then send them to eternal damnation. If He had it would have made Him unjust and God cannot be anything but just and righteous!

Although the Decrees of God are His eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will whereby for His own glory He has foreordained whatever comes to pass, foreordaining something does not mean to violate human volition. God knew who would believe in Christ and knowing that He provided fantastic equal privilege under the print-out of predestination. Eph 2:10 says that we have the opportunity for good achievements inside the Pre-Designed Plan of God as a part of equal privilege of election. God has prepared this in advance, this is the divine provision of our portfolio of invisible assets prepared by God in advance in eternity past for every Church-age believer. It all means that we as believers should walk by means of our invisible assets. When we realize this and when we understand doctrine of Divine Decrees we can understand such passages as; Rom 6:4 *"So we too might walk in newness of life."* Eph 4:1 *"Walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called."* We are to walk in victory because of what the Lord has done.

Concerning our sins, look at Isa 44:21-23 *"Remember these things, O Jacob, And Israel, for you are My servant; I have formed you, you are My servant, O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me. I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud, And your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you. Shout for joy, O heavens, for the Lord has done it! Shout joyfully, you lower parts of the earth; Break forth into a shout of joy, you mountains, O forest, and every tree in it; For the Lord has redeemed Jacob And in Israel He shows forth His glory."*

God knew simultaneously in eternity past everything that would ever happen in human history (every thought, every action and every decision of every creature). God knew how everything would relate to each other, how every person would relate to each other. We were all in the mind of God billions and billions of years ago, all of us with all of our problems, every single one of them. The question is do we believe it? Remember Rom 10:17 says *"Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."*

Heb 11:6 *"And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."*

Point 3. The logical order of the Divine Decrees.

The Bible presents to us the principle of a pre-creation reality. Inasmuch as the Decrees were simultaneously known by the Omniscience of God, they were also simultaneously decreed by God, this is known as the concept of Lapsarianism. Lapsarianism is a Theological subject dealing with the logical order of the Divine Decrees and this provides the logical environment as well as the logical order for the elective decrees. Remember that all decrees occurred simultaneously in the mind of God but we think of them logically to explain how all these things are working together. Logical order means that although the entire decree is one thought in the mind of God, the principle of cause and effect is involved in human perception and in human understanding. Let's note the correct order of the elective decrees as it relates to the human race, not the angelic race, because we don't have all the decrees of the angelic race given to us in the Bible.

First, God decreed the creation of all mankind with free will in the status of perfection to resolve the prehistoric angelic conflict, and to bring many sons into glory. Being brought into glory means there is a Christian way of life, a way to glorify God after salvation.

Secondly, God decreed to permit the fall of mankind through the function of his own determination, his own volition as the extension of the angelic conflict into human history. Angels had a fall, therefore man must have a fall to resolve the conflict. This duplicates Satan's fall and the subsequent existence of fallen angels.

Thirdly, God decreed to provide eternal salvation for all mankind under the doctrine of Unlimited atonement. God is fair and provides for all, He doesn't arbitrarily assign creatures to Hell. Unlimited atonement means that all sins in human history were imputed to Jesus Christ on the cross and judged, so that Christ is the issue and not sins, 2Co 5:14-15, 19; 1Ti 2:6, 4:10; Tit 2:11; Heb 2:9; 2Pe 2:1; 1Jo 2:2.

Fourth, God decreed to leave the reprobate (those who reject Christ as Savior) to their just condemnation.

Fifth, God decreed simultaneously in eternity past both election and predestination for believers only. Under this point we include the election of true Israel in Rom 9:6, the election of the humanity of Christ in the dispensation of the Hypostatic union, and the election of the Church as the body of Christ and Royal family of God.

Election is not a violation of free will, but the expression of the sovereignty of God, Who wills the highest and best for every believer in Jesus Christ. Notice 2Pe 1:10 *"Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and election; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you."* We would not have to make certain about God's calling on our lives and His election if it did not take into account our free will. Election is the expression of the sovereignty of God willing His highest and best for every believer in Jesus Christ but we have to respond willfully to His plan for our life in order to receive His highest and best. Election is the prehistoric, pre-creative recognition by God of those who would believe in Christ, Eph 1:4-6 and then what He desired to provide and give to them. It is the expression of the sovereign will of God in eternity past; predestination is the provision of the sovereign will of God for you so that we might execute the Pre-Designed Plan of God. As a part of election, there is also the decree to provide a portfolio of invisible assets for every believer by depositing in escrow greater blessings for time and eternity for every believer, Eph 1:2-4.

In eternity past, God the Father, as the grantor deposited into an escrow, greater blessings for every Church age believer. The first thing that God ever did for us was providing the means of glorifying Him. Everything in the divine decrees ultimately will bring glory to God. God's purpose will stand!

The Place of Grace and Mercy in the Divine Decrees

01/20/02

We are continuing in our study of the Divine Decrees and we have noted that this is a fantastic doctrine to learn and an important one to understand because we need to understand the “purpose and plan” of God.

Point 1. Was a definition: The decrees of God are His eternal and immutable will regarding the future existence of all events which will happen in time and the precise manner and order of their occurrence, this includes angelic history as well as human history.

Point 2 dealt with the five characteristics of the divine decrees.

1. All-comprehensive which means that they are go together and are held together perfectly.
2. Eternal which means that God knew all of the decrees at all times and He is not gaining in knowledge.
3. Perfect God is perfect; therefore, His decrees are perfect.
4. Unchangeable and certain. Nothing can possibly occur to necessitate a change.
5. The free choice of God in eternity past. The decrees are the free choice of God in eternity past.

This led us to our third point: The logical order of the divine decrees or what is also known as Lapsarianism.

Lapsarianism is a theological subject dealing with the logical order of the Divine Decrees.

- a. Create all mankind
- b. Permit the fall
- c. Provide salvation
- d. Leave the reprobate to their just condemnation.
- e. Election and predestinate believers only.

The plan of God has to do with God gathering into one all-inclusive plan, all the objects of salvation, whether in heaven or on earth, in Christ, Eph 1:9-10 *“He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth.”* It is also called the mysterious purpose or plan which had been hidden for ages in God, which it now made known to His saints, Eph 3:4-11

Point 4: The distinctions Between what God Permits and what He Desires.

The Divine Decrees are based upon God being glorified and bringing glory to Himself. Everything in the divine decrees is designed to bring glory to God. One of the principles under this doctrine is that God has placed all mankind under a complete indictment of total depravity. This complete indictment is the fact that He has placed all of us under total depravity and under the category of condemnation so that He may extend His mercy to all. Rom 11:32 says *“For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all.”* Many Theologians who do teach the Divine Decrees miss out on the importance of understanding the place of Grace and mercy in the decrees. The divine decrees are designed to bring glory to God. Remember in Exo 33:18-19, when Moses said, *“I pray Thee, show me Your glory! the Lord said, I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of Jehovah before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.”* Mercy is grace action, grace is free and in grace, God works and mankind benefits. Grace comes from God in the form of gifts but it returns to God in the form of glory. The

Divine Decrees are designed to bring glory to God and it is the grace and mercy of God that does so. God concludes all members of the human race under the category of disobedience so that He might have mercy upon all. Mercy is, in effect, a byproduct of the essence of God in action toward the human race in history. This is why Romans chapter 11 verse 32 tells us that God has actually banded all under unbelief so that he may have mercy upon all. This brings glory to God throughout human history as designed by the Divine Decrees. God did all of this so that the only policy of God toward men would be grace and mercy. That is why there is a direct relationship between the mercy of God and the glory of God and between the grace of God and glory of God. We have been created for His glory and He has given us all the grace and mercy that we would ever need. God is not our enemy, He loves us, He is our Father and He is on our side, Rom 8:31 *"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?"* Once these principles are understood, life is exciting, meaningful and filled with purpose. Grace and mercy is God's policy toward us, therefore, what is our responsibility toward Him when we understand these exciting principles? Look at Rom 12:1-2 *"I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."* Why should we present our bodies a living sacrifice?

1CO 6:20 *"For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."*

Once we recognize that in eternity past God decreed for us to be treated with grace and mercy, then we are able to operate in that principle that grace comes from God in the form of gifts but it returns to God in the form of glory. God's plan throughout all the ages is that He might be glorified by the grace that He dispenses to undeserving creatures. That is why God did what He did in Rom 11:32, God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all. There can be no demonstration of mercy until there is someone in the condition that requires mercy and therefore God not only decreed to create all mankind and then to permit the fall of all mankind but then in grace He provided salvation for all mankind so that all mankind could be the beneficiaries of mercy, and He permitted the fall because without a fall there is no condemnation for all mankind and condemnation must precede salvation. Without the fall of man and the resulting condemnation, there can be no demonstration of the mercy of God to the human race. In order to demonstrate His mercy to the Angels in the angelic conflict, God allowed the fall of man so that mankind would be under the sentence of condemnation and depravity and therefore, in grace, God gives to all mankind His son and if mankind receives the Son, then they are a recipient of the mercy of God. After salvation, God still gives as His grace and mercy. The principle still applies, Col 2:6 *"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,"* Grace comes from God in the form of gifts, the Problem Solving Devices, Portfolio of Invisible Assets etc. This grace returns to God in the form of glory from the winner believer only living in God's plan performing Divine good, Eph 2:10, *"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."* After salvation we are still in a state of hopelessness even though we have eternal salvation and therefore the biggest problem of all is solved and that is the fact that we were destined to the lake of fire if we did not believe in Jesus Christ...but we still need God. We still need the manifestation of the grace of God and when we are recipients of the grace of God, we are objects of His mercy. After salvation, we are still in the devil's world and we are still helpless and hopeless to cope with the adversities that we face, the trials, the difficulties the tragedies, especially those that come from spiritual combat. We are hopeless and helpless in ourselves to confront the things that must assail us in this life and therefore God has given us mercy and the mercy's now in the spiritual skills, the problem solving devices, the invisible assets. The problems that we cannot solve or resolve, we learn to cope with by living in faith-rest. This is 1Co 10:13 is all about, *"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the*

way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it." So we have received mercy to handle any problem or difficulty in life. Paul said in 2Co 4:1 *"Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not get discouraged."* We are beneficiaries of the post-salvation mercy of God because He has given us a spiritual life in which we can overcome every possible problem that we would ever face in life. God hasn't only given us mercy for our unsaved condition but mercy for our saved condition. The greatest things that God has given to us after salvation is the 10 Problem Solving Devices, the ultimate one being Occupation with the person of Christ. Occupation with Jesus Christ is the greatest provision of the mercy of God in our post-salvation lives. It gives us the ability to pass the greatest test of our spiritual lives. In Rom 11:33 *"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!"* Notice the things that he considers to be deep, Rom 11:33 *"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"* Paul is speaking of the fact that in eternity past God made a decree that included the entire human race under condemnation and total depravity so that he could have mercy on all. The mercy of God is a very vital aspect of the Divine decrees. Always remember that Rom 5:16 tells us that we are condemned through no demerit of our own so that God could justify us through no merit of our own. It was all because of the disobedience of one man, Adam. This is a manifestation of the mercy of God. In His grace, He gave us His Son and then in His mercy, He saved us. This was all to bring glory to God. The divine decrees point to the mercy of God, the fall of Adam and the fact that God did something about sin. God decreed that we would all be under the sweeping sentence of condemnation through no fault of our own because he had a plan to bring us under the sentence of justification through no merit of our own...under the obedience of one man, Jesus Christ.

Point Five in our doctrine of the Divine Decrees: To What Extent is the Human Will Free?

The Scriptures teach that there are restraints upon human volition and in reality that we really do not have freedom as such, but what we have is a choice. We are given options to choose but not really freedom in the sense of God's freedom. God can do whatsoever He pleases. Our options are limited. People are not free from God and free from Satan, they are in one of the two kingdoms.

Eph 2:1-2 *"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience."*

The word *spirit* is the Greek noun *pneumatōs*, used as an adjective, and of course it has many meanings, here it refers to a spirit higher than man but lower than God. The word can also refer to demon influence, and in some cases even demon possession, it also refers to the disposition or influence which fills and governs the soul of anyone. It refers to the fact that the unbeliever is born in bondage to sin and the kingdom of darkness. This is why in Joh 8:44, the Lord said to a group of unbelievers, *"You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father."* We are also told that in Col 1:13 that we have been *"delivered from the domain [kingdom] of darkness, and transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son."* Then on the other hand we have such passages as the ones we noted in detail in Phi 1:6 *"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who has begun in you an absolute good work will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus."* Or Phi 2:13 *"for it is God [the Holy Spirit] who is at work in you, both to will [give you motivation] and to work [He gives you the ability to execute] above and beyond His good pleasure."* In reality there is an external power and a system of domination contending for our soul. This means that the entire human race, saved and unsaved, believers and unbelievers, are not really free from a superior influence.

There are only two kingdoms to choose between or to live in.

1. The kingdom of God created by God.
2. The kingdom of darkness developed by Satan.

All Satan can do is take the flawless creation that God creates and pervert it into evil. The entire human race, saved and unsaved, believers and unbelievers, are not free from a superior influence. The mystery is that fact that this influence, as potent as it is, is totally unrecognized within the realm of human experience.

1Jo 5:19 *"We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one."*

Rev 12:9 *"And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world;"*

The mystery is that fact that this influence, as potent as it is, is totally unrecognized by those in the cage. For example, the Jews living during our Lord's day thought they were free. Not only were they in bondage to Roman dictatorship but they were also in bondage to their father Satan. In Joh 8:31-37 Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, *"If you abide in My word, {then} you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered Him, We are Abraham's offspring, and have never yet been enslaved to anyone [that's a lie right there]; how is it that You say, You shall become free? Jesus answered them, Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. And the slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. I know that you are Abraham's offspring; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you."* They were the natural seed of Abraham but not the spiritual seed. The spiritual seed is in view in Rom 11:26 and thus all Israel will be saved. Both seeds are mentioned in Rom 9:6b *"For they are not all Israel [true spiritual seed] who are descended from Israel [natural seed];"* For example, Abraham's son Isaac continued Abraham's seed and two sons were born at the same time through one woman. One was just the natural seed of Abraham, the other was both the natural seed and spiritual seed. This is why Rom 9:13 states just as it is written, *"Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."* So our Lord goes on, Joh 8:38-44 *"I speak the things which I have seen with {My} Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from {your} father [Satan]. They answered and said to Him, Abraham is our father. Jesus said to them, If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. For what does the Scripture say? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. You are doing the deeds of your father. They said to Him, We were not born of fornication [virgin birth]; we have one Father, {even} God. Jesus said to them, If God were your Father, you would love Me; for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand what I am saying? {It is} because you cannot hear My word. You are of {your} father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own {nature;} for he is a liar, and the father of lies."* They were in bondage and they didn't even know it. The Bible also teaches that God influences the unbeliever to some extent as well as Satan and his power influencing believers to some extent. The influence of God upon the unbeliever must be exercised if they are even going to turn to Him in saving faith. In Joh 6:44, the Lord said that *"No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me draw him."* This is the principle of Joh 1:12-13, *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, {even} to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."* There is also a lot of confusion at times caused by the statements that God hinders spiritual vision and hardens hearts. But He does. Concerning this principle

Mat 13:10-15 *"And the disciples came and said to Him, Why do You speak to them in parables? And He answered and said to them, To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. For whoever has, to him shall {more} be given, and he shall have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see,*

and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled [Isa 6:8-10], which says, You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; And you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; For the heart of this people has become dull, And with their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes Lest [a better translation would be otherwise] they should see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I should heal them."

That has been a problem passage for individuals who do not understand the balance of the Divine Decrees. Rom 9:17 says *"For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, (a reference to Pharaoh Amenhotep the Second) For this very purpose I raised you up, or I have caused you to continue in history."* Here is a person who was anti-Israel to the core, a person who was very evil. Yet the Lord said, *"I have caused you to continue in history."* Whenever we find ourselves in danger and disaster, whether personal, national, or international, remember that these things are permitted to continue in history that the power of God may be demonstrated.

From that comes two things.

1. The evangelism of the unbeliever.
2. The spiritual growth of the believer.

Many times in human history God has demonstrated His power by means of some evil ruler. Many times in human history God has demonstrated his power by means of some evil people. Many times God has demonstrated His power by means of believers who are negative toward Bible doctrine. This is another way of saying, "God uses the wrath of man to praise Him" Psa 76:10. By means of the hardness of Pharaoh's heart, God is going to demonstrate His power in such a way that it will have an effect on two entire generations. And as we have noted, also an effect on the entire world.

Here however, the Exodus generation and the generation that followed is in view.

Rom 9:17-18 *"For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth."*

So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. By means of the hardness of Pharaoh's heart, God demonstrated His power in such a way that it effected two entire generations. Remember that the doctrine of heathenism teaches that if anyone in any part of the world, no matter how geographically isolated, at the point of God consciousness expresses in his soul a desire to know God, and a desire to have a relationship with God, then God will provide, some way and some how, that information. Whatever it takes, the person will have the opportunity to hear the Gospel and to respond. Pharaoh Amenhotep II, in the Eighteenth dynasty, controlled all of the area of the Middle East. He was a very powerful king of Egypt which at that time dominated all the Middle East and most of North Africa. In that area there was a tremendous number of people who were positive at the point of God consciousness. Instead of God using the Internet, or satellite radio or television, He used the hardness of one man's heart to get the Gospel message and His power throughout this region. This is a perfect illustration of the divine decrees bringing glory to God even through man's negative volition. God can use many types of people to accomplish His purpose. The Lord may allow some wicked person in our life to do things spitefully to us for the purpose of making us stronger spiritually. The Lord will even use the wickedness of people and angels to bring about His plan and purpose, Job 21:30 *"For the wicked is reserved for the day of calamity; they will be led forth at the day of fury."* The Lord will actually use the evil and the wickedness of man to reveal His glory to the world. In Luk 7:47, God used the wickedness of legalism to magnify His grace and mercy, *"For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little."* Inevitably the Lord will be glorified even when men perform the greatest evil which they are capable of performing, 2Co 13:8 *"For we can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth."* One of the most fascinating things that will ever come to us when we learn the divine

decrees is to see history strictly from the divine viewpoint. We have a taste of it from the study of Scripture.

The Doctrine of the Wild Ass

01/27/02

This week we returned to our main passage in Genesis. Let's review verses 1-10 of Gen 16: *"Now Sarai, wife of Abram did not become pregnant for him, and she had a female slave, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar, So Sarai said to Abram, Now behold, Jehovah has prevented me from bearing children [or an heir for you Abram]. Please go in to my female slave; perhaps I shall obtain children through her. And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. And after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Abram's wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian, her female slave, and gave her to her husband Abram as his mistress. And he fornicated with Hagar, and she became pregnant; and when she was aware that she had become pregnant, her mistress was unimportant in her eyes or in her thinking. And Sarai said to Abram, The wrong done me should have been judged by you. I have given my female slave into your arms; but when she saw that she had become pregnant, I was despised or unimportant in her eyes or her thinking. May the Lord judge between you and me. But Abram replied to Sarai, Behold, your female slave is under your authority; do to her what is good in your sight. So Sarai treated her harshly, and she [Hagar] fled from her presence. Now the angel of the Lord [this is the Lord Jesus Christ] found her or confronted her by the oasis in the desert, by an oasis on the way to Shur. And he said, Hagar, Sarai's female slave, where have you come from and where are you going? And she said, I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai. Then the angel of the Lord [Jesus Christ] said to her, Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority. Moreover, the angel of the Lord said to her, [and we have seen that this is an if], if you obey the Lord and go back and submit to the authority of Sarai, I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they shall be too many to count."*

As we continue, we see that Hagar did obey from her own volition and so the promise of The Lord Jesus Christ in verse 10 would come true for her. In this fascinating study of Hagar we see her taking the Lord's advice and obeying the perfect counsel from perfect God. She's going to accept this counsel because she recognizes Him as God, and therefore infinitely superior to herself, so she's going back to a situation where she had been wronged and abused and she's going to trust in the Supreme Court of Heaven to handle the situation.

Because of Hagar obeying the Lord in verse 10, certain blessings are described, regarding her progeny or her descendants. The point we will see, is that it is possible to be blessed without having true happiness. God can provide certain things, but true happiness depends on capacity, especially the capacity to appreciate what you have been given. God is going to give certain blessings to this woman as a new believer, however blessings given to a believer who is not in spiritual adulthood, while still a blessing, have no happiness connected with them. True happiness comes from spiritual adulthood or having maximum doctrine resident in the soul, which Hagar doesn't have. She is a woman who definitely is going to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as her Savior, and who is in heaven right now, but she never had enough spiritual momentum from the function of perception, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine to enjoy the happiness that God provides. Unfortunately, this is also the negative eulogy of the majority of God's people.

For Hagar, the lack of true happiness is not because of her fornication, that's already blotted out. Always remember on the day of our salvation there are two verses applied specifically to us, first Isa 43:25 *"I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins."* The second verse is Isa 44:22 *"I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud, And your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you."*

Having certain things does not mean happiness, but having those things with capacity can bring happiness. Remember this principle: Capacity for life plus the things associated with happiness equals blessing.

In the case of Hagar she is being given a covenant for the Arabs and certain blessings but they do not mean happiness. In fact, if she truly loved Abram she never could be happy because in chapter 21, she's going to lose him permanently. So then, verse 10 and the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ, Gen 16:10 *"Moreover, the angel of the Lord said to her, I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they shall be too many to count."* The "angel of the Lord" is The Lord Jesus Christ as we have already noted. The Hebrew verb for "said" is *amar* and this word indicates that much more was said than what we have in this verse. He is now about to communicate the blessings for her obedience. The promise of blessing from God comes as a result of her adjusting to the justice of God. The exact moment of Hagar's salvation is not known, but the declaration of her salvation will be given a little later in the passage, Gen 16:13, *"Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, Thou art a God who sees; for she said, Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?"*

Hagar is permitted to have a look at the Divine Decrees when the Lord says in Gen 16:10 *"I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they shall be too many to count."* Anytime, anyone can see a part of the divine decrees it has to be construed as a blessing, but not the blessing that includes happiness, this is a different type of blessing all together. There are blessings which include happiness for mature believers, but there are also blessings that do not. Hagar's descendants refers to one of the most vigorous of the Arab groups. The seed of Abraham goes all the way to Jesus Christ. The seed of Hagar goes to Mohammed. Isaac, will perpetuate a new race, the Jews, while Ishmael will perpetuate the most vigorous of the Arab nations. No one can count the Jews, there are too many, neither can anyone count the Arab's from Ishmael. Ishmael will be a major source of the Arabs found throughout the world as well as followers of Islam. Mohammed claims his descent from Ishmael and there is every evidence that is absolutely correct. Therefore, this is a part of our Lord's pronouncement of blessing but there's no happiness in this blessing because not only do the Arab's fight against the world, but they are constantly fighting among themselves.

The prophecy is given in verse 11, Gen 16:11 *"The angel of the Lord said to her further, Behold, you are with child, And you shall bear a son; And you shall call his name Ishmael, Because the Lord has given heed to your affliction."* Hagar, of course, knew that she was pregnant, she did not know, of course the sex of the potential child. Therefore, it is of great significance that the one who spoke to her diagnosed correctly the sex of the child who would be born and also that the birth would occur. The proper noun, *Jishma'e'l* or Ishmael means *Jehovah hears*. Isn't that interesting that his name means Jehovah hears not Allah hears. In this verse the Hebrew word *shama* means Jehovah has heard of your affliction or your misery. This brings us right back to the divine decrees, this says that Jehovah heard Hagar's misery in eternity past and therefore Ishmael was a part of the divine decrees.

Now, the name Ishmael, (Jehovah hears) reveals the fact that justice demands justice. It was the justice of God manifest to Hagar which resulted in her conversion in Verse 13 and it will be the justice of God that deals with Abram and Sarai for their abuse of this victim called Hagar. So the verse says "Furthermore, the angel of Jehovah said to her, behold you have become pregnant and you shall give birth to a son, therefore you shall call his name Ishmael, Jehovah hears, because Jehovah has heard your misery." Notice that it is the misery or affliction issue which brings a new concept into the principle of justice demanding justice. Here is an unbeliever crying out for help and God will take the side of the unbeliever against two believers. The unjust, unfair misery of the unbeliever, brings in and introduces the justice of God. God's justice to man lies with this woman, who obviously has sinned, who obviously has failed, but also is the one who has been maltreated and abused and blamed the most. Abram maltreated her by not freeing her and giving her some security and protecting her from Sarai who maltreated her by abusing her authority. Both of them developed a very bad case of self-righteousness. Self-righteousness is an intrusion on the justice of God and it is hypocritical and phony, but more than that it is evil. One of the worst things in the world is self-righteousness. Self-righteousness is a manifestation of the total depravity of man. Self-righteousness

is worse than sin because it is evil and it totally contradicts the purpose of the divine decrees, which is bring glory to God, not man. Abram will pay more for his self-righteousness than he did for the fornication, evil is worse than sin. In the reaping of the whirlwind, it is his self-righteousness and his refusal to accept the responsibility for his own decisions and ignore the relationship with Hagar, which he himself set up, that will come back to haunt him. Sarai's self-righteousness will also be dealt with.

While Hagar was happy to become the bed-partner of Abram, and even though the sins involved were accomplished in ignorance, she is still responsible for them because ignorance is no excuse. Nevertheless, she is definitely a case for the supreme court of heaven. When a person has been a victim of every type of malpractice and injustice from man, God takes up the case even when an unbeliever is involved, this is the justice of God. So we have the victim receiving the justice of God, including salvation, including deliverance, including a future prophecy. The new race descendent is the Jewish descendent. We will see that the Abram is also the father of many nations not just the father of one race and one nation. One race of course is the Jew, one nation Israel, but he is also the father of many nations. Remember that Mohammed is a descendent from Ishmael, and just as we will see in the next verse, Ishmael is a wild ass of a man, so is Islam a wild ass of a religion.

The justice of God takes a woman who is the victim of Abram's injustice, the victim of Sarai's injustice. Injustice plus injustice equals divine intervention through grace. Divine justice manifests itself in grace to Hagar as we have seen. We have seen first of all how the Lord came to her, and how He interrogated her, (not that He needed information, for He already had all the facts), but it was a test of her honesty and she was strictly very honest with Him. She was not only helpless and hopeless, but she was honest, the only honest person in the whole picture. She said in effect that she was a runaway slave, she didn't make any bones about it.

The name Ishmael, or Jehovah hears, opens up the principle, the doctrine, that the justice of God is for the unbeliever as well as the believer. In time, where there is maltreatment, the injustice of man to man, there is always the perfect answer from the supreme court of heaven. In Gen 16:11 the Lord Jesus Christ tells her the name of the son, before He tells her the administration of divine justice in her case. He has told her what to do first, return to authority. Get back under the authority of the woman who has maltreated you, but this time, you go under her authority with My protection. Some principles involved before we move to the next verse.

1. Misery or affliction has called, we call this a voiceless prayer to God. She didn't call on God, but in effect, the supreme court of heaven has perfect radar and picks up every case of man's injustice to man.

2. The soul in torment in misery ascends to God where the justice of God deals with the facts. We know that the case is now before the supreme court of heaven by the name of Ishmael, God hears. That means more than God hears, it means God is cognizant of all the facts and justice will administer the situation.

3. While the interpretation of Deuteronomy 32:10 applies to Israel it certainly portrays the grace of God to Hagar on this occasion. Deu 32:10-12 *"He found him in a desert land, And in the howling waste of a wilderness; He encircled him [by application that's Hagar], He cared for him or her, He guarded him or her as the pupil of His eye. Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, That hovers over its young, He spread His wings and caught them, He carried them on His pinions. The Lord alone guided him, And there was no foreign god with him."* This is a perfect description of divine justice.

4. A new doctrine has opened up, namely God's justice to the unbeliever. God's justice to those who are the victims of the injustice of man. There must be divine justice because again the principle, man's injustice to man cannot be resolved by man.

5. While Abram is out of fellowship in fornication with Hagar, the principle of blessing by association still applies, since Abram is carnal and not reversionistic and there will be blessing by

association. There is evil involved, but the evil has not taken Abram all the way to reversionism as we shall see. While neither Hagar nor Abram deserve anything from God, here is grace and justice combined in the Lord Jesus Christ coming to Hagar as the angel of Jehovah and providing for her, not only justice, but comfort and assurance.

6. The next verse not only describes Ishmael, but it describes the entire Arabic race which comes from Ishmael.

Every letter in the Hebrew alphabet represents something and the first letter of a name or word is very revealing. The first letter of Ishmael's name is a Jod equivalent to our "j" and in the Hebrew, the ninth letter of the Hebrew alphabet and Jod represents a hand. It is no coincidence that Gen 16:12 says *"And he will be a wild donkey of a man, His hand will be against everyone, And everyone's hand will be against him; And he will live to the east of all his brothers."* Abram is the father of both Ishmael and Isaac. These two are half brothers in history. Both are antithetical and antagonistic. The antagonism of the mother's Sarai and Hagar is reflected in their descendants up until this day, the Jews and the Arabs who are descended from Ishmael. Not all Arabs are descended from Ishmael, but the dominant Arab group definitely is. Five hundred years of Arab conquests came from the descendants of Ishmael, they almost conquered the world. It is not surprising, therefore to note the prophecy of the traits of Ishmael's descendants. The source of all of that information is in verse 12, *"And he [this also refers to his descendants] will be a wild ass of a man,"* The Hebrew word for "will be" is the verb *hayah* (haw-yaw); which means to become emphatically, to be established as, to remain, to continue. The word *pere'*, (peh'-reh); refers to a wild ass, one who runs wild disrespecting authority; it literally means an onager: a fast running wild ass having a lot of hair on his face. The word *pere* is where we get our word *pariah* from which means those who are outcasts or in exile, and it comes to mean a wild ass. So it should be translated literally, he will become a wild ass of a man but "he" refers to Ishmael and his descendants. Ishmael and his descendants reject authority and that's what a wild ass means in this passage, they will be anti-authority having no respect for human rights and property, as we have seen in the attack upon our nation. It is interesting that the mother went back and submitted herself to authority, but her son was always anti-authority. The Arabs have always been anti-authority, they almost conquered the world during Medieval times but one of the reasons why the Arabs did not conquer the world, is because they never could stop fighting among themselves. The Arab's always get vigorous when they're fighting someone else, and just as soon as they've won a battle, then they all start fighting among themselves. Sudan's sworn enemy is Egypt who is angry at Sudan because Sudan is harboring Egyptian terrorists who tried to assassinate the Egyptian President. Iraq and Kuwait hate each other. Iran and Saudi Arabia are fighting with each other. Algeria is Islamic, 100,000 Muslims were slaughtered by their own fellow Muslims in the last decade. Probably the greatest war we've seen in the last 20 years is the war between Iran and Iraq which had nothing to do with Jews and Christians. But the whole world will never be Arab, because the key to maintaining what you have conquered, and maintaining freedom, is self-discipline. When you get away from self-discipline and freedom you distort freedom, you abuse freedom, and eventually you destroy freedom. That is why we see so many Arab nations that are not free, but they are in slavery to a dictator or a group. Their women are considered second-class citizens and treated as such. The thing that makes freedom possible for all of us is discipline and authority. This is why Paul said in Gal 5:1 *"It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery."* Then in Gal 5:13 *"For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."* Without discipline and authority we could not enjoy the benefits of freedom, they would be abused and destroyed. Now, in this passage the wild ass portrays children rejecting authority and never having to get under authority. Abram never exercised the discipline over Ishmael that he did over Isaac. He exercised no discipline over the six illegitimate children he had by Keturah. For thirteen years he did

nothing to discipline his son Ishmael and because he did not discipline his older son; his older son abused his younger son, Isaac, who was the true heir and the perpetuation of the Jewish race. So, the principle of authority is not only delegated, but also invented by God. God invented authority as the environment of freedom for the function of human volition. Authority comes before human freedom. When Isaac is only ten years old, and Ishmael is 23, he will be entering into inordinate competition. So Ishmael will be constantly competing against Isaac and therefore he will be seen ridiculing and bullying his younger brother in later passages. And when Sarah sees it, that's the end of the line in Genesis 21. And the fascinating thing is that this is still happening today between the descendants of Isaac and the descendants of Ishmael. Ishmael will never have a true love in any direction, toward God, toward a woman, or toward man. He will be a man of violence, emotionally and mentally unstable.

The Doctrine of the Sneaky Snake

02/03/02

As we move on in our study of the Israeli-Arab conflict, we begin in Gen 16:10, *Moreover, the angel of the Lord said to her, "I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they shall be too many to count." Furthermore, the angel of the Lord said to her, "Behold, you have become pregnant, And you shall give birth to a male child; And you shall call his name Ishmael [Jehovah hears], Because the Lord has given heed to your affliction. And he [Ishmael and his descendants] will be a wild ass of a man,"* We have noted what the Bible says about the wild ass or the *pere'* (peh'-reh) which refers to a wild ass or one who runs wild and disrespects authority; it literally means a fast running wild ass having a lot of hair on his face. These will be the descendants of Ishmael.

There are illustrations of these wild asses throughout the scripture:

1. In our passage, Gen 16:12, the wild ass portrays children rejecting authority and never having to get under authority.
2. In Job 24:5, we noted the wild ass human being does not acknowledge authority and the principle of freedom and privacy. He destroys others, and eventually he destroys himself.
3. In Jer 2:24, the wild ass does not recognize the importance of discipline and faithfulness in human relationships.
4. In Jer 14:6, the wild ass is used in scripture to indicate that he steals from others or is a freeloader.
5. In Hos 8:8-9, the wild ass is the apostate reversionistic believer going back to the cosmic system for help.

So Ishmael will be a wild ass of a man and he will always be trying to prove something. But he will never really prove anything except that he is a wild ass of a man. Ishmael, like all people who reject authority is also a sneak and this is how conspiracy enters into the picture. Ishmael was such a sneak that Abram never really caught on to what he was doing to Isaac, it was the discernment of his wife Sarah that saved the day.

Ishmael will prove to be a sneak, hiding his anti-authority attitude and his tendency to overthrow and put down Isaac behind a facade of an extremely pleasing personality. Ishmael abused, ridiculed, tormented and constantly caused trouble for Isaac. In fact, God the Holy Spirit inspired the apostle Paul to give those events as the perfect illustration of legalism persecuting grace in Gal 4:22-29, *For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman. But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise. This is allegorically speaking: for these women are two covenants, one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. For it is written, "Rejoice, barren woman who does not bear; Break forth and shout, you who are not in labor; For more are the children of the desolate Than of the one who has a husband." And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.*

The point for us is, beware of the wild ass or the sneaky snake. It might be someone really close to us as it was for David, whose son Absalom was a sneaky snake. There have been a lot of other wild asses and sneaky snakes throughout human history. There was Korah, the cousin of Moses. We saw Joseph's brothers who sold Joseph into slavery. There was Judas Iscariot who was a sneaky snake and of course we saw Satan, the Messiah's personal angel. There is a great lesson here, never be shocked at those involved in the sneaky snake syndrome, they could be someone very close to us. This is why the Bible warns us to be very careful with the friendships that we develop in life. There are some characteristics of these wild-ass sneaky-snake types to be aware of. For example, they never stop trying to prove their superiority to anyone in their vicinity, therefore, in their periphery, there is

always misery by association. This wild-ass type cannot accept the fact of someone being better and this becomes an obsession, they cannot recognize the fact that there will always be people who are better than them. There will always be someone better and someone worse than we are, but as we have seen, our happiness is not found in being better than anyone else but rather it is found in Bible Doctrine and in our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

People who succeed in life are generally the pluggers, the ones who keep on doing and learning and although they may be slow, they'll get there and they're happy, low key and very content.

Before we go on in our study of Ishmael, let's look at one of the masters of the sneaky snakes in action. In Joh 13:17, the night before our Lord's death, our Lord said to His disciples, *"If you know these things [in context, the principles of grace, love and humility], happinesses are yours if [third class condition, maybe you will, maybe you will not] if you do them. I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen or elected; but {it is} that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats My bread has lifted up his heel against Me.'*" This of course is a reference to Judas Iscariot. The raising up of the heel means to overthrow or to seek one's destruction and to reject one's authority. Judas has pretended to love the Lord but it was a pseudo-love. That's what the wild asses and the sneaky snakes do, love with a pseudo-love, a conditional love.

The Lord knew from eternity past who this sneaky snake would be and yet our Lord always gave Judas his privacy. There is a lot of arrogance in born again believers today who stick their nose into everyone's business, yet notice that the Lord wouldn't even do that to Judas.

In John 13:26 Our Lord is going to tell John who the sneaky snake is without giving him a name.

Joh 13:26 *Jesus therefore answered, "That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel" [or the special piece of bread which was dipped in the sauce] and give it to him." So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, {the son} of Simon Iscariot.*

The key to understanding this verse is the word for morsel, *"psomion"* which was a special piece of bread dipped in meat sauce that was in a dish at the center of the table at the Passover. No one ever touched this bread until the host had first dipped a piece of bread into this sauce and then offered it to some person at the dinner. This was a special honor at the dinner and once the person accepted the bread the others were then free to take bread and do the same. This was the final grace appeal to Judas from The Lord Jesus Christ and it brings out something else that is very interesting. The Lord knew that Judas was a sneaky snake, He knew that Judas had already made arrangements to betray him, yet the Lord offered him the psomion, the highest honor from the host at the Passover.

This should be a lesson to all of us, that just because we may be totally convinced that a person will not respond to the Gospel, or to doctrine, that should not stop us from treating them with honor and respect. By accepting the honor of the morsel, Judas perpetuated the hypocrisy of the wild ass sneaky snake. Judas is an unbeliever who accepted this high honor with negative volition in his soul. In verse 27, when he did this, something very interesting happened, Joh 13:27 *And after the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Jesus therefore said to him, "What you do, do quickly."* God's love and God's grace never gave up on Judas Iscariot nor does God's love and God's grace ever give up on anyone else. Judas Iscariot was a sneaky snake, and the interesting thing is that sneaky snakes are always remembered. Let's note some principles concerning the Sneaky Snake:

1. The sneaky snake can be someone close to you that has become so familiar with you that they believe that they're more qualified to do what you are doing, Psa 41:9, 55:12-14, 20-22.
2. The sneaky snake is usually someone who is bitter about personal failures. They are losers who are looking for excuses.
3. Many times the sneaky snake can have a good personality and even give the appearance that they are leaders. They will cater to people, compliment them for the sake of gaining an advantage. As Jud 1:16 says *These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.*

4. The sneaky snake can also be very sincere, very emotional, most of all, very arrogant. They establish compatibility on the basis of personality. Every Christian at some time will be attracted to a pleasing personality, whose function is manipulation, undermining of authority and exploitation for evil.
5. The sneaky snake also likes to look for others who have an axe to grind against the one they are betraying. They find people who are jealous, vindictive, bitter or implacable to join them in their betrayal.
6. The sneaky snake is usually jealous, covetous, envious and lustful of what the victim of their betrayal has. If the sneaky snake is a believer, you will always hear the sneaky snake claiming that the Lord is with him or on his side.
7. The sneaky snake likes to get as many individuals involved in his betrayal as he can so that the betrayal will have some credibility and believability. They give the betrayal some credibility and believability and then bully people into supporting something that is evil without them even knowing it. They then put people in a position of supporting the betrayal, which is very difficult for them to get out of, unless, they make some drastic decisions. This causes them to get involved with the evil behind the betrayal which can be used in the future to keep them committed to the sneaky snake as well. When the sneaky snake is exposed and his betrayal begins to crumble, and it will in God's time, they remind people that they were also involved.
8. The sneaky snake is usually promised some form of personal promotion and prosperity for his betrayal. Sometimes he will get others to do his dirty work while trying to appear to be the right and innocent one who is a victim rather than a villain.
9. The sneaky snake leads others in his betrayal with lies and inventions, corruption, distortion, inaccuracy, misrepresentation, perversion, defamation, and slander. They lead others into shifting the blame for their own misfortunes from themselves to the one who is being betrayed.
10. The sneaky snake works behind the scenes for a long period of time and waits for something to reach it's peek, and then it's time to strike.
11. The sneaky snake looks for individuals who can easily be swayed into joining the betrayal. These are people who can easily be swayed, bitter people who are failures and losers in life. They are bitter because they are discontent or malcontent with life itself.
12. There are some sneaky snakes that never face the one they have betrayed, they let other's do their dirty work.
13. The sneaky snake will use anyone as a stepping stone as they are trying to climb the ladder of success.
14. Many sneaky snakes assume that the victim of their betrayal has overlooked their talent and ability.
15. Many sneaky snakes bear a grudge from a sense of grievance or frustrated ambition.
16. The sneaky snake makes false accusations and remember that those who make accusations and judge others are usually guilty of the very thing they judge others for.
17. The sneaky snake thinks that he should be in a position of authority when in reality he does not have the leadership ability to be there. They are often cowards who backbite, slander, gossip and malign anyone who has any authority over them.
18. The sneaky snake must be clever, personable, hypocritical, sly and arrogant. Normally he has two personalities, one that he uses to recruit people for his betrayal and the other which is who he really is. He has to be sly, arrogant and filled with his own self-importance.
19. The sneaky snake is usually dissatisfied with his circumstances and his niche in life and he wants to be promoted beyond his capacity.
20. And then our last principle, in trying to wipe out others, the sneaky snake inevitably wipes out himself.

Gen 16:12 *“And he [Ishmael and his descendants] will be a wild ass of a man, His hand will be against everyone, And everyone’s hand will be against him; And he will live to the east of all his brothers.*

The phrase *His hand will be against everyone, And everyone’s hand will be against him;*

There are no verbs here, it should be *“His hand against everyone, and everyone’s hand against him.”*

This is the way the Hebrew language says that this person is a totally violent anti-authority person. Arrogance plus jealousy, plus violence, plus rejection of authority equals inordinate competition. The last phrase *And he will live to the east of all his brothers.* The word for *live* is the Hebrew verb *shakan* which is an idiom and it means that he shall live in defiance of his brethren. The phrase “to the east of” means that it is “in defiance of.”

The geographical reference is also correct, Ishmael’s descendants lived east of the Jews, but this is not what is meant here. It means that he lives in antagonism of his brother Isaac and here is a fantastic prophecy, that the Arabs descended from Ishmael will always hate the Jews, always defy the Jews and it is built into every generation the principle of inordinate competition, and the Arab-Israeli conflict, as we know it today. The Arabs will always be antagonistic toward the Jews. The antagonism will continue between the sons of Abraham, his two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, and their descendants.

There are some of Ishmael’s descendants who have believed in Jesus Christ and who are not only born again believers, but who have advanced to spiritual maturity and of course they have an entirely different attitude. In our main passage, we are talking about the prophecy of the descendants in general, not the exceptions where there is recovery from this problem through Bible doctrine resident in the soul. The antagonism of the Ishmael’s of this life rages against anyone who challenges their deep seeded pride, and that’s exactly what the Jews have done from time to time in human history.

So no matter how gracious, how kind, how thoughtful or courteous anyone is to a wild ass type, they will do you in sooner or later. Job found this out regarding his friends who were very *happy* deep down in their souls about what has happened to Job. They were his friends but they always envied him, Job was more prosperous than them, and throughout the years of their friendship, they were waiting for the time when Job finally got his. In fact, it was part of their whole happiness structure, that’s what motivated them. That’s what motivates Arab hatred against the Jews.

The Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ

02/10/02

As we continue our study of Gen 16, we reviewed a very important doctrine that every believer must have a firm understanding of. Every believer must be able to defend the faith, to explain the Deity of Jesus Christ.

Point 1 was our definition. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is eternal God. As a member of the Trinity, He always existed. The Lord Jesus Christ is also coequal and co-eternal with God the Father and God the Spirit, Col 1:15-17, *"And He [Jesus Christ] keeps on being the exact image of the invisible God, the privileged first born with reference to all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.* This is important because Gen 1:1 says *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."* In eternity past, Jesus Christ had the same essence as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. In time, He still had the same functions of deity, but He also became true humanity. So He is now different than the Father and the Holy Spirit because He is also true humanity and therefore, He is unique. To prove that Jesus Christ is God, we can begin by pointing out that in Gen 1:1 the Bible says *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."* Those who deny that Jesus is Lord must be asked, "Who created the Heavens and the earth?" The answer of course, God did! Yet Col 1:15-17, as we have seen, says The Lord Jesus Christ did. Jesus Christ is eternal God and as a member of the Trinity, He always existed as God. There never was a time when He was not God.

The "privileged first born" in Col 1:15 refers to the humanity of Christ. The humanity of Christ was born as taught in Isa 7:14, *"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."* This was of course fulfilled in Mat 1:20-23. However, the deity of Christ always existed as taught in Joh 1:2 *"He was in the beginning with God."* In Col 1:15, we read, *"He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation."* Note that Jesus Christ was not created but He is the first-born of every creature. This means Christ was the first born with reference to all created beings, that's the way Col 1:15 should be translated. In other words, the passage doesn't say he is the firstborn among creatures but the firstborn with reference to all creation or creatures. So Col 1:15 says *"And He [Jesus Christ] keeps on being the exact image of the invisible God, the privileged first born with reference to all creation."* The Lord Jesus Christ is God, He created all humanity and He is unique. Everything that we will ever possess, all we will ever have depends upon the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. Understanding and mastering this doctrine is important. Look at 1Jo 2:22-23 *"Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also."*

Point 2 in our doctrine deals with the Syllogism of Deity. A syllogism is a logical formula consisting of two premises and a conclusion. There is a major and minor premise plus a conclusion, derived from deductive reasoning. For example, every virtue is admirable (major premise), kindness is a virtue (minor premise), therefore, kindness is admirable (conclusion). Following this formula, we can say that the Trinity is eternal, Christ is a member of the Trinity, therefore, Christ is eternal. 1Pe 1:1-2 is one of at least three verses of scripture where the deity of Christ is presented as a syllogism, 1Pe 1:1-2 *"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure."* Notice we have God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit all mentioned in this verse. We have the omniscience of God the Father mentioned by the word foreknowledge and we have the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit

sanctifying the believer. Then we have obedience to The Lord Jesus Christ. (see also 2Co 13:14, Mat 28:19) Isa 48:16 is also a syllogism, *“Come near to Me; listen to this. From the first, I have not spoken in secret. From the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord God [God the Father] has sent Me [God the Son], and His Spirit [God the Holy Spirit].”*

Point 3 deals with the Claims of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ could look at a crowd of people who were angry at His claims of sharing God’s nature and tell them that no one has lived a sinless life, except for Himself.

Joh 8:28-29 *Jesus therefore said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am {He,} and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.”*

Joh 8:46-47 *“Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear {them,} because you are not of God.”*

The Lord Jesus Christ claimed to be the ONLY way to God, not one of several ways, but the one and only way, Joh 14:6. The Lord Jesus Christ claimed not to teach the way, but to be the way to God. Nobody has ever made claims like that before and backed them up, but The Lord Jesus Christ did through his love, life, miracles and power.

Joh 14:6 *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.*

The Lord Jesus Christ claimed to have shared the glory of God in Heaven and to have pre-existed the people he spoke with. The apostle John wrote that The Lord Jesus Christ was with God in the very beginning, and that *“all things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.”* In Joh 17:5 He prayed, *“And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.”* He also claimed to be able to forgive sins. Luk 5:20-21, this is one of the reasons that the Jewish leaders were so angry with Him, His continual practice of forgiving people’s sins. The religious leaders understood clearly that since sins were rebellion against God Himself, and only God could forgive sins.

Luk 5:20-21 *And seeing their faith, He said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven you. And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, “Who is this {man} who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?”*

Our Lord claimed to be equal with God in Joh 5:18 *“For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.”* The Lord Jesus Christ claimed to be a Heavenly King, Luk 22:69 and He claimed to be the King of the Jews, in Luk 23:3. He also claimed to be the Son of God and the King of Israel, Joh 1:49.

In our study of Gen 16, we are on verse 13 which reads *Therefore, she called upon the name of the Lord who was speaking to her, you are the mighty God of vision or doctrine, or revelation, “Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?”* Notice that it says that she remained alive after seeing Him or seeing God. We have noted that the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is the only Person of the Trinity to ever be seen, as taught such passages as Joh 1:18, 6:46; 1Ti 6:16; 1Jo 4:12. Look at Joh 1:18 *“No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained {Him.}”* In Gen 16:13 Hagar sees the second person of the Trinity, The Lord Jesus Christ. Look at Joh 5:37, *“And the Father who sent Me, He has borne witness of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.”* Or Joh 6:46 *“Not that any man has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father.”* As we have noted, the deity of Christ is important to understand because one thing that other religions such as the Buddhists, Mormons, Muslims, Hindus, Moonies, the Way international, Jehovah’s witnesses, Christian scientists, Scientology, the New Age movement, etc. all

have in common is that they all deny the deity of Jesus Christ or the fact that Jesus is Lord, or that Jesus is Jehovah and God. However, what does the Bible say? Look at 1Jo 2:23 *"Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also."* Or Joh 5:21-23 *"For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him."*

Point 4 deals with Scriptural Documentation regarding the Deity of Christ.

For example, Mic 5:2 says Jesus Christ is eternal God during the incarnation, Mic 5:2 *"But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, {Too} little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity."*

This was fulfilled by our Lord in Mat 2:5-6, And they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet, And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, Are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; For out of you shall come forth a Ruler, Who will shepherd My people Israel." Notice the phrase in Mic 5:2, "His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity." This same Hebrew word for eternity "olam" is used to affirm the eternal existence of the Father in many passages, Gen 21:33; Psa 41:13; 90:2; 103:17; Isa 40:28. So, what this proves for the Father, it also proves for the Son. In Joh 8:56-58 *"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw {it} and was glad." The Jews therefore said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."* The phrase "I am" means He always existed. "I am" in the Greek is "ego eimi" and it cannot be correctly rendered as anything except "I am."

The Jews understood His use of "ego eimi" to be the same as when used by the Father, as evidenced by the fact that they sought to kill him when He said it.

Jehovah is the traditional translation of the Hebrew consonants JHWH - the special name for the one true God. However, the Jews said that this name was too sacred to be pronounced. So they replaced it by a variety of names - such as "Lord" or "the Name."

On a number of occasions Jesus refers to himself by using "I am."

For example, in Joh 6:35 Jesus said *"I am the bread of life;"*

Joh 6:41 *"I am the bread that came down out of heaven."*

Joh 6:51 *"I am the living bread"*

Joh 8:12 *"I am the light of the world"*

Joh 8:18 *"I am He who bears witness of Myself"*

Joh 10:7 *"I am the door of the sheep."*

Joh 10:14 *"I am the good shepherd"*

Joh 11:25 *"I am the resurrection and the life;"*

Joh 14:6 *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life;"*

Joh 15:1 *"I am the true vine"*

Those are the ten "I am's" of the Gospel of John and of course ten represents the number of completion of the divine order and The Lord Jesus Christ was completely identifying Himself as the great I am.

Some say that Jesus Christ never claimed to be God, this is not true. At the time of his trial, Jesus was asked by the high priest about His Messiahship. Look at Mar 14:60-64 *And the high priest stood up {and came} forward and questioned Jesus, saying, "Do You make no answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?" But He kept silent, and made no answer. Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed {One?}" And Jesus said, "I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." And tearing his clothes, the high priest said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? You*

have heard the blasphemy; how does it seem to you?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. Many scriptures prove that The Lord Jesus Christ is God.

In Isaiah 45:22-23 God says of himself (through the prophet), "Turn to Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other. I have sworn by Myself, The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness And will not turn back, That to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear {allegiance.}" In Phi 2:10 Paul says "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." In Joh 5:18 "For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God." Jesus was indeed "making himself equal with God" as we read in John's Gospel. He was beginning to teach that the "unity" of God involved a true uniting of three "persons" in the Godhead or in the divine nature; and he was claiming to be one of them. In Col 2:9 Paul writes "*in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.*" The Bible clearly teaches the deity of Jesus Christ. God is omnipotent (all powerful) according to the Scriptures, 1Ch 29:11. In Phi 3:21 Jesus Christ is all powerful, *He exerts the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.*" In Gen 2:3, God is the Lord of the Sabbath, In Mat 12:8 we read *For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.* We read that Jehovah will judge mankind in Isa 3:13 *The Lord arises to contend, And stands to judge the people.* In 2Co 5:10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ,* Isa 44:6 reads "*Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel And his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.*" In Rev 1:17 *And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last,"* In 1Ch 29:11 we read "*Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth;*" Mat 28:18 *And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."* In 2 Ch 7:14 we read "*and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*" Mat 9:6 "*But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" then He said to the paralytic—"Rise, take up your bed, and go home."*

So back to our main verse Gen 16:13 and our corrected translation says "*Therefore, she [Hagar] called upon the name of the Lord who was speaking to her, "you are the mighty God of vision or doctrine, or revelation, Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?"*" The point that is so important is that Hagar recognized that God was talking to her. The most important question that anyone needs to answer is found in Mat 22:42 "*What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?"* Remember that The Lord Jesus Christ LJC said "I am He!" He said I am He in Joh 8:18; Deu 32:39; Isa 41:4; 43:10; 43:13; 48:12; Jer 29:23; Joh 8:18; 8:24; 8:28; 13:19; 18:6; 18:8; Rev 2:23. So in Mat 16:16-17 *And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal {this} to you, but My Father who is in heaven."* Here is the point, unless a person believes that Jesus Christ is Lord and God, they cannot be saved. That is why this doctrine is so important to understand.

Point 5 deals with the Bible Verses Stating Jesus is God.

Mat 1:23 "*Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which translated means, God with us."*

Joh 1:1-4 "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."*

Joh 1:9-10 "*There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him."*

Then we should correlate Joh 1:1 "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."*

Joh 1:14 *“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

Joh 5:18 *“For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.”*

Joh 5:21-23 *“For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.”*

Joh 10:30 *“I and the Father are one.”*

Whoever is the true God is also eternal life. Therefore, if we identify the one who is eternal life, we also identify the true God.

Point 6. The Preincarnate Work of Jesus Christ Indicates He Was God. The most obvious preincarnate work is the fact that The Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator of the universe, Joh 1:3; Col 1:16; Heb 1:10.

Joh 1:3 *“All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”*

He had to be God to preexist all other creatures. We have a lot of Biblical documentation of His preincarnate person. Joh 1:14-15, Joh 3:13, Joh 8:23, Joh 8:56-59, Joh 17:4-5, Joh 17:14, Joh 17:18, for example. So the fact that He existed before He became a man points to His deity.

Point 7. TLJC also is identified as God by the Old Testament Theophanies. The Lord Jesus Christ often came as a man in the Old Testament. For example, He was the one who wrestled with Jacob in Gen 32:24-30. He also came as the burning bush to Moses in Exo 3:(1-6). In the Old Testament, He appeared as the angel of the Lord or the angel of Jehovah. And there are passages where The Lord Jesus Christ is not only called the angel of Jehovah but at the same time He is also called Jehovah, Gen 22:11-18, Gen 31:11-13, Exo 3:1-6, Acts 7:31-35, Exo 13:21, 14:19, Judg 6:11-23, 13:9-22. In all of these passages you will find The Lord Jesus Christ mentioned in context as the angel of Jehovah. There is also something else that is very interesting, the angel of Jehovah is also distinguished from Jehovah. Because, the angel of Jehovah is always Jesus Christ. There are times that Jehovah can refer to God the Father, God the Son, or God the Spirit.

The word Elohim is in the plural and as a plural word translated God in the Old Testament, it refers to the entire Trinity, it is used in Gen 1:26, 3:22.

Gen 1:26 *Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;”*

Gen 3:22 *Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil;”*

Whenever one or more persons are going to be mentioned we have the word Jehovah. It is used for God the Father, God the son and God the Holy Spirit. However, it is only the Son who is the “angel of Jehovah”. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only visible member of the Trinity. Jesus Christ is the only the manifest person of the Godhead...but He is still God. He is the only person of the Godhead who ever is manifest to man or to creatures in the form of a creature or in some other form like the burning bush or the pillar of fire at night or the cloud by day. Jesus Christ was the angel of Jehovah in the Old Testament but since He’s also Jehovah, the passage will say somewhere in it that “Jehovah said” indicating that the angel of Jehovah is Jehovah and that Jehovah is also the angel of Jehovah. The angel of Jehovah is a Theophany and Jehovah is God. So obviously when some other member of the Godhead is involved in the passage where the angel of Jehovah is functioning it will say Jehovah said to the angel of Jehovah, because the Father is Jehovah too. This is true in Gen 24:7 *“The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my birth, and who spoke to me, and who swore to me, saying, To your descendants I will give this land, He will send His angel before you, and*

you will take a wife for my son from there.” Or Gen 24:40 And he said to me, The Lord, before whom I have walked, will send His angel with you to make your journey successful, and you will take a wife for my son from my relatives, and from my father’s house;” Note that in these passages, the angel of Jehovah is distinguished from Jehovah and another principle emerges which is the fact that the angel of Jehovah is the second person of the Trinity. Jesus Christ is always said to be the visible God. The only member of the trinity who is ever visible is Jesus Christ, again that’s Joh 1:18, 6:46, 1Ti 6:15-16, 1Jo 4:12, and after the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the angel of Jehovah never appears again. Point 8. The essence of God is ascribed to Jesus Christ.

1. Savior, Psa 2:6; Mat 28:18; Act 2:36; 2Pe 1:11; Rev 19:16.
2. Perfect righteousness and justice = holiness, Luk 1:35; Joh 6:69; Heb 7:26.
3. Love, Joh 13:1,34; 1Jo 3:16.
4. Eternal life, Isa 9:6; Micah 5:2; Joh 1:1, 8:58; Col 1:16 17; Eph 1:4; Rev 1:11.
5. Omniscience, Mat 9:4; Joh 2:25; 1Co 4:5; Col 2:3; Rev 2:23.
6. Omnipresence, Mat 28:20; Eph 1:23; Col 1:27.
7. Veracity, Joh 14:6; Rev 3:7.
8. Omnipotence, Rev 1:8.

He is the supreme being of the universe, king of heaven and earth! He has absolute authority and volition. Jesus Christ is also the sovereign one of the universe according to Gen 1:1, Rev 17:14, 1:5-6, 19:16. So God is sovereign, Jesus Christ is sovereign, therefore Jesus Christ is God. God is also immutable. He is neither capable of nor susceptible to change. He is absolute stability. His word and His works are immutable. And therefore we are told that TLJC is the same yesterday, today and forever, Heb 13:8. To say that Jesus Christ is God is to say that we can know the truth about God or we can know what God is like. In fact, apart from Jesus Christ, we really cannot know God. There is no knowledge of God apart from a knowledge of The Lord Jesus Christ. The second practical application of the truth that Jesus Christ is God is that God was always like Jesus. Sometimes we tend to think of God as just, and holy and stern and that TLJC changed God. However, TLJC opened a window in time so that we might see the eternal and unchanging love of God. Thirdly, because Jesus Christ is God it means that He is available and able to satisfy all the needs of your heart. God is infinite and has inexhaustible resources. So in our main passage of Gen 16:13 we have more than enough evidence that Hagar was talking to God in the person of Jesus Christ called the angel of Jehovah.

“El Shadday”: I Am the God of many breasts.

2/17/02

As we continue our study of Genesis, we have noted that between Gen 16:16 and Gen 17:1, there is 13 years of silence. We know that from comparing Gen 16:16 *And Abram was eighty six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.* In Gen 17:1 *Now when Abram was ninety nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram*” It was 13 years before the Lord began to communicate divinely inspired commands to Abram and Sarai. For those 13 years while Ishmael is growing up, Hagar will be under the protection of Abram who recovers and advances all the way to supergrace. The Abram who emerges at the end proves that wonderful gracious principle found in the Word of God, we are to never let our failures keep us down.

As we enter into Gen 17, notice verse 1, *the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless.”* This is a very unusual mandate because only a mature believer could fulfill it and therefore it tells us that something happened to Abram between Gen 16:16 and 17:1, we now see a supergrace believer in Abram.

Gen 17:1-6 Now when Abram was ninety nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly.” And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, “As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. “No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations. And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you.”

Abram who is now Abraham is a better person because he learned from his failures and mistakes and had the courage to utilize the grace of God. He took responsibility for his own decisions and did not let guilt and condemnation keep him down. He realized that the issue was not why he did what he did, but that he did it. A lesson to all of us, the issue is not why we did what we did but that we did it.

Paul faced this dilemma and said Rom 7:15 “For that which I am doing [practicing], I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.” That’s why doctrine is so important, it helps us to recognize that we are not perfect and even though we fail like Abram and Sarai there is a way out, through the grace of God, rebound and recover.

However, before any believer can appreciate the divine solutions to the indwelling problems of the old sin nature and the magnificent grace of God, the believer must be brought to the end of himself. To realize how helpless and hopeless they are without Christ and also how the Lord has solved the sin problem as well as the entire sin nature. Not only has sin been forgiven but the effects of our sins as well, such as guilt, condemnation, self-righteousness, and legalistic tendencies.

Both Abram and Sarai wanted to do good, to bring forth the promise heir. But they tried to accomplish it through human power and not divine power. They tried to use human viewpoint and the works of the flesh to fulfill the plan of God and bring forth the promise of God. But, there are no human solutions in God’s plan.

So thirteen years have elapsed between the chapters and during those years, Abram and Sarai have repented and recovered from their evil, they have advanced to supergrace. During the years, they have come to recognize the total helplessness of their situation and they have recognized that by man’s efforts, man cannot solve his problems. They realized that only solution left was that they must adjust to the justice of God by means of spiritual growth. The question to many believers today is “how many years is it going to take them to learn this same lesson.”

So, in Gen 17:1 the Lord or Jehovah appeared to Abram. Jehovah, JHWH in the Hebrew, is the personal name of each member of the Trinity, in contrast to Elohim, which is the name of God from

the standpoint of His attributes. Elohim is a plural name and refers to two or three members of the Trinity when it is used. Jehovah is a singular name and refers to a specific member of the Trinity. When the word JHWH occurred in the Old Testament, the Jews substituted the noun ADONAI, because they considered JHWH such a sacred name that they wouldn't even pronounce it. Three persons are called JHWH: The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit. Each one is separate and distinct therefore, JHWH is used for each one. Since all the members of the Trinity are coequal and co-eternal, all members are called by the name JHWH.

The Father is called JHWH or Jehovah, Isa 64:8, *But now, O Lord [JHWH], Thou art our Father, We are the clay, and Thou our potter; And all of us are the work of Thy hand.*

The Son is called Jehovah, Isa 45:21, *"Declare and set forth {your case;} Indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, [JHWH] the Lord? And there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me."* This refers to Jesus Christ, look at Act 4:12 *"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven [Jesus Christ] that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."*

The Holy Spirit is called JHWH, Isa 11:2, *And the Spirit of the Lord [JHWH] the Spirit Jehovah will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.* The first part of Gen 17:1 should read *Now when Abram was ninety nine years old, Jehovah [TL]C, who according to the Bible is the only visible manifestation of the Trinity or the only Jehovah] appeared to Abram.*

In Gen 17:1 with the phrase *"I am God Almighty;"* we begin to note the revelation of Jehovah to a supergrace believer. The word "I" is the pronoun *ani* and should be translated either "I, even I am," or "as for me, I am." The Word for *Almighty God* is actually two words, *el shadday*. Few individuals seem to have the nerve to translate this as it is, and therefore we lose something, because we have a tremendous explanation in this particular phrase.

The Hebrew word *El* is used for God and His power, so almighty or omnipotent God is a good translation. The word *Shadday* is a plural word from *shad*, which in the singular form refers to a woman's breast. Therefore if we are going to translate it correctly we have to say something like this, *"I even I am omnipotent God of many breasts."* A translation like this demands some kind of an explanation. The *shad* or the "many breasts" analogy is used for grace provision and for logistical grace. *Shad* is used because it is the woman's breast that feeds and nourishes the helpless baby.

We must understand that this is an anthropomorphism relating to logistical grace. An anthropomorphism ascribes to God human forms of the body which God does not actually possess, but is used to explain God's policy, God's manner of operating in terms of a human frame of reference such as the hands, ears etc. Let's compare some scripture to get a better understanding of the translation. In Gen 49:25, breasts are used for fruitfulness and that the children given by God's grace will be fed, well cared for, and will grow to maturity as they should. In Exo 29:27, the breast of the sacrificed animal was to be used as a wave offering to indicate the believer's love and affection toward God.

In SOS 1:13, the breasts are used as a picture of the perfect love, sweetness and satisfaction that exists between the Lord and the children of God. In Sol 4:5, breasts are used to remind us of the sufficiency, devotion and activity of the love of the children of God for the Lord Jesus Christ. In Isa 60:16, breasts refer to God's people obtaining the best and richest treasures of their enemies. Their enemies would be made to give up their very living to Israel. In Isa 66:11, breasts refer to the abundant blessings of God. In Rev 15:6, breasts refer to loyalty, love and devotion. These verses give us some idea as to what the Lord is saying to Abraham in Gen 17:1. In this important phrase *El Shaddai*, God is seen as the Infinite Mother, pouring forth blessings from the Breasts above to the womb below. Remember that in Gen 1:27, when God created man, we read *And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

Gen 5:2 *“He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created.”*

The name *El shaddai*, the God of many breasts, clearly indicates that the righteous and loving God Jehovah cares for us as a mother cares for a newborn child. Everything we could possibly need, exactly when we need it, God IS! Back in Gen 17:1-2 *“Now when Abram was ninety nine years old, Jehovah appeared to Abram and said; I am omnipotent God of many breasts. Walk before Me, and be blameless. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly.”*

Notice the word “multiply” referring to blessing. Again we have the principle of blessing and multiplication. The phrase, *El Shaddai*, therefore, is used to connote blessing and prosperity.

The point is that the nursing relationship contains a symbolism that resonates throughout the Old and New Testaments. A fruitful womb [analogous to being born-again] and abundant milk [feeding of divine blessing] symbolize the favor of the Lord and prosperity. Throughout the Bible the principle of El Shaddi, the many breasted God, is used to connote feeding the spiritual life.

Paul said in 1Co 3:1-2 *“And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able,”* In this passage, Paul explains that they must begin at the beginning. They must have the most basic knowledge and the basic doctrines of Christ before they move on to greater levels.

Heb 5:12-14 *“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.”*

In this passage, the writer uses breast milk to mean the basics of Christianity even though here he is admonishing those who are slow learners.

1Pe 2:1-3 *“Therefore, putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the graciousness of the Lord.”*

In Isa 49:15, the Lord uses breast feeding as a reminder of His love and compassion for His people, *“Can a woman forget her nursing child, And have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you”*

As the human baby starts out as the most helpless of creatures and the mother helps to feed and nourish the child, the spiritual significance is that God helps the helpless.

The many breasts then refer to the variety of blessings that God provides for the believer, who adjusts to the justice of God in time. The adjustment to the justice of God through the daily function of perception, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine liberates divine justice to provide maximum blessing for a mature believer. This is something that the average believer will never experience in time because the average believer is not consistent with his daily perception, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine.

So, Abram is now a mature believer and the maximum blessing is just around the corner. In thirteen years, Abram’s spiritual momentum has turned him all the way from being involved in the whirlwind of evil, all of the way to supergrace, which is his present status. And the blessing of the justice of God was so fantastic that we are in for some great principles of spiritual common sense.

Adjustment to the Justice of God

03/03/02

As we continue our study of Genesis chapter 16 and 17, we have noted that Hagar adjusted herself to the justice of God by doing what our Lord said, being obedient and going back to Sarai and submitting herself to Sarai's authority. We also noted that it was approximately 13 years before the Lord began to communicate divinely inspired information to Abram because that's how long it took him to adjust to the justice of God. Everything that God does for us is because of His grace. However, we need to understand that divine grace is only administered through divine justice, not divine love. Deu 32:4 says *"The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and just is He."* Ultimately, as we have seen, all blessing or discipline from God to us must be filtered through His justice. All of the divine attributes are filtered through the justice of God.

- ☐ God is Love and He so loved the world *that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.* But we cannot have that eternal life unless the justice of God is satisfied with our righteousness.
- ☐ God is also Veracity, absolute truth, but the justice of God cannot allow truth to have anything to do with lies. Jesus said, *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me."*
- ☐ God is Omniscient, having all knowledge, but His justice will not allow Him to give us what He *knows* we need unless we have adjusted to the justice of God.
- ☐ God is Omnipotent but His justice will not allow His omnipotence to destroy sin and evil until it's the right time to do so.
- ☐ God is Omnipresent, but His justice will not allow Him to dwell in Hell or the eternal lake of fire.
- ☐ God is Immutable, He is always faithful, but His justice will not allow Him to change His mind and give man another chance after death to those who have rejected Him, Heb 9:27.
- ☐ God is perfect Righteousness but only adjustment to the justice of God will allow + R to have fellowship with imperfect man.
- ☐ God is Eternal Life, but His justice will not allow Him to live eternally with sinful creatures.
- ☐ God has all Sovereignty, but His justice will not allow Him to make any decisions that are against His character and nature.

God cannot use any of these divine attributes in violation of another. Whatever, God provides in grace must not compromise His perfect essence. God's justice must be free to give blessing to sinful man without violating His divine integrity and must approve everything that comes from God to man. God created man perfect and everything God provided for man came from the *love of God*. In the Garden of Eden, divine love was man's point of contact with God. The righteousness and justice of God was never a point of contact for man until after man sinned. As long as man obeyed he was a recipient of what the love of God could do for him, Gen 2:16-17 *And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the Garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die."*

God loved man personally because there was something in man worthy of God's love, man possessed absolute righteousness however, it was not the righteousness of God but the righteousness of man, God loved man personally. However, *personal love* has conditions attached to it, if man violated those conditions he would have to reap the consequences for doing so. There was no impersonal-unconditional forgiving love in the Garden. When man sinned, he crossed the line from being the point of reference for the love of God to being the point of reference of the justice of God. When he crossed the line, the only thing the justice of God could do was to condemn him. And that is why after Adam and the woman sinned, we read in Gen 3:23-24, *"therefore the Lord God sent him out*

from the Garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the Garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life."

When the Lord sent the man and the woman out of the Garden, that seemed to be a victory for Satan, the villain in the Garden who tempted the woman to sin and to also bring down the man. However, what seemed to be a victory for Satan and a defeat for God and mankind was actually a blessing in disguise. The same justice that condemned man in the Garden is the same justice that solved man's problem with sin. After God solved the sin problem and gave man perfect righteousness as a gift, He also put man under the principle of blessing from His justice. However, this time the blessings would not have conditions upon them, this time, the blessings will come from grace and justice and man would be the beneficiary of something greater than Adam and the woman had in the Garden in a perfect environment.

Through the justice of God, we have the righteousness of God that comes as Rom 3:22 states *"the righteousness of God comes through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction"* Adam and the woman didn't have God's righteousness or eternal life. All of those wonderful things Adam had, he could lose in a second, all he had to do was sin and it was all gone. The love of God could only do so much. The love of God could give to Adam. The Lord would keep on coming every day to see Adam and give him more doctrine, He gave Adam the woman, Adam didn't have to work and the love of God would give Adam perfect environment. However, the love of God couldn't give Adam anything past the day that he ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The love of God could only give one day at a time in the Garden of Eden but the righteousness of God from His justice gives us, as believers, permanence and eternal security, Joh 10:28 *"and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand."*

The grace of God, which flows through the justice of God, makes it possible for us to have something in time greater than Adam and the woman had in the Garden. The justice of God could only come into the picture when man violated the command of God, then the justice of God condemned man and sent them out of the Garden. Adam and the woman were created perfect by God and could die in the perfect environment of the Garden of Eden. However, we were born in sin in the imperfect environment of the devil's world and will never die if we have believed on The Lord Jesus Christ. That's why our Lord said in Joh 11:26 *"Everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die."* The day that the justice of God gave you His righteousness, you have permanence and security forever and the love of God the Father couldn't do that. The love of God couldn't provide salvation, it was the justice of God that did so and that is why our Lord died on the cross.

The justice of God judged His Son for our sins so that in 2Co 5:21 *"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."* God the Father could not provide salvation from His love because the love of God does not judge, that comes from the justice of God. Therefore, the justice of God can do *much more* even for us in time than the love of God, so in reality, Adam's fall was a curse turned into a blessing.

Grace working from the justice of God produces more than the love of God did under perfect environment and perfect conditions.

There are three adjustments to the justice of God in time.

The first is salvation, which is instant adjustment to the justice of God. We simply believe in Christ, a non-meritorious function of perception. By believing in Christ, we immediately, instantly have adjusted to the justice of God, for Christ was our substitute on the cross, He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. God the Father actually judged God the Son on cross bearing our sins and this judgment came from the justice of God. 1Pe 3:18 *"For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for*

the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;” This instant adjustment to the justice of God means that we merely believe, and the justice of God is free to give to us at least 40 things immediately. Salvation adjustment to the justice of God is found in such passages as Rom 3:24 *“being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;”*

The second instant adjustment occurs every time we are out of fellowship, as 1Jo 1:9 says we are to simply name the sins to God, and we are forgiven and cleansed immediately. This is Rebound adjustment to the justice of God, 1Jo 1:9 *“If we acknowledge [name and cite] our sins, He is faithful and just, with the result that He forgives us our sins [known sins] and purifies us from all unrighteousness [unknown sins].”*

The third adjustment is much more complicated and is not instantaneous, but rather it is gradual and depends upon our attitude toward doctrine and our subordination to the authority of our right pastor. We take in doctrine every day and eventually through the daily function of perception, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine, we move to the different stages of spiritual adulthood, all the way to the maturity barrier. This is when the justice of God is free to release our escrow blessings for time, and then rewards us in the eternal state, Eph 1:3-4; Rom 14:10; 2Co 5:10. We must all stand before the Judgment seat of Christ, the place where justice administered, to either receive rewards or lose rewards, 1Co 3:11-15.

This brings us to the principle that there is no solution in life for the unbeliever or the believer than the divine solution. The divine solution is the absolute and the only solution and the divine solution is found under the principle of learning how to adjust to the justice of God.

This takes time and gives us the attitude of a mature believer who has learned to accept the fact that the divine solution is the only solution.

When the apostle Paul was going through personal suffering, he said in 2Co 12:7-10, *“And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”* Paul prayed three times that his problem be taken away. But the thorn in the flesh demanded divine solution not human solution. Paul had to adjust to the justice of God. Adjusting to the justice of God is accepting the divine solution, *“My grace has been and still is sufficient for you.”* Paul recognized that a part of a personal sense of destiny is that human solution is no solution to certain problems in life.

Adjusting to the justice of God is illustrated from visible heroes of the Old Testament. In Gen 17, Abraham and Sarah finally did things God’s way and therefore they adjusted to the justice of God and received the divine blessing they sought for. Abraham and Sarah finally adjusted to the justice of God and the first thing they encountered was a test—sexual death. However, when a believer adjusts to the justice of God, they never look at life from the standpoint of human failure or impossibility, because they have become strong in claiming the promises of God. Abraham did not waver in unbelief, he no longer looked at the promise of God emotionally.

God is glorified when the believer adjusts to the justice of God. Loser believers do not understand this principle of adjustment to the justice of God because they fail to recognize that they never have to worry about God. God will do everything right and keep His word. God gave a command to Abraham to be circumcised and the moment Abraham complied and adjusted to the justice of God, God restored the sexual ability of Abraham and the womb of Sarah. It didn’t seem to make much sense

but that is what faith is all about, doing it God's way. Heb 11:1 says *"Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."*

It also took time for Moses to adjust to the justice of God, because he was trying to do things his own way and even he, as great as he was, had difficulties in adjusting to the justice of God and the timing of God, (Act 7:22-29). Whatever Moses did was better than anything anyone had done before him. Moses built the treasure cities of Egypt, he had a phenomenal knowledge of academics, but more importantly he learned doctrine. He was the number one man in the Egyptian empire when it was at its peak. As a believer it was time for him to identify himself with the Jews, because God had revealed to him that he would be the founder of the Jewish nation in fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. Moses had the right personal sense of destiny but the wrong timing and he failed to adjust to the justice of God. He had to learn God's timing must always supersede man's timing. Moses, on Moses' timing, had failed to deliver Israel because his timing was wrong. It took his entire life, 120 years, for his personal sense of destiny to be fulfilled and for him to finally adjust to the justice of God. Moses had to learn that human power and human dynamics cannot fulfill the plan of God in any dispensation. Before Moses could take his family back into Egypt forty years later he had to learn the principle of adjusting to the justice of God and it's interesting that that also demanded that he circumcise his two sons, since circumcision was the ritual sign of adjusting to the justice of God. Moses was almost put under the sin unto death for failure to obey, Exo 4:24. His wife circumcised his son and then left him and took his sons with her. Moses had learned the lesson that when God makes a promise, it does not depend on man or upon the power of man. It always has to be God's timing and God's power, not man's.

Every believer must learn the lesson of dependence on who and what God is and understand the essence of God and the fact that the Lord will provide the power. The corrected translation of Heb 11:24-27, says *"By means of doctrine, when Moses had become great, he refused to be proclaimed the Pharaoh; and he choose to endure maltreatment with the people of God, rather than enjoy the temporary pleasures of sin; he concluded that reproach [insults, reviling, disgrace] for the sake of Christ greater value than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking ahead to his reward. By means of doctrine he left Egypt behind, not being afraid of the king's anger; for he persevered, because he kept on seeing the invisible One."*

Adjustment to the justice of God means true spiritual values in time related to the spiritual life, that is what Moses did. When a believer has adjusted to the justice of God, he has eliminated fear from his life. He waits upon the Lord for guidance and understands that between him and God, there is divine justice at work. The loser believer cannot conquer fear in a crisis because he has no adjustment to the justice of God. A believer takes his stand when he stops being afraid and utilizes the faith-rest drill, then watches the Lord's deliverance.

At the end of his life, as a great leader, Joshua said in a crisis of Jewish apostasy, Josh 24:14-15, *"Now, therefore, respect the Lord and serve Him in integrity and doctrine; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River [Nile] and in Egypt, therefore serve the Lord. Furthermore if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, then choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites [the Phallic cult] in whose land you are living; but as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord."* Joshua learned from Moses that you cannot force people into a course of action when it comes to doctrine. Like Moses, Joshua had adjustment to the justice of God and a life to match that adjustment. Adjustment to the justice of God recognizes in grace that God does the work and we cannot help God and never loses sight of the fact that God does the work.

David understood the meaning of Abraham's circumcision as a sign of an adjustment to the justice of God. When Israel was being taunted the Philistine Goliath in 1Sa 17:45-47, David paraphrased Moses *"the Lord will fight for you today."*

Jeremiah ministered for forty years, beginning with the thirteenth year of king Josiah in 626 B.C. and continued until 586 B.C. He taught the word of God under the last five kings of Judah. He taught three generations that were negative to doctrine just as Moses had done. The only response to Moses' and Jeremiah's ministries was from the young people. Jeremiah understood the true significance of circumcision as a ritual related to Bible doctrine and adjustment to the justice of God. He understood the relationship between the reality of an adjustment to the justice of God and its meaning in the ritual of circumcision.

Jer 4:4, "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, And remove the foreskins of your heart, Men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Lest My wrath go forth like fire And burn with none to quench it, Because of the evil of your deeds."

Jeremiah challenged the people to be circumcised, something they understood very well. The challenge was to use the doctrine in their souls to adjust to the justice of God and become occupied with Christ. The foreskins of their heart referred to the arrogance skills, scar tissue of the soul, and reversionism. It is never too late to recover as long as you are alive. But if you continue rejecting doctrine, you will completely cover your consciousness with scar tissue of the soul.

Jer 6:10 says, "To whom shall I speak and give warning, That they may hear? Behold, their ears are uncircumcised, And they cannot listen. Behold, the word of the Lord has become a reproach to them; They have no delight in it."

The uncircumcised ear refers to the negative volition to Bible doctrine at the point of hearing. People who enjoy doctrine are positive believers, even when they are rebuked. People who do not like doctrine never like to hear any message that rebukes them. When you reject doctrine you become a slave to something in your life. Your values change and you go back to being what you were before and you are far worse than what you were before because you have scar tissue of the soul. Once you have rejected Bible doctrine and become a slave to the humanistic values of life, you cannot listen to the word of God without reacting and despising doctrine. When you have Bible doctrine circulating in your stream of consciousness, then you have a circumcised heart.

A few principles as we wrap up this point:

1. Abraham's adjustment to the justice of God was related to the power of the faith-rest drill, which he exploited to the maximum. He had an adjustment to the justice of God related to his circumcision and related to resurrection.
2. Moses' adjustment to the justice of God caused him to see the divine solution while Israel could only see the problems. In testing, the believer who has adjusted to the justice of God concentrates on the solution. The divine solution is the only solution.
3. David demonstrated that adjustment to the justice of God is constructed through the testing experience. David had the preparation of killing a lion and a bear that had taken a lamb. The believer who has adjusted to the justice of God acknowledges that the only true hero for any crisis is our Lord Jesus Christ and advances to occupation with Christ.
4. Jeremiah's adjustment to the justice of God caused him to keep teaching doctrine in spite of three generations rejecting his message. He watched the young men and women of his last Bible class go into slavery because they had refused to adjust to the justice of God. The adjustment to the justice of God through the daily function of perception, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine liberates divine justice to provide maximum blessing for a mature believer. This is something that the average believer will never experience in time because the average believer is not consistent with his daily perception, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine.

How Abram Came to the Place of Pleasing God

03/17/02

What is it that God desires from us? David said in Psa 51:6 *Behold, Thou dost desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part Thou wilt make me know wisdom.* In Pro 23:26, *Give me your heart, my son, And let your eyes delight in my ways.* God desires our Heart, in fact the giving of the whole heart to God is commanded in the Scriptures, Pro 4:23, *Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it {flow} the springs of life.*

During our 2002 Florida Conference, we looked at the different types of believers or the different types of churches that exist in every generation. We noted that in Rev 2:2-3, as a church or individual believers, those at Ephesus had good deeds, produced divine good works and persevered and had not grown weary. However Rev 2:4, we read that the Lord had something against them, *“But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.”*

Then the church of Smyrna is mentioned in Rev 2:8 who went through tremendous tribulation and poverty. In verse 10, they were told about suffering for blessing and that they were going to be tested ten days, the number of completion. The church or individual believers in Pergamum in Rev 2:14 were warned about the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel and committed acts of immorality.

In Rev 2:18-20, as a church or individual believers, Thyatira tolerated false doctrine and false teaching, even though in Rev 2:19, they had deeds, love, faith, service and perseverance, Rev 2:19 *“I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first. But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond servants astray, so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.”*

The church or individual believers at Sardis are told in Rev 3:1-2, to wake up and strengthen the things that remain. Rev 3:1-2 *“And to the messenger of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars, says this: ‘I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God.’”*

Then in Rev 3:8, the church or individual believers at Philadelphia are described as having divine good deeds and a little power, and they have kept with doctrine and have not denied the Lord’s name. They are warned in Rev 3:11 *“I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown.”* Their problem was that they were being tempted by Satan and his kingdom of darkness to become distracted.

Finally in Rev 3:14, we have the Lukewarm believers of Laodicea as a church or individual believers. These are the type of believers who in Rev 3:17, have the attitude *“I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,”* and they do not know that they are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

If we were all to examine ourselves, what type of believer would we be?

We studied one type of believer in detail, the Ephesus type. Rev 2:1 *“To the messenger of the church in Ephesus write: The One [Jesus Christ] who keeps on empowering the seven stars [pastor-teachers in the Church-age]”* The seven stars refer to the teaching pastors of the Church-age, seven being the number of completion and the finished work. We know that because back in Rev 1:20, when John describes his encounter with The Lord Jesus Christ, he writes, *“As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the messengers or the pastor-teachers of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.”* The pastors of the Church-age are called stars because the stars in the celestial heavens were once the voice God used to communicate His word all over the earth. Before the scriptural

record there was the Stellar record, the record or the witness of the stars. Therefore, that which the stars in the heavens once did, the stars on earth must do now as they communicate from the scriptural record. In this verse the stars are pastors teaching Bible Doctrine, while the lampstands are believers of the local church learning and applying doctrine.

The corrected translation of Rev 2:2, *"I know your accomplishments (productions) both your strenuous effort and your perseverance (residence and function in the PPOG), furthermore you are not able to tolerate evil (categories of evil), and you have tested those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, consequently you have discovered them to be false;"* So far this is a good report on the Ephesian church or the Ephesus type believer. In Rev 2:3 *"Furthermore you keep having perseverance (residence and function inside the PPOG) and you have endured because of My name (or because of Me), and you have not fainted under pressure."*

In Rev 2:4, we come to the criticism of the Ephesus type of believer, *"But I have this against you, that you have left your first love."* One of the reasons why believers fail is because they leave their first love. Actually the Greek here means that they have abandoned, deserted, omitted, disregarded or neglected. It doesn't mean to leave as such but really to lightly esteem. They have become familiar with Him which causes apathy, indifference, passiveness, complacency. The corrected translation of Rev 2:4 *"But I have this against you, that you have neglected your most important love."* As a believer, the most important love in this life is the Lord Jesus Christ. Then in Rev 2:5 *"Remember therefore from where you have fallen,"* Remember when the Lord was your most important love? The next phrase tells us how to get back and recover. Rev 2:5 continues with *"and repent."* This is strictly a mental function, to change our mind, change our system of thinking, it means to rebound and recover. Then we have *and accomplish the deeds you did at first;* This means to do the deeds or the things a believer did and to have the same excitement they had as a new believer. To the Ephesus type believer, the one who has done well but has lost his first love, Rev 2:5 contains the solution as well as the alternative. The solution - *"Remember therefore from where you have fallen [your personal love for TLJC], and repent [change your system of thinking] and do the deeds you did at first;"* The alternative - *"or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place unless you repent."*

God Desires our Heart and that all begins by going back to the very simplistic principle of knowing Him and this requires spending our time. Most of God's people have difficulty in realizing and facing up to the fact that God is not on a timetable and He is not in a hurry in His progress of their spiritual life. They feel that they are not making any spiritual progress unless they are experiencing some emotional high and constantly having evidence of growing spiritually. Many times when it seems like we are receding or going backwards, it is not, as so many think, a matter of backsliding or losing your first love or apostasy or reversionism. It is a matter of God at work in us in His timing and His ways, Phi 1:6 *"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who has begun in you an absolute good work will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus."* Phi 2:13 *"for it is God [the Holy Spirit] who is at work in you, both to will [give you motivation] and to work [He gives you the ability to execute] above and beyond His good pleasure."* This is important to understand because the spiritual life matures and becomes productive through the principle of growth, 2Pe 3:18, rather than by adversities and experiences, much time is involved. Getting to Know Him involves a lot of time, time to learn and then after that, especially time to wait. Paul warned us about become weary because of not receiving desired results in Gal 6:9 *"And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary."*

Our responsibility is to patiently wait on Him and the time necessary for Him to work into our character, our life, that which we have learned and received as we are getting to Know Him. It's that word that most of us don't like, patience. We wait, and in reality the time is short, but the waiting seems long, Heb 10:36, *"For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised."* The Lord is far more interested in what motivates our activity

than in the activity itself and so He tells us to take heed to examine ourselves, and be careful when we do our righteous deeds so that the motive isn't to be seen by men, to be a people-pleaser, Mat 6:5. So often in our service for God we're concerned about what people might think of us. Sometimes we're motivated by the desire for people to know how talented we are, our motivations are often people-oriented rather than God-oriented. We must be far more concerned about what God thinks rather than what people think. When our motives are right we do things not for people but for God, all without fanfare or bringing any attention to ourselves. This issue is so important that Jesus told the church that unless there were some immediate changes in Ephesus, he would come quickly and move the candlestick out of its place.

As we continue our study on the Arab-Israel conflict, we have seen the importance of Adjusting to the justice of God. We pick up our passage in Gen 17:1 "Now when Abram was ninety nine years old, Jehovah appeared to Abram and said; I am omnipotent God of many breasts. Continue to advance under My supervision maintain spiritual maturity." We have noted that Abram has arrived at spiritual maturity and that he has adjusted to the justice of God. Part of adjusting to the justice of God has to do with reaching spiritual maturity or what we call maturity adjustment to the justice of God. Through the consistent and daily function of perception, metabolism and application of Bible doctrine, the believer reaches spiritual maturity. It is maximum doctrine in the soul of the believer that frees the justice of God to provide blessing for the mature believer. There are six categories in this blessing package; Spiritual, Temporal, Association, Historical, dying, and Eternal. Some are received immediately, while others are received as the believer continues to grow.

Abram has reached spiritual maturity and he has the capacity to appreciate the *source* of blessing, as well as the *blessing* itself. Doctrine in the soul is what gives a person the capacity to enjoy for life in general. There is a principle that is experienced when one reaches spiritual maturity; it is the giver not the gift that is important, Psa 103:2 says "*Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits;*" Prosperity comes to us because of the grace of God. Everything we have has been given to us either directly or indirectly by God.

In Gen 17, Abram reached a point in his life where he appreciates the source of everything he has, the Lord Jesus Christ, but now he also has great capacity to appreciate the gift. There are many things in life that are associated with blessing, but they will not be enjoyed, unless there is capacity to accompany it. Promotion is often associated with happiness, but there is no happiness in promotion unless there is occupation with the person of Christ. Abram now has perfect happiness, and the fact that he is about to be given sexual prosperity and he is about to become a new race, means that he has entered the primary zone where he is now, for the first time, ready for the blessing. By the way, he entered the primary zone for divine blessing as an Arcadian, not a Jew, at this time, there were no Jews in the world. Before he will receive his sexual prosperity, he will be converted from Arcadian from the Semitic race, to Jew, a brand new race, and this will be accomplished at circumcision. Circumcision will revive the use of his sexual apparatus, so that he can enter into sexual prosperity and have the blessings of the primary zone.

In Gen 17:17 we see Abram's response, "Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" In the next chapter, the chapter after that, the mother of the son will laugh. Later in Gen 18:14 "*Is anything too difficult for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son.*" He would name the child Yitschaq which means laughter or he laughs, that's what Isaac means.

So two principles emerge:

1. Divine justice releasing divine power is the problem solver of life.

Abram had a hopeless problem.

2. And therefore, here is a second principle, if God can solve Abram's hopeless problem, He can solve your problems whether they are hopeless or not. There's no such thing as a problem in life that has no solution, but to get the solution with the problem, you must have the secondary or the primary zone of blessing.

Abraham and Sarah will learn the lesson of Gen 18:14 *"Is anything too difficult for the Lord?"*

Mat 19:26 *"With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."*

Mar 9:23 *"All things are possible to him who believes."*

Luk 18:27 *"The things impossible with men are possible with God."*

We all need to remember that when we give something over to God. In Abram's case, the maximum use of divine power includes the restoration of two helpless people in the field of procreation and pregnancy. Furthermore, divine power will manufacture and perpetuate the new race through one person, Isaac, and multiply it into a great nation as well as a great race. What God does for Abram, He will be done for the Jews many times thereafter. This means that every time we turn on the news or read what's going on in the Middle East and see this little nation called Israel, the center of attention, we are seeing the faithfulness and the omnipotence of The Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of the devil's world. Therefore, the very existence of a Jew today on planet earth is a demonstration of the justice of God, the grace of God, the faithfulness and the power of God. The perpetuation of the Jewish race is a reminder of the faithfulness of God. The fact that the Jewish race is still here today, and that there is a small Jewish nation in the Middle East today, reveals that God will provide.

Satan understands the importance of the Jew, even if we do not. This is why throughout human history, time after time, Satan has sought some way of destroying the Jew. God, whose power is greater than the ruler of this world, has perpetuated the Jew down to the very hour in which we live. God has fulfilled and still is fulfilling Gen 17:2 *"And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you with power of power."*

This brings us now to Gen 17:3 *"And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying,"* Abram did not fall standing on his toes and leaning forward, he did not fall on the ground and break his fall with his face. The Hebrew word *naphal* simply means that when he heard these things he got right down on his knees and then he just gradually stretched out until he fell forward and he wound up with his face on the ground, bowing before The Lord Jesus Christ. In the ancient world, this was a sign of recognition of authority and submission to that authority. Abram has learned above all to recognize God's authority. This is the first time we read that he fell on his face when the Lord spoke to him.

The prostration of Abram recognizes the fact that through authority, and submission to authority, Abram has come to the place of pleasing God. This is still applicable to us today, whenever God speaks through His word, we do not get down flat on our faces, but we are to listen and concentrate on what the word of God teaches, Ecc 5:1 *"Guard your steps as you go to the house of God, and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools;"* In other words, don't let it become just another place to go.

In fact, we should never forget that all of us will be judged and evaluated based upon our love and desire for God's word, Joh 12:48. In Gen 17, we now have then the confirmation of the Abrahamic covenant. Abram has adjusted to the justice of God, that means that God's essence will be free to provide everything necessary in the primary zone of blessing. On the hopeless side, both Abram and Sarai are incapable of sex, are incapable of having children, are incapable of everything that is necessary. But on the positive side, God has promised it. God has given certain promises and as Abram has seen those things as a mature believer, he staggers not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith giving glory to God and being fully persuaded that what God promised, God is able also to perform.

So in Gen 17:3 *“And Abram fell on his face or prostrated himself, and God talked with him, saying,”* Abram fell flat on his face because as an ultra supergrace believer, he has recognized the authority of God totally and completely. Abram, by his posture, indicates the acceptance of authority. This was the attitude that He had toward the Living word, TLJC, who was about to speak the spoken word, the word of God. The supergrace attitude longs for the communication of the Word of God, Bible doctrine. The supergrace believer is willing to be like the Queen of Sheba who went over 1,000 miles to come to Bible class and hear the wisdom of Solomon. We praise God by our faithfulness and support and daily intake of the word of God. If you have the privilege of having a local doctrinal ministry then you should live in the light of Heb 10:25 *“not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.”* There must be the acceptance of the authority before there is the acceptance of the ministry of any pulpit in America or in the world today. And so when Bible class is about to begin, it begins with the Lord Jesus Christ definitely accepted as the teacher. His authority is important and Abram’s posture indicates subjection to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Maximum doctrine resident in the soul plus maximum spiritual growth does not remove the believer from the authority of Bible doctrine or a doctrinal teacher, and this why the Lord Jesus Christ, as Abram’s teacher, tells him to continue advancing. And therefore to maintain his spiritual maturity, maintain the primary zone.

It now becomes obvious that doctrine resident in Abram’s soul gives him instant recognition of and submission to the authority of the essence of God. From the very essence of God, to which he has submitted to, is coming fantastic blessing. Abram has come to the place of occupation with the giver, which makes the potential gift enjoyable. He already is totally occupied with the giver, this is noted in his posture. The Lord Jesus Christ is the giver. Abram has maximum category one love for maximum doctrine in his soul as an ultra supergrace believer, he is totally occupied with the Lord. His gift is going to be sexual prosperity, from which will come, not only the sign of a new race, which will be the cutting away of the foreskin of Abram’s phallus, but it will also be the means of perpetuating that new race through one person only. And therefore, as this comes, Abram will have the capacity to enjoy, he will have the capacity to appreciate because he is occupied with the giver.

The gift does not bring the happiness, but occupation with Christ brings the happiness, and therefore Abram’s posture indicates both his respect for the giver, and therefore his love for the giver, and Abram had no qualms at all about getting down on his knees and then prostrating himself with his head to the ground, because in his soul he was totally occupied with the one who was now teaching him.

Why Abram Finally Received the Blessings God Promised Him

03/24/02

As we continued our study of Genesis chapter 17 this week, we took a look at fear, we noted some interesting principles concerning Abram and his humility and fear toward God as being that which qualified him finally to be blessed by God. Abraham came to a place where he became serious about his relationship to God.

Our corrected translation reads Gen 17:1-3 *"Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, Jehovah appeared to Abram and said; I am omnipotent God of many breasts. Continue to advance under My supervision maintain spiritual maturity And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you with power of power. And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying,"*

This is the first time that Abram fell on his face when the Lord spoke to him. This was the attitude that He had toward the Living word, The Lord Jesus Christ, who was about to speak the spoken word that became the written word, the word of God. Abram now has learned who to truly fear.

Sadly many of the believers alive today have not learned who to truly fear. We know that because the one to truly fear, God, says in Heb 10:25 *"Do not forsake assembling yourselves together"* But many believers say no to God. God says in Heb 13:17 *"Keep obeying those pastors who themselves are ruling over you, and submit to their authority,"* But many believers say no to God. God says in 1Co 16:2 *"On the first day of every week let each one of you put aside something from what you have earned during the week, and use it for the offering."* But many believers say no to God. God says in 1Co 11:24-25, *"Keep on doing this [celebrating the Lord's supper] in remembrance of Me."* But many believers say "no."

God says in 1Pe 4:10 *"As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."* But many believers say no to God.

Many individuals today are living in fear because of the current events that are taking place. 2Ti 1:7 says *"For God has not given us a lifestyle of fear, but of power and love and discipline."* When a believer surrenders to any aspect of fear in his or her life, that fear begins to escalate and gains control over the believer. In fact, Satan requires fear to have control over the human race and without fear he has no point of contact to control the believer. The Bible says that we have not been born again and saved and a placed in union with Christ in order to fear again.

Rom 8:15 *For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"*

Notice the phrase *leading to fear again* because that is what all of us had been subject to ever since our first birth, the physical birth. However, once we are born again, Joh 3:3 *Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* We now have a second birth which should be manifested by Joh 8:32 *You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.* All of humanity, by virtue of the first birth, is under some form of fear, the ultimate one being fear of death. All fears in the human race are traceable to that fear of death, something that we should not have, because of what our Lord Jesus Christ did. In Mat 10:28 our Lord said *"And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."* There is no reason for any of us to fear.

1Jo 4:18 *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.*

Christians do not fear death because of the truth that God has provided through Jesus Christ and the victory over death. Satan knows that if he can get an individual to fear death, they will not truly live and they will not be able to fight the spiritual conflict they have been called to fight.

Heb 2:15 says that our Lord came and died so that *“He might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery to the devil all their lives.”*

Once our enemy can get us to fear, he then can get us to become emotional, and once we give way to the emotional reaction of fear, we become a slave in our soul and cannot deal with the actual reality. We become disarmed towards the real things in our life that require claiming the promises of God. To have no fears in our lives is the first expression of our love toward God. We as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ have no reason to fear because; We are new creatures and children of the King. We are part of a Royal family, part of the body of Christ. We are an heir to the throne, ambassadors for Christ and royal priests. The point is that all fears are related to some form of death. When we realize that the Lord has delivered us from the greatest fear, the fear of death, it will cause us bow down before Him, like Abram did, and realize what His justice and righteousness has done, to make us exempt from eternal condemnation. This is what finally happened to Abram, he had times when he was living in fear, but during those 13 silent years, he has grown-up spiritually. He is humbled before the Lord, now he has reached the point in his spiritual life where he was now ready for divine blessing.

Gen 17:3 *And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying,*

In verses four through eight, we come to the reassurance of the Abrahamic covenant and the divine decree. We start with Gen 17:4 *“As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.”* Notice the phrase *“As for Me,”* it doesn't say, *As for your part in the covenant this is what you must do,”* it says *“As for me,”* and it represents the guarantee of the fulfillment of the unconditional Abrahamic covenant which is the very essence or character of God. This magnifies the party of the first part, the members of the Godhead, the Trinity, with Jesus Christ acting as the spokesman, it does not magnify the party of the second part, Abraham. The Lord will do all the providing, He is Jehovah Jireh, the Lord our provider. The sexual blessing and prosperity, changing him to a new race, the pregnancy of Sarah, the birth of Isaac, these things could have occurred many years before, but they would have gone unappreciated. God's timing for the blessing is perfect, it is compatible with our spiritual status. Abram's physical status is hopeless, now bowed down on the ground but his soul status is improving everyday and it is the status of soul to which the justice of God responds.

There's another principle in Gen 17 that is applicable for all of us, God looks at our recognition towards the authority of the one who teaches, and then He looks at the content which has been accumulated through the daily function of perception, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine. Therefore, an important question for believers to answer is what is their attitude toward the one who teaches and toward his authority? You see, in Abram's case, Abram is not only occupied with the blesser, Abram has subjected himself to the authority of the blesser. It took Abram a long time to realize that, but once he did life became simple.

1Ti 5:17 *Those pastor-teachers [presbuteros] who have ruled well with the result that they keep ruling honorably, they must be considered worthy of double honor, most of all those who work hard to the point of exhaustion in the study of the word and the teaching of doctrine.*

Pastors must always remember that what they are communicating is not theirs, it belongs to God, to all members of the Trinity and nothing can be more sacred, more important than what is communicated from the pulpit. Therefore it must be accurate, it must be right, it must be correct, it must be the truth, otherwise the justice of the Father, the justice of the Son, the justice of the Holy Spirit all vote for double-discipline for the pastor. Therefore not too many are pastors because the pastor has a tremendous authority assigned to him, regardless of the size of the church. This is why those who have the gift of pastor-teacher are always males, because females cannot exercise this authority. They are designed to be responders and such an authority cannot and does not reside in them.

This is why members of the congregation are commanded to respect the office and the authority of the Pastor not the individual. The personality of the pastor, or the manner of his communication, or the way he looks, or any other factor, is not the issue, the issue is the communication of the message. God uses all different types of personalities. Some of you would not have liked Peter because he was known for being too impulsive, James perhaps too fanatical. While John was too serious and passionate and Philip asked too many questions. Bartholomew was very composed and to some he seemed boring while Matthew was humble and to some he seemed weak. Thomas was known for his pessimism. James {the son} of Alphaeus was quiet while Simon the Zealot was strong-willed and Judas (son of James) was intense. Of course, the apostle Paul was a genius and a prepared man, the greatest intellect and eloquence of his day, however, he used a lot of divine sarcasm. That gives us some idea of the individuals that the Lord chose. The point is to pay attention to the message not intellectual ability.

When we accept the authority of a pastor, we accept the teaching that he communicates and two things are emphasized in the teaching of doctrine. First the authority of the pastor, secondly his message. One is emphasized in the congregation, submission to that authority, so that there can be concentration on the message. One can never concentrate on the message until they separate the authority of the pastor from his personality or any other factor. In order to take in doctrine, you must concentrate on the teaching of doctrine, not on the individual characteristics of the pastor.

So Abram has learned who to truly fear and he has accepted the authority and adjusted to the justice of God, he is now ready to receive the blessing that God has for him, this also gives us our introduction to verse 4,

Gen 17:4 *“As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.*

The word for covenant in the Hebrew is *beriyth* which refers to an unconditional covenant. Being adjusted to the justice of God is being adjusted to every characteristic in the essence of God, and therefore is no compromise of the divine essence in giving Abram this wonderful ultra supergrace blessing.

The covenant blessing to Abram includes the original paragraph of Gen 12:2-3, a new race and a new nation will come from Abram. The new race of Jews will eventually become the new nation at the time of Moses. The new race of Jews and the new nation of Israel are guaranteed to have certain parts of planet earth. The Abrahamic covenant then becomes pivotal in the history of the human race because it provides a new race to become custodians of doctrine in human history, and to serve God in both evangelism and the communication of doctrine.

Gen 17:4 *“As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.*

The Hebrew word for nations is *goyim* (go'-eem); and it means a foreign nation, it refers to Gentile nations. When it says *“You shall become a father of many nations,”* these are Gentile nations and do not include the Jewish nation, which is going to be a new race in Abram's time, but not a nation for nearly five hundred years. We also have the word for father is the Hebrew word *`ab*, and means the father of many gentile nations.

The Mysteries behind the Similarities between Israel and the Church

03/31/02

Genesis 17:3-4 *And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, "As for Me [My part in the covenant], behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations."*

We have been studying God's promise to Abram, especially the phrase *"You shall become a father of many nations."* This is actually a reference to the Gentile nations; the Jews will be a new race in Abram's time, but will not be not a new nation for nearly 500 years. We see the fatherhood of Abraham under three separate conditions in the Bible.

Abraham is called *"the father of us all,"* whether Jew or Gentile, Rom 4:1,16. In Gal 3:6, Paul writes, *"Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness."* The key premise to keep in mind is that Abraham's justification came when there were no Law and circumcision in effect. The law came 430 years after Abraham's justification, Gal 3:17, *"What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise."*

Gal 3:7-9 *Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the nations shall be blessed in you." So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.*

Those who are of faith are those who place their faith in Christ. Therefore, they are called "sons of Abraham." Part of the Abrahamic Covenant included both the Gentiles as well as the Jews. The Lord Jesus Christ completely fulfilled all the demands of the Law and therefore secured the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant, for both Jew and Gentile alike. The only means of securing this blessing is faith in Jesus Christ!

Abram is the pattern of eternal salvation, or the adjustment to the justice of God at salvation. Abram saw himself as a sinner, he saw the cross in the future, and he saw his own sins being judged in Christ. Abram saw the Lord Jesus Christ dying for those sins and God the Father judging them, and he believed in "Jehovah Elohim," God the Son. Notice that Abram did not invite Christ into his heart, get baptized, raise his hand, walk any aisles, or feel sorry for his sins; he simply believed.

Abraham is called *"the Father of circumcision."*

Rom 4:10-12 *"How then was it reckoned? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be reckoned to them, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised."*

Abram is the source, the originator of the new race of Jews, and this is his title for the beginning of a new race, the new racial species that began at the moment he received circumcision.

The third fatherhood of Abram is found in Gen 17:4-5, our main passage, and in Rom 4:17 where he is called the "father of many nations": *"(as it is written, a father of many nations have I made you) in the sight of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist."* This is a reference to the pattern of *supergrace* and *ultra-supergrace* prosperity, in this case, Abram's sexual prosperity through which he became the father of many Gentile nations, including the nations that would come from the six sons of his future mistress Keturah.

Gen 17:4 *"As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of many [Gentile] nations."*

This verse also emphasizes that when God blesses the mature believer who adjusts to the justice of God, there is blessing for others associated with him and even great historical impact. This is why Sarai became “Sarah” in Gen 17:15 and the second member of the new race. Sarah becomes the mother of the new race, but neither Hagar nor Ishmael ever became a new race. This will result in a division in the camp that will eventually call for separation.

Abram becomes the first Jew; Sarah becomes the second through blessing by association. The new racial species was a blessing from the grace of God, just as the new *spiritual* species in the Church-age, 2Co 5:17, “*Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*” In the history of the human race only two new species have been added:

☐ Israel was added as the new racial species; the Jew is racially different from all the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

☐ The Church is the new spiritual species.

There are some interesting correlations between the two new species. Israel came from procreation, originating with the first Adam. The Church came from the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, as He perpetuated the great power experiment of the Hypostatic Union into the Church-age, His Bride demanding a new spiritual species for the utilization of divine power.

1Co 15:22 *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.*

The new spiritual species originates from regeneration and the mechanics of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The new racial species of Israel had to be perpetuated through procreation, while in the Church-age the new spiritual species of the Royal Family of God is perpetuated through the baptism of the Spirit at the point of salvation. In both cases, *birth* is involved, the birth of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah, and being born again through regeneration and the baptism of the Spirit.

Abram and Sarai are a new race, and Hagar and Ishmael belong to the old Semitic race, being related to the Arabs, and here is the beginning of the Mid-East Crisis. The Apostle Paul taught that this represented the works of the flesh (Ishmael, the human solution) versus the works of the Spirit (Isaac, the divine promise).

Gal 4:29-31 *But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. But what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman. So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.”*

Israel has both a racial and a spiritual election. The racial election of Israel is Abraham’s physical seed based on procreation and genetics. The Jew as the newest race in history has the genes of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. However, the election of Abraham’s *spiritual* seed is based on regeneration. Born-again Jews have both a racial and spiritual election. The spiritual election of Abraham’s seed is related to Abraham’s salvation, the pattern for salvation in the Old Testament.

Gen 15:6 *Abraham believed in the Lord and it was credited to his account for righteousness.*

No one was ever saved by keeping the Law, even in the Old Testament. People were saved in the Old Testament as they are now, although they knew the object of their faith by a different name; they were looking forward to the Cross, whereas we look back on the Cross. The object of faith in the New Testament is Jesus Christ; the object of faith in the Old Testament was the Lord, Jehovah. Both refer to the same Person, God the Son, but in different languages.

The election of the Church, the Royal Family of God, is strictly spiritual and invisible, a part of every Church-age believer’s *portfolio of invisible assets*. It removes all environmental, genetic, and volitional handicaps; we are all equal “in Christ.” God created each of these new species for a historical impact—Israel for a visible historical impact in the Old Testament (the Age of Israel) and in the Millennium as a client nation, and the Church for an invisible historical impact during the times of the Gentiles.

Each new species is a witness for the prosecution in Satan's appeal trial, which is coterminous with human history. God uses Israel in the *trial* phase of Old Testament history; He uses the Church in the *rebuttal* phase of New Testament history.

In the trial phase all admissible evidence is presented before the judge, or in some cases the jury. In our doctrine, the trial phase begins with the fall of man in the Garden and continues until the beginning of the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union. Human history was begun and mankind created in order to duplicate the conditions of the prehistoric angelic conflict. This provided the evidence and precedence for Satan's appeal trial during human history. The fall of man in the Garden of Eden even duplicates the fall of Satan in the Garden of God, both occurring in perfect environment.

The trial phase in the court of appeals is essentially Old Testament history. Man was given the opportunity to choose for or against God, with one command from God; only one thing was forbidden. With the fall of Adam, Satan became the ruler of planet earth and from this position presents the defense in the historical appeal trial of all fallen angels, 2Co 4:4; he is the god of this world. The courtroom is planet earth because it was on planet earth that the angelic conflict originally took place. According to Eze 28, at one time Satan led all the angels on planet earth in worshipping God.

The human race provides evidence, arguments, and precedents in the appeal trial whether winners or losers. God entered His evidence by creating man just as the angels were created—innocent (or perfect) with the potential to love and worship God through *right decisions*, as well as the potential to become imperfect through *wrong decisions*. Human history provides circumstances and options similar to those of angelic history before man's creation. For example, Satan had been created in perfect innocence; Adam was created in perfect innocence. The angels have free will; man has free will. Adam freely and deliberately chose to follow the pattern of arrogance that characterized Satan's original revolution. Therefore, the fall of Adam duplicates the fall of Satan.

The rebellion of Satan in the Garden of God resulted in the fall of angelic creatures, Rev 12:4a. The rebellion of Adam in the Garden of Eden resulted in the fall of mankind, Rom 5:12. In angelic history, God provided a decision-making process by which angels could express non-meritorious positive volition. Through the exercise of their free will, angelic creatures are divided into two categories—elect and fallen angels, Rev 12:7, 1Ti 5:21, Mat 25:41, Mar 8:38. The Bible does reveal a form of reconciliation for angels, Col 1:20, Phi 2:10, Heb 2:2.

Likewise, God provided salvation for all mankind so that man can express non-meritorious positive volition through faith in Christ, Joh 3:16. Through the exercise of free will mankind is divided into two categories, believers and unbelievers, Joh 3:36.

The formal presentation of the case begins with the prosecution presenting its case, followed by the defense presenting its case in the trial phase (Old Testament history and the new racial species, the Jew), and then the rebuttal phase (New Testament history and the new spiritual species, the Church). Human history is basically a courtroom trial, where we are witnesses before the angels, testifying to God's justice. This is brought out by many passages and principles from the Word of God.

Job 2:3 And the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to ruin him without cause."

1 Cor 4:9 For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.

1Pe 1:12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.

The chief antagonist in the angelic conflict is called "Satan" or the "devil." In fact, his title of "*ha Satan*" in Hebrew means an attorney who slanders and gets away with it because of some legal loophole; it also means an adversary. He possesses this title because in human history he functions as an attorney

in a courtroom presenting his case and making accusations against others. In the Greek, his name is “*diabolos*” (devil), which has the same meaning—an adversary, an attorney in opposition in law, or a slanderer. This is why we see Satan constantly bringing accusations against believers into the Supreme Court of Heaven.

Rev 12:10b For the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night.

The Mysteries behind the Similarities between Israel and the Church Part 2

04/07/02

We are noting the similarities between Israel as new *racial* species and the Church as the new spiritual species. So far we have seen that God created each of these new species for historical impact. Israel was created for a *visible* historical impact in the Old Testament (age of Israel) and in the Millennium through their client nation function. The Church was created for an *invisible* historical impact during the Church-age and the times of the Gentiles.

Israel is certainly the center of controversy in the world today, this is important for us to note because of two reasons: First, because we need to observe the times we are living in. Our Lord told His disciples this in Mat 24 when they asked Him to tell them of the time of His return. Here our Lord begins to reveal some of the signs that would take place before His second coming. He mentions a few of them beginning in Mat 24:4-7 *And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, I am the Christ and will deceive many. And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not frightened, for {those things} must take place, but {that} is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes."*

We also studied Daniel 12 concerning the coming of The Lord Jesus Christ for the second time and we saw that explosion of travel and education would take place, Dan 12:4, *"Keep this prophecy a secret; seal it up so that it will not be understood until the end times, when travel and education shall be vastly increased!"* In all of history, the vast increase in travel has come just in the last half century with the explosion of both ground and air transportation. We are told of a new world order in, Rev 13. Increased centralization of world financial and political power is part of the groundwork to the soon-coming world power system of the Antichrist, who will be the incarnation of Satan and who will deceive most of the world.

So, it is important for us to note that Israel is the center of controversy in the world today because we need to observe the times we are living in. Secondly, we are getting ready for the next two dispensations, the Tribulation and the Millennium, both of which focus in on the Jew, the new racial species. The Lord Jesus Christ taught that only those who have spiritual illumination and discernment from the Holy Spirit could hope to understand the trends and meanings of history. In Mat 16, the Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven, but He answered by telling them, *You can read the signs of the weather in the sky, but because of spiritual blindness you cannot read the signs of the times.*

Israel is the new *racial* species and they are getting ready for being the center of the next two dispensations, the Tribulation and the Millennium. The United States is at present God's client nation representing the Church or the new spiritual species in the present dispensation, the Church-age. Israel's future as a part of the Abrahamic covenant is given in the Bible in far more accuracy and preciseness than what current day Media can give us, Zec 12:1-9.

We have been noting that each new species is also a witness for the prosecution in Satan's appeal trial in the angelic conflict. We have noted the basic premise that a trial has three phases.

- ② First, there is the formal presentation of the case: the prosecution presents its case, followed by the defense presenting its case. In the angelic conflict the prosecution is God. The defense is Satan and the fallen angels! The formal presentation of Satan's appeal trial corresponds to Old Testament history with basically the Jews as a race and Israel as a nation as the center of the conflict. The trial phase begins with the fall of man in the garden and continues until the beginning of the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union.

- ② Next is the rebuttal phase where the rebuttal arguments of the prosecution [God] followed by the rebuttal arguments of the defense [Satan] are heard.
- ② Finally comes the closing argument and summary, first by the prosecution [God] and then by the defense [Satan].

The fact that human history is similar to what we call a courtroom trial is brought out by many passages and principles from the word of God. The fact that an appeal was filed with God is presumed from the lapse of time between the sentence of fallen angels (Mat 25:41) in eternity past and the execution of that sentence at the termination of human history (Rev 20:10). Between the *passing* of the sentence in eternity past and the *execution* of that sentence at the end of the Millennium, an appeal trial is occurring in human history. Any believer can be a vital part of that appeal trial. This is why we have the doctrine of angelic observation, Luk 15:7,10; 1Ti 3:16; 1Co 4:9; Eph 3:10; 1Ti 5:21; 1Pe 1:12.

In the Old Testament, God basically used the new racial species, the Jew as His witness. In the New Testament, God uses the new spiritual species, the Church, as His witness. In the Old Testament, God basically called upon the new racial species, the Jew, to bring glory to Him. This is why in Hebrews chapter 11 we have God's hall of fame for the Old Testament believers. Verses 33 – 40 tell of them and things they accomplished by means of doctrine resident in their soul, their spiritual preparation. These verses tell of how these believers *conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness or justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions and quenched the power of fire*. It says that these Jewish witnesses *quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong*, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others experienced mockings and scourgings, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill treated they wandered in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. But the Word of God says that *And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect*.

God foresaw and provided a better thing for us in order that without us (believers in the present dispensation) they would not be perfected or completed. This means that they would not receive their resurrection bodies before us. As Church age believers, by means of the rapture, the resurrection or translation of all believers of the Mystery age, will precede these heroes of past dispensations in resurrection, 1Co 15:23, 1Th 4:16-17. Although they preceded us chronologically in history, the Church-age believer will precede them in resurrection, this is the plan and the grace of God!

Heb 11:40-12:1, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect. Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

The Greek word for witnesses is *martus* and it means a witness in a legal sense, to testify as eyewitnesses or of a character reference for one being questioned. It refers to those, who after our Lord's example, have proved the strength and genuineness of their faith in Christ by undergoing suffering or even death.

Heb 12:1-3 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses [Old Testament winners from the new racial species, the Jew] surrounding us, let us [New Testament spiritual species, the church] also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, be concentrating on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down

at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.

We have used the term “Dispensations” which are divine categories of human history; therefore, both the divine outline and the divine interpretation of human history. They are the vehicle by which believers living at a specific time in history can orient to God’s will, plan, and purpose for their lives. God’s plan is not the same for every dispensation, in fact, the plan is quite different in each dispensation. We do not sacrifice animals like they did in the Old Testament, we are not under the Mosaic Law, etc. A Christocentric dispensation, of which there are only two in human history, is where Christ lives inside of man, these are the dispensations of the hypostatic union and the Church-age. This is why we read in 1Ti 3:16, *And by common confession great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Beheld by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.* These two dispensations or periods of time are when God presents His case and reveals His justice and righteousness and love. His justice is revealed by His fairness in dealing with the fall of mankind and by judging sin. His righteousness is revealed by the fact that He was willing to forsake His own Son while judging sin. His love is revealed by the fact that He offered salvation to anyone who would believe upon The Lord Jesus Christ. This means that there are two categories of main witnesses, a third which is not needed but added by God, is Christian marriage. Our Lord and the invisible heroes of the Church-age are the two main witnesses for the prosecution in this trial. Remember that the laws of evidence found in the Bible demand investigation of each accusation. Legitimate evidence is based on two or three witnesses being interrogated independently and agreeing to their testimony.

There are similarities between the two new species, both the racial Jew and the new spiritual species, the church, originates from a category of biblical death. Israel originated from Abraham’s sexual death, Rom 4:17 21; Heb 11:11 12.

The church originates from the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the union with the substitutionary spiritual death of Christ on the cross. It’s also interesting to note that each new species was formed from a significant event in history connected with circumcision. The new racial species is related to the circumcision of Abraham at age 99. The new spiritual species is created through circumcision as well but it is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit at salvation which began on the day of Pentecost. The baptism of the Spirit at salvation and the resultant positional sanctification is the only circumcision of the Church Age.

Col 2:11, *And in Him [positional truth and sanctification with Christ] you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;*

This verse should be translated *by the renunciation of the body or the flesh* -referring to the old sin nature which indwells the body. The phrase *by the circumcision of Christ* refers to your retroactive positional truth. This means that the day that you believed, you were identified with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection.

Col 2:12-13, *having been buried with Him not in baptism but by means of the baptism [of the Spirit], in which [baptism, that is the spiritual baptism] you were also raised up with Him [our current positional truth] through faith in not the working but in the operational power of God who raised Him from the dead. And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh [our OSN, which inevitably we need to be cut off from], He [God the Father] made you alive together with Him [TL]C and our positional sanctification], having forgiven us all of our transgressions,*

This means that the spiritual circumcision of being entered into union with Christ is the sign of the new spiritual species, “a circumcision made or performed without human hands, as Col 2:11 says.

Physical circumcision was cutting off of a part of the flesh as a symbol of a covenant

relationship with God and His people. In Col 2:11, spiritual circumcision is “removal of, not a part of the body, but, the entire body of the flesh” or the OSN. “The body of the flesh” is the physical body controlled by the old sin nature that everyone possesses and the removal of it is positional truth, the truth that arises as a result of the believer being placed in Christ by the Spirit’s baptizing work.

Because the sin nature was judged by Christ in His death, so the believer by virtue of his union and identification with Christ shares that “removal” that Christ accomplished, just as he shares Christ’s fullness and is declared to be “complete” in Him, Col 2:10. So the believer’s circumcision is not only a spiritual reality consisting in the putting off of the body of the flesh; it is more precisely Christ’s circumcision, effected by Him and imputed to the believer. Our Lord’s circumcision has no reference to His physical circumcision, Luk 2:21, when He was eight days old, but is a meaningful term that the apostle applies to Christ’s death towards the entire sin nature. There is no sin nature without the male phallus because it is the male phallus that is the instrument that passes down the old sin nature to both the male and female.

The important definition to note in Col 2:11 is the phrase “*the removal of the flesh*” which is literally the “cutting away” of the flesh. Remember one of the meanings behind circumcision is that fact that it was a ritual which was related to Abraham’s spiritual growth. Circumcision represented the ultimate expression of spiritual growth in the life of Abraham. Because he had grown up spiritually, he was ready to become the father of the Jewish race. However, under the principle of the uniqueness of the Church-age, our spiritual circumcision is based upon the fact that we do not have to wait to become a mature believer like Abraham did, because we are in union with Christ and we share in His circumcision.

Spiritual circumcision applies to every member of the body of Christ. It does not imply eradication of the flesh in this life but it does indicate that by union with Christ the believer in time is delivered from the power and the authority of the OSN. Our flesh, or our OSN has been cut off positionally from us at the moment of salvation. This is why we have such commands and directions as in Rom 8:3-4, *For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.* At the moment of salvation, spiritual circumcision means that we were positionally cut off from the flesh or the OSN. Therefore, the apostle warns us in Rom 8:8, *and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.* This does not refer to sin but human good performed by the flesh. No matter how hard we try and how good the deeds may appear on the outside, we can never please God when you operate in your flesh because our flesh is dead! It was crucified with Christ on the cross and the only thing that our dead flesh can produce is dead works.

We have a responsibility and we have an obligation which Paul defines for us in Rom 8:12-13, *So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh, For if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

The apostle Paul gives us the reason why we had to have a spiritual circumcision or be separated from our flesh in Gal 5:17, *For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.* All believers have a circumcision and this circumcision relates to the OSN, our circumcision says that never again are we to depend on the OSN. When we understand how circumcision relates to retroactive positional truth, then we will take the same position that God took with regard to His plan. There is nothing that man can do, no plan that man can dream up, no thinking, no doing, no action, no giving up of anything, no taking on anything, no energy of the flesh, that is a part of the plan of God. The tragedy of our day is that Christianity in it’s apostasy is strictly energy of the flesh, human gimmicks, human good. They

were all rejected at the cross and all rejected at the point of salvation with the spiritual circumcision when you were entered into union with Christ.

When this is not understood, we have all the nonsense of salvation by works, which is a false doctrine that rejects God's grace policy in the provision of eternal salvation for the human race. Salvation by works rejects the total helplessness of mankind under real spiritual death. Real spiritual death not only means separation from God at birth and total depravity, but it also means helplessness to do anything about our status quo. Salvation by works makes the distinction between Christianity and religion. In Christianity, mankind is eternally saved through the work of God., Eph 2:8, *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and not of yourself, the gift from God.* God the Father planned it, God the Son executed it on the cross, and God the Holy Spirit reveals it. In religion, man seeks to gain the approbation of God through some category of human works, self sacrifice, personality, or energy of the flesh. Always remember that Christianity is not a religion. In Christianity, God does the work and man is the beneficiary apart from any merit or any works.

The Doctrine of the Abrahamic Covenant, Part 1

4/14/02

Gen 17:5 *"No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations."*

He is no longer Abram which meant "the father of high places," this is the name that his father had given to him and it meant a worshipper of the moon god who was called Allah as we have noted. Abram also means father of high and windy places, which in effect means father of nothing. But that's all changed; Abram shall become Abraham. The father of nothing is going to become the father of something; a new race. The name change signifies Abram's advance to ultra supergrace, and prepares the way for Abraham's ultra supergrace blessings.

Gen 17:6 *"And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you."*

Not only the new race called the Jew and the new nation, Israel, but also this is a reference to the Arabic nations descended from Abram through Hagar and Keturah. He will have seven bastard sons who will become some of the greatest of the Arab nations. Verse 6 refers to sexual prosperity that as a specific part of Abram's blessing. Abraham had everything but the one thing he truly desired, sexual prosperity. There is a basic concept to keep in mind regarding Gen 17:5-6, only God can turn cursing into blessing and that means the justice of God must be free to act before cursing can be turned into blessing.

Turning cursing into blessing is a divine monopoly, man does not have the ability to solve his problems; only God can do that.

Abram goes from the father of nothing to the father of many through God's grace which is only administered under the non-meritorious principle of adjustment to the justice of God. Apart from the adjustment to the justice of God, there is no possibility of justice fulfilling justice in grace blessing, there is no possibility of cursing being turned to blessing. Man can only turn cursing into cursing, and only God can turn cursing into blessing. Man does not have the talent, ability, wisdom, power, authority or anything in his makeup to turn cursing into blessing, this belongs only to God. As long as man tries to solve his problems cursing is added to cursing, hopelessness is intensified. God's grace function and man's work function are mutually exclusive.

As long as Abram tried to solve his own problem, the whirlwind merely intensified, and during those thirteen silent years, he stopped trying and God took over.

In verse 7, we see the Abrahamic covenant, *"And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you."* We see the covenant again in Gen 12:1-3, *Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

Gen 12:7 *And the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land."*

So he built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him.

We see it again in Gen 15:13-18. Over and over again the Lord has repeated this covenant, because repetition is the only way Abraham or for that matter any one of can learn. Therefore we have begun a review of

The Doctrine of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Point One in the doctrine is a definition of the Abrahamic covenant; *an unconditional covenant (agreement, disposition) between God as party of the first part in favor of Abraham and his progeny as the party of the second part.* This is a justice covenant from the justice of God and because it is

unconditional there are no strings attached. This covenant is a deposition made by God in favor of Abraham and like all covenants, it is a part of the divine decrees. The source of this blessing to Abraham and his descendants is not because of any merit in Abraham, but because of Abraham's adjustment to the justice of God and the fact that God is pleased. Therefore, the justice of God is free to fulfill this covenant to Abraham at the point of his adjustment to the justice of God through the attainment of his spiritual maturity.

Point Two: The Original Declaration of the Covenant, Gen 12:1-3. Verse one emphasizes Abraham's necessary isolation and separation from Ur for the fulfillment of the covenant, for the development of the new race, and for the development of his spiritual advance, plus separation from his family to avoid personal distraction. The corrected translation of Gen 12:1-3 *Now JHWH [Jesus Christ] had spoken to Abram, "Go with reference to yourself from your land, and from your relatives, and from the place of your birth, to a land which I will cause you to see; And I will manufacture from you a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will cause your person to become great; therefore, you will become a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you, but the one who despises you, I will curse, and all the races shall be blessed through you."*

Verse 3 has three clauses:

1. Blessing by association.
2. A curse on anti-Semitism.
3. Messianic blessing clause.

Point Three: The Land Promise in the Abrahamic Covenant, Gen 13:14-16. The Palestine Covenant.

Gen 13:14-16 And the Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which you see, I will give to you and to your progeny forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if anyone can count the dust of the earth, then your descendants also can be counted."

In Gen 15:18-21 the dimensions are given, *On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: the Kenite [they lived in Saudi Arabia] and the Kenizzite [the lived in Jordan] and the Kadmonite [they lived Syria]. and the Hittite [Northern Syria] and the Perizzite [Judah] and the Rephaim [Jordan] and the Amorite [Iraq and Lebanon] and the Canaanite [western Syria and Palestine] and the Girgashite [West of Jordan] and the Jebusite [Jerusalem]."* During the Millennium, the land of Israel will extend from Turkey to Syria in the north, west to the Mediterranean Sea, south to East Africa, to include all of Saudi Arabia, and east to the Euphrates River. God will give Israel more than they could ever conquer or hold in Old Testament times. This covenant guarantees the entire Middle East as a land grant to Israel forever. We can begin to see why most of this region are anti-Semitic and why Satan promotes these nations to hate Israel. The Jews do not have any right to this land until Jesus Christ returns at the Second Advent.

Point Four: The covenant was confirmed to Isaac, Gen 26:3-4. This had to be done to prove the covenant would not be fulfilled through the line of Ishmael, this is the doctrine of blessing by association.

Gen 26:1-5 Now there was a famine in the land, besides the previous famine that had occurred in the days of Abraham. So Isaac went to Gerar, to Abimelech king of the Philistines. And the Lord appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land of which I shall tell you. Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham. And I

will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws.”

Point Five: The covenant was confirmed to Abraham’s grandson Jacob, Gen 35:12. This is why the title of Jesus Christ is so important as *“the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”*

Gen 35:12 *“And the land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, And I will give the land to your descendants after you.”*

Point Six: The covenant was confirmed at the time of the Exodus, Exo 6:2-8. This was the time for the formation of the Jewish nation.

Exo 6:1-4 *Then the Lord said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for under compulsion he shall let them go, and under compulsion he shall drive them out of his land. God spoke further to Moses and said to him, “I am the Lord; and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, Lord, I did not make Myself known to them” and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, And I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they sojourned. And furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage; and I have remembered My covenant. Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am the Lord.”*

God Almighty is El Shaddai, the many-breasted God, referring to His many grace provisions. This covenant was the basis on which God delivered the Jews, a race in slavery, and caused them to become a nation. Six hundred years after the death of Abraham there are still blessings to the Jews, all from blessing to one mature believer.

Point Seven: The Mechanics of the Abraham Covenant Demanded Ultra-supergrace Sexual Prosperity, Gen 17:1-7; Rom 4:13-18. There is blessing in every generation to the Jews of that generation where the omnipotence and logistical grace support of God are emphasized.

Point Eight: Circumcision is the Ritual of Confirmation and Acknowledgment that this is an Unconditional Covenant, Gen 17:9-14; Rom 4:13-18.

Circumcision in Israel is a reminder that God keeps His word. Circumcision means that any Jew, who believes in Christ, will be the recipient of this covenant forever.

Circumcision illustrates the faith-rest drill and Abraham’s dependence on the omnipotence and faithfulness of God.

Point Nine: Amplification of the Covenant is also after Abraham Passes Momentum Testing, Gen 22:17-24.

Gen 22:17-24, *“Indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham lived at Beersheba. Now it came about after these things, that it was*

told Abraham, saying, "Behold, Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: Uz his first-born and Buz his brother and Kemuel the father of Aram and Chesed and Hazo and Pildash and Jidlaph and Bethuel." And Bethuel became the father of Rebekah: these eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother. And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah and Gaham and Tahash and Maacah."

God is obligated to bless us because of the promises He made to Abraham and also why we should be thankful and grateful to Abraham.

Heb 2:14-16 Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. It is important to note why Abraham is mentioned so many times and why God was so pleased with Him.

Gen 22:1 *"Now it came about after these things,"* After all those things mentioned from Gen 11 to Gen 22. In Gen 11:31, he was told to separate from his family and he did not. He was told to leave Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan and he only went as far as Haran and settled there.

- ☒ In Gen 12:4, he finally departed from Haran and entered into the land of Canaan but only after God separated him from his father through death. In Gen 12:5, he took Lot his nephew and came to the land of Canaan.
- ☒ In Gen 12:8, he settled down learned a lot of doctrine and built an altar to the Lord.
- ☒ In Gen 12:9, he went to the Negev, the place of neglecting doctrine.
- ☒ In Gen 12:10, he went to Egypt, the place of total rejection of doctrine.
- ☒ In Gen 12:13, he begged Sarah his wife, to say that she was his sister and he refused to stand up for her.
- ☒ In Gen 13:4, he recovered from his reversionism and got back in fellowship with the Lord.
- ☒ In Gen 13:9, he finally separated from Lot as the Lord commanded him to do.
- ☒ In Gen 14:14, he heard that Lot had been taken captive by some enemies and he led his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and went to rescue Lot.
- ☒ In Gen 14:15, he not only rescued Lot but defeated one of the greatest in the world at that time, the armies of Chedorlaomer.
- ☒ In Gen 14:18, he was blessed by Melchizedek, king of Salem who was a priest of God, for the tremendous victory that he had and he was given one tenth of all that Melchizedek had.
- ☒ In Gen 14:21-23, the king of Sodom offered him millions and Abraham refused it because it was not from God.
- ☒ In Gen 16:2, he made one of the biggest mistakes of his life as the verse says "Abram listened to the voice of Sarai", he went in and got Hagar pregnant.
- ☒ In Gen 16:6, he turned Hagar over to his jealous wife so that she could torture Hagar when he should have been protecting both women from each other.
- ☒ In Gen 17:23, he recovered from his reversionism and went forward with the plan of God trusting God so much that he circumcised the flesh of his foreskin.
- ☒ In Gen 18:23, he tried to intercede for the righteous who were in Sodom and Gomorrah.
- ☒ In Gen 19:29, God destroyed the cities but God remembered Abraham and sent Lot and the righteous ones out of the city before it's destruction.
- ☒ In Gen 21:5, Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.
- ☒ In Gen 21:14, this time the Lord told Abraham to listen to the voice of his wife and send Hagar and Ishmael away because of the way Ishmael kept mocking Isaac.

A lifetime of facing every type of test, succeeding in some and failing in others but consistently taking in doctrine and not letting failures keep him down.

He is a man who went through all of this but, he came to a point where God could give him a final examination that was so important that the entire world will have it on record forever. It is so fantastic that the exam was not necessarily given to test Abraham but to tell the world what happens when a believer finally has so much doctrine in his soul that he thoroughly and completely understands God. To take the life of someone that Abraham loved more than his own life and more than anyone else in life and to receive such a command and never to bat an eye from the time he received the command. God made a promise to him in the Abrahamic covenant, that because of Abraham and his faith, we would all be blessed, blessed because of association!

Gen 22:1, *Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham,*

Here the Hebrew verb is *nissah* which in the piel stem is an intense stem and obviously the test is intense situation. It means to test, to prove, to try. We have not really seen this side of Abraham until now where we will see him as a believer who loved God so much that he received a title that was unique, he was called the friend of God.

2Ch 20:5-7 Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord before the new court, and he said, "O Lord, the God of our fathers, art Thou not God in the heavens? And art Thou not ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? Power and might are in Thy hand so that no one can stand against Thee. Didst Thou not, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before Thy people Israel, and give it to the descendants of Abraham Thy friend forever?"

He was under pressure and what did he do? He offered up Isaac; The challenge was are the blessings more important than the One who gave them?

This is the test! This is the challenge! Who is more important, God, the Giver or the wonderful things He gives to the believer as the believer is blessed in the different stages of spiritual growth. This is the test that every believer in super-grace or spiritual maturity will face. Very few people in all of human history have been tested as Abraham was tested on this occasion. Abraham passed the test and God was pleased and as a result of the covenant between God and Abraham we too share in the blessings.

The Doctrine of the Abrahamic Covenant, Part 2.

04/21/02

As we continue in our study of the Abrahamic Covenant, a review of our first 8 points:

Point One: In the doctrine is a definition of the Abrahamic covenant; an unconditional covenant (agreement, disposition) between God as party of the first part in favor of Abraham and his progeny as the party of the second part.

Point Two: The Original Declaration of the Covenant, Gen 12:1-3.

Point Three: The Land Promise in the Abrahamic Covenant, Gen 13:14-16. The Palestine Covenant.

Point Four: The covenant was confirmed to Isaac, Gen 26:3-4.

Point Five: The covenant was confirmed to Abraham's grandson Jacob, Gen 35:12.

Point Six: The covenant was confirmed at the time of the Exodus, Exo 6:2-8. This was the time for the formation of the Jewish nation.

Point Seven: The Mechanics of the Abraham Covenant Demanded Ultra-supergrace Sexual Prosperity, Gen 17:1-7; Rom 4:13-18.

Point Eight: Circumcision is the Ritual of Confirmation and Acknowledgment that this is an Unconditional Covenant, Gen 17:9-14; Rom 4:13-18.

Point Nine: Amplification of the Covenant is also after Abraham Passes Momentum Testing, Gen 22:17-24.

Gen 22:1-2, Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."

Here we see the attitude of Abraham, the New Testament tells us what that attitude was in Heb 11:17, *By faith or by means of doctrine resident in the soul Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac;* The Greek verb is a perf-act-ind of *prosphero* which means that he offered up the most valuable, the most important thing to him in the world, his uniquely born son, Isaac. Abraham did this with the intent of slaying just as God commanded. The perfect tense of the verb tells us that the action was totally done in the mind of Abraham even though he didn't have to complete it. This shows us that a believer can be blessed even though he has not done certain things because God knows he would have done them given the opportunity. Paul said in 2Co 8:12 *For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a man has, not according to what he does not have.*

Heb 11:17, By means of doctrine resident in the soul Abraham, when he was being tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises went right on offering up his only begotten son; Actually the Greek says *"his uniquely born son,"* and that describes Isaac because he was uniquely born from two people who were sexually dead, his father was 100 years old and his mother, was beyond menopause at age 90. In this sense, Abraham is analogous to God the Father in that he was willing to sacrifice his uniquely born son Isaac. Issac is therefore analogous to The Lord Jesus Christ as one who was innocent. Abraham was willing to do it in order to please God the Father which is the same thing we are told concerning God the Father in Isa 53:10, Isa 53:10, *"But the Lord [God the Father] was pleased To crush Him [Jesus Christ], putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering.*

Abraham had been given a great blessing, the challenge was, are the blessings more important than the One who gave them? This is a challenge and a test that every believer in super-grace or spiritual maturity will face, the same test that anyone with positive volition must take. In Mat 10:37 our Lord said, *"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."*

Heb 11:17-18 By means of doctrine resident in the soul Abraham, when he was being tested, offered up as a sacrifice, Isaac; and he who had received the promises went right on offering up

his only begotten son; it was he [Abraham] to whom it was said, "In Isaac your descendants shall be called." He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead; from which he also received him back as a type.

Very few people in all of human history have been tested as Abraham was tested on this occasion. As we have seen, Abraham took many tests and he passed many of them and failed many of them. But Abraham learned from his failures as well as from his successes. Abraham came to possess a tenacious attitude about the essence of God and he realized the total importance of divine resources and divine essence. The more he learned about his own inabilities, the more he realized from doctrine in his soul, the importance of the ability of God and the essence of God.

In this chapter we see Abraham at his greatest, he is between 125-127 years old. His son Isaac according to Josephus, a Jewish historian, was about 25-27.

Gen 22:1-22, Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."

The phrase *"Take now your son"* is a command and an invitation for Abraham to have the privilege of making a sacrifice for the Lord in the angelic conflict. The phrase in the Hebrew actually says *"Please take now your son"* and denotes the fact that God has respect for Abraham. This is very unusual because God says that there is not even one righteous man among mankind, Rom 3:10-18. In the eyes of God, vanity is the best that man is, Psa 39:5b, *Surely every man at his best is nothing but vanity. Selah.* Man's good deeds are said to be filthy dirty rags, Isa 64:6, *For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment;* Man's head is described for us by God in Isa 1:5-6, *The whole head is sick, And the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head There is nothing sound in it, Only bruises, welts, and raw wounds.* Man's heart is described for us in Jer 17:9, *The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?* There is one thing that God does have definite respect for and we've study it before, God honors His word. Abraham is a man who has maximum doctrine in his soul.

In the phrase *"Take now your son"* we have in the Hebrew "eth-binekha", bin means son, and with the suffix it means "your son" Abraham has two sons, this could be rationalized to mean Ishmael. However, the next word dispels any possibility of getting Ishmael into the picture. Gen 22:2, *And He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac,* The Hebrew phrase used here for "your only son" is "eth-yechidhekha" is equivalent to the Greek word *monogene* meaning uniquely born son. This then is the beginning of a parallel. Isaac was a son who was uniquely born, not like our Lord with the virgin birth, but he was born from two members of the human race who were sexually dead.

Abraham now has to face whether or not the command of God is more important than his love for Isaac. One writer made this statement; "We can never gauge our love by feeling. The only true test of love is how much we are prepared to do for the one to whom we profess it." The Lord said in Joh 14:21, *"He who has My commands [doctrines] and keeps them, he it is who loves Me"* On the surface, this command of God appears to be irrational, a mistake! However, there's an issue here that is not obvious on the surface, the principle of the justice of God! God is fair and His justice is impeccable, He cannot be unfair and He cannot make a mistake. Never in the history of the human race was a believer more occupied with the Giver rather than the gift, than Abraham. He has perfect confidence in the justice of God. Abraham has a confidence that never once in five days questions the justice of God.

Gen 22:2, And He said, "Please take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."

The land of Moriah is the same place that is later called Zion and the mountain of Moriah is the hill on which Solomon built the Temple, 2Ch 3:1. In fact, one of the hills on Moriah is later called Golgotha or

The Skull and we see it later in Luk 23:33, *And when they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left.*

For Abraham, the event that God has commanded is, as with all great spiritual tests, accomplished in total isolation without encouragement or discouragement from friends, relatives or people who might be critical and not understand. The Tester is God, and what other people think, say or advise is absolutely of no consequence. An ultra-supergrace examination or a test when the believer is at spiritual maturity contains many ways to fail and only one way to pass. When it comes to our relationship with the Lord that's what it has to be—only us and Him.

Our relationship with the Lord doesn't have a thing to do with other people it has to do with doctrine in our soul. If we ever reach spiritual maturity, one thing that we shed in a hurry is public opinion or what other people think. People won't understand that attitude, they will be highly insulted that they have not been consulted with. But in spiritual maturity the believer possesses so much doctrine that it's always between them and the Lord and no one else! Even though there may be a lot of people who have their own opinions about what's happening in our life, we answer to God only.

In Gen 22: The burnt offering is a part of understanding the initial adjustment to the justice of God. The burnt offering represents the concept of propitiation and how it takes a sacrifice, the sacrifice of The Lord Jesus Christ and it represents the impeccability of the humanity of Christ being offered up to God the Father for all of our sins. As sins were all poured out upon The Lord Jesus Christ, the justice of God the Father judged our sins being born by Christ and justice was satisfied. For justice to be satisfied, justice has to have something to judge, that's what took place on the cross.

Gen 22:2, And He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go for yourself to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you." This is an invitation for Abraham to have the privilege of making a sacrifice for the Lord and glorifying God in the angelic conflict.

Abraham is spiritually mature and he has adjusted to the justice of God that qualified him for fantastic opportunities and blessings. However, before these fantastic blessings continue, Abraham must have his doctrine tested, this principle of testing found in 1Pe 1:7. The Lord is going to put him through a test which proves whether or not the gifts (blessings) or the Giver is more important to Abraham. The mature believer always places greater emphasis on the Giver rather than the gift. Being occupied with the Giver makes the gift totally and perfectly enjoyable.

No person has ever been honored with such a difficult examination. Remember that God will never test an individual beyond what he is able to bear, 1Co 10:13. Therefore, the very fact that Abraham could bear such a test reveals his spiritual status. In Gen 22 the phrase "*offer him there as a burnt offering*" means killing his son and burning his body. Giving back to the Giver the gift which was given to him approximately 25 years before. Human viewpoint says this is irrational, unreasonable, and doesn't seem to be fair. However, we must remember that God is perfect and only makes perfect decisions. Abraham, as an ultra-supergrace believer can only think of God as fair and perfect in His judgment, if God says do it, there's nothing to do but to do it.

In one of the greatest tests ever given, two men are involved, their relationship to the Lord and the women just waits for the blessing. Sarah doesn't even have to sweat out the five days that Abraham is gone. Five days later she has a better husband than she ever had before. One of the greatest tests that all women must face is the waiting test. In fact, in most cases, it takes a greater person to rest and wait than to get involved with the action. Notice the silence of Sarah illustrates her tremendous poise and trust in her husband as well as in The Lord Jesus Christ. Sarah, as a mature female believer, had that phenomenal ability to wait. Sarah is going to be blessed as never before. Abraham is occupied with Christ, Sarah is occupied with Christ and occupation with Christ is true capacity for life. Sarah is as noble as Abraham in her very own way by not even being mentioned in this passage. In Abraham's most difficult hour she was not a burden to him. When a man is called by

the Lord to do something, he is going to have enough obstacles to deal with as it is, therefore he doesn't need extra burdens from the woman.

Gen 22:3, *"So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him."*

Understanding how everything relates to the righteousness and justice of God is so important to every believer who approaches Spiritual Maturity. Our attitude toward divine essence and especially our attitude toward His justice!

Is God fair?

Is God just?

Many believers have constant set backs because they never answer this concept concerning of the justice of God. Until the believer's life lines up with the justice of God, they will be under discipline until the Lord comes back. So the entire verse again says Gen 22:2, *"And He said, 'Please take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go for yourself to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you or point out to you.'"*

There is no conflict in the soul from such a command when the believer is mature. This command only seems irrational to the believer who has not arrived to the point of maturity. You see Abraham believes that God cannot lie! This is why Heb 11:19 says, *He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead.*

This is why he said in Gen 22:5 to his young men, *"Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and we will return to you."* One thing about the mature believer, he not only understands the justice of God, he understands the authority of God. When God gives a command, obviously God cannot make a mistake and God is in command.

The Doctrine of the Abrahamic Covenant, Part 3

04/28/02

The doctrine of the Abrahamic Covenant is still our subject, and the ninth point we have noted in this study is that *amplification of the covenant is given after Abraham passes momentum testing*, Gen 22:17-24.

Gen 22:3 *So Abraham rose early in the morning...*

Abraham was caused to get up early by the motivation he had from his occupation with the person of Christ. He had maximum *category one* love (toward God), a perfect scale of values, phenomenal maturity, and perfect confidence in the Giver and in His justice and fairness. Even though the gift was obviously being withdrawn by the command to sacrifice his son Isaac, it made no difference in the relationship.

Abraham did not seek counsel from his wife or friends; he did not talk it over with anyone. Divine challenges and commands are only confused when counseling gets involved. When the Word of God speaks of "counselors," it refers to Biblical doctrines residing in the believer's soul, as in Pro 1:5, *"A wise man will hear and increase in learning, and a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel."* The understanding does not come from other people; it comes from God's Word. Abraham received counsel from the Lord, doctrine resident in the soul.

Gen 22:3 *So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey.*

The Hebrew noun "*chamor*," translated "donkey," refers to the highest quality of individual transportation at the time. Abraham had great blessings and the capacity to appreciate them. This is a part of Abraham's blessing for time, and inasmuch as he is occupied with the person of Jesus Christ, the greatest wealth in the world could not destroy his attitude toward the Lord or his spiritual life. It is not the possession of things that can hold you back; it is lack of occupation with the person of Christ. Abraham was able to enjoy what he had, and his motivation and willingness to obey is revealed by the fact that he saddled his own donkey.

Gen 22:3 *So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son.*

The word for "son," "*beno*," means beloved son. This is his most precious gift, his beloved son; however, Abraham is more occupied with the Giver than he is with the gift.

Gen 22:3 *...He split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.*

The Hebrew verb for "arose" is "*quwm*," indicating that everything was done with vigor and with the intent of complete obedience. There was no hesitancy and no evasion; the mature believer assumes the responsibility for his own actions and is decisive in them. He understands the issue and pursues the policy of God with vigor and strength.

Gen 22:3 *So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his ass, and took two of his young slaves with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.*

God sends us no trials or tests, whether great or small, without first preparing us and providing a way of escape that we may be able to bear it. These tests and trials are God's vote of confidence in us with the doctrine we have learned. Abraham recognizes divine authority and obeys without hesitation.

There are many parallels between Isaac and Jesus Christ.

- ☐ The birth of Isaac foreshadows the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Isaac was the child of promise, and more was said about him before his birth than about any other, with the only exception of Abraham's greater Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ☐ Isaac was the child of a miracle; Sarah's womb was "dead," Rom 4:19, and she needed supernatural help, Heb 11:11. This is a foreshadowing of the miraculous virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- ☐ Isaac was also the promised seed and son, Gen 17:16; so also was Jesus Christ, Gen 3:15, Isa 7:14.
- ☐ When Isaac's birth was announced, his mother asked, in Gen 18:13, *"Shall I indeed bear a child, when I am so old?"* to which the answer was returned, *"Is anything too hard for the Lord?"* The striking analogy is seen in the fact that when the angel of the Lord made known to Mary that she was to be the mother of the Savior, she asked in Luk 1:34, *"How can this be, since I am a virgin?"* Then the answer was returned in Luk 1:37, *"For nothing will be impossible with God."*
- ☐ Isaac's name was specified before he was born in Gen 17:19. Before Jesus Christ's birth, His Name too was specified, Mat 1:21.
- ☐ Isaac was declared to be Abraham's uniquely born son whom he loved; our Lord was called the uniquely born Son of God.

Gen 22:4 *On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance.*

There is nothing to indicate that Abraham had anything but complete peace on this three-day journey. There is no change in the happiness of the mature believer in the midst of the greatest disasters in life. Tranquility and peace is not freedom from pressure, but rather *blessing in the midst of pressure*. Doctrine resident in the soul provides the basis for victory over the adverse circumstances of life, and God guarantees the mature believer that all things will work together for good.

God had informed Abraham that he would tell him which mountain was the appointed location of the sacrifice, and now in Gen 22:4 Abraham suddenly recognizes the chosen place, which was to be the scene of the ultimate act on the part of a believer, proving that the Giver is more important than the gift.

Gen 22:5 begins to show the dynamics of maximum application of doctrine to experience.

Gen 22:5 *And Abraham said to his young men [slaves], "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and return to you."*

Abraham was surrounded by dependable and trustworthy servants, which speaks well of his treatment of his slaves. The command to remain at the foot of the mountain with the *chamor* ass indicates Abraham's trust of his slaves. The noun translated "lad" is *"wehanna'ar,"* and it does not mean a "lad" at all; it means that he is a young man.

Notice that Abraham says that *we will worship and we will return*. Abraham knew the command, and he had complete confidence in the Lord. He knew the covenant that was given to him stated, *"In Isaac shall your seed be called,"* Gen 17:19. We read in Heb 11:19, *"He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead."* If he really is going to kill Isaac according to the divine instructions, it is obvious to Abraham that the Lord will have to raise him from the dead.

To the slaves this is a very simple thing; as far as they are concerned, the father and the son are going to the top of mountain to worship the Lord there. Competent leadership made it simple.

Gen 22:5 *And Abraham said to his young slaves, "Stay here with the ass, and I and the young man will go yonder; and we will worship and we will return to you."*

Note that Abraham is dogmatic in his thinking, when he says, *"We will return to you."* This clear, dogmatic thinking is based on his tremendous confidence in the justice of God. Another principle to note here is that those in positions of authority do not have to give explanations for what they do. In fact, in many cases, if they give reasons and explanations, they violate the rights and privacy of others. This is why we must learn to obey without questioning authority.

Abraham believed in the doctrine of resurrection and therefore applied it to this situation. He believed that God keeps His Word and therefore had a dogmatic confidence that Isaac would come back down that hill with him, because it is impossible for God to lie. This relates to Rom 4:2-3, *"For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness."*

Abraham was justified in two ways:

- ☐ Justification before God by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, Gen 15:6.

☐ Justification before man, Jam 2:21.

As a result of passing the test of Gen 22, he was vindicated before man, identified as a mature believer, and called a friend of God. He had said that he and Isaac were going up the mountain to worship, and the utilization of doctrine is the highest form of worship.

Someday you will be called upon to use a maximum amount of doctrine in a crisis, and it will be your greatest moment of worship. The high point in your life is that time when you will make the most use of the doctrine in your soul. Learning doctrine is not the end; faithfulness in learning will make doctrine the working object of your faith. You will then produce works that have eternal repercussions. These are the gold, silver, and precious stones at the judgment seat of Christ.

The real power of Christianity is found in doctrine. Love for the Lord Jesus Christ is based upon the believer's attitude toward Bible doctrine, Joh 14:23, "*Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word.'*" The intake of doctrine is the basic concept of worship. The application of that doctrine is the overt, visible justification by works, Jam 2:21, "*Was not Abraham our father justified [vindicated] by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?*" The works are merely what is seen, but it is the doctrine that produces the works! James continues in Jam 2:22-23, "*You see that doctrine was working with his works, and as a result of the works, the doctrine was completed [fully developed], and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness [salvation, Gen 15:6], and he was called the 'friend of God [justification by works, 2Ch 20:7, Isa 41:8].'*"

Abraham did not go up the hill to advance or improve his spiritual life, nor to get blessed or make points with God. He did so to worship God; there was no thought of advancement or gaining anything from God. The test was not designed to promote Abraham but to reveal how much he had *already* been promoted. The mature believer does what he does and gives what he gives, without seeking advancement or promotion from God. Abraham went up that hill to demonstrate who and what God is. He is called the friend of God in three passages, and whether the Lord gives him a pat on the head or not is not the issue. This is why he had such a great, intimate relationship with God.

The mature believer lives in the principle of Ecc 9:10, "*Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might.*" The friend of God has a perfect happiness in life and a remarkable promotion and blessing in eternity, which is indescribable. God tests His friends in ways that He would never test anyone else.

Under the *first mention principle*, Abraham portrays the true meaning of substitutionary sacrifice. Isaac is a young man, probably 25 years old, and he recognizes the authority of doctrine and is willing to offer himself on the altar. His relationship with his father has taught him to be as obedient to the will of God as his father is. Isaac becomes a perfect picture of the uniquely born Son of God offering Himself for our sins on the Cross. The sacrifice on the mountain was to take place between the father and the son only. When God judged our sins in His Son, it was a private matter between Him and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gen 22:6 *And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son.*

Remember that Isaac is approximately 25 years old and this is important because he is the stronger of the two, and he willingly allows his father to put him on the altar. Most young men at this age would never go along with this. The volition of Isaac, the potential sacrifice, is definitely involved. We can see what kind of respect for authority he has, not only for the authority of God, but also for the authority of his father, who is communicating the orders. The positive volition of Isaac foreshadows the human volition of the Lord Jesus Christ in facing the Cross, Joh 10:17, "*For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.*"

Like our Lord Jesus Christ, Isaac was willing to do his father's will. Just as Abraham laid the wood on his son, so the Lord Jesus Christ carried the burden of our sins. This entire sequence of

events portrays an act of justice whereby God the Father would judge all sins as the Lord Jesus Christ bore them on the Cross.

The Doctrine of the Abrahamic Covenant, Part 4

05/05/02

We are studying Point 9 in the Doctrine of the Abrahamic Covenant which deals with the fact that the Amplification of the Covenant is given after Abraham Passes Momentum Testing.

Gen 22:1-6, Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you." So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young slaves with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood himself for the burnt offering, and he arose and went to the place of which the God had told him. On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. And Abraham said to his young slaves, "Stay here with the chamor ass [the finest means of transportation in the ancient world], and I and the young man will go yonder; and we will worship and we will return to you." And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together.

All the ingredients for judgment are there, the wood represents humanity, 1Co 3:12, the fire represents wrath and judgment, as in Num 11:1, while the knife represents the crucifixion of the flesh, as in Pro 23:2.

In verse 7, Isaac breaks the silence, *Gen 22:7-8, And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" And Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son."* Abraham's intention has not wavered and he still has his priorities straight. Abraham knows that God has the power of resurrection and resuscitation. The Giver has the ability after the sacrifice is made to bring the son right back to life so that they can go down the hill together. Therefore, Abraham never loses sight of the Giver and that is why he is called a friend of God. As a mature believer, Abraham is so occupied with the Lord that nothing becomes a distraction. Abraham has tremendous security because he knows the Giver can never leave him or forsake him. And, if the Giver gives an order like this he has a reason for it and Abraham doesn't even question the order. Wisdom is not in questioning the order but in knowing the One who gave the order and obeying it.

Gen 22:8 And Abraham said, "God [Elohim] will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son."

When the time comes, Abraham will give Isaac the whole picture, but this isn't the time. This is Elohim's command and Elohim will provide for Himself.

Everything must be properly prepared and then Isaac will hear the words and then exercise his option. The way that he exercises his option will also indicate the perfect illustration of our Lord Jesus Christ when He said in Luk 22:42 *"Yet not My will, but Thine be done."* So once Abraham mentioned Elohim to Isaac that was enough for Isaac who as a believer, understood the answer in terms of the doctrine of divine essence that Elohim must provide the sacrifice, Elohim has the power to see to it. The sacrifice is God's business, for the mature believer, the issue is always what the Lord thinks, what the Lord says, the Lord is always the issue. Since God is to be the judge, God must select the sacrifice. In a burnt offering God judges the offering and when it says that it is a sweet smell, Lev 1, that means the offering was acceptable to God.

The sacrifice must be perfect to receive the transfer of our sins to Himself and the subsequent judgment of those sins. There are two facets to the sacrifice, the transfer of the sins to the innocent victim and then the judgment of the innocent victim. There has to be an innocent victim for this one time in history to demonstrate that when the reality of the Cross comes, there will be an innocent human victim. The lamb and the other type of sacrifices merely portray the human victim that God

will accept. God will only accept one human victim, and that is the impeccable Lord Jesus Christ as the God man, therefore, the innocent lamb represents the impeccable lamb of God. The principle that Elohim will provide the lamb is a correct principle because God the Father will provide the lamb, the unique Son of God, Joh 1:29, *"Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

Abraham accepted God's authority and his son Isaac accepted his authority. When his father answered his question, the answer was good enough for Isaac.

Gen 22:8, *And Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together.*

The word for *together* is *jachdaw* which means that they were in harmony, united for a mutual purpose. It illustrates the perfect harmony of God the Father and God the Son in the provision of our so great salvation. The principle also is that the grace of the cross is the basis for the principle of harmony among believers.

This passage also teaches us that only God can provide or supply what will satisfy Himself and only God has the right to say what will satisfy Himself. It is the Lord who is to be satisfied not us. In our relationship with grace, God has all the rights and we have none. As with salvation, so with the entire plan of God, we are not consulted as to what pleases us, our responsibility is to enter into what pleases God. God devises the plan and we can only advance in perfect harmony to do His will. Just as Abraham and Isaac advanced up the hill in perfect harmony so we must advance in the perfect harmony of doctrine resident in the soul of each believer. Harmony doesn't mean that we have all arrived at the same point spiritually, far from it. Harmony means we are all adjusting to the justice of God and taking in Bible doctrine. There are three factors to Christian harmony.

- ☐ First is salvation adjustment, we must all be born again.
- ☐ Secondly, that we get back in fellowship as quickly as possible through rebound so that we don't use our old sin nature on someone else.
- ☐ Thirdly, the advance in harmony comes when we are all positive toward doctrine.

Gen 22:8, *And Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself..."*

God alone would supply that which would satisfy Himself. Nothing of man could ever meet the divine requirements. Nothing that man provides could ever satisfy God. If sacrifice for sin was ever to be found, God Himself must supply it.

The "lamb" was not only provided by God but it was also for God. It was for His sake first! There are many things that we are told about in the Bible that God does for His sake. The restoration of our soul, David said in Psa 23:3, *He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.* It's because of Who God is and for "his sake" that He restores my soul and guides me in paths of righteousness. God pardons us and forgives us because of the fact that God is holy and can have nothing to with sin but also He cannot leave us or forsake us, therefore because of that, for His name's sake He will pardon our iniquity! God wipes away our sins and doesn't even remember them and He does so for His own sake (see also Eze chapter 20).

Gen 22:9, *Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there, and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood*

.It is the epitome of spiritual growth to do the will of God regardless of how it appears to us. Whether it appears unreasonable, unfair, or unexplainable! If we are adjusted to the justice of God through the three stages, salvation, rebound, and spiritual growth, then the justice of God can do nothing but bless us!

It's important to see that word *el-hammaqom*, translated "to the place", referring to only one place where this could be done, any other place and it won't work out right. This place is located near some brush and right behind where the altar is going to be built there is a ram stuck in the brush.

There's only one place to be and that is where the sacrifice or the substitute will be located and no other place will do!

Abraham entered into reversionistic distraction from being in the wrong geographical location: Gen 12:10?20, he went to Egypt; and in Gen 20:1?18, Gerar. And both times he got himself in jams! David's real problems began by being in the wrong geographical location, operation Bathsheba, 2Sa 11:1! In the life of Abraham, we noted that the change of geographical location was the basis for separating Abraham from his family and relatives. The only way to know positively what the will of God is for our life is to understand Bible doctrine and metabolize it. We cannot know the will of God apart from knowing the word of God. If believers are doing what God wants them to do, then they will eventually wind up in the place where God wants them to be.

If we get out of God's geographical location for our life, there will be no divine revelation. There are environments and human associations which are detrimental, hazardous, to the concentration of the word of God. The believer must separate from hindrances and distractions to concentrate on doctrine, whether the hindrances are geographical or personal, friend and social distractions which would keep you from the daily function of perception, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine. There's only one place to be and that's the place where the provision is, that's the place of wisdom. The key is the place, *el-hammaqom*, which indicates a specific place where God wanted the burnt offering. Every detail of life is involved in being in the right place at the right time. This is why you cannot afford to miss the doctrine that your pastor-teacher communicates on a daily basis.

Gen 22:9, Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there, and arranged the wood,

The verb for *arranged* is *arak* which means to arrange or set in order. Abraham does it right, everything is in order. God has one way of doing something and that is the right way. Only a right thing done in a right way is right! The right place is the predesigned plan of God, the right way is operating under the power of God the Holy Spirit.

This is why details are given precisely and accurately as a part of the Word of God to reveal to us the importance of a right thing being done in a right way!

Heb 8:5 says Just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, See, He says," that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain."

If Noah had built the ark with his own dimensions rather than what the Lord gave, the ark would not have saved Noah and his family. The prophet Jeremiah warned the children of Israel in Jer 49:20 and Jer 50:45, Therefore hear the "plan" of the Lord! However, just like in the days of Jeremiah when believers had developed hardness of the heart, so it is today that believers have the same attitude as in Jeremiah's day. The mature believer does it well and he does it right. We're going to study those two slaves at the bottom of the hill and we are going to see that all four people in this passage are going to be blessed. And none of them were at the same stage of spiritual growth but they all have one thing in common, they all do whatever they do and they do it right.

Gen 22:9, Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there, and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood.

There are actually four things in this verse that Abraham does which bring out the accuracy of the mature believer when he is under pressure.

- ☐ First, note that he went "to the place" of which God had told him, 'el-hammaqom. This means that even under pressure the mature believer stays in the right place.
- ☐ Secondly, then he built an altar there, the Qal imperfect of *banah* means to build, to construct, or to set up.

- ☒ Thirdly, he arranged the wood, the Qal imperfect of arak means to arrange or set in order.
- ☒ Fourth, he bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar on top of the wood.

The principle is that Abraham does it right, everything is in order. There will be believers who were faithful in the mundane things in life who will rule in the eternal state because God knows that they would be faithful in much.

Abraham doesn't have to do a lot of things because a lot of things are being done for him by two very faithful and capable slaves. So the wood had to be stacked properly to burn the sacrifice. And Abraham is doing everything right because he is thinking and he is thinking under the greatest pressure that anyone ever had. Having arranged the wood for burning, Abraham then explains to Isaac the command. Isaac was obedient to his father's authority even as his father was obedient to divine authority. The son has confidence in his father as his father has confidence in God. Isaac's willingness to be bound is a beautiful picture of the Son of God on the cross bearing our sins. Isaac has perfect submission to authority, he offered no resistance to Abraham even though he is the stronger of the two. Authority doesn't have to have physical strength but rather mental strength.

Gen 22:10-11, *And Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."*

The *angel of the Lord* is *mal'akh Yahweh* which is a reference to The Lord Jesus Christ. The word *called* actually means a shout. The repetition of a name is of great significance. In this verse we have two vocatives, the doubling of the proper noun, 'Avraham 'Avraham. In the Hebrew language nouns are repeated to express an exceptional quality. Repetition serves to intensify the expression of highest degree. The doubling of Abraham's name means that Abraham has reached the highest peak in the spiritual life. He has reached the place of pleasing God as only a few people in history have been able to do.

- ☒ Moses was called "Moses Moses" in Exo 3:4.
- ☒ Samuel was called "Samuel Samuel" in 1Sa 3:10.
- ☒ Jacob was called "Jacob Jacob" in Gen 46:2.

Abraham has demonstrated ultra super-grace status by a complete and total obedience to the will of God without questioning God's wisdom or challenging God's justice. There's been no cry of unfair or why is God doing this to me. The application of doctrine in the mature believer is simple, what God gives, God has the right to take away because God has all the rights. That's the way that it should be because God has all the wisdom. It is the judgment of the Giver which is important not the judgment of the beneficiary. The sooner we learn that our opinions are not important, the sooner we advance in the spiritual realm. God requires that all mature believers set aside their personal opinions and prejudices in favor of divine opinions of divine justice. There is no room for two opinions or viewpoints in the reality of spiritual maturity. In spiritual maturity there is no such thing as two opinions or viewpoints! Only in immaturity and reversionism is there room for two viewpoints.

With the knife in his hand ready to slit the throat of Isaac, the testing of Abraham is now dramatically halted!

Gen 22:12, *And he said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear or respect God,*

With these two commands, the test is now over and Abraham has passed. Isaac presents to us not only a type of Christ being offered on the altar, but also Christ raised again from the dead, and that on the third day, too, for it was on "the third day" that Abraham received Isaac back again. Remember that during the three days that elapsed from the time Abraham received command from God to offer him up as a burnt offering, his son was as good as dead to him. Abraham had total confidence in the justice of God. The justice of God means that God cannot be unfair or mistreat anyone. The Lord

stepped in and stopped Abraham is simply because the work of salvation is entirely the work of God and there's no place for man's works!

The Divine Plan Behind the Ritual of Circumcision and its Spiritual Significance

05/12/02

In our study of the origin of the Jew, we now continue in Gen 17:9 where God reiterated the Abrahamic Covenant, *“Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their Generations.”*

Gen 17:10-14 *“This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”*

Circumcision is a sign of all that is related to the ultra supergrace prosperity of Abraham and the Jews. It is the recognition of the beginning of a new birth but also of the fact that God not only provides salvation in time, but it becomes logical that with salvation He will provide many other things. Remember Rom 8:32, *He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?* There is something beyond salvation, and the ritual of circumcision is going to emphasize some of these wonderful things. In verses 9 through 14 we have an extensive dissertation on the ritual of circumcision.

Gen 17:9 *“Furthermore,” Elohim said to Abraham, “Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their Generations.”*

The phrase *God said further to Abraham*, is from the Hebrew verb *amar* and indicates that there must be further teaching after the reconfirmation of the Abrahamic covenant. God is now going to communicate some doctrine that Abraham never heard before, some further teaching. This is a significant and pivotal momentous occasion.

Momentous occasions are accompanied by permanent training aids to bring to remembrance the new doctrinal principles. For example, in the founding of the new race, the Jew, a permanent training aid was set up and that is the ritual for circumcision. In the founding of the new nation, Israel, a permanent training aid was set up the Levitical offerings, the tabernacle and the holy days were permanent training aids. In the bringing forth of the new spiritual species, the Church, the Lord's supper was instituted as a training aid and as a momentous occasion to commemorate the doctrinal principle of the Lord's supper. The celebration of the Lord's Supper is a ritual but it is to commemorate a momentous occasion with certain doctrinal principles in view. We are proclaiming the Lord's death an through that death justification, propitiation, expiation, reconciliation, redemption.

When a lot of believers think about the Lord's Supper they think about it as being a time when they go through a ritual that reveals the reality of our Lord's sacrifice, and that is partly true. However, there is another aspect of it that I think a lot of believers overlook and that is the aspect of fellowship with God's people. Whether you like it or not, or whether you are people-oriented or not, or a so-called people person or not, the bottom line is that you have been called to be a member of the body of Christ and to function as a member of the body.

In Gen 17:9 the phrase *shall keep* means to guard something of infinite value, appreciating it to the utmost, that it stands as number one in your scale of values. It is guarding something in the sense that it stands as number one in your scale of values. The Abrahamic covenant is so important to the Jew, to the racial Jew, that it must be guarded in every generation by a memorial ritual. A ritual, which for nearly 4000 years has been faithfully observed in every generation of the Jewish race. That's how

this particular ritual has perpetuated itself, it is the oldest of all the rituals, and therefore one of the least understood, but one of the most important. Even at its very beginning was attacked by overflowing to others who were not Jewish, and becoming a practice for many other nationalities and races. There are many gentile groups who are circumcised, but it has no meaning to these people. Just as emersion in baptism has very little meaning, if any today, to certain denominations who claim that it is a must. They practice it, but it's a ritual without meaning. The same thing is true about the Lord's table, a ritual started by the Lord Jesus Christ the night He was betrayed, and a ritual, which is now nearly 2000 years old. Many churches go through the motions, but it is not understood and ritual without reality is meaningless. To go through the ritual without understanding is ritual without reality.

One of the first rituals in the Bible, is a memorial ritual called circumcision and the meaning of this memorial ritual was taken from its first occurrence, Abraham was sexually dead, and when a person is sexually dead he is alive throughout his body, with the exception of his phallus. The phallus on Abraham was dead, it was impotent, it was useless in the function of sex, and therefore the very place of the ritual becomes very significant, the cutting off of the flesh. The situation was hopeless, but Abraham now has his ultra supergrace status and having pushed on to ultra supergrace status, he already knows that his blessing in ultra supergrace status is sexual prosperity. Abraham was sexually dead, the use of his phallus to perpetuate his seed was impossible and yet absolutely necessary once he reached ultra supergrace. However, he knows that if God gives a promise, God keeps His promise, and that God has the ability to overcome any handicap related to that promise. Circumcision, which is the removal of useless skin from the foreskin of the phallus, commemorates the grace of God and the principle of justice plus omnipotence.

At the age of 100, Abraham could not provide the necessary 23 Genes for the starting of the new race. But then Sarah could not provide the other 23 Genes from her fallopian tubes. So, it was a totally hopeless situation. Furthermore, Ishmael was the product of a non-circumcised person. He will remain Semitic and he is not a part of the Abrahamic covenant. He will be a part of blessing by association because God is fair. Ishmael is actually a combination of two races, half Akadian, half Egyptian, but he will be called by a new national title race eventually, Arab.

So, before the new race can be born, Abraham has to be a new race himself and this occurs at the end of the chapter when he submits to circumcision in which he recognizes the deadness and the hopelessness of the flesh and the over ruling grace of God from the source of divine justice. God must keep His word, and Abraham has learned this very practical principle, that God always honors His word, no matter how hopeless a situation. One of the greatest manifestations of the grace of God throughout all of human history is the hopeless situation. That's when grace goes to work, and remember that under the principle of grace it is God who does the work. It is God who provides, and God will provide. When the operation was completed, God made all the changes, more changes in Abraham's soul, changes in his body, he was a strong man again with regard to muscle.

The entire verse says Gen 17:9 *Furthermore, Elohim said to Abraham, "Now as for you, you shall keep or guide My covenant, you and your descendants after you or your seed, the Jewish race after you, in their respective Generations,"* Both the doctrine of circumcision and the ritual of circumcision was guarded the Abrahamic covenant for Generation after Generation of history, not the ritual alone, but the ritual with its doctrine inside of the soul. Before the new race can be born, Abraham has to be a new race himself and this occurs at the end of the chapter when Abraham submits to circumcision in which he recognizes the deadness and the hopelessness of the flesh and the overruling grace of God from the source of divine justice.

We must briefly note the subject of circumcision in both its ritual and spiritual significance. Circumcision consists in cutting away the foreskin of the phallus. At the time, a flint knife was used for the operation, Exo 4:25; Jos 5:2. A flint knife was very sharp and made out of rock. Flint is spoken of in

a figurative manner in the Bible, denoting strength and determination, Isa 5:28; 50:7; Eze 3:9. Circumcision not only revived his sexual ability, but was the moment when God established the new race of the Jew. Therefore, circumcision was to be the ritual to commemorate the establishment of the new racial species. Before circumcision, Abraham was called Abram, he was Semitic, an Akkadian, after circumcision he was called Abraham, the first Jew.

The Jewish custom of circumcision was performed on the eighth day after birth and it was at that time a name was given to the son. In the Hebrew, the number eight is *shemoneh* and as a numeral it is the superabundant number, over and above this perfect completion, and also the first of a new series, as well as being the eighth. This is why the Jewish custom of circumcision was performed on the eighth day after birth and then a name was given to the son.

As far as circumcision is concerned, it is one of the great grace tokens of all time. The first act of circumcision was to recognize supergrace blessing and the fact that God keeps His word. It was the ritual sign that Abraham had passed momentum testing and had now become a winner. However, there is no spiritual merit in circumcision. It was the expression of Abraham's metabolized doctrine at the point of maturity. It is related to the Genetic creation of the new racial species. As a ritual, circumcision has no meaning to the Jew who rejects Christ as Savior, for ritual without reality is meaningless. Circumcision represents the fact that Abraham with doctrine in his soul recognizes that God will take care of this situation. He is in a hopeless situation but he believes God. This is a matter of grace and there's no place here for energy of the flesh, or for trying to second guess God and to figure out some human solution. The meaning of Abraham's circumcision is that in spite of the hopelessness of sexual status, Abraham recognizes that God will overcome hopeless circumstances. God provided for those helpless situations in eternity past and Abraham came to recognize that the solutions to his temporal problems existed before he did. He recognizes that long before he existed and long before he had problems, God already had the solutions.

Satan and the kingdom of darkness in correlation with the ignorance of man distorts that which God has provided. And therefore, false systems were promoted by Satan to obscure the true meaning of circumcision. Circumcision was practiced among many ancient peoples, such as the Egyptians, Africans, natives of the South Seas, North Americans, and Arabians. It was used as a sanitary function for the Egyptians, as a tribal mark for the Africans, as a rite to celebrate the "coming of age." Many ancient cultures circumcised young boys at about 12 years of age, as a sort of initiation ceremony into manhood. Even the Jews distorted circumcision into a system of arrogance, from which came racial prejudice. They thought that they were better than others and would call all the Gentiles, "the uncircumcised".

The apostle Paul had to deal with the principle of circumcision and the Mosaic Law in the early church. There were many Jews who had gone through the ritual of circumcision but not the spiritual reality behind it and therefore concerning the Jews we need to note the difference between true circumcision and uncircumcision as found in the Bible. The true meaning of circumcision is maximum Bible doctrine in the soul as illustrated by Abraham reaching a maximum stage of spiritual growth. In fact, the Bible teaches that when God destroyed the nation of Israel under the fifth cycle of discipline, it was because of no Bible doctrine in the soul, therefore lack of circumcision of the soul. This is the tragedy of being the physical seed of Abraham without being the spiritual seed of Abraham. This is why Paul said in Rom 9:6b *For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel*; Circumcision was used to portray emotional revolt of the soul, scar tissue of the soul, hardness of the heart in passages like Jer 6:10, 9:25-26, Eze 44:7, Acts 7:51. Jeremiah warned the people of the coming of the fifth cycle of discipline from the Chaldeans but the people's ears were "uncircumcised"; that is, they would not listen to Bible teaching. It is doctrine in the soul that makes you alert to coming national disaster. Being a new racial species, with circumcision as the sign, is absolutely meaningless without regeneration. Abraham is the pattern for Old Testament salvation, Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3; Gal 3:6.

Throughout their history, the Jews failed, because while they were given physical superiority in the Old Testament through the new racial species, they had no advantages from it because they rejected Jesus Christ as the God of Israel: Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad.

Circumcision was also used to portray perception, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine, Deu 10:14-16, *Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it. Yet on your fathers did the Lord set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day. Circumcise then your heart [right lobe], and stiffen your neck no more, stop resisting God and His word.*

You circumcise your right lobe by the daily perception and metabolization of Bible doctrine. In Act 7:51, Paul as Saul of Tarsus was standing there watching Stephen being stoned to death. Stephen shouted in Acts 7:51, *"You men! You are stiff necked and uncircumcised of heart and ears! And you are always resisting the Holy Spirit. You are doing just as your fathers [ancestors] did."* The Jews resisted the ministry of the Holy Spirit; first, at the point of common and efficacious grace, and secondly, at the point of the communication of doctrine; both the demonstration of God's fantastic grace. All you can do is listen and believe; God the Holy Spirit must do all the rest. Stephen looked back on the entire history of Israel's failure when he said, *"just as your fathers did."*

For 2000 years, the Jews had the greatest opportunities in the Old Testament and they blew it. To survive as a client nation requires a pivot, which in the Old Testament required both the ritual and the reality of circumcision through the advance to spiritual maturity. To avoid racial prejudice and the arrogance it feeds, the Jew of the Old Testament had to be circumcised in his heart, which included salvation through faith in Christ and spiritual growth through metabolized doctrine, resulting in both the giant step to spiritual self-esteem and the victory step to spiritual maturity under the ritual plan of God. And again this is why it says in Rom 9:6, "All Israel is not Israel." "All Israel" is the Jew who is a part of the new racial species. But all Israel is "not Israel," because you're not true Israel until your heart is circumcised or regenerated. The point is that there's no advantage to being the new racial species apart from regeneration. Therefore, in Old Testament times, a regenerate Gentile was far better off than a Jewish unbeliever as new racial species.

Under the divine plan behind the ritual of circumcision and its spiritual significance, we also need to note the false circumcision during the Church-age. Circumcision as a ritual is no longer an issue in the Church-age, because client nation Israel no longer exists. The Pre-Designed Plan of God (PPOG) has replaced the ritual plan of God, to which circumcision belongs, circumcision is not a spiritual issue of any kind. Circumcision is now practiced throughout the world basically as a sanitary function or as a religious requirement of Jews and Arabs and others but this is all circumcision means today. The only issue today in this dispensation: Will the believer fulfill the PPOG?

In 1Co 7:18-19, Paul says Was any man called already circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commands of God. Circumcision is not only non beneficial spiritually, but is a source of legalism and a means of distracting the believer from the execution of the PPOG; this is the subject of the entire book of Galatians. This is analogous to those who today believe in baptismal regeneration there is no such thing.

Gal 5:2-4, *"Behold, I Paul say to you, that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you [you have lost out in the PPOG]. And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the entire Law [something he cannot do besides he is in the wrong dispensation]. You have been severed from Christ [you're not in the PPOG], you, who would be justified by the Law, you have drifted off course from grace."*

So during the Church Age, circumcision has been distorted into a system of legalism and apostasy. Circumcision as a ritual in the ritual plan of God for the dispensation of Israel no longer exists.

The Divine Plan Behind the Ritual of Circumcision and its Spiritual Significance, Part 2

05/19/02

Gen 17:12 is our main passage and led to our study of the Doctrine of Circumcision, *“And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants.”*

We have noted that the number eight represents that which is over and above the number of rest and completion, which is seven, as well as representing something brand new. The number eight also refers to regeneration as well as resurrection and that is why the eighth day of the week, Sunday, is called the Lord's day in the New Testament, Mat 28:1. Eight is also the Bible number for success, resurrection and glory, Luk 9:28. Eight is also the number of newness of life in 1Pe 3:20, when God destroyed the world through the flood eight persons, were brought safely through the water. The fact that this ritual occurred on the eighth day is no coincidence. It denotes the newness of having the life of God. It points to the importance of growing up spiritually and reaching that resurrection life in time. It refers to regeneration and newness and being excited about the privilege of having the life of God in the souls of man. Yet mankind goes through life totally ignorant of these fantastic blessings. So the number eight in the Bible illustrates the principle of something new, something great, something glorious and that is why the Lord instituted the eighth day for the right of circumcision. Eight means the beginning of a new race. Eight means everything that is a challenge to us.

Abraham is going to be a new race, the moment he is circumcised, in one moment of time he will be converted by God into an entirely new race. The name Jew will be the indication for his race, and since he has no nationality, since departing from Ur of the Chaldees, he will be called a Hebrew. Hebrew means immigrant, or one who crosses over the river, later on Hebrew will carry the connotation of missionary. Later, his progeny will be Jews, they will be born Jews, but they will also become the nation of Israel. Hebrew will be replaced by the nation, but that's six hundred years away beginning with Moses. Abraham is the father of the Jewish race, Moses will be the father of the nation Israel. There will then be four types of people instead of three, Shem, Ham, Japheth, and Jew. The purpose of the Jew is that God raises up the race in order to be the custodians of the word of God in the Old Testament. God honors His word and this is always a testimony to His word in every generation of history. Islam will come from Ishmael, and Islam will practice circumcision in the thirteenth year. Just as it had no meaning with Ishmael, because Ishmael was an unbeliever, so it has no meaning as the ritual is practiced today in Islam. Ishmael is a founder of a group of nations rather than a race. Ishmael is not in the Abrahamic covenant, this is a covenant for a new race, and this is a covenant, which has a ritual. Based upon the principle that the only thing that really counts in life is Bible doctrine resident in the soul, the ritual without doctrine is meaningless.

Ishmael is not in the covenant of the new race, and Ishmael's circumcision does not have any spiritual connotation. Today many Arab groups follow the custom of circumcision at age 13, since many of them are descended from Ishmael. But the impact of this passage is to exclude Abraham's first born, to exclude Ishmael, from the new race and from the Abrahamic covenant.

When Ishmael was circumcised he is still Semitic and he will still be the founder of several Arab groups. Abraham had maximum doctrine resident in his soul, which means that he has already adjusted to every system of adjustment to God. Abraham has adjusted to the justice of God at salvation. Abraham believed in the Lord and was credited to his account for righteousness. Between Genesis chapter 16 and 17, during those 13 years Abraham used rebound many times, Abraham has cracked the maturity barrier. Abraham is now a mature believer, and that maturity is adjustment to the justice of God. God honors His word. Maximum doctrine resident in the soul frees the justice of

God for every wonderful blessing of life, as we have been studying throughout the last few weeks in this particular series.

Ishmael was circumcised but he has not believed in the Lord and never will, he has rejected adjustment to the justice of God. The only reason that Ishmael is ever blessed is because he is the son of an ultra supergrace believer. It is because of his relationship to Abraham, that's the only reason, and this explains the principle why the wicked prosper.

Psa 37:7 "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes."

Psalm 73 describes some of the frustrations that many believers have had at times. They make positive decisions and then see friends, family members and relatives making negative decisions and getting ahead in life and receiving prosperity. There's a frustration that can take place, things are not working out in their life and then they see certain people, namely the wicked, or those who could care less about God, prospering.

Psa 73:1 (A Psalm of Asaph.) Surely God is good to Israel, To those who are pure in heart!

This type of thinking is very important especially when you're going through something and you don't know how that thing is going to turn out. When you're going through adversity in time or disaster, remember: Even if you don't understand what you're going through remember God is good to His people.

Psa 73:2-3 But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling; My steps had almost slipped. For I was envious of the arrogant, {As} I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

Envy in the soul turns into jealousy. There are certain people who prosper even though they are wicked. One of the main reasons is found in our main passage in Gen 17, blessing because of association with a mature believer. God in His Grace actually will allow the wicked to prosper on this earth. One of the reasons is because this is their Heaven. God loves them so much that He sent His uniquely born son for them but they rejected Him. However, His impersonal love, loves them, this is their only form of prosperity, this is their Heaven. Once they die, for billions and billions and billions and billions of years they suffer in the eternal lake of fire and so in God's grace, He blesses them and lets them have some enjoyment, because He's a just and righteous God.

There are believers and unbelievers who cheat and lie and steal and who are criminals and who would do what they can to get ahead and it may seem that they get more. But you don't see the discomfort and lack of content in their soul. You don't see when they go to sleep at night that they have all these riches and all these things and all this form of prosperity, but there's something missing in their soul. They don't have that peace that goes beyond understanding, Phi 4:6. No one can buy contentment. Solomon said this in Ecc 2:10, *And all that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure,* He was the most miserable person in the world at this time and he said, *"All that my eyes desired, I did not refuse them."*

Psa 73:13, Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure, And washed my hands in innocence;

Believers can feel that way sometimes, they take in doctrine, follow God, but it seems all in vain because they don't see immediate results.

Psa 73:16, When I pondered to understand this, It was troublesome in my sight.

Psa 73:17, "Until I came into the Sanctuary of God: Then I perceived their end"

Once back into the sanctuary or the place where God's Word was taught, eyes are opened again to the truth. When things are not going right in your life, that's a time to draw near. If everything's going wrong in your life say, "I better get to class right now, things are not working out and I know God is on my side, I need some enlightenment. I need to hear what the Spirit says to the church."

Psa 73:18 Surely Thou dost set them in slippery places; Thou dost cast them down to destruction.

They were standing on a smooth place (everything's going smooth for them), but always remember something smooth places can be very slippery. Remember Ecc 8:11 *Because the sentence against an*

evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil. They keep doing it, because they think they're getting ahead, they're getting away with it. They're not. The Lord says, *"There's a year for their punishment"* meaning every person who is anti God and has negative volition has a year assigned by God for their punishment. Believers in The Lord Jesus Christ have something far greater than any rich man could ever, ever buy and never forget that. So in Psa 73:23 *Nevertheless I am continually with Thee; Thou hast taken hold of my right hand.* I don't care if things are going wrong. I don't care if I don't have that money. I don't care if I don't know what my future is all about. *"I am with thee; You have taken hold of my right hand."*

Psa 73:24 With Thy counsel [your doctrine] Thou wilt guide me, And afterward receive me to glory.

As believers, we must have spiritual momentum and that comes from daily intake of doctrine. You must take in doctrine today, and tomorrow, and the next day and the next and the next. It is your daily intake of the word that is going to change your life. It is Satan's objective as the ruler of this world to eliminate Jews, and to blind us from the piritual significance of circumcision. But one ritual which occurred nearly four thousand years ago, one ritual of circumcision tells us the whole story, it tells us many stories, it tells us why the wicked often prosper. It tells us why the Jews are blessed by God in a special way. It tells us that the exploitation of grace is available to every generation, and even though many of us as believers are gentiles, we are in for the greatest possible blessings by the exploitation of the grace of God. One man, with many of his failures recorded for us in the word of God, is an example of what can happen if the believer doesn't quit and goes forward in God's plan, Rom 15:4, 1Co 10:11. There is only one way to exploit grace, you can't go out and work for God to gain blessing from God. You can't tithe, join the church, feel sorry for your sins and go through a system of legalistic penance, you can't do any of these things for the blessing of God. There's only one way to get the blessing of God, and that's to take in doctrine, today, tomorrow, the next day, the next, the next and the next and the next after that. Notice the next statement in Gen 17:12-13, *"And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant or slave who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant."* You can be a slave and still be blessed of God no matter what the conditions. You may be in great adversity, you may be in slavery, but you can still be blessed of God. You don't have to be free to have divine blessing. Freedom does not mean equality. Many people who have freedom abuse freedom. Many people who have freedom don't even use it. A slave can use the freedom in his soul and reach spiritual maturity if there is positive volition in the soul. You can be in a situation of slavery or bondage, maybe in a bad marriage, or you don't like your job, financial bondage, problems with your health, etc., and still enjoy the truth that sets you free. God provides the doctrine, and your response to doctrine is the key. Even a slave born in the house can have great the opportunity for prosperity. The key to prosperity is Bible doctrine because God honors His word. When the justice of God is liberated and free to bless, He can bless anyone, anywhere, anytime, no matter what their social status is. So, even people who are not Jews, and even people who have had to sell themselves into slavery can be blessed by association. Many people in the ancient world sold themselves into slavery. That's the way you filed bankruptcy in the ancient world. So, there was possibility for a person who has had real adversity to turn that adversity around into great blessing. But you can't do it apart from adjustment to the justice of God. For the only one who can turn cursing into blessing is God Himself. God has a monopoly on turning cursing into blessing. When man tries to solve his own problems, by turning cursing into blessing, he intensifies the cursing.

1 There are two categories of slaves mentioned back in our passage. Those who were bought as slaves or given to Abraham, Gen 16:12 (given by Pharaoh); Gen 20:14 (Abimelech); and those who

were born slaves, Gen 14:14, 17:12-13. Slavery is a Biblical subject. So let notice some principles as found in the Word of God. There were two sources of slavery in the ancient world: poverty in peacetime and being captured prisoners in war. Poverty in peacetime means that they sold themselves as slaves. Being captured in wartime means that they were acquired by force.

2. A man could sell himself into slavery, according to Lev 25:39-41. Becoming a slave was a way of declaring bankruptcy and paying off his debts. However, he had to be freed during the Year of Jubilee (every fiftieth year in the history of Israel).
3. All slaves were freed every fiftieth year even if they sold themselves on the 49th year. The only exception is if a slave did not want to be free and then he could remain a slave by an act of his own volition.
4. A father could sell his daughter or son into slavery to pay off the debts, Exo 21:7; Neh 5:5.
5. A widow's children could be sold to pay off their father's debt, 2Ki 4:1.
6. A woman could sell herself into slavery, Deu 15:12-17.
7. Slaves were often acquired through trade, purchase, payment of debt, as a gift, through birth, plunder in war, or by self determination, Exo 21:16.
8. Slaves were manumitted by redemption or purchase, by the elapse of time (six years), Exo 21:2-4, by the year of jubilee (the fiftieth year), Jer 34:8-10, through physical disability or being maimed, Exo 21:26.
9. Slaves had to be paid wages and they could use their pay to purchase their own freedom on the seventh year.
10. Being maimed or disabled also meant that they could be free. In this case, the master was responsible to take care of the slave for life.

You see, certain people find security in slavery and servant-hood. A pastor is to be a slave of The Lord Jesus Christ, not a servant but a *doulos*, a slave. Servant is a dignified title that doesn't hold any water in the Greek at all. Now, the piercing of the ears was a reference to the person willingly becoming a servant or a slave forever. He would stand up against the door and he would spread his ear out and then get hit with an awl and he would get a nice hole put through the ear!

And here's an interesting one, one that is very important biblically if slavery is just, the slave had the right to own property and possess money, Lev 25:29. He had the right to promotion, Gen 15:2, 39:4. He had the right to worship God without interference from the master, Exo 12:44; Deu 12:12. The Bible goes to great extremes to demonstrate rights and privileges of the master and rights and privileges of the slave. And therefore note that slavery was not forbidden. In the New Testament, the Church was not issued any decree abolishing slavery, even though many early church believers were slaves in the Roman empire. The responsibility of a slave to a master is taught in Eph 6:5-9 and Col 3:22-4:1. Now we've used those passages in the past to help labor in our day and age with management. However, it says master and slave, it says *kurios* and *doulos*.

Eph 6:5-9 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; not by way of eyeservice, as men pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free. And, masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Col 3:22- 4:1 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without

partiality. Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.

Now it's very difficult to teach something that runs counter to our historical trend. the epistle to Philemon dealing with a run away slave, it doesn't advocate the abolishment of slavery, but emphasizes just treatment of slaves who are believers or otherwise. Onesimus was a run away slave and returned when Paul sent him back. It also gives strong emphasis on the personal option to free slaves under principles of grace righteousness. Slavery has continued throughout world history. Abraham chose to have slaves and the Bible does not condemn him for it. Slavery means great responsibility to the slave owner in the execution of his authority. It takes great leadership ability not to abuse the power of ownership. Slavery provided the option between security and freedom. Back to our main passage in Gen 17:12-13, *And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant or slave who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.*

The Blessings for the Supergrace Believer

05/26/02

Gen 17:15-17 *Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. And I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall come from her." Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"*

As we continue to study the background to the Israeli-Arab conflict, we have changed subjects temporarily from circumcision to the principle of *blessing by association*. In verse 15, Sarah, the wife of Abraham, has not quite kept up with him spiritually, but she has reached spiritual maturity. She is about to be blessed here, not just because of her own spiritual advance, but because of her relationship with Abraham.

In these verses we can see what happened to Sarah during the 13 silent years between chapters 16 and 17. For a long time Sarah had overt beauty but no inner beauty. She was full of arrogance, jealousy, hatred, bitterness, and most of all revenge, as in her treatment of Hagar, the Egyptian slave girl. However, through perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine, she acquired both spiritual maturity and inner beauty. Having cracked the maturity barrier, she is no longer contentious (Sarai); she is now a princess (Sarah). In spite of all her husband's past failures, she grew up spiritually by responding to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a great lesson for those who are married to someone who is negative toward doctrine, or for those who are still single, that all they need is to follow their future bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Another principle we can learn from Abraham and Sarah is that people cannot change people. Only Bible doctrine in one's soul can change him. This is taught in Rom 14:1-5, *"Now accept the one who is weak in doctrine, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. One man has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. Let not him who eats regard with contempt him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats, for God has accepted him. Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and stand he will, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One believer regards one day above another, another believer regards every day alike. Let each believer be fully convinced in his own mind."* The foods that we eat are not important when it comes to spiritual matters, and we are not force our own opinions on others. The Apostle Paul continues in Rom 14:6-8, *"He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. For not one of us lives for himself, and not one of us dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die we belong to the Lord."* In other words, our life and death are in the hands of the Lord. It is His business no one else's; we are responsible to the Lord. An individual can only be changed in his soul, whether it be by Bible doctrine or the influence of evil. People cannot be changed by bullying, pushing, or forcing some pattern of dress or demeanor or some type of personality on them.

Sarah has the capacity for blessing from her own spiritual maturity, and blessing by association with an *ultra-supergrace* believer, her husband Abraham, is something even greater, beyond any blessing she already has. Blessing by association extends to one's mate, to parents, to children, to friends, to business associates, and to all who are in the periphery of the mature believer.

Gen 17:16 *"And I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."*

This is the *piel* perfect form of the Hebrew verb "*barak*," which means she will be blessed intensively. This is a positive declaration that the new race will be perpetuated through Sarah and through no one else. This is Sarah's blessing by association—she will have ultra-supergrace sexual prosperity in her

relationship with Abraham. God revives them both instantly, and shortly, within a few months, Sarah will become pregnant.

There are distinct categories of blessings for the believer who reaches supergrace in time.

1. Spiritual blessings. These include sharing the perfect happiness of God and occupation with Christ as maximum *category one* love (toward God), which is greatly intensified in supergrace and ultra-supergrace. Many blessings accompany the believer's maximum love for the Lord Jesus Christ. The supergrace believer has great capacity for life, love, happiness, and blessing, and total appreciation for grace. He also receives the tremendous ability to face undeserved suffering in life with no complaining. For the supergrace believer, the intensification of spiritual blessings comes when he wears the shroud of maximum, unremitting, undeserved suffering to glorify God in the angelic conflict, and this suffering will not terminate until he departs this life. In the midst of it all, he still has perfect happiness, the "peace which surpasses all comprehension," Phi 4:7. The supergrace believer also has the to correctly interpret contemporary history, to evaluate current events in the light of the Word of God. He is free from slavery to the circumstances of life, and he adaptable to changing circumstances. The mature believer shines in time of historical disaster. He has grace orientation, freedom orientation, authority orientation, common sense, and a total sense of security, whether in prosperity or disaster.

2. Temporal blessings. These include material wealth, either received or acquired, as well as physical health. The supergrace believer can have professional prosperity, including a great influence on others, leadership dynamics, success, promotion, and recognition in one's sphere of life. Abraham had the privilege of receiving one of the greatest titles in the Bible, "friend of God." Moses was a successful ruler. Paul was the greatest communicator of all time. Jeremiah was the greatest prophet of all time. In supergrace, the believer will have the ability to assume responsibility and authority without emotional inspiration or false motivation. The supergrace believer can also have great social prosperity and great friends, as well as sexual prosperity with one's right man or right woman. In mental prosperity, the ability to think and concentrate increases. This gives the believer a greater capacity for life and a great deal of interest toward what is happening in everyday life. Every day will be meaningful. God will also grant cultural prosperity, which is maximum enjoyment of drama, art, literature, music, history, etc. Establishment prosperity includes enjoyment of freedom, privacy, and protection of life and property from criminals and reprisal.

3. Blessings by association. Those around a mature believer are blessed by their association or relationship with that person. There are two categories of blessings here. They are blessed either directly by God or indirectly from the supergrace believer as a result of the overflow of his supergrace blessings. These peripheral areas of blessing by association include loved ones, business life, social life, and the local church. There are also geographical blessings to the supergrace believer's city, state, and nation.

4. Historical blessings. The mature believer carries his generation, 2Ti 1:5. He stabilizes his generation and even future historical generations. The ebb and flow of history does not disturb the tranquility or impact of the mature believer. He is the Mat 5:13-14 believer, "*the salt of the earth*" and "*the light of the world.*" The supergrace believer is on the winning side of history, whereas the reversionist is caught up in the disasters of history and swept along with them, Eph 4:14, "*As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming.*" The supergrace believer rides the crest of the wave of blessing. He rises above historical disaster.

5. Undeserved suffering. Only in time do we have the opportunity to glorify God under pressure, disaster, and undeserved suffering to prove to Satan and the fallen angels that Bible doctrine can handle any situation. God gives us the ability to handle suffering and turn suffering into blessing, Rom 8:28, Deu 23:5. A mature believer knows when he is under divine discipline or undeserved suffering.

The former is unbearable; the latter is bearable. The supergrace believer's ability to handle undeserved suffering glorifies God and becomes evidence against Satan in his appeal trial. Undeserved suffering is also used by God to keep our eyes on Him and our focus on eternity, Rev 2:10, 2Co 12:9 10. Undeserved suffering also teaches us the value of Bible doctrine, Psa 119:67 71. We read in Psa 119:67, *"Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Thy word."* Here, the psalmist is living in disastrous conditions and still says, *"I keep Your word."* God in wisdom deals with us as perfectly as only He can. He allows suffering, heartache, and disaster in our lives to draw us closer to Him.

6. Dying blessings (dying grace). Every believer has a choice in time between staying positive to Bible doctrine and receiving dying grace, or turning negative to doctrine and dying the sin unto death. For the supergrace believer, the curse of death with its pain and fear is removed, Heb 2:15. It is the greatest experience in life. The perfect happiness of the supergrace believer in time is exceeded only by his happiness in dying grace, 2Ti 4:6-8. The mature believer has the best of life, greater blessing in dying, and better than the best for all eternity. As Psa 116:15 declares, *"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His godly ones."*

7. Surpassing grace blessings at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Surpassing grace is the optimum in spiritual achievement. It is the point of maximum blessing and reward, and the ultimate in glorifying Jesus Christ. "Surpassing" connotes something beyond supergrace and beyond time. Surpassing grace is the status of special blessings and rewards in eternity for the believer who has broken the maturity barrier in time.

Gen 17:16b *"...Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."*

Here the Lord is referring to the many blessings that accompany supergrace. The plural form of "nations" anticipates the dividing of the nation of Israel into Ephraim and Judah, and then later the Roman Province of Judea, the revival of the Israel in the 20th century, and finally the Israel of the Tribulation. This foreshadows the fact that Israel as a client nation to God comes and goes in history, and every time it departs through the fifth cycle of discipline, it is later revived under God's blessing. Sarah is the mother of many kings in history, including the entire Davidic Dynasty and of course the Lord Jesus Christ.

The blessing by association indicates not only the status of Abraham as an ultra-supergrace believer, but also that instead of receiving just her own personal supergrace blessings at this time, Sarah is receiving great blessing because of the man to whom she is married. Abraham is about to become the "friend of God," a statement found only three times in the Scripture, 2Ch 20:7, Isa 41:8, Jam 2:23. This means that Abraham, as an ultra-supergrace believer, has a genuine occupation with the Lord Jesus Christ, the Giver. The gift, Isaac, will never again be as important as the Giver to him. This will be tested in Gen 22, as we have studied. When the Giver is more important than the gift, the believer has true capacity for life. The ability to love God comes from maximum doctrine resident soul, the doctrine by which one becomes a mature believer.

You cannot love God unless you know God. You cannot know God unless you have the means of knowing God in your soul, Bible doctrine. Abraham, from this time on, will always love the Lord Jesus Christ more than anything else in life, and the Lord will shower him with gifts. He will always have his eyes on the giver, and therefore not only enjoy the gift, but have the security of loving the Giver.

In Gen 17:17, Abraham responds in what seems like a rather strange way: *"Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, 'Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?'"* The word "laughed" is very interesting. Abraham regarded the promise of sexual prosperity being so real and the blessing being so great (in spite of having been sexually dead for 13 years, and Sarah having never been pregnant in all her 90 years),

that it immediately aroused a relaxed response. We read of Abraham's attitude regarding this promise in Rom 4:17-21. Abraham is expressing his joy and confidence in the promise of God.

Sarah is going to be blessed because she is associated with an ultra-supergrace believer, Abraham, and she is about to have her womb opened and receive sexual prosperity. All the effects of menopause are reversed instantly. The instant revival of their sexual ability is the beginning of their sexual prosperity, and Sarah will soon be pregnant with a child named "*Yitschaaq*" (Isaac), which in Hebrew means "laughter."

The Doctrine of Laughter

06/02/02

Gen 17:17, *Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"*

This was not a token of Abraham's weakness of faith or unbelief, as Sarah's was according in Gen 18:12 according to Rom 4:17-21. Abraham's laughter expresses his relief, and it's incredible to him what God is about to do.

This is the first time we find laughter mentioned in the Bible so it is imperative to see what the Bible teaches on the subject. Laughter is a way to convey joy or satisfaction but also mockery and ridicule, as in Jer 20:7, *I have become a laughingstock all day long; Everyone mocks me.* There is also a silent laughter, which is an expression of amusement in the eyes. We all know people who laugh with their eyes. There is also the concept of laughing privately or secretly while appearing to be solemn or serious. Laughter can also be a reaction to someone or something expressing scorn, derision, sarcasm, ridicule. In the Bible, laughter is both the expression of the mature believer and the reversionist.

Laughter is also used in the scripture as an anthropopathism, that is there are certain passages, we will note where God laughs, and that of course is an anthropopathism. For example, laughter is used to mock those who reject Bible doctrine, in Proverbs chapter one, verses 24 through 29. In our main passage of Gen 17:17 we see laughter as an expression of humor from a mature believer and here it is the first appearance of laughter in the Bible. Abraham is an ultra supergrace believer expressing his relief, expressing his happiness at the thought of having a son, even though the condition at the moment is hopeless, Heb 11:11 and 12. The relaxed mental attitude of maturity indicates a good sense of humor. The sense of humor indicates a capacity for life of the mature believer, and Abraham's laughter is faith breaking through the barriers of hopelessness. There are some people who think that the Christian way of life can contain laughter and that God wants us to always be very serious and do great things for Him. A sense of humor is a great blessing from God and God Himself has the greatest sense of humor.

There is also laughter in the Bible as an expression of an evil and arrogant judgmental heart. Laughing at someone else's expense is very, very poor taste.

2Ki 2:23-24, *Then he [Elisha] went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up by the way, young lads came out from the city and mocked him and said to him, "Go up, you baldhead; go up, you baldhead!" When he looked behind him and saw them, he cursed them in the name of the Lord. Then two female bears came out of the woods and tore up forty two lads of their number.*

Making fun of someone because they are perhaps not as well dressed, or getting together and giggling with other people about them. Looking at someone in a mocking way, obviously, having your happiness at someone else's expense, these are evil forms of laughter.

There is definitely a time and place for laughter, and there is a time and place not to have it. When you start laughing at other people because they are uncomfortable, because they are not presentable, because of some disaster which has overtaken them, this laughter is not only poor manners but often it reflects a very poor spiritual life.

Laughter is also associated with happiness, that is why we read in Ecc 3:4, *A time to weep, and a time to laugh; A time to mourn, and a time to dance.* These are antithetical concepts. Weeping for sadness, laughter for happiness, mourning for great adversity, dancing for great pleasure. The mature believers attitude toward adversity is expressed in laughter, a relaxed laughter in the midst of great adversity, Job 5:17-22.

Job 5:17-18, *"Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproveth, So do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For He inflicts pain, and gives relief; He wounds, and His hands also heal.*

Job 5:19-27 is a dissertation on spiritual maturity and the fantastic blessings that come to the mature believer. The problem is that Eliphaz, a friend of Job is insinuating that if Job was a mature believer he would have been protected from all that happened.

Job 5:19, *From six troubles He will deliver you,*

Six is man's number and it represents all the trouble that man could get himself into. However, Eliphaz makes it 7 which is the perfect number. *Even in seven evil will not touch you.* In verse 20 this marvelous passage continues, *in famine (economic depression) He will redeem you from death, and in war (He will preserve you) from the power of the sword.*

Job 5:21 *You will be hidden from the scourge of the tongue which is social disaster, Neither will you be afraid of violence or violent death when it comes. You will laugh at violence and famine or economic depression, neither will you be afraid of wild beasts.*

This is not foolish laughing, this is the relaxed mental attitude of a believer who has a true sense of humor under pressure. A sense of humor is very important in time of disaster, it helps the believer to think! The laughter of appreciation of who and what God is, the laughter of happiness when there is adversity. The laughter of the mature believer under dying grace, and under conditions of economic depression, and this laugh again is from the inner resources of Bible doctrine it is a laugh of blessing, it is a laugh of confidence, of security for the believer who is in ultra supergrace.

Pro 14:13, *Even in laughter the heart may be in pain, And the end of joy may be grief.*

People can appear to be very happy, very pleasant and may seem to be having a wonderful time. Many times you will see someone at a party, looking like they having a great time and laughing but the laughter is forced, the happiness is forced, they're really pathetic.

Laughter also expresses ridicule in the Bible, Psa 80:6, *Thou dost make us an object of contention to our neighbors; And our enemies laugh among themselves.* This is a common form of laughter where people use someone as a source of laughter, because of some inadequacy, clumsiness or disaster. This is the laughter which expresses lack of capacity for life, and lack of true grace sensitivity. In Mat 9:24, Jesus is in the chamber of a dead woman, but He's going to raise her to life, this is the daughter of Jirus, and it says, *He {began} to say, "Depart; for the girl has not died, but is asleep." And they {began} laughing at Him.* They were all laughing and ridiculing our Lord and He got tough with them, He threw them out.

Mat 9:25, *But when the crowd had been put out, He entered and took her by the hand; and the girl arose.*

He threw them all out and then He resuscitated her. The same laughing is described in Mar 5:40, and Luk 8:53, and it is not an acceptable laughter, it is not a laughter which reflects anything good in the soul. Laughter also expresses the happiness of restored Israel at the time of the millennium, Psa 126:1-3. Laughter is also used to express an anthropopathism ascribing to God a human action. It's used to explain to man in man's frame of reference, God's policies, God's attitudes, and God's plan. Gods policies are expressed in human terms for a human frame of reference to understand that policy and one of the things that is expressed is laughter. The expression of the divine attitude in controlling history is often expressed through the concept of laughter, Psalm 59:8, *But Thou, O Lord, dost laugh at them; Thou dost scoff at all the nations.* Jesus Christ controls history and His will is accomplished regardless of how much power is abused by tyranny in any nation.

Gen 17:17, *Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"*

The thought of Abraham is recorded for us in the last half of verse 17, the laugh is expressed first and then the thought behind the laugh. The laugh was a response to both the ritual of circumcision and the doctrine behind the ritual. The ritual is merely the mechanics for expressing the doctrine because ritual without reality is meaningless and here, if you don't understand the thought, you will not understand the laughter. So the thought behind the laugh is also given. Just as ritual

without reality is meaningless, laughter without thought is meaningless, and there is a thought behind the laughter, and here it is. First of all, in light of the fact that he has been sexually dead for 13 years, and that he is almost 100 years old, he is laughing at himself. He has not had sex for 13 years because he is incapable of having sex. His phallus is incapable of functioning in sex and therefore he's in a hopeless situation as far as sex is concerned. But God has given him the doctrine to go with his hopeless situation just like God gives us doctrine for our hopeless situations.

Here, the proper doctrine plus the hopeless situation brings out, first his sense of humor, he laughs at himself as he responds with great happiness to God. He has the ability to laugh at himself and that isn't all, because he also thinks of Sarah. He has a fantastic sense of humor, a sense of humor and capacity for life go together. Many times divine viewpoint can be overpowering, therefore accept it as reality through humor. Humor is sort of an escape valve to take the overpowering thought of God's blessing in by degrees. Humor is sort of an escape valve to take the overpowering thought of God's blessing in by degrees. It's combining the principle that he is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all we could ever ask or think. This is more than Abraham could ask for, this is more than he could think. Therefore, he takes it by degrees through his sense of humor. He laughs at himself, he laughs at Sarah being pregnant, and having a child. He laughs at the fact of having great sexual prosperity with her, it's beyond human comprehension. However, once the laughter is completed there is one other factor that must be covered in verse 18. Abraham does have some emotional distraction. While he is going from thought to thought, it suddenly strikes him, what about Ishmael? Abraham loves Ishmael very much but he's a very poor father to Ishmael because of no discipline, remember Ishmael is a wild ass of a man. We studied the fact that Abraham was not a good father to Ishmael in the sense of training him and giving him discipline. He was a good father in the sense of provision, Ishmael had everything he wanted. Ishmael didn't lack for anything. But, Abraham did not discipline Ishmael, and as a result, Ishmael was a wild ass of a man, he rejected all authority but his own. Later on Abraham will love Isaac as he never loved another human being. But, at this moment, Isaac is just an embryo on the drawing boards, he is not a reality as of yet. However Ishmael, his thirteen year old son is definitely in his thoughts all of the time, and he loves Ishmael dearly. The corrected translation of Gen 17:18 reads, *But said Abraham to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before Thee!"* It doesn't say *"Oh that Ishmael might be the heir!"* That's already settled, it says *"Oh that Ishmael might live before Thee!"* This means Abraham was asking God to make Ismael a believer to be a believer because even Abraham knows that Ishmael is not a believer in Jehovah Elohim and that he is a wild ass of a boy who will grow up to be a wild ass of a man. This verse does not mean that he was desiring Ishmael to be his heir and favored over Isaac. It means that God would also bless Ishmael and that he would live before God as a believer. God can bless a believer or unbeliever but He cannot violate their volition and force them to believe.

In verse 17, Abraham's laughter was legitimate and expressed his joy an emotional response of the fulfillment of the promises of God. It was a legitimate emotional laughter based upon doctrinal conclusions. Once the laughter is completed there is another factor, his love for Ismael. All Abraham has to do is realize that if Ishmael adjusts to the justice of God, he could live before God but until he does there is no living before God. No one can believe for another or else the entire world would be saved according to 1Ti 2:6; 2Pe 3:9. So back in Gen 17:18, Abraham remembers his son Ishmael with whom he is emotionally attached to and therefore begs God to have Ishmael live before Him. Gen 17:19, *But God said, "No, Ishmael will always be an unbeliever. Ishmael is not Jew, will never be a Jew under any circumstances. Isaac is still a year away, hence there is an emotional pull toward a known factor, toward the son whose personality is so pleasing to him. Ishmael will be blessed by the association with Abraham, but Ishmael will never be in the Abrahamic covenant.*

The Doctrine of Application, Part 1

06/09/02

After studying the promise of the heir that God gave to Abraham in Gen 17:1-21, we will now see what Abraham does once he has received his promise and his instructions from the Lord.

Gen 17:22 *And when He [God, Elohim] finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham.*

Abraham follows his instructions immediately.

Gen 17:23 *Then Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all the servants who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's household, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the very same day, as God had said to him.*

This is a great illustration of the positive believer's perception, metabolization, and *application* of Bible doctrine. This verse has led us to the study of the Doctrine of Application.

Point 1: Introduction. There are three ways in which believers reject Bible doctrine:

- A. Refusal to hear the teaching of God's Word on a consistent basis.
- B. Refusal to metabolize Bible doctrine after hearing the teaching—the failure to convert *gnosis* (knowledge) into *epignosis* (wisdom).
- C. Refusal to apply the doctrine, even after hearing and metabolizing it.

Eph 4:17-21 *This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus...*

If we have really learned of “the Christ,” then we will not continue under the old man. We are not merely to put off the old man; we are also told to put on the new; there is no “neutral” position. This is precisely the difference between Christianity and morality. Morality stops at the negative, which is putting off the old man. However, true Christianity goes forward to “put on the new.” These two commands always go together; we cannot fulfill one without the other.

Eph 4:22 *That, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit.*

The Greek verb for “lay aside” is “*apotithemi*,” which means to take off dirty or soiled clothes, and here it refers to rebound. We cleanse ourselves of the “dirt” we pick up in the cosmic system through rebound. The old man is going to destruction, the new man is created new; these two natures are exact opposites. The Greek noun translated “manner” (*anastrophe*) does not necessarily mean an overt manner of life but refers specifically to the old sin nature controlling the thought pattern of the individual through human viewpoint. It has to do with the way we *think* rather than the way we act (although what we think is inevitably revealed by our actions). This is the “former way of life,” the thought pattern in opposition to Bible doctrine. The Bible teaches that the old self is dead, crucified with Christ on the Cross, Rom 6:6.

Eph 4:23 *And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind [“*pneumati tou noos*,” the breathing of your soul]...*

Receiving divine viewpoint comes after the putting off of the old man. Here is where the ministry of God the Holy Spirit sustains us by renewing and restoring us again and again. This refers to our daily fellowship with God the Holy Spirit and our daily intake of doctrine, i.e., the breathing of our soul. This “renewal” cannot take place in our human spirit or our human mind by itself; it is only

possible through the “breathing of our soul”—fellowship with God the Holy Spirit and the intake of Bible doctrine.

In Eph 4:24 we have the ultimate objective in the Christian life: *“And put on [enduo] the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness [by means of grace and justice] and holiness of [devotion to] the truth.”* This command means to “clothe” the soul, which is necessary for building a *soul structure* as we learn doctrine upon doctrine. The putting on of the new self is accomplished experientially by building a soul structure through the intake of doctrine. Putting on the new self is the result of continually studying the doctrines of God’s Word. Consistency over a period of time is the key.

Both the negative and the positive aspects of the spiritual life (“do...” and “do not...”) are guaranteed to those who depend upon the ministry of the Spirit. Unfortunately, many Christian leaders have forced upon believers the idea that Christian character must be built by strenuous self-effort and self-discipline. This deception leads down the path of dependence upon self and human works as the basis for acceptance with God. These believers end up trusting in the flesh and in their own ability to conform to what they think God desires them to be. There is a curse on the man who trusts in himself and his own ability. We must be continually reminded that it is not the fruit of the believer or the fruit of the ministry that counts; it is the fruit of the Spirit.

Point 2: Application of doctrine is the only way to handle people. When believers have too much garbage in the soul and scar tissue of the soul, there is nothing that can be done to satisfy them. From the *emotion complex of sins*, such a believer becomes irrational and confused. From the *arrogance complex of sins*, he becomes bitter, implacable, jealous, vindictive, and self-righteous. However, implacable people must be treated in grace, and we must beware that we do not lose our own integrity or spiritual strength when interacting with such people.

People testing comes in two categories:

- A. In personal love or admiration, the object of our love often controls our life and causes us unhappiness, unless we have attained spiritual self-esteem, spiritual independence, or spiritual maturity. In desiring to please the object of our personal love, we find ourselves becoming a different person and no longer following our normal function.
- B. In personal hatred or animosity, the object of our antagonism or irritation can often control of our life and our happiness, unless we have advanced to spiritual adulthood.

Under the predesigned plan of God, God designed true happiness to always reside in us so that we do not depend on other people or material things for our happiness. We are to have personal control of our life, a personal sense of destiny, self confidence from metabolized doctrine, and therefore, poise and command of self. Therefore, we bring our happiness to others, but we do not lean on others or circumstances for our happiness. People are easily led away from the predesigned plan of God and doctrine by their friendships and love life, or hatred and conflicts. Therefore, Pro 13:20 tells us, *“He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.”*

Without impersonal love developed in spiritual independence, we inevitably become a slave to people and the way that they treat us. The solution to people testing is found in the combination of personal love for God and impersonal love for mankind. In fact, you do not personally love God the Father unless you have impersonal love for all mankind!

Believers can talk about how much love they have in their church or in their “fellowship” groups, but when they become critical and judgmental of another believer, they are only revealing what phonies they are. Remember the lesson that the Apostle Paul learned in Act 9:4 when he was persecuting believers: *“And he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’”* Our Lord made a very clear statement in Mat 25:40, *“I tell you the truth, whatever you did to one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did to Me.”*

“Spiritual independence,” also called “spiritual autonomy,” is the second stage of growth in the spiritual life, and is the prerequisite for solving all problems of human relationships, i.e., people testing, as well as system and thought testing. In spiritual independence we are spiritually self-sustained, and we are able to solve our problems with doctrinal resources and the power of God. We also have the divine power to accept correction and receive understanding. Believers do not blame anyone else for their own decisions when they are spiritually self-sustained.

Virtue-love as a problem-solving device is the secret to our relationship with God, our relationship with mankind, and the success of our personal love. Virtue-love is the manifestation of the power of God, 2Ti 1:7, “*For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.*” Through impersonal love, the believer can have control of his own life and his own happiness. Therefore, disappointment, frustration, and dissatisfaction with others cannot damage his happiness; he is protected from the misery caused by keeping his eyes on people. Once you attain spiritual adulthood, and you begin to face the different forms of *suffering for blessing*, God becomes the source of your happiness.

People can only become a distraction to the fulfillment of the God’s plan for your life when human relationships become more important to you than Bible doctrine. Our Lord said in Luk 12:51-53, “*Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two, and two against three. They will be divided, father against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against mother; mother in law against daughter in law, and daughter in law against mother in law.*” People can become a major distraction to the spiritual life. When personal ambition becomes stronger than Bible doctrine, the believer has lost his scale of values and priorities. In Mat 8:18, thousands are following the Lord and His ministry: “*Now when Jesus saw [eido] a crowd around Him, He gave orders to depart to the other side.*” The Greek verb here means to look and evaluate with thought, to perceive, and to realize something. Our Lord knows the real reason this crowd is following Him—what they can get for themselves. He is going to give a command, but before He does He evaluates the situation. Some of these people are following Him because they want to be delivered from the Romans. Some are following Him because they want to see miracles and healings. Others are following Him for entertainment, and still others for convenience. Our Lord is actually going to do something to separate those who are serious students of the Word of God from those who want all the nonsense and gimmicks that come with religion. He is going to separate the disciples from the crowd so that they can concentrate on the message. In the Church-age, this is exactly what a local assembly is for—to take us away from the realm of society and separate us for a short period of time to learn Bible doctrine.

Crowds, or “herds,” of people have evil influences on believers who are positive and want to learn doctrine, and this can be a very serious form of people testing.

Mat 8:18 *Now when Jesus saw a crowd around Him, He gave orders [a command] to depart to the other side.*

Notice that it is not being *around* the Lord Jesus Christ or His people that matters; it is *following His orders* when He gives them that really matters. Some are going to obey this command, while others are going to come up with excuses. While the mob is huge, most of them have negative volition toward doctrine. The Lord knows these people will be a distraction and that the disciples, the serious students of the Word of God, need to be isolated under His authority, away from the mob.

Many believers are going to be casualties in spiritual warfare, and their lip-service to the Lord will be exposed. As we will see, many of them will not separate from the mob to join the Lord because they are more interested in people than doctrine, Mat 8:19-20, “*And a certain scribe came and said to Him, ‘Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.’ 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.’*” The scribe is an intellectual

who is distracted from the most important thing in life by the details of life. Mat 8:21 continues, *“And another of the disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.’”* Here is a believer called a disciple, who calls Jesus “Lord,” indicating that he has much more doctrine than the scribe who merely called Jesus “teacher.” This disciple has had some teaching, but such believers can sometimes get very arrogant. To know a little and assume it is a lot is very dangerous. Unfortunately, this believer is one who is always concerned about what *people* think of him. He allows family and friends to guilt him into action; therefore, he fails people testing.

Joh 12:42-43 *Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.*

Mat 6:2 *“When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men.”*

Mat 23:5 *But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men.*

If you are concerned about what others think of you and what they are saying about you, you cannot live the Christian way of life. Our Lord said in Mat 5:11-12, *“Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”* Many believers fall away from doctrine and doctrinal ministries because they cannot handle the persecution and pressure that comes with being faithful to doctrine. We are promised escrow blessings, but with those blessings comes persecution, Mar 10:28-30, *“Peter began to say to Him, ‘Behold, we have left everything and followed You.’ Jesus said, ‘Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel’s sake, but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.”* Our Lord also warned us that if we are truly doing His work and serving Him, we will be persecuted, Joh 15:20-21, *“Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me.”*

The Doctrine of Application, Part 2

06/16/02

In our study of the Doctrine of Application, we are continuing with Point 2 and the principle that application of doctrine is the only way to handle people.

Point 2 (continued): Because every member of the human race possesses an old sin nature, it is imperative that we learn how to handle problems with other people. People can cause great distraction in the life of a believer. Public opinion and what others think of us can cause us distraction, as our Lord taught in Mat 8. We have seen this in our day in the rise of the news media as a propaganda agent for Islam, communism, and socialism. The public is constantly bombarded with false concepts. The only protection the public has against the inculcation of evil propaganda is positive volition to the truth of the Word of God. Public opinion never has the facts or the truth; it is irrational, irresponsible, emotional, and arrogant.

Mat 8:21 *And another of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father."*

This man, according to Luk 9:60, is already a preacher, and he has enough doctrine to preach the Gospel, but he is too concerned about what others think; he is a distracted disciple. In Mat 8:22 the Lord gives him an answer and a command: *"But Jesus said to him, 'Follow Me; and allow the dead to bury their own dead.'" This man faces a question that must be answered—what is his number one priority? Therefore, the Lord tells him, "Let the [spiritually] dead bury the [physical] dead."* The rest of our Lord's reply is found in Luk 9:60, *"Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God."* In the following verse, we see another individual who failed people testing, because of his attachment to his family.

Luk 9:61-62 *And another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home." But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."*

People testing is a major factor in the spiritual life and the application of doctrine. Passing this test is necessary for tranquility in the believer's life as well as for rewarding and worthwhile relationships. The believer must always be on guard against personality conflicts. The reaction factor in personality conflict becomes a source of great irritation and misery to most believers today. This reaction is generally expressed through the *arrogance complex of sins*, including hatred, bitterness, maligning, judging, and revenge motivation and function, all a source of terrible unhappiness.

When we react to people with antagonism, we are handing over control over our life to them, and we resort to either mental or verbal hostility or even violence. To recover control we must learn impersonal love; unfortunately, however, most believers never get this far.

Reaction to people can become a major distraction to our momentum in the plan of God. To avoid reaction in personality conflict, we must consistently reside in the predesigned plan of God for our life, under the enabling power of the Spirit, with momentum from metabolized doctrine. Once we reach spiritual adulthood, we will have great happiness even while suffering for blessing.

Since true happiness is the monopoly of God and His plan, we cannot depend upon people or circumstances for our happiness. In personal love or hatred, the other person controls our life, and when we become upset with them, we surrender our happiness to them. When we blame them for our unhappiness, which is produced by our own volition, we have intensified the suffering in our life under the law of volitional responsibility.

Phi 2:13-14 *For it is God [the Holy Spirit] who is at work in you, both to will [give you motivation] and to work [give you the power to live the spiritual life] above and beyond His good pleasure. Keep on doing all things without complaining, grumbling, or arguing.*

We must learn to mind our own business and work out our own salvation. The Apostle Paul warned the Thessalonians about the seriousness of violating the privacy of others and not operating in the Royal Family Honor Code, 2Th 3:11-12, *“For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.”* “Eat your own bread” is a Greek idiom that means “mind your own business.” We can not afford to get sidetracked from the plan of God by people.

Point 3: A thought can make or break you. The environment of confusion causes stress, 1Co 14:33. If there is confusion in any area of life (the home, romance, friendship, etc.), there will be stress there as well. The solution to confusion demands *concentration*, bringing reality from doctrine into the consciousness of the soul.

Pro 23:7 *As a person thinks in his heart, so he is.*

Gal 6:3 *If anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.*

Our soul is a spiritual battlefield, and what we think determines whether we are winning or losing.

Eph 4:23 *Become refreshed [renewed] by means of the spirit of your mind [through your thinking].*

Rom 12:2-3 *And do not be conformed to this world [do not fall into a state of confusion], but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment [in terms of sanity, being rational without illusion], as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.*

Paul also tells us in Phi 3:15, *“Therefore, as many as are mature believers, let us continue objective thinking. Furthermore, if you have a different mental attitude, God will reveal that to you.”* Bible doctrine is the thinking of God in relationship to the human race. Nothing is more important than knowing God’s integrity and how He thinks, and understanding how God operates in His predesigned plan.

Point 4: The Results of Bible Doctrine in the Soul.

- A. Confidence in time, Job 5:24-27, 2Co 5:6-8. The Bible says in Heb 10:35, *“Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.”*
- B. The divine viewpoint on life and the right priorities in the soul, Isa 55:7-9, 2Co 10:5.
- C. Orientation to the plan of God, Isa 26:3-4, Rom 8:28.
- D. Stability of mind. Bible doctrine in the soul will protect us from becoming what Jam 1:8 calls a *“double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”*
- E. Divine guidance and the execution of the will of God, Rom 12:2-3.
- F. Occupation with Christ, our “social life” with Christ, and the capacity and ability to love God and appreciate Him as the source of blessing, Phi 3:10, Eph 3:19, Heb 12:1-2.
- G. Attaining and holding spiritual maturity, Phi 3:12-14, *“Not that I have already obtained it [have already become mature], but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”*
- H. Eternal grace blessings, Heb 11:9-10,13; Jam 1:25 cf. 2:12-13.

Point 5: Thinking is the application of Bible doctrine to experience. Thinking Bible doctrine is synonymous with application of Bible doctrine. First we must learn doctrine, then we must think

doctrine. No believer can apply doctrine to his experience until he has metabolized that doctrine in the right lobe of the soul. Application of doctrine depends on metabolization of doctrine. There are three concepts for the environment of application: learning, thinking, and solving.

- ☒ Learning is tantamount to perception and metabolization of Bible doctrine.
- ☒ Thinking is the application of metabolized doctrine to experience.
- ☒ Solving is understanding and using the problem-solving devices of the predesigned plan of God.

Point 6: The Directions of Application.

- A. Toward God—worship, personal love for God, and occupation with Christ.
- B. Toward people—impersonal love for all mankind.
- C. Toward self—spiritual self-esteem.
- D. Toward dying—the doctrine of dying grace.

Point 7: The Importance of Volition.

- A. All believers must learn to choose identification with the Lord over prosperity in the world, Heb 11:25. This means the application of Bible doctrine in every area of our life. It means rejecting the pseudo-prosperity of the cosmic system for suffering with the people of God.
- B. As believers we also need to choose relationships based on doctrine, 1Co 2:2, *“For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”*
- C. As believers we need to make daily choices for life or death, and blessing or cursing, Deu 30:19, *“I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants.”*
- D. Positive and negative decisions result from positive or negative volition toward Bible doctrine, Psa 25:12, *“Who is the man who fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way he should choose”*; Pro 1:29, *“Because they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.”*
Gen 17:23 *Then Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all the servants who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham’s household, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the very same day, as God had said to him.*

When Abraham dies, he will leave behind eight sons. All eight of them will have historical impact. All will become great nations. Many kings will come from Abraham. He was noble as the father of many nations and distinguished as the father of Israel. He is great as the “father of us all,” Gal 3:7, as the pattern for faith alone in Christ alone, but as a father, Abraham failed with seven of his eight sons. He exercised no discipline over the illegitimate sons he had with Hagar and Keturah. For 13 years he did nothing to discipline his son Ishmael. In fact, Ishmael abused his younger half-brother, Isaac, who was the true heir and the perpetuation of the Jewish race. As we have seen, this conflict is still going on today.

Although Ishmael is not a part of the Abrahamic covenant, Abraham still circumcised him at age 13, in compliance with divine instruction. All his life, Ishmael will be a failure, a “wild ass” of a man. He is going to reject authority and reap the consequences. However, he will also have great blessing personally, including great wealth and success. Fantastic blessing is in store for him, not because there was anything good or admirable about him, but because of his association with an *ultra-supergrace* believer, his father Abraham.

When Abraham took Ishmael to circumcise him, he was circumcising an evil man. Abraham knew something that all parents need to remember—the only way that we are ever going to be a real blessing to our children is to reach spiritual maturity. Through this *blessing by association*, they can be promoted in the world and even become wealthy, but they can only prosper spiritually if they personally *adjust to the justice of God*.

Adjustment to the Justice of God

1. The one-time, instantaneous adjustment to the justice of God at the point of salvation.
2. Continual instantaneous adjustment to the justice of God through the rebound technique.
3. Ongoing adjustment to the justice of God through positive volition toward doctrine day after day, year after year, all the way to spiritual maturity.

Abraham became a spiritual champion, and he was a blessing to everyone who was ever related to him in any way. He was a blessing to his slaves and to all eight of his children, including the seven bastards. He was a blessing to his wife, and even to his two mistresses. His spiritual life blessed all those around him, including his family, friends, loved ones, and all those under his authority, and the circumcision of his slaves and of Ishmael in Gen 17:23 symbolizes this blessing by association. There are several important principles revealed in this verse:

1. The circumcision of Abraham's slaves indicates blessing by association.
2. God does not provide equality for happiness in blessing; He provides happiness for everyone involved, in their own role and their own rank.
3. For these slaves, happiness came from blessing by association and the security of being under the authority of a man of integrity.
4. Better to be a slave in the household of Abraham than to be king of an evil, reversionistic nation.
5. Neither equality nor freedom can provide happiness; happiness is only found in God's plan.
6. In many cases, the happiest people are those who are under the authority of the one who has been promoted and who is fulfilling the responsibilities of his position.

Never since Abraham has there been another man who had such a fantastic outreach of blessing to others through his own spiritual advance, and his personal relationship with the Lord. He was a greater blessing by association than anyone else who has ever walked the face of the earth, except the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

A Great Sign Appeared in Heaven, Part 1

06/30/02

As the turmoil in the Middle East continues to escalate, we need to remember that Satan has been the ruler of this world since the fall of Adam. Satan has greater power than any human and rules the world through his cosmic systems, Luk 4:5-7; Joh 12:31, 14:30, 16:11; 2Co 4:4; Eph 2:2.

Luk 4:5-6 *And he [the devil] led Him [the Lord Jesus Christ] up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish."*

The devil rules all fallen angels, all unbelievers, and even many believers through demon influence and cosmic involvement.

As the *great power demonstration* of the Hypostatic Union overflows into the Church-age, the Body of Christ is freely given the same power and the same spiritual life fulfilled by our Lord when He walked this earth. The Body of Christ is ruled by the Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, and has received the delegated divine power to resist the devil, 1Jo 4:4, "*Greater is He who is in you [the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit in the predesigned plan of God] than He who is in the world [the power of Satan as ruler of the world and cosmic system]."*

Satan is the enemy of Israel, and all anti-Semitism is satanic, Rev 12:4,13,15. In every generation, Satan uses all his power in his attempt to destroy Israel, but he will never succeed. As the ruler of this world, Satan sees an issue that very few people understand today—the reason why the Jew is here, what the Jew represents, and God's unconditional promises to the Jew. The entire structure of Biblical eschatology (the study of future dispensations) depends upon the future of Israel in the Millennium. God has promised Israel a great future, and to understand this, we must understand the Jewish race, and the pre-millennial return of our Lord at His Second Advent. The unconditional promises made to Israel will be fulfilled in the future, at our Lord's Second Coming. To ignore or reject these truths is to be deceived by the kingdom of darkness.

This is a great invisible conflict, and the Jew is at its center. Therefore, it is Satan's primary goal to destroy Israel so that God cannot keep His Word. Satan has sponsored anti-Semitism since the beginning of the Jewish race. Neither the United States nor any other nation can afford to fall into anti-Semitism because the Scriptures state dogmatically that God curses those who curse Israel, Gen 12:1-3, and this divine promise to Israel remains the same to this very day. God alone reserves the sovereign right to punish the Jews for their disobedience, Lev 26:14-39, Deu 28:15-68, and throughout their history, God has preserved them because of His promise, Gen 12:1-3 cf. Lev 26:44.

Israel is guaranteed a national future that no human or satanic plans can destroy. Therefore, no one, especially the believer in Jesus Christ, should ever support anti-Semitism. Believers must understand God's historical and future plan for Israel. Regardless of how long the Church-age continues, we can expect further outbreaks of hostilities in the Middle East and across the world. The Lord gave warnings of wars and rumors of wars leading up to His return, Mat 24:3-8, "*And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?' And Jesus answered and said to them, 'See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, "I am the Christ," and will mislead many. And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.'*"

In spite of these persistent conflicts in the world, God's immutable promise of a future return assures that human history will continue. Satan has instigated antagonism toward the Jews throughout history, and he will initiate a period of unparalleled anti-Semitism in the Tribulation, Rev

12:17, *“And the dragon was enraged with the woman [Israel], and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments [doctrines] of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”* Satan’s all out effort will culminate in that future day when four major powers will converge on Israel in an attempt to annihilate the Jews. The “King of the North” and the “King of the South” (Dan 11) will be the Soviet Union and the united Arab states, respectively. The King of the West would be a federation of European states, and the King of the East would be the Chinese communists and their allies.

Mentioned prophetically in Scripture, each empire of the Tribulation is intensely concentrated on the Middle East in general and on Israel in particular. Each will be driven by anti Semitism. Satan reasons that if no Jews survive, God’s character will be impugned because His covenant Word to Israel would be proven false. To fully understand this, we must know the content of prophecy concerning the course of events in the final seven years of the Jewish age.

The removal of all believers from the earth at the Rapture of the Church, 1Th 4:13-18, will announce the beginning of the Tribulation and accelerate Satan’s offensive against the Jews. The unconditional covenants are an everlasting promise given in grace to Abraham and his born again progeny, Gen 17:7. This treaty consists of four separate paragraphs and guarantees the Jews a future, a purpose, and a “title deed” to a land of their own, and it depends solely upon the character of God for fulfillment. The seven-year Tribulation period begins after the Rapture and terminates with the Second Advent of Christ, and the historical trends of this period are given in Rev 6-19. This dispensation is also known as *Daniel’s 70th Week*, the time of *Satan’s Desperation*, and *Jacob’s Trouble*; it is the dispensation of the greatest power struggle in all human history, directly involving not only the human race, but angelic creatures as well. It is Satan’s last attempt at total dominance of the world. The Tribulation is prophesied in many passages in the Old Testament, such as Jer 30:4-8; Zec 14:1-9; Dan 9:26-27; Isa 34:1-6, 63:1-6; Dan 11:40-46; Eze 38-39; and Zec 12:1-3, and it is prophesied by our Lord in Mat 24-25. It is not a time that you would want any of your family members, friends, neighbors, or even enemies to experience, if you truly understand it. It is a great period of wrath on this earth from God and from Satan, Zep 1:14-18. It is a time of great judgment on the earth as never before, Rev 6:12-17, indignation, Isa 26:20-21, trial, Rev 3:10, destruction, Joe 1:15, darkness, Joe 2:2, and desolation, Dan 9:27. According to the Word of God, it could begin on this earth tomorrow because of the immanency of the Rapture.

Anti-Semitism is hostility toward the Jews on the part of a person, group, organization, or nation. It is intolerance, hatred, prejudice, opposition, persecution, and the exercise of terrorism and military action against the Jewish race. As we have noted before, since the church has already defeated Satan in its identification with the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross, Col 2:14-15, Heb 1-2, the Jews are now the center of the angelic conflict. This is the cause of the great satanic opposition against the Jews, concentrated in the Middle East, and spread throughout the world. This persecution and hostility against the Jews will reach its peak in the Tribulation period as Satan plans the genocide of the Jewish race.

In Rev 12:1 we read, *“And a great sign appeared in heaven [Abraham and Sarah and the beginning of the Jewish race through circumcision, as well as the fulfillment of the Cross], a woman [Israel] clothed with the sun [a reference to Jacob], and the moon [Jacob’s wives, who reflect him as the moon reflects the sun—the twelve patriarchs would come from Jacob’s two wives and two mistresses, Gen 37:9.]”* Since the day Satan discovered that Israel was to be the source of the incarnate Christ, Israel has been the target of his hatred and antagonism. There is a historical and eternal relationship between the uniqueness of Christ and the uniqueness of Israel.

Rev 12:2 *And she [Israel, with reference to the virgin pregnancy as well as the many Jewish holocausts] was with child; and she cried out [the greatest holocaust of all, which will take place*

at the end of the Tribulation with the third demon assault army of Rev 9], *being in labor and in pain to give birth* [wishing for deliverance from this severe anti-Semitism].

Rev 12:3-6 *And another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon [Satan] having seven heads and ten horns [control of seven heads and ten horns, referring to the revived Roman empire of the Tribulation and the ecumenical religion], and on his heads were seven diadems [crowns]. And his tail [his power] swept away a third of the stars of heaven [the prehistoric revolution in heaven in which one third of the angels followed Satan in the prehistoric angelic conflict], and He [God] threw them to the earth [this will take place in the middle of the Tribulation]. And the dragon [Satan] stood before the woman [the virgin Mary] who was about to give birth [the virgin birth of Christ, which Satan wanted desperately to prevent], so that when she gave birth he might devour her child [destroy the humanity of Christ and the hypostatic union, and therefore win the angelic conflict]. And she gave birth to a son, a male child [our Lord Jesus Christ in hypostatic union], who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron [capital punishment during the Millennium]; and her child was caught up to God [the ascension] and to His throne [the session]. And the woman [true Israel, Jews saved during the Tribulation period] fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God [for refuge], so that there she might be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days [the last half of the Tribulation, the time of Satan's desperation].*

Rev 12:7-12 *And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death. For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."*

Satan always has and will hate the Jews. We still see the overflowing of his anger in historical anti-Semitism at the present time. Satan has two major objectives in the unfolding of his plan of anti-Semitism:

1. The historical objective, in which Satan sought to keep our Lord from being born, and then to kill His humanity before He reached the Cross.
2. The prophetic objective, in which Satan seeks to destroy Israel before the Second Advent, so that the four unconditional covenants to Israel cannot be fulfilled.

The Abrahamic Covenant defines the *race* for client nation Israel—Abraham becoming a Jew through circumcision at age 99, Gen 12:1 3, 13:15 16, 15:18, 22:15 18, 26:3 4; Exo 6:2 8.

The Palestinian Covenant defines the *land* for client nation Israel, Gen 15:18, Num 34:1 12, Deu 30:1 9, Jos 1:3 4. The Davidic Covenant defines the *dynasty* for client nation Israel, 2Sa 7:8 16, Psa 89:20 37.

The New Covenant defines the *restoration* of client nation Israel at the Second Advent and its Millennial *modus operandi*, Jer 31:31 34.

The New Covenant cannot be fulfilled to any Jew unless he has eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. This covenant will be fulfilled during the Millennium and the eternal state, Isa 61:2 11, 59:20 21; Rom 11:26 27. It is an eternal covenant, Eze 16:60, therefore, the Jewish recipients of this covenant must have eternal life to be its beneficiaries.

In Rev 12:1 we see the “sign” for the first time pointing to the Jewish race. The Hebrew noun translated “sign” is “*semeion*,” which means something ceremonial or supernatural, a miracle, a sign, a wonder, or that by which a person or thing is distinguished from others and known. This supernatural sign refers to the origin of the Jewish race.

In Isa 7:14 we read about the most important sign that God gave: “*Therefore the Lord [Jehovah] Himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel [“God with us”].*” In Rev 12, the great sign began with Abraham and circumcision and God opening the womb of Sarah. This is the first sign in view in Rev 12:1. Isa 7:14 gives the second sign—the Messiah coming through the virgin birth. The Lord Jesus Christ had to be born from a woman, without an old sin nature being passed down by a human father. While both man and woman are carriers of the old sin nature, it is the man who passes on the old sin nature through the fertilization of the female ovum. It is only the male’s 23 chromosomes that carry the old sin nature and not the female’s; therefore, if a woman were to have a virgin pregnancy (i.e., if her ovum were fertilized apart from male copulation), her offspring would be born into the world without an old sin nature, and Adam’s original sin could not be imputed. This was the case in the birth of the humanity of Christ, when our Lord was born as the last Adam. The first Adam was created perfect; the last Adam, Jesus Christ, was born perfect. Jesus Christ was born in the same state as Adam before the fall, and He would succeed where the first Adam failed. The virgin birth is the basis for our redemption, because it provided the world with a perfect human being, the only One qualified to be judged for the sins of the world. Instead of a sin nature, our Lord was born with a human spirit, born as Adam was created. In His humanity, Jesus was born filled with the Spirit, and He was born *trichotomous* with a body, soul, and spirit.

The Jewish prophecy of the virgin birth is given in Isa 7:14.

Isa 7:14 *Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.*

The historical fulfillment of the virgin birth is found in Mat 1:19-25.

Mat 1:20-21 *But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.”*

The result of the virgin birth is recorded in many passages, such as Joh 1:14, Rom 1:3, 1Ti 3:16, Heb 2:14, Phi 2:5-11.

Joh 1:14 *And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

A Great Sign Appeared in Heaven, Part 2

07/07/02

Revelation 12:1 *And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman [Israel] clothed with the sun [Jacob, Gen 37:9-10], and the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of twelve stars.*

In our study of the past and future of Israel, we have seen that there were three important signs given to the Jews.

1. The sign of circumcision, a sign that Abraham would perpetuate the Jewish race, Gen 17:11, *"And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you."*
2. The sign of the virgin birth, pointing to the Hypostatic Union and the unique relationship that the Lord Jesus Christ would have with God the Father, Isa 7:14, *"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."*
3. The sign of Israel becoming a nation, manifested by the miracles of the ten plagues, Exo 10:2.

In Rev 12:1, the "twelve stars" refer to the twelve tribes of Israel, who came from a man called Jacob. To better understand God's plan and His grace on behalf of the Jewish race, we need to look at Jacob and his father Isaac. Both men are great examples of Bible doctrine making a *man* out of a wimp, and even providing a place for him in God's "hall of fame," Heb 11.

Gen 27:1-2 *Now it came about, when Isaac was old, and his eyes were too dim to see, that he called his older son Esau and said to him, "My son." And he said to him, "Here I am." And Isaac said, "Behold now, I am old and I do not know the day of my death."*

Isaac is now 137 years old, his half-brother Ishmael has been dead for 14 years, and he thinks he is also dying; however, he will live another 43 years.

Gen 27:3-8 *"Now then, please take your gear, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me; and prepare a delicious dish for me such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, so that my soul may bless you before I die." And Rebekah was listening while Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game to bring home, Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "Behold, I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, saying, 'Bring me some game and prepare a delicious dish for me, that I may eat, and bless you in the presence of the Lord before my death.' Now therefore, my son, listen to me as I command you."*

How unfortunate it is that Jacob is 77 years old, and he is still at home and still taking orders from his mother!

Gen 27:9-13 *"Go now to the flock and bring me two choice kids [baby goats] from there, that I may prepare them as a delicious dish for your father, such as he loves. Then you shall bring it to your father, that he may eat, so that he may bless you before his death." And Jacob answered his mother Rebekah, "Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man and I am a smooth man. Perhaps my father will feel me, then I shall be as a deceiver in his sight [of course, he is a deceiver, but deceivers fear being discovered]; and I shall bring upon myself a curse and not a blessing." But his mother said to him, "Your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get them for me."*

All three instructions ("*go now...*", "*bring me two choice kids...*", and "*bring it to your father...*") are in the imperative mood, meaning orders and commands. Jacob is a 77-year-old "Momma's boy."

Gen 27:14-19 *So he went and got them, and brought them to his mother; and his mother made a delicious dish such as his father loved. Then Rebekah took the best garments of Esau her elder son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. And she put the skins of the kids on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. She also gave the delicious dish and the bread, which she had made, to her son Jacob. Then he came to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?" And Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau*

your first born; I have done as you told me. Get up, please, sit, and eat of my game [being the liar that he is, he should have said, "My game of deception"], that you may bless me."

Jacob can lie and deceive very smoothly.

Gen 27:20-24 And Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have it so quickly, my son?" And he said, "Because the Lord your God caused it to happen to me." Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come close, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not." [Apparently Isaac does not trust either of his sons.] So Jacob came close to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau." And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him. And he said, "Are you really my son Esau?" And he said, "I am."

Appropriately, the Lord says in Mal 3:6, *"For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob [liars and deceivers], are not consumed."*

Gen 27:25-28 So he [Isaac] said, "Bring it to me, and I will eat of my son's game, that I may bless you." And he [Jacob] brought it to him, and he ate; he also brought him wine and he drank. Then his father Isaac said to him, "Please come close and kiss me, my son." So he came close and kissed him; and when he smelled the smell of his garments, he blessed him and said, "See, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed; now may God give you of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, and an abundance of grain and new wine."

The Jewish fathers were given divine authority to pass down blessings.

Gen 27:29-33 "May peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you; be master of your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be those who curse you, and blessed be those who bless you." Now it came about, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had hardly gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. Then he also made delicious food, and brought it to his father; and he said to his father, "Let my father arise, and eat of his son's game, that you may bless me." And Isaac his father said to him, "Who are you?" And he said, "I am your son, your first born, Esau." Then Isaac trembled violently, and said, "Who was he then that hunted game and brought it to me, so that I ate of all of it before you came, and blessed him? Yes, and he shall be blessed."

Isaac now recognizes that Jacob has the blessing. He could have reneged on the blessing of Jacob, but the doctrine in his soul would not allow him to do so, Heb 11:20, *"By means of doctrine resident in the soul Isaac blessed Jacob."* He trembled "violently" because he realized the serious mistake he would have made by blessing Esau rather than Jacob.

Gen 27:34-36 When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me, even me also, O my father!" And he said, "Your brother came deceitfully, and has taken away your blessing." Then he said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he has supplanted me these two times? He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing." And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?"

Esau obeys Isaac, goes hunting, returns with the delicious meal his father loves, and tells no lies. Meanwhile, Jacob never leaves the house, and he substitutes a goat for the venison Isaac desired, willfully deceives his father, and even uses the Lord's name to do so; yet he receives the blessing. In fact, in Rom 9:13 we read, *"Just as it is written, 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.'"* (This is an *anthropopathism*, ascribing a human emotion to God.)

Gen 27:37 But Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Behold, I have made him your master, and all his relatives I have given to him as servants; and with grain and new wine I have sustained him. Now as for you then, what can I do, my son?"

Even though Isaac was old and blind, his spiritual eyes were now opened to the fact that God had overruled, and Esau was not God's choice. He could now recall what the Lord had said to Rebekah in Gen 25:23, *"And the Lord said to her, 'Two nations are in your womb; and two peoples shall be separated*

from your body; and one people [the Jews] shall be stronger than the other [the Arabs]; and the older shall serve the younger.” It takes a great believer to learn from being deceived that something he intended was not the will of God, and to refrain from bitterness. When we can learn from such an experience with no bitterness or anger, it is an indication that we have grown up spiritually. Isaac learned the lesson of Rom 9:16, *“So then it does not depend on the man who wills [Isaac] or the man who runs [Esau], but on God who has mercy.”*

Concerning Esau, Heb 12:17 says, *“For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.”* The meaning of this verse is brought in Gen 27:38, *“And Esau said to his father, ‘Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father.’ So Esau lifted his voice and wept.”* The repentance Esau desired was not personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; he was yelling and crying, desperately trying to change Isaac’s mind, but never could.

Gen 27:39-41 *Then Isaac his father answered and said to him, “Behold, away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling, and away from the dew of heaven from above [a prophecy that Esau would not participate in God’s blessing as Jacob would]. And by your sword you shall live, and your brother you shall serve; but it shall come about when you become restless, that you shall break his yoke from your neck [there would come a time when Esau would break free, a form of blessing given to Esau by Isaac, as in Heb 11:20]. So Esau bore a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him; and Esau said to himself, “The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob.”*

In his acceptance of the disappointment of Jacob getting the blessing over his favorite son Esau, Isaac shows us how to bear the consequences of making wrong decisions. At times the Lord will allow people who are close to us to hurt us, even unintentionally, to guide us onto the correct path, Psa 23:3, *“He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake.”* We must not hate others because of the pain they cause us. As Joseph said to his deceitful brothers in Gen 50:20, *“And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.”*

The Lord can turn the curse of deception into praise toward Himself, Psa 76:10, 2Co 13:8, Isa 54:17. Throughout history there have been those who try to attack the people of God and prevent doctrine from being taught, but as Exo 1:12 says of the Egyptians persecuting the Jews, *“But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out.”*

Esau only saw the deceiver Jacob and vowed revenge; Isaac saw God’s hand in the matter and trembled because he almost made the wrong decision. We can bear the pain inflicted upon us by others when we see that they are merely the instruments of divine blessing or divine chastisement. Unfortunately, to this day, the method of Rebekah and Jacob is largely adopted by religious people who believe that the ends justify the means. The destiny of all attempts to manage God’s affairs by deception or misrepresentation is seen in the scheme of Rebekah and Jacob. After this ordeal, Jacob is disciplined for 20 years and Rebekah never sees her son again. They gained nothing and lost much. God had promised that the birthright would be Jacob’s, and God would have given it to him *at the proper time*, but their timing did not line up with God’s timing. Jacob had to flee for his life until his dying years, as is evident in Gen 47:9, *“So Jacob said to Pharaoh, ‘The years of my sojourning are one hundred and thirty; few and unpleasant have been the years of my life.’”* The sin of Rebekah and Jacob was the sin of assuming God had forgotten His promise or was unable to perform it. Their blasphemous plan was to take God’s work out of His hands and try to do it better themselves. While each member of Isaac’s family tried their own plans, God’s purpose was still accomplished, as it always is, Isa 46:8-11. Jacob was a con-artist, yet God still chose him over Esau.

Upon the discovery of Jacob’s deception, Isaac took a doctrinal stand, and for the first time in his life on record in Scripture, he acted in courage rather than cowardice. Esau had always been his

favorite, but he realized that Jacob was a believer and that Esau, as an unregenerate unbeliever, could not partake of God's covenant. Even though Esau the unbeliever is genetically related to Abraham, he is not spiritually related to Abraham through regeneration, and so was rejected from the new racial species, Rom 9:6-13,11:26. The Apostle Paul writes in Rom 9:6, *"But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel."* This was a message to the Jews that in their first three generations, when the genetic structure of the Jew was established, that even though they have a physical advantage over all other races as the new racial species, this superiority means nothing without regeneration, which is necessary for the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant.

From this point on, Isaac the wimp was gone, and a real man took his place. Isaac had lived as a wimp in many ways, with the exception of his obedience to his father's authority on mount Moriah in Gen 22. Bible doctrine made Isaac the wimp a great man, carried him to spiritual maturity and entered him into God's hall of fame. Upon the discovery of the deception, Isaac stood his ground, and he stood on the principle of doctrine that he knew well—the elder would serve the younger. Therefore, no matter how much and how long Esau begged, he would not revoke the blessing of Jacob, Heb 12:16-17. A real man takes a doctrinal stand no matter what his feelings or emotions are; he sees the true issue and does not allow his pride to interfere. This was an act of supergrace nobility based on doctrine resident in the soul and is similar to the test of Abraham in Gen 22, although not as great as Abraham's test. Doctrine resident in the soul took precedence over his great love for Esau, his favorite son. Doctrine in our souls must take precedence over our love for *any* member of the human race. Doctrine in Isaac's soul even overcame being put down and deceived by his wife Rebekah, whom he loved dearly. Bible doctrine in the soul can change anyone's life and make anyone great.

Jacob is mentioned first in Rom 9:13, even though he is the younger, because he is a true Jew and he is the heir. The Lord Jesus Christ calls Himself by the great title, "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," Exo 3:6, Mat 22:32. He is the God of those who are born-again. He is the God of three generations who were not only racially in the same line, but also spiritually. They all followed the same pattern in regeneration. They were all colossal failures, yet they all became great men and died great men. Because He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He is faithful to us.

Heb 11:20 *By means of doctrine resident in the soul Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come* [things destined to be].

The Abrahamic Covenant is going to be fulfilled. These things are "destined to be" and are certain to be fulfilled. The Jewish race will continue and will never be destroyed. Through them God makes the statement, *"I am the God of grace, and if I can preserve the Jewish race, I can take care of your problems."* Isaac gave Esau all he could give an unbelieving son, but he could not give him the spiritual heritage. Isaac was a weak man all his life, but he became strong and decisive when facing the crisis of deception because he was prepared by the intake of doctrine. Isaac the weak wimp became Isaac the man of steel and strength. And Bible doctrine made the difference.

A Great Sign Appeared in Heaven, Part 3: A Profile of Jacob

07/14/02

We are continuing our study on the third sign found in heaven as recorded for us in Revelation 12:1, which reveals why Satan promotes anti-Semitism and hatred toward the Jews.

Rev 12:1 *And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman [Israel] clothed with the sun [Jacob, Gen 37:9-10], and the moon under her feet.*

Three important signs were given to the Jews:

1. The sign of circumcision, a sign that Abraham would perpetuate the Jewish race, Gen 17:11.
2. The sign of the virgin birth, pointing to the hypostatic union and the relationship that Jesus Christ would have with His Father, Isa 7:14.
3. The sign of Israel becoming a nation, manifested by the ten plagues.

Isaac's blessing of Jacob is related to this sign, Heb 11:20, *"By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come."* The phrase "by faith" is translated from the Greek noun "*pistei*," which literally means "*through the instrument of doctrine.*" The Greek noun "*pistis*," translated "faith," has three different meanings:

1. That which causes trust and faith; translated "faithfulness," "reliability," "proof," and "pledge."
2. "Faith" in the active sense of believing; translated "faith," "trust," and "confidence."
3. That which is believed, or the body of faith and belief; translated "doctrine."

The corrected translation of Heb 11:20 reads: *"By means of doctrine resident in the soul, even concerning things destined to be [the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant], Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau."* Isaac blessed Jacob as a part of the covenant, and he blessed Esau outside the covenant. He gave Esau all he could give an unbelieving son, but he could *not* give him the spiritual heritage. In Gen 27:36, Esau blamed Jacob for stealing his birthright and his blessing, but Esau is the one who allowed it to happen. And while Isaac had been deceived by two people that he thought loved him (his wife and son), it did not change his decision. Spiritual growth and maximum doctrine resident in the soul gave him the objectivity and courage to stick with a major command decision.

Psa 119:165 *"Great peace have they which love thy doctrine: and nothing shall offend them."*

1Co 2:15 *"But he who is spiritual discerns [appraises] all things, yet he himself is discerned by no man."*

Your real spiritual "status quo" is known only to you and the Lord! You are not subject to investigation by other believers, not even your pastor; this is the privacy of the priesthood, as in 1Co 11:28, 2Co 13:5; Gal 6:4. You do not have the right to examine other believers because you do not have the power to look into their souls and examine their motivation. We are not to examine the fruit of others, 1Co 2:15. For the mature believer, no one knows his innermost thoughts. No one else knew why Isaac allowed the deception to prevail, but God did. We cannot scrutinize, appraise, or judge a spiritual man. We do not even know ourselves as well as we think we do, Psa 19:12, *"Who can understand his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults";* 1Co 4:4, *"For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord."*

In evaluating other Christians, we have a tendency to believe evil if we dislike them, and refuse to believe anything evil if we like them; in either case, it is none of our business. We must remember that we never have all the facts; in fact, this is why pastors should not council. We must all learn how to live our own lives as unto the Lord and let others live theirs, 1Pe 4:15, *"By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler [one who violates the privacy of others]."* Privacy is violated by gossiping, maligning, and judging.

Isaac had the moral courage to stand by a right decision no matter how great the pressure or ridicule. Isaac the failure emerges as Isaac the supergrace hero, the spiritual champion with noble courage, a man of doctrine. The wimp is gone and the man emerges because doctrine became more

real to Isaac than anything else in life. In Gen 27:21-33, Isaac recognized that the Lord would not have allowed him to give the blessing to Jacob unless it was the Lord's will.

Gen 27:34-37 When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me, even me also, O my father!" And he said, "Your brother came deceitfully, and has taken away your blessing." Then he said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he has supplanted [deceived] me these two times? He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing." And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" But Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Behold, I have made him your master, and all his relatives I have given to him as servants; and with grain and new wine I have sustained him. Now as for you then, what can I do, my son?"

Isaac is old and blind, but he is also spiritual, and his spiritual eyes are now opened to the fact that God has overruled and Esau was not God's choice. He had already been told years ago that Esau would serve Jacob, Gen 25:23, *"And the Lord said to her [Rebekah], 'Two nations are in your womb; and two peoples shall be separated from your body; and one people shall be stronger than the other; and the older shall serve the younger.'"* Isaac did give a measure of blessing to Esau, but it was not the covenant blessing that guaranteed fantastic prosperity, and power and authority over the family, and Esau bore such a grudge that he made plans to kill his brother Jacob, Gen 27:38-41.

In Heb 11:21 we see a "chiseler" and deceiver who made it to spiritual maturity and visible heroship in one lifetime: *"By faith Jacob, as he was dying..."* We need to see a profile of Jacob and learn some of his background, in order to fully understand that third sign in heaven, which Satan despises because it glorifies the grace of God.

Satan hates to see the grace of God glorified, because it reveals that God is not unfair or unjust, and that He would do anything and everything for those whom He has created. In the angelic conflict, Satan attempts to present a case that God is unfair and unjust and a God who is neither merciful nor gracious. In this dispensation of grace, the Church-age, God demonstrates the fallacy of the satanic lie through people who are graced-out to the maximum, people like us. Think of how could God use a man like the Apostle Paul, the man we read about in Act 8:3, *"But Saul began destroying the church, entering house after house; and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison."* He was a genius in the natural realm and he became the greatest Bible teacher in the early church, yet he said in 1Co 1:17, *"For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, that the cross of Christ should not be made void."* He could have used "clever speech" being a genius, but God would not allow him to use the strength of his flesh. It was said about him in 2Co 10:10, *"For they say, 'His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive, and his speech contemptible.'"* When God can reach out to someone like Paul and with all his weaknesses use him in the angelic conflict, it is devastating to Satan. Therefore, we need to look at the man who represents the *"great sign in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun."*

1. Jacob was the son of Isaac and the twin brother of Esau, and he was also an ancestor of Jesus. He was nicknamed Jacob because, at the birth of the twins, "his hand *took hold* of Esau's heel," Gen 25:26, *"And afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob; and Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them."* According to the accounts in *Genesis*, Jacob continued to "take hold" of the possessions of others, such as his brother's birthright, Gen 25:29-34, his father's blessing, Gen 27:1-29, and his father in law's flocks and herds, Gen 30:25-43, 31:1. His name means supplanter or swindler. Webster's dictionary's definition of "supplant" is to "overthrow by force or treachery or deception." He was named "one who overthrows." From his birth he seems to have had an ingrained trait to outdo his brother or anyone else in his path. Jacob had a nasty habit of deception, and his family trend and family traits made him a good liar.

2. Jacob tried to take Esau's birthright for a mere bowl of beans, Gen 25:31. He waited for an opportunity and then seized it. In Gen 25:24-27, we read, *"When her days [Rebekah, Isaac's wife] to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. Now the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau. And afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob; and Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them. When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a peaceful man, living in tents."* The word "peaceful," which is the Greek adjective "tam," means pious, gentle, or dear. However, we read in the next verse, Gen 25:28, *"Now Isaac loved Esau, because he had a taste for game [hunting (Esau was tough and athletic)]; but Rebekah loved Jacob."* Right away we notice problems of comparison and favoritism. A very unfortunate fact is that the children were loved on the basis of how they pleased their parents or whether they possessed the same interest as their parents. The mother loved Jacob because he was like she was. He was gentle and sweet, and he liked to stay at home with mommy in the house. Isaac liked Esau because he was "manly." Let us see what kind of person Jacob was, Gen 25:29-34, *"And when Jacob had cooked stew, Esau came in from the field and he was famished; and Esau said to Jacob, 'Please let me have a swallow of that red stuff there, for I am famished.' Therefore his name was called Edom. But Jacob said, 'First sell me your birthright.' And Esau said, 'Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?' And Jacob said, 'First swear to me,' so he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and rose and went on his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright."* It suddenly occurred to Jacob that this would be a good opportunity of seizing the right to be the spiritual leader of the family. He decided to take advantage of his brother's weakness and rob the blessing from him. This was the motto of Jacob's life—*"Take advantage!"* Jacob had lived with his parents for 77 years, and he had undoubtedly been told that the Lord had said he would have the birthright. Therefore, he was not only a traitor to his brother and his father, but also toward his God. In Gen 25:31, *"But Jacob said, 'First sell me your birthright.'" Here we see the deceitfulness and arrogance in Jacob, actually believing that the things of God, such as the birthright, could be bought. Many religious swindlers are still selling things today, and this is evil and against the Word of God. Money cannot buy eternal life, happiness, love, or virtue. Paul said in 2Co 2:17, "For we are not like many, peddling the word of God."*

In Gen 25:32, *"And Esau said, 'Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?'"* Esau was an unbeliever, yet hundreds of thousands of believers today have this very same attitude. They allow their carnal and physical desires to drown out the conviction of the Holy Spirit and obscure the vision of divine blessings for the promise of temporal things. Very few believers even recognize the privilege of gathering together for public worship through the intake of doctrine. For the average believer, there is no thought of the duty he owes to God—no sense of requirement. He does not love God with all of his strength, as in Mar 12:30, Luk 10:27, Deu 6:5. The average believer gives no consideration to any responsibility or obligation to His Lord and Savior.

Even the communion service is taken very lightly by many believers who do not come and celebrate this great event of the Cross when their local assembly gathers together for that purpose. This was so sacred to the early church that they did it daily, Act 2:46. So many of God's people have sold out—like Esau they have said, *"What use then is the birthright to me?"* As believers we should all pause to remember what the Lord requires from us:

- ☐ To be occupied with Him.
- ☐ To be governed by His doctrine.
- ☐ To love and to serve Him.
- ☐ To have all five parts of our soul in complete submission to Him—emotion, self consciousness, volition, mentality, and conscience.

- ☒ Accountability for what we hear, Deu 18:19.
- ☒ Fulfilling any vow (commitment) we have made, Deu 23:21.
- ☒ To live by these three principles: (1) justice, (2) loving mercy (grace in action), and (3) walking humbly with our God, Mic 6:8.

David tells us that only the wicked assume that God will not require anything, Psa 10:13. The more doctrine you learn and the more committed you are, the more shall be required of you, Luk 12:48.

Many of God's children, although they can never lose their salvation, have sold parts of their birthright away. At the moment of salvation, every believer is given fantastic blessings and assets, and yet they are so involved in the devil's world that they do not have time for their heavenly birthright. They are given an eternal inheritance in Eph 1:14, yet they ignore that inheritance. They have been given eternal life, but through negative volition toward doctrine, they have ignored the reality of living in that eternal life in time. They have been reconciled to God, but they ignore the relationship that comes through reconciliation. They have been created a new spiritual species but do not live in the new creation. They have been entered into the Royal Family of God forever but refuse to gather together with the Royal Family of God in time. They have been given equal privilege and equal opportunity to glorify God but have ignored the divine opportunities and privileges. They have been given the universal priesthood of the believer but refuse to function as priests. They have been made royal ambassadors for Christ at the moment of salvation but have sent a message to their King: "I am not interested in representing You in this foreign land!" They are indwelt by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and have ignored Their presence. They have been given the unique availability of divine power but insist on relying on their own disgusting, worthless, pathetic human power. They have been given a portfolio of invisible assets but have sold out to the cosmic system. They have been given the unique predesigned plan of God but insist on relying on their own plans. They have been given a spiritual gift to build up and edify their local assembly, but they are too busy investing in the devil's world. They have been transferred into the kingdom of God and delivered from the kingdom of Satan but have refused to accept that liberty and freedom. They have been given direct access to God but do not have time to approach Him. They have been given escrow blessings but would rather receive cosmic compensation. They have been given divine problem-solving devices but instead rely on human solutions. Therefore, before we think of condemning Esau for selling his birthright, we should look closer at ourselves to stay alert and take care that we do not sell the privileges of our new birth to the cosmic system of Satan.

A Great Sign Appeared in Heaven, Part 4: Beware of the Laban's and Jacob's of life, the Con-Artists.

07/21/02

We have been noting Rev 12:1, *And a great sign appeared in heaven a woman [the woman is Israel] clothed with the sun [a reference to Jacob according to Gen 37:9-10], and the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of twelve stars.* The moon, as we have seen, is a reference to the wives of Jacob and his mistresses who reflect him as the moon reflects the sun. The stars are the twelve tribes of Israel as we will note.

Gen 35:22-26, And it came about while Israel was dwelling in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; and Israel heard of it. Now there were twelve sons of Jacob—the sons of Leah: Reuben, Jacob's first-born, then Simeon and Levi and Judah and Issachar and Zebulun; the sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin; and the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid: Dan and Naphtali; and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maid: Gad and Asher. These are the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram.

Four woman brought forth the 12 tribes of Israel, two wives and two concubines. Heb 11:21, we read in the corrected translation, *By means of doctrine resident in the soul Jacob,* The Greek word for Jacob is Iakob which comes from the Hebrew word Jaaqobh which means heel-catcher, sup planter, one who overthrows by force, treachery or deception. His name was certainly prophetic, he was an opportunist and a con-artist. The interesting principle that we have been noting is that when the Lord first appeared to Moses, in Exo 3:6 He said, *"I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."* In fact, this phrase is used throughout the word of God. The Lord Jesus Christ quoted this passage in Mat 22:32, *"I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."* Why? Because Satan hates when God can take a person like Jacob or Paul or you or me and yet with all of our weaknesses use us to glorify Him in the angelic conflict. Remember that in the angelic conflict, Satan tries to convince people that God is unfair, unjust and a God who is not merciful or gracious. Satan hates when the grace of God is glorified because it reveals the love and the mercy of God and how God is not unfair and unjust and how He would do everything for those whom He has created. In this dispensation of grace, the church-age, God demonstrates the fallacy of the satanic lie through people who receive abundant grace.

It's also important to understand why God calls the nation of Israel Jacob. Every time Israel went into apostasy God would remind them of His grace, mercy and justice. Jacob had a lot of faults and failures and he utilized everything to his own advantage. We noted in Gen 25, he used his brother's hunger to purchase the birthright. The birthright included a double portion of blessing from the family, Deu 21:17, the rulership of the entire family, Gen 27:29, as well as the title to the family blessing from God, Gen 27:4, 28-29. However, remember, even if you are a believer and a child of God you still reap what you sow. The natural law is what goes around comes around. So, it's time for Jacob to get a taste of his own medicine so let's look at the passage that describes this.

After Jacob tried to obtain Esau's birthright for just one bowl of lentil soup, his twin brother Esau vowed to kill him, (Gen 27:41-44). So Jacob ran away to Haran to his uncle Laban. And therefore, we read in Gen 29:1-2, *Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the sons of the east. And he looked, and saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep were lying there beside it, for from that well they watered the flocks. Now the stone on the mouth of the well was large.* In the East, the wells are still covered with large boulders to prevent the water from becoming polluted.

Gen 29:3-6, When all the flocks were gathered there, they [more than one of them] would then roll the stone from the mouth of the well, and water the sheep, and [then they would] put the stone back in its place on the mouth of the well. And Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Haran." And he said to them, "Do you know Laban the son

of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him." And he said to them, "Is it well with him?" And they said, "It is well, and behold, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep."

These men would gather together at this well and wait for Rachel to come with the sheep. And why not because of what the Holy Spirit says about her in verse 17, she had a fantastic body, symmetry and she was also beautiful. As soon as he found out that Rachel had a beautiful face and body and that she was coming, he immediately thought that this could be the one. So he did what any normal man would do, he tried to get the others out of the vicinity so that he could be alone with her.

Jacob is a very deceitful person even when he's not trying to be. He doesn't care about the sheep, he cares about the woman who is coming with the sheep.

Gen 29:7-10, And he said, "Behold, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered. Water the sheep, and go, pasture them." But they said, "We cannot, until all the flocks are gathered, and they [all of the men] roll the stone from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep." While he was still speaking with them Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. And it came about, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went up, and rolled the stone from the mouth of the well, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.

Gen 29:11, Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted his voice and wept.

So, he figured he had come to the right place and that she was the one who would be given to him in marriage.

Gen 29:12, And Jacob told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and that he was Rebekah's son and she ran and told her father.

She took off, and that was pretty smart, she not only had a gorgeous figure and a beautiful face, but like many beautiful women, she was also smart, so she left the flock behind for Jacob to take care of!

Gen 29:13-14, So it came about, when Laban heard the news of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. Then he [Jacob] related to Laban all these things. And Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him a month.

During this month Jacob worked with the flocks, and why not, remember verse 9, Rachel was a shepherdess. So, in verse 14, Laban offers him a job. Laban realized that Jacob would eventually come into a substantial inheritance and he also had observed by this time Jacob's obvious love for his daughter Rachel, so uncle Laban had a plan.

Gen 29:15, Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative [Oh God, right there an alarm should have gone off], "Because you are my relative should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?"

Uncle Laban recognized there would be many advantages to having Jacob as a son-in-law. After all, he knew that his sister Rebekah who married Isaac was very wealthy and it would only be a matter of time before Jacob received all that wealth! Therefore, he wanted to bind Jacob to him in some way but, in a rather crafty manner, let Jacob name the terms, anticipating that because of Jacob's desire for Rachel, he would get a better bargain this way.

Gen 29:16-17, Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. And Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful of form and face.

Rachel was much more beautiful than Leah.

Gen 29:18, Now Jacob loved Rachel, so he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel."

Seven years of free service by a man who was an exceptional worker was surely a fine deal for Laban, especially in view of the fact that he would have been happy to have Jacob marry into the family regardless.

Gen 29:19-21, *And Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man; stay with me." So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her. Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my time is completed, that I may go in to her."*

Jacob made a mistake when he said this, he should have said "Give me Rachel." Jacob finally had to ask for her because Laban would have never brought it up. Laban devised a scheme, resolving to substitute Leah for Rachel on the wedding night. He figured because Jacob loved Rachel so much that he could extract another seven-year period of free service from Jacob, as well as solve the problem of getting a husband for Leah at the same time. He also knew that if Jacob refused that he could easily find a husband for Rachel!

Gen 29:22, *And Laban gathered all the men of the place, and made a feast.*

At the proper time, when the wedding formalities had been observed, Laban presented his daughter to Jacob as his wife. Now comes the time when the deceiver is deceived. The clash of these two deceivers and their struggle for supremacy is one of the greatest battles in the book of Genesis. Laban's first chance to really practice his treachery takes place on the wedding night! Laban invited "all the men of the place" to the marriage banquet so that when the prank played on Jacob becomes known to all, it will not be easy for Jacob to cast off Leah. Laban will have disposed advantageously of a daughter who perhaps none would have desired.

Gen 29:23, *Now it came about in the evening that he took his daughter Leah, and brought her to him; and Jacob went in to her.*

There are some interesting correlations here, when Jacob deceived his father Isaac, he pretended to be the elder when he was the younger. Now, he thinks he's getting the younger when in fact he is getting the elder!

Gen 29:24-25, *Laban also gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid. So it came about in the morning that, behold, it was Leah! And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served with you? Why then have you deceived me?"*

Isn't that interesting? "It's alright that I deceive my father but how could someone deceive me"? The tables are turned now and Jacob says in effect, "it's an awful thing to deceive someone." It is time for Jacob to get a taste of his own medicine so let's look at the passage which describes this.

Gen 29:25, *So it came about in the morning that, behold, it was Leah! And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me?"*

Remember in Gen 27 how Jacob had deceived his father Isaac? Now, in Gen 29:25, *Jacob, who liked to deceive others but didn't like to be deceived by others said, Was it not for Rachel that I served with you? Why then have you deceived me?"* Jacob now feels and knows what it's like to have deceit practiced on him concerning something that is extremely important and precious.

What goes around comes around.

Gen 29:26, *But Laban said, "It is not the practice in our place, to marry off the younger before the first-born."*

Uncle Laban conveniently forgot to tell Jacob about the fine print in the contract. Notice how smooth Laban was, he certainly should have explained this to Jacob at the time of his proposal, but he kept it to himself, not wanting to lose the opportunity to have Jacob work for him and to get him into the family.

Gen 29:27, *"Complete the week of this one [the seven day marriage celebration], and we will give you the other also for the service which you shall serve with me for another seven years."*

So there is the principle of divine retribution. First of all, let me remind you about the principle of rebound, 1Jo 1:9, If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. There never was a believer who named a known sin to God privately, without any system of human works, or human power, or gimmicks, who was not

immediately forgiven. No matter how great the sin or sins, God is faithful, God is just, and God is dependable. The alternative to rebound of course is suffering for divine discipline, Heb 12:6. However, there are many things that happen to a believer who refuses to rebound that has nothing to do with God getting them back or making them pay. The point is that there are a lot of things which happen to believers that come from their own negative decisions and not from God. This is why Job 4:8 says *According to what I have seen, those who plow iniquity And those who sow trouble harvest it.* That is not divine discipline. It may be divine retribution but divine retribution comes from the law of volitional responsibility or reaping what we sow, Gal 6:7. Laban's treatment of Jacob we see the deceiver deceived. This principle that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap is written across the pages of the word of God. This is not paying for your sins, this is reaping what you sow because you have refused to rebound. This is the principle of what goes around comes around. Pharaoh, the King of Egypt, gave orders that every son of the Hebrews should be drowned, Exo 1:22. Therefore, he reaped what he sowed because in Exo 12:29, his firstborn son died and in Exo 14:28, he was drowned in the Red Sea.

In Num 16:2-3, Korah, the drummer boy in Israel, caused a gap, a division or a crack in the congregation of Israel, and so God made a gap in the earth to swallow him and his followers, Num 16:30. A man called Adoni-bezek who was responsible for seventy kings having their thumbs and their big toes cut off, Judges chapter one. Saul of Tarsus stood by and consented to the stoning of Stephen, in Act 7:58 *And when they had driven him [Stephen] out of the city, they began stoning him, and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul.* And later we read that at Lystra the Jews stoned Paul in Act 14:19, But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.

A most striking example of what men term "poetic justice" is the case of Jacob himself. First, he deceived his father and was, in turn, deceived by his father-in-law. Jacob's little game of deceiving someone caught up with him. Jacob faked that he was the elder when, in fact, he was the younger, and deceived his father Isaac. Therefore, the divine retribution was that on his wedding night instead of receiving the younger daughter he received the elder for his wife. In fact, in deceiving Jacob by giving him the older daughter Leah, Laban also tricked his younger daughter Rachel who was expecting to be married to Jacob, therefore, later we find Rachel tricking Laban in Gen 31:35. What goes around comes around. Jacob's favorite son was Joseph and all the other sons were jealous of him. Therefore, they wanted to get rid of him and faked his death and deceived their father Jacob. Jacob's sons deceived him by dipping the coat of Joseph in the blood of "goats" and making him believe an evil beast had devoured him!

Jacob deceived Isaac in regard to his favorite son Esau, and so was Jacob deceived in regard to his favorite son, Joseph. When a person continues to make negative decisions and they even hurt others, Gal 6:7, *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.* There are natural laws that God has provided which take care of all the injustices in life. And they will all be taken care of in God's timing. If there is rebound, there can be recovery, if not, it will catch up with you, it's just a matter of time.

We will summarize the remainder of this chapter and the next two in order to understand what kind of life Jacob had and why Satan hates when God can take a man like Jacob and make something great out of him. Rachel was affected by this deception in one way or another, whether she had been commanded by her father to go along with this deception or whether she had to be forced to do it, we simply do not know. And by the way, it could not have been easy for Leah, either. Though she wanted a husband, and harbored a secret love for Jacob, Leah knew that Jacob really loved Rachel. Jacob must have been angry and bitter, both with Leah and Laban. However, he must also have recognized the similarity between this situation and the deception he had played on his father Isaac and his brother Esau.

At the first opportunity, he confronted Laban with a demand for an explanation. And Laban responded with his rehearsed answer that the older sister must always be the first to wed. And then he proposed his new bar-gain. If Jacob would fulfill Leah's wedding week, Laban would then give him Rachel also, providing Jacob serve Uncle Laban another seven years. Laban really reveals how wicked and rotten he really is. If Jacob had just rebounded from his deception over his father and stayed in the promise land none of this would have happened. So in Gen 29:28-30, *And Jacob did so and completed her week, and he gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife. Laban also gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her maid. So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and indeed he loved Rachel more than Leah, and he served with Laban for another seven years.* Uncle Laban never cheated Jacob again, although he tried. And not only did Jacob take uncle Laban's two daughters but he took the best part of uncle Laban's cattle. Uncle Laban made a great mistake when he started cheating his talented nephew because his talented nephew then had no qualms about taking uncle Laban to the cleaners. He took his daughters and the balance of his wealth. All of us at some time or another are going to bump into a Jacob or Laban in this life. This world is filled with Laban's and reversionistic Jacob's. They are generally people with pleasing personalities. Being people smart is no defense against the con-artists's of this life. Neither of course is spiritual maturity for David was one of the greatest believers of all time and in the state of spiritual maturity he was conned by certain individuals as well.

It is certainly a true factor of life and it is probably good for anyone in life to be taken in at sometime by a Laban because there are so many things to learn. For example, not to react, not to be bitter, vindictive, implacable or full of vengeance. Sometimes greatness in business or in a profession or in the spiritual life or even in social life are measured in terms of Laban testing. All of us at sometime will fail because it's inevitable that the very thing that makes us strong, honor and integrity, also makes us vulnerable and even sometimes weak.

Your Own Place, Your Personal Sense of Destiny, and Your Own Country

08/04/02

Genesis 30:25 *Now it came about when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my own country."*

Rachael gave birth to Joseph at the end of the 14 years of Jacob's slave labor to Laban, and Jacob is now asking for permission to leave and go back to the promised land (which he should never have left). For us as Church-age believers, this would be analogous to leaving the predesigned plan of God. We have many warnings concerning this in the Word of God, and as the Apostle Paul said in Gal 4:16, *"Have I therefore become your enemy by telling you the truth?"*

If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you must also consider yourself a soldier.

In 2Ti 2, Paul reminds us that a soldier does not lead a normal life, and that the ministry to which all believers are called is not a normal life. As believers we have been commanded to "fight the good fight of faith" under the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2Ti 4:7-8, *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing."*

Every believer has been enlisted in the Lord's spiritual army as a spiritual soldier. Unfortunately, most believers do not listen and are now Absent With Ot Leave (AWOL).

We have some very applicable analogies concerning soldiers in the natural realm and soldiers in the spiritual realm.

- ☐ A soldier must give up his freedom to serve his country, and a believer is to give up his freedom to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, Mat 16:24-25, *"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it'";*
- ☐ Gal 5:13, *"For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through virtue-love serve one another."*
- ☐ A soldier must leave all his worldly affairs behind as he goes forward to serve his country, 2Ti 2:4, *"No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier."*
- ☐ What every soldier must do first is to go into training after he has enlisted in the military, and the believer's first need after salvation is spiritual training through the intake of doctrine. We are required to be armed with the full armor of God, Eph 6:10-11, *"Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Pick up and put on the full armor from God, so that you may be able to hold your ground against the strategies of the devil."*

Eph 6:12-17 *For our warfare is not against blood and flesh [human beings], but against the rulers [demon commanders such as Abaddon Apollyon, Beelzebub, etc.], against the authorities, against the world rulers of this darkness [demon ambassadors to world rulers and demon conspirators], against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens ["rank and file" demons]. Therefore, pick up and put on the full armor from God, so that you may be able to hold your ground in the day that evil attacks you, and having done everything, hold your ground. Hold your ground therefore, after you have buckled on your combat gear around your waist with truth [perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine], and [after] having put on the breastplate of righteousness, [hold your ground] after you have put on your combat boots on your feet with the readiness [preparation] of the gospel of peace. In addition to all [all this military equipment] taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish [intercept and destroy] all the flaming missiles of the evil one. And take [receive favorably,*

welcome] *the helmet of salvation, and [receive favorably] the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.*

There is a powerful kingdom surrounding us whose sole purpose to stop us from advancing in God's plan. It is controlled by our adversary, the devil in 1Pe 5:8. Satan is the "god of this world," and his goal is to first seduce us and then ultimately defeat us. He will continually bombard us with his many lies and philosophies until he finally sees one hit. Without the "mind of Christ" in our souls, we have no chance to withstand his deception. Satan succeeds when we lose our peace, composure, poise, happiness, and contentment. Satan can use cosmic (worldly) thoughts and projections to influence us, therefore we must all continue "*taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one.*" Only Bible doctrine exposes his lies, 2Co 2:11, "*In order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes.*"

As the god of this world, Satan has placed foolish individuals in positions of authority as he attempts to control the entire world system, Rev 12:9, "*And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world.*" We are not told to fight with those in positions of authority or rulership; instead, we are commanded *hold our ground* as we execute God's plan, Eph 6:11-14; Jam 4:7, "Submit therefore to God [execute His plan]. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" ; 1Pe 5:9, "*But resist the devil by being firm in your doctrine.*"

The soldier is trained so much in the same skills, over and over again, through constant *repetition*, that once he is placed in a pressure situation and does not have time to stop and think, he will automatically do what he has been trained to do. Repetition of doctrine is security for us (Phi 3:1) because, when we come under pressure, we will be thinking the right thoughts, responding instead of reacting, and applying the necessary doctrine. If we consistently make good decisions from a position of strength in normal times, we will be able to do the same in time of crisis and disaster. The difference between fear and courage is the ability to *concentrate* under pressure. To be effective in combat, a man has to be trained for the job, and that takes *time*. He has to know how to do his job under normal conditions before he is given the job under abnormal conditions. It is the *training* that will make him victorious.

- ☒ Soldiers are also clothed by their military; the Christian soldier is said to be clothed by the Lord Jesus Christ in the natural realm, Mat 6:25-33, and in the spiritual realm, Gal 3:27, "*For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*"
- ☒ A soldier is also told who to go to war against, and he understands who his enemies are; likewise, the Christian soldier has his warfare appointed to him, and his enemies are made known to him by the scriptures. We are told that the devil makes war against the Lamb and His followers in Rev 17:14, "*These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful.*"
- ☒ A soldier is also supplied logistically as he goes forward in training, discipline, and warfare, and the Christian soldier is provided logistical grace for his spiritual walk and warfare. The military bears the expense of the war and furnishes the soldier with whatever is necessary for his calling. Our Lord has given us clothes, armor, weapons, and everything necessary to handle what we are going to face, 1Co 10:13, "*No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.*" Everything we need both in the natural realm and in the spiritual realm has been provided for us by God, 2Pe 1:3.

1Ti 4:7 *Have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women.*

Again we see the importance of self-discipline. The organization of your time and the establishment of your priorities is vital. Godliness is a lifestyle for the spiritual believer. Living the spiritual life is the result of consistency in the perception of Bible doctrine taught and repeated by the pastor-teacher. Godliness holds the key to our happiness, capacity, and success. For all eternity, because of

consistency and faithfulness in the *"little things,"* many *"ordinary"* believers will wear the uniform of glory, the order of the morning star, and various crowns, as their names are recorded in the historical records of heaven; they will rule cities for a 1,000 years during our Lord's Millennial Reign. Godliness is profitable in time, but even more so in the life to come.

The believer needs spiritual power and self-discipline much more than physical power, and this means dedication, commitment, and instruction. Discipline is of no value when it is not consistent. The word "discipline" means to "drive on" or to *"perform or practice in order to develop skill."* Anyone can exercise, even in the spiritual realm, but to stick with it requires character. *"Exercise"* for the Royal Family of God in the congregation of the local church means self-discipline, assembling together, concentrating on the teaching, good manners, silence, refraining from commenting and disturbing others by moving around, and objectivity and persistence in spite of distraction.

As Jacob learned the hard way, after wasting 14 years of his life, the believer must not leave the *"promised land,"* Gen 30:25, *"Now it came about when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, 'Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my own country.'"* A soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ stays on the battlefield and does not go AWOL from his own place and his own country.

- ☐ A soldier must also be an expert and well-skilled in his field, in everything necessary for his calling, Luk 14:31, *"Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand?"* This requires discipline and wisdom. The soldier must understand the word of command and be ready to obey his officer.
- ☐ A soldier must also know his place and keep rank and file. The Christian soldier must know his particular station, where he has been placed in the body of Christ by God the Holy Spirit, 1Co 12:18. Military discipline appoints every officer his proper position, and every soldier marches in the same rank and file, where he is placed by his commander. In the military, the soldier is not free to change his station or post on his own, especially in time of battle when he will be exposing himself and others to great danger if he does not follow orders accurately and precisely.
- ☐ Soldiers must follow their leader. Every Christian soldier follows the Lord Jesus Christ and must keep his eyes upon Him through the intake of doctrine, Mat 10:38.

The Christian soldier is to discover God's plan for his life and stick with it while he is growing spiritually. Pastors, deacons, and members of each church must keep their places, and not withdraw at their own whim. This does not mean you can never be promoted, it simply means you need to hold the ground that you have gained.

As Christian soldiers we must be willing to follow the Lord Jesus Christ in His reproaches, afflictions, difficulties, and even dangers. We live in the intensified stage of the angelic conflict, and these principles function in the invisible realm. A spiritual war is waged against the soul of every believer, and it is something that none of us can afford to ignore. Nothing is more necessary for spiritual soldiers than divine wisdom and power, especially when we are faced with internal adversaries. Our adversary the devil is compared to a serpent because he is sly and deceitful. He is a subtle enemy, and the Christian soldier is his primary target. Without doctrine resident in the soul and obedience to that doctrine, all of us are vulnerable to the craftiness and deceitfulness of the devil. If Satan could overcome the man and woman when they were in a perfect state without an old sin nature, just think of how easily he can do it now!

Eph 5:14-17 For this reason it says, *"Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you. Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."*

Satan is a master at choosing the proper time and the most advantageous season for tempting and attacking the believer. Satan knows when to make his attacks and the time when he is most likely to

prevail. For the adolescent believer, Satan will attack when he first responds to Bible doctrine—temptations and things he pursued for years are brought into his life to distract him and drag him back into the cosmic system. Satan attacks when the believer is plagued by a great adversity, or in a time of physical weakness. He will also attack the Christian soldier when he is about to enter any significant venture for God’s glory. He stood at the right hand of Joshua (a great soldier for the Lord), to resist him in Zec 3:1-3. The *“right hand”* represents that with which we serve and follow God. Satan standing at the right hand of Joshua portrays his intense desire to hinder us from our calling. Satan takes advantage of any ignorance of doctrine the believer may have, and attacks when he is out of God’s geographical location, as he did to Eve, when she was by the tree. He will also attack after a great manifestation of God’s love, as when Paul was exalted with the *“abundance of revelations,”* and Satan assaulted him with intense temptation and adversity, 2Co 12:7, *“And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me—to keep me from exalting myself.”* The kingdom of darkness will do anything it can to invade the soul of the Christian soldier.

Satan also has an impressive intelligence network to gather information on those who have positive volition and their actions, Eph 6:12 (*“spiritual forces of wickedness”*). He has spies who are well acquainted with the thinking and weaknesses of his enemies (Christian soldiers), and these demons are masters at finding out the sin which *“so easily entangles us,”* Heb 12:1, *“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”* All believers have a particular sin to which they are prone, and Satan will take full advantage of it. Satan *gradually* approaches the soul as he makes his attack. When he first comes to tempt us, either through the world, the flesh, or his demons, he is *“unassuming”* and will demand very little, knowing that is all he can accomplish at the time. If he were to demand our allegiance and devotion to him all at once, he would be denied; therefore, he works on us a little at a time. The kingdom of darkness, under his rulership initially attacks in a very subtle manner, with just a few trivial distractions to draw the believer away slowly but surely.

Gen 30:25b *“Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my own country.”*

If you are to be victorious as a soldier of Jesus Christ, you must recognize your own place, your personal sense of destiny, and your own country (the *“promised land,”* the predesigned plan of God), and remain there.

Your Own Place, Your Personal Sense of Destiny, and Your Own Country, Part 2: The Doctrine of the Christian Soldier

08/11/02

In our study of Jacob, we have seen him wasting 14 years of his life after leaving the promised land, Gen 30:25-26, *"Now it came about when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, 'Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my own country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me depart; for you yourself know my service which I have rendered you.'"*

The ultimate goal of the kingdom of darkness is to do whatever is necessary to take the believer away from the teaching of Bible doctrine and the predesigned plan of God, from *"your own place and your own country."* Your own place represents your personal sense of destiny and your own country represents the predesigned plan of God. If you are serious about your relationship with God and want to remain in your own place and your own country, Satan will attack you.

He always attacks when the believer first gets into Bible doctrine. No sooner does the individual discover doctrinal truth, then temptations and things he pursued for years are brought in to distract him and drag him back into the cosmic system, Mat 13:18-22. The kingdom of darkness also attacks when the believer is undergoing a great adversity. This may be a time of physical weakness that at some time may be a part of the calling of God on your life. In 2Co 11:26 Paul wrote, *"I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren."* Remember the great statement Job made to his wife, Job 2:10, *"You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?"*

The kingdom of darkness will attack when the Christian enters a significant venture for God's glory; as Paul said in 1Th 2:18, *"For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and yet Satan hindered us."* They will also attack those who are serious about their relationship with God after a great manifestation of God's love and God's Word. For example, when Paul was exalted with the "abundance of revelations," he received the "messenger of Satan," 2Co 12:1-9.

The kingdom of darkness will come to the believer, hanging out false colors in the guise of friendship, as an "angel of light" teaching false doctrine, and they will often try to use self-pity on the believer, knowing how vulnerable he is when he is feeling sorry for himself. Satan shows us false colors to disguise himself in a "friendly uniform," to appear to be on our side. He will even send reversionistic people to the local assembly who are not called to that assembly, Gal 2:4, *"But it was because of the false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage."*

Satan also has an intelligence committee to monitor the Christian soldiers who have positive volition toward doctrine, Eph 6:12 (*"spiritual forces of wickedness"*). He has spies who are experts at exploiting the sin which "so easily entangles us," Heb 12:1. It is important to understand how subtle the kingdom of darkness is and how they *gradually* approach the soul. When they first tempt the believer, they will demand very little, knowing that is all they can get from him at the time. If they were to demand his complete allegiance to the *cosmos*, or the world system, all at once, they would be denied; therefore, they work at it slowly but surely. It may begin with one wrong thought thrown at the believer's mind with Satan's "flaming missiles," and once that thought is allowed to sit in the mind for a while and is free to wander, it will eventually travel from the mind to the tongue and to someone's ear and their mind, and so on. Then Jam 1:14-16 becomes a reality: *"But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren."*

Satan, like a shrewd warrior, also has his reserves; he always has some fresh troops at hand. If his first temptation fails, he has many more. This attack is made only on the Christian soldier. The majority of Christians are no threat to Satan, and their problems are with the Lord, 1Co 16:22, *"If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed. Maranatha."*

Another strategy that Satan employs is to feign retreat and pretend he has been defeated, leading the Christian to believe that he has won a victory where he actually has not. Our Lord warned of unclean spirits going out *voluntarily*, only to come back even stronger than before, Mat 12:44-45, *"Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came'; and when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order. Then it goes, and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."*

A Christian soldier is required to know the distinct beats of the drum and the sound of the trumpet, meaning the distinct doctrines of the Word of God taught by the pastor-teacher. The communicator of doctrine is told in Isa 58:1, *"Cry loudly, do not hold back; raise your voice like a trumpet."* Just as a trumpeter needs to be well-skilled in his instrument, so the pastor needs to be well-skilled in his communication of doctrine, 1Co 14:8, *"For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle?"* If the pastor does not rightly divide the word of God and communicate accurately, how will the soldiers under his command know what orders to follow? The Christian soldier may need an alarm sounded in his ears when danger is near or an enemy is coming, and therefore he needs to recognize the notes of the bugle, i.e., the necessary doctrine. It may be a call to duty or to prayer or to any form of service, and the faithful Christian soldier will listen closely to the spiritual trumpet. Sometimes it sounds reproof, sometimes counsel, sometimes warning, and sometimes comfort; it is carefully observed by the well-trained Christian soldier, 2Ti 3:16-4:2.

If you are serious about your relationship with God and are determined to stay the course in your own place and your own country, you will be a person of courage, bold and determined, not easily discouraged nor dismayed by the threats, malice, or strength of an enemy. As God said to Joshua, His courageous soldier who was preparing to enter the promised land, Jos 1:7, *"Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go."* The Christian soldier will cultivate the attitude of David in Psa 23:4, *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me."*

Principles of Bible doctrine impart boldness and courage to the Christian amidst danger that he faces in the angelic conflict because of his faithfulness to doctrine. This is the virtue of our calling; motivation and zeal are given to us when we realize the privilege of fulfilling God's plan for our life. When we consider that we are fighting the good fight of faith and that we have the *honor* of glorifying Christ, we are motivated as Christian soldiers. We see the courage of the early church in Act 5:41, *"So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name."* We should be motivated to stand up for the cause of Christ, the Word of Christ, and the people of Christ. The Christian soldier must carry out his calling to gather for Christ, Mat 12:30, *"He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters."*

The Christian soldier understands the power and strength of God, who has promised to stand by him in all his conflicts, even with the worst of his enemies, Isa 41:10-14. The Apostle John said in 1Jo 4:4, *"You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world."* The Christian soldier understands the call of God; every Christian must take the time to learn how to use his time, talent, and treasure to glorify God, as well as to learn what his spiritual gift is. The Christian soldier has a good conscience, which made Paul bold in the presence of his irate adversaries, Act 23:1, *"And Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, 'Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day.'" A soldier with a burden of guilt cannot engage an enemy with the courage he needs. Satan loves to make accusations against God's*

people, to condemn them and plague them with guilt, and the sins and failures he brings up are true. However, the man and the woman after God's own heart never quits. Peter gives us great instruction in 1Pe 3:15-16, *"But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame."* Finally, the Christian soldier has the assurance of victory, which also serves to increase his boldness and courage. The Christian soldier believes that he is more than a conqueror, even before he enters the conflict, because his captain has assured him he shall overcome in the end and receive the crown of life, Rev 2:10, *"Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."*

A soldier must expect to endure hardness and prepare himself; the Christian soldier must concede to a life attended by many hardships and difficulties if he desires to bring glory to Christ. Just as soldiers must often experience hardship that others know nothing about, so the Christian soldier goes through personal challenges that no one else realizes. We are told in 1Pe 5:6-9, *"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you. Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world."*

We may think that no one else can understand what we are going through personally, but the Bible says otherwise, 1Pe 5:10, *"And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect [mature], confirm [prove], strengthen, and establish you."* The Christian's life is accompanied by many difficulties that he must endure as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. We must learn to endure the hardship that results from our own personal sins. Our own failures can bring great sorrow and trouble upon us. We hurt ourselves and then we end up looking for someone to blame. Sin not only hinders the Christian soldier, but many times his own conscience wounds him for it. Sin not only brings hardships upon the soul, but many times distress and anxiety upon the body.

We must also learn to endure the hardship that comes from self-denial. We are not called to asceticism but we are called to self-sacrifice, Mat 16:21-27. There are times when you may be called to deny yourself of prosperity, riches, wealth, success, sleep, rest, pleasure, or whatever is necessary in your pursuit of victory. If anything is taking you away from a relationship with God, God will ask you to part with it, Mat 19:16-30. We must learn to endure hardship from people, vicious and cruel reproaches, and everything that the so-called "lovable brethren" can devise and throw at us, Jam 3:8-10, *"But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father; and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way."* The tongues of many men are cruel weapons, as in Psa 42:10, *"As a shattering of my bones, my adversaries revile me, while they say to me all day long, 'Where is your God?'"* Being mocked, ridiculed, and judged are among the sufferings and tests of the Christian soldier, but as long as he holds his ground in his own place and his own country, he will overcome them.

Gen 30:25-26 *Now it came about when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my own country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me depart; for you yourself know my service which I have rendered you."*

Jacob now had 11 sons and a daughter, all born during the last seven years. Now that he had fulfilled his bargain, he asked Laban to dismiss him and let him go home with his wives and children.

However, we read in Gen 30:27, *“But Laban said to him, ‘If now it pleases you, stay with me; I have divined that the Lord has blessed me on your account. Name me your wages, and I will give it.’”* Although Laban talked about the Lord, he did not know the Lord or understand who the Lord was. Laban was still involved in heathen practices such as divination, fortune telling, and consulting mediums. These activities are strictly forbidden in Lev 19:26, Deu 18:10-14. However, Laban was still able to realize that the Lord was blessing him with materialism on account of Jacob. Laban wanted Jacob to continue work-ing for him so he asked him to name his wages. (He had done this once before in Gen 29:15, *“Then Laban said to Jacob, ‘Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?’”*) Now, in Gen 30:29-30, 20 years later, *“He [Jacob] said to him, ‘You yourself know how I have served you and how your cattle have fared with me. For you had little before I came, and it has increased to a multitude; and the Lord has blessed you wherever I turned. But now, when shall I provide for my own household also?’”* Jacob is reminding Laban how hard he had worked for him and how the Lord had blessed and multiplied what little Laban had when Jacob first came. Now it was time for Jacob to do something for his own household. In Gen 30:31-32, *“So he [Laban] said, ‘What shall I give you?’ And Jacob said, ‘You shall not give me anything. If you will do this one thing for me, I will again pasture and keep your flock: let me pass through your entire flock today, removing from there every speckled and spotted sheep, and every black one among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and such shall be my wages.”* In that region, the goats are generally black or dark brown but rarely white or spotted, and the sheep are generally white but very seldom black or speckled; Jacob is only asking for a small minority of Laban’s livestock.

Jacob continues in Gen 30:33, *“So my honesty will answer for me later [we will see just how “honest” Jacob is], when you come concerning my wages. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, will be considered stolen.”* Laban thought this would be a good deal for him, a cheap price for Jacob’s knowledgeable and skillful care of his flock, so he agreed, Gen 30:34, *“And Laban said, ‘Good, let it be according to your word.’”* When Laban responds this quickly and with as few words as possible, he obviously thinks he is getting the best the deal (one con to another). In Gen 30:35, *“So he [Laban] removed on that day the striped and spotted male goats and all the speckled and spotted female goats, every one with white in it, and all the black ones among the sheep, and gave them into the care of his sons.”* Laban accepted the deal, and then in his own deceitful way he tried to cheat Jacob again. He removed what few sheep and goats that would have belonged to Jacob, gave them to his sons, and sent them on a three-day journey so that Jacob would not know where they were. Laban believed that he had destroyed Jacob and made it impossible for Jacob to ever recover and be successful again. But this story is far from over.

Your Own Place, Your Personal Sense of Destiny, and Your Own Country, Part 3: Returning to a situation may not be what we want to do, but it is sometimes what we should do.

08/18/02

After making a deal with Jacob concerning Jacob's wages and what portion of the flocks he would receive, Laban now shows his selfish, crafty nature and his distrust of his nephew Jacob, Gen 30:34-36, *"And Laban said, 'Good, let it be according to your word [Laban has no intention of keeping his word].' So he removed on that day the striped and spotted male goats and all the speckled and spotted female goats, every one with white in it, and all the black ones among the sheep [all those that were rightfully Jacob's], and gave them into the care of his sons. And he put a distance of three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks."*

Here is where Jacob fails; when Laban's actions of mistrust come to light, Jacob resorts to trickery in order to be assured of success, Gen 30:37-38, *"Then Jacob took fresh rods of poplar and almond and plane trees, and peeled white stripes in them, exposing the white which was in the rods. And he set the rods which he had peeled in front of the flocks in the gutters, even in the watering troughs, where the flocks came to drink; and they mated when they came to drink."* Jacob felt that Laban's previous actions of deception justified this scheme; however, Jacob is wrong.

Gen 30:39-40 The flocks mated by the rods, and the flocks brought forth striped, speckled, and spotted. And Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the striped and all the black in the flock of Laban; and he put his own herds apart, and did not put them with Laban's flock.

Jacob knew that sheep are very susceptible to what they are seeing during copulation and during the period of gestation, and that the effects of their sight are passed on to the offspring. This is a good illustration of the Biblical principle that strong impressions are made through the eyes.

Gen 3:1-7 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'" And the woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.'" And the serpent said to the woman, "You surely shall not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings."

Job realized the danger of following his eyes, Job 31:7, *"If my step has turned from the way, or my heart followed my eyes...,"* as did John in 1Jo 2:15-16, *"Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world."* Very often we see something, and our heart wants to go after it. Some great advice is given in Pro 4:25, *"Let your eyes look directly ahead, and let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you."* Do not let your eyes wander after anything that appeals to your weakness, temptations that are likely to entice or attract you. The eyes represent what holds our attention or our desire. Our Lord dealt with this in Mat 6:19-23, *"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; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light."*

But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!"

The anthropomorphism of *the pupil of God's eye* is used to describe God's love and protection for His people, especially Israel. (An *anthropomorphism* ascribes to God physical human forms that God does not actually possess, to explain God's policy, and manner of operation in terms of a human frame of reference.) The pupil of the eye is analogous to the "wall of fire" around Israel, Zec 2:5. Only God has the right to punish Israel when necessary, therefore all anti-Semitism is anti-God. When God refers to the Jews as "the pupil of His eye," He is emphasizing the principle that anti-Semitism will be punished, and kindness to the Jew will be blessed, Deu 32:9-10, *"For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the howling waste of a wilderness; He encircled him, He cared for him, He guarded him as the pupil of His eye."* Similar passages include Psa 17:8, *"Keep me as the apple of the eye; Hide me in the shadow of Thy wings,"* and Zec 2:8, *"For thus says the Lord of the Armies, after the glory [the Second Advent] He [God the Father] has Me [God the Son] against the nations which plunder you, for he who touches you, touches the pupil of My eye."*

Gen 30:40-42 And Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the striped and all the black in the flock of Laban; and he put his own herds apart, and did not put them with Laban's flock. Moreover, it came about whenever the stronger of the flock were mating, that Jacob would place the [striped] rods in the sight of the flock in the gutters, so that they might mate by the rods; but when the flock was feeble, he did not put them in; so the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's.

Jacob let the weak ones mate with no rods in front of them, so that the best offspring went to his flock and the weakest to Laban's. However, as seen in a later passage, all his tricks were unnecessary, Gen 31:4-8, *"So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to his flock in the field, and said to them, 'I see your father's attitude, that it is not friendly toward me as formerly, but the God of my father has been with me. And you know that I have served your father with all my strength. Yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times; however, God did not allow him to hurt me. if he spoke thus, 'The speckled shall be your wages,' then all the flock brought forth speckled; and if he spoke thus, 'The striped shall be your wages,' then all the flock brought forth striped."* Whenever the flock produced what belonged to Jacob, Laban would change his mind and alter the agreement ("From now on, the striped belong to me," and later on, "Now all the speckled belong to me"). Laban could never win, and it was not because of Jacob's scheming; it was because of the protection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the promise made to Jacob's father Isaac in Gen 26:24, *"I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you, and multiply your descendants, for the sake of My servant Abraham."*

Gen 31:9-12 "Thus God has taken away your father's livestock and given them to me. [He recognizes it was God at work.] And it came about at the time when the flock were mating that I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the male goats which were mating were striped, speckled, and mottled. Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob,' and I said, 'Here I am.' And he said, 'Lift up, now, your eyes and see that all the male goats which are mating are striped, speckled, and mottled; for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you.'"

Laban had mistreated Jacob long enough, and God intervened, just as He will intervene for us. God did not need Jacob's help, just as He does not need our help. God did not need Jacob's little plots and plans, just as He does not need our little plots and plans. God never gives us the right to get even. What Laban had done to Jacob in cheating him had not escaped God's notice, and no one who has wronged you will escape God's notice, 1Co 6:7, *"Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?"* We must never repay evil, Pro 20:22, 1Th 5:15.

Now in Gen 30:43, *"So the man [Jacob] became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks and female and male servants and camels and donkeys."* All this took place during a six-year period (Gen

31:41). God was fulfilling His promise, even in this story of two unprincipled men, each trying to outwit the other. The Bible does not hesitate to tell us the very worst about its heroes so that we may better magnify the grace of God, out of which “trophies of mercy” are created. Undoubtedly someone will take unfair advantage of you, but that is not justification to do the same to them. Many times these are tests to prove whether you believe the Word of God or the ways of the world. People can be cruel and evil, but you will live to see them trapped in their own pits and pierced by their own swords, if you are faithful to doctrine, Psa 7:14-16, *“Behold, he travails with wickedness, and he conceives mischief, and brings forth falsehood. He has dug a pit and hollowed it out, and has fallen into the hole which he made. His mischief will return upon his own head, and his violence will descend upon his own pate.”* The whole scenario has turned around on Laban, Gen 31:1, *“Now Jacob heard the words of Laban’s sons, saying, ‘Jacob has taken away all that was our father’s, and from what belonged to our father he has made all this wealth.’”* Laban lost everything, and finally reaped what he sowed. The natural laws provided by God take care of all the injustices in life *in God’s timing*. For those who refuse to rebound and recover, their actions catch up with them.

To summarize Gen 31, we should first note that Jacob’s increasing prosperity stirred up jealousy in Laban’s sons, who realized that Jacob had cheated their father, Gen 31:1-2. They recognized that all Jacob’s wealth came from what had been their father’s. Laban’s behavior also changed, revealed by dirty looks instead of smiles (he doesn’t like to lose). He had been willing to use Jacob as long as it was to his advantage, but he was not happy to see Jacob’s prosperity above his own. In Gen 31:3, the Lord confirmed that Jacob should leave and told him to go back to the land of his fathers, reminding him of the promise of the land given to Abraham. For Jacob, however, going back to his relatives would not be easy, because Esau had threatened to kill him. God promises, *“I will be with you,”* meaning Jacob need not fear. *Sometimes* going back to a situation is not something any of us like to do, but *sometimes* something we should do.

In Gen 31:17-19, Laban had gone to shear his sheep when Jacob loaded up everything he had acquired and slipped out of town: *“Then Jacob arose and put his children and his wives upon camels; and he drove away all his livestock and all his property which he had gathered, his acquired livestock which he had gathered in Paddan aram, to go to the land of Canaan to his father Isaac. When Laban had gone to shear his flock, then Rachel stole the household idols that were her father’s.* In Gen 31:22-23, as soon as Laban heard the news he gathered his relatives and pursued Jacob: *“When it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled, then he took his kinsmen with him, and pursued him a distance of seven days’ journey; and he overtook him in the hill country of Gilead.”* By that time, Jacob was in the hill country of Gilead, and he had traveled about 30 miles a day, which was unusual for such a company of people and flocks. He was running away very quickly. However, in Gen 31:24, before Laban actually caught up with Jacob, God warned him in a dream to be careful not to say anything good or bad to Jacob (not to make any deals, entice him to return, or make threats). In Gen 31:26-28, Laban rebuked Jacob for running off secretly: *“Then Laban said to Jacob, ‘What have you done by deceiving me and carrying away my daughters like captives of the sword?’”* [Laban could not believe his daughters wanted to go of their own accord, so he accused Jacob of carrying them off like prisoners of war.] *Why did you flee secretly and deceive me, and did not tell me, so that I might have sent you away with joy and with songs, with timbrel and with lyre* [he claims that Jacob missed a joyous going-away celebration with tambourines and “lyres”—but of course there were only “liars”]; *and did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters? Now you have done foolishly.”* Laban acted as if he were totally innocent of any wrongdoing that would cause Jacob to leave.

In Gen 31:29, Laban told Jacob he outnumbered him and could harm him if God had not warned him in the dream. Then in Gen 31:45-47, Jacob set up a stone as a memorial pillar, which would mark the boundaries between Laban on the north and Jacob on the south, Gen 31:45-47, *“Then Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. And Jacob said to his kinsmen, ‘Gather stones.’ So they took stones and*

made a heap, and they ate there by the heap. Now Laban called it Jegar sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed. The two con-artists made a deal never to see each other again. They both had wounds and scars from their conflicts with each other.

The story continues in Gen 32:1: *“Now as Jacob went on his way, the angels of God met him.”* God sent these angels to make Jacob conscious of His heavenly presence and assure him of divine protection, knowing Jacob would need confidence and courage. A similar instance occurs with Elisha and his servant in 2Ki 6. By sight, the odds looked overwhelming with the army coming against Elisha, but he prayed that his servant would be enabled to see the angelic army around him, and his prayer was answered. Guardian angels are assigned to us, Heb 1:14, and their power is revealed in passages such as 2Th- 1:7 and Psa 103:20. In Gen 32:2, *“And Jacob said when he saw them [God’s angels], ‘This is God’s camp [or army].’ So he named that place Mahanaim [meaning “two camps,” God and his].”* Jacob will have to face the 400-man army of Esau. He is now on the path of obedience, and when we are on the right path, we will encounter obstacles that test our faith. Jacob is returning from his long exile (in the wrong location) to the land given him by God. When he returns, he brings many wounds and scars with him, including four wives and eleven children, but God sends His angels in advance to welcome His servant home.

In Gen 32:3-6, *“Then Jacob sent messengers before him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. He also commanded them saying, ‘Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: “Thus says your servant Jacob, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed until now; and I have oxen and donkeys and flocks and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight.”’ And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, ‘We came to your brother Esau, and furthermore he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him.”* Jacob’s two great enemies were Laban and Esau, one *outside* the promised land, one *within*, typifying the believer’s struggles with the *world* and the *flesh*. As far as Jacob knew, Esau still threatened vengeance, but seeing the angels, reminded him he was being guarded by God’s infinitely numerous and powerful host. Unfortunately, he will still rely on human wisdom, power, and ingenuity. Though his anger had long since abated, Esau did not know what Jacob’s intentions were. For all he knew, Jacob might be coming with his own army to claim his promised boundaries and possessions and to subjugate him. The real problem here, however, is not that Esau is coming with 400 men, but that Jacob’s mind is racing in many different directions, and he is filled with fear, Gen 32:7, *“Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed.”* Fear is a mental attitude sin, characterized by panic in a dangerous situation. For the believer, fear is the result of failure to learn and utilize the problem-solving devices. This is Jacob’s problem—he has not been learning and applying doctrine for a long time.

Your Own Place, Your Personal Sense of Destiny, and Your Own Country, Part 4: We all need to have the experience of going through struggles in life alone with God.

08/25/02

In our study of the Israeli-Arab conflict, we are noting that in spite of Jacob's failures, God says throughout the Bible, *"I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."* Even after the encouragement he received from a visit from the Lord's angels in Gen 32:1-2, Jacob is still living in fear of his brother Esau's revenge.

Gen 32:3-6 Then Jacob sent messengers before him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. He also commanded them saying, "Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: "Thus says your servant Jacob, "I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed until now [Jacob is still relying on human viewpoint and human cleverness—he is returning to the promised land, and all he remembers is the last time he saw Esau 20 years ago, when Esau threatened to murder him]; and I have oxen and donkeys and flocks and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight."'" And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and furthermore he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him."

The real problem here is not that Esau is coming with 400 men; the real problem is that Jacob's mind is racing in many different directions and he is filled with fear, Gen 32:7, *"Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed."* Every time fear comes into your life, you know you are not living the Christian way of life, 1Jo 4:18, *"Fear does not exist in virtue-love, but virtue-love drives out fear; for fear causes punishment. In fact, the person who is afraid has not been matured by virtue-love."* If you have personal love for God the Father and you know Him, you understand His integrity, you rest on the entire essence, integrity, and person of God. You will not even need to claim promises, for now you will know the One who makes the promises.

Knowing that God loves you is a process that comes from perception of doctrine; the more you learn, the more you will realize how much God loves you. However, Jacob has not been learning doctrine on a consistent basis. We do not start by loving God; God starts by loving us. We did not find God; He found us. God's love for us is based on who God is, not who we are. God loved us before the foundation of the world, Act 2:23, *"This Man [Jesus Christ], was delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God."* His love for us was not based upon anything we accomplished, Eph 1:3-4, *"Worthy of praise and glorification be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He elected us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him."* God loved us billions of years ago and not only elected us to be His children, but also blessed us beyond our imagination. God loves all believers; He knew in eternity past who the winners and losers would be, and He still blessed even the worst of believers. Both winners and losers have an eternal escrow savings account, equal privilege and equal opportunity, and the perfect righteousness of God given to them at the moment of salvation, and God's loves His righteousness, Psa 11:7, 33:5. God blesses us, keeps us alive, and gives us all a measure of prosperity, from His love to His righteousness in us. As believers we possess His righteousness, and therefore His justice is free to love us forever with an impersonal, unconditional love, Rom 8:38-39. This sets the believer free from guilt, worry, condemnation, and self-introspection.

These weaknesses of Jacob are pointed out to us by God the Holy Spirit so that we will be encouraged to keep going, in spite of our own shortcomings. Fear ranges from uneasiness to a total insecurity in life. Certainly there are always going to be future disasters just as there have been past historical disasters, but the believer with doctrine is a survivor. If you have no confidence in God, you, like Jacob, will have constant fears tormenting you.

We may need to ask ourselves the questions, "Do I entertain fear in my life?"... "Am I frightened by what the future holds?" Fear is used very effectively by Satan to confuse and blind the human race. In the Christian life, there is no reason for ever being frightened. Fear is a mental attitude sin, 1Sa 17:24-26, Rom 14:23, *"Whatever is not from faith is sin."* Fear is a sign of backsliding, or going "absent without leave" in the Christian life, 1Sa 18:12,29, 21:12. Fear can result in sickness and depression, Gen 21:17, and even suicide, 1Ki 19:4.

Causes of fear in the Bible are as follows:

- ☒ Rejection of Bible doctrine, Psa 53:5, *"The fool rejects doctrine and is in great fear where there is no fear."*
- ☒ Worrying about the details of life, Mat 10:29-31, *"Therefore do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows."*
- ☒ Breakdown in the mentality of the soul over the pressures of life, Luk 21:26, *"Men will be fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken."*
- ☒ Fear of what others might say or do, especially when witnessing for Christ, Joh 7:13.
- ☒ Fear of death. Satan uses this fear to keep people in bondage their entire lives, Heb 2:15.
- ☒ Fear of rejection. In Gal 2:12, Peter feared being rejected by the Jews so he separated from his Gentile brethren.
- ☒ Fear of old age. In Ecc 12:1-8, fears and phobias haunt the elderly because they have reached old age without memory of their Creator.
- ☒ Fearing the "floods," or antagonism, of ungodly men, Psa 18:4.

Fear is not part of God's plan, Deu 31:8, Isa 41:10, 2Ti 1:7, *"For God has not given us a lifestyle of fear, but of power and love and of sound judgment."* Fear then, is total disorientation to the plan of God and destroys any personal sense of destiny. The absence of fear is a part of the relaxed mental attitude that believers with doctrine enjoy. We see this in Moses, Heb 11:27, *"By means of doctrine resident in the soul, Moses left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen."* Moses knew the principle of Heb 13:6, *"The Lord is my helper and I will not fear what man may do to me."* Therefore, courage, the absence of fear, is a sign of spiritual growth, Psa 56:3-4. Promise after promise, line upon line, precept upon precept, in God's Word are designed to give the believer confidence toward God, and therefore freedom from fear.

On the other hand, fear can also drive us to the Lord. In Gen 32:9-12, fear of Esau drove Jacob to humble himself and seek God. In Luk 8:50, fear of his child dying drove a man to seek the Lord. In Mat 8:26, fear drove the disciples to run to the Lord and wake Him up. As Psa 34:4 says, *"I sought the Lord, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears."*

Fear is such a serious sin because it is a lack of trust and respect toward God. We see this fear in Jacob in Gen 32:7-8, *"Then Jacob was extremely frightened and filled with mental anguish [and in this state of mind, he resorts to a desperate, foolish, human plan]; and he divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and the herds and the camels, into two companies; for he said, 'If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the company which is left will escape.'" By this time, Esau has no intentions of seeking revenge; it is merely the imagination of Jacob's evil heart. In Gen 32:9-13, "And Jacob said, 'O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Lord, who didst say to me, 'Return to your country and to your relatives, and I will prosper you,' I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which Thou hast shown to Thy servant; for with my staff only I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies. Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me, the mothers with the children. For Thou didst say, 'I will surely prosper you, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'" So he spent the night there. Then he selected from what he had with him a present for his brother Esau."* First he prays to the Lord to deliver him, then he gets right back up from

his prayer and falls back on human solutions. Gen 32:14-20 continues, *"...Two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milking camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, 'Pass on before me, and put a space between droves.' And he commanded the one in front, saying, 'When my brother Esau meets you and asks you, saying, "To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and to whom do these animals in front of you belong?" then you shall say, "These belong to your servant Jacob; it is a present sent to my lord Esau. And behold, he also is behind us." Then he commanded also the second and the third, and all those who followed the droves, saying, 'After this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him; and you shall say, "Behold, your servant Jacob also is behind us." For he said, 'I will appease him with the present that goes before me. Then afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me.'"*

Jacob is operating as a coward, afraid of what a man can do to him. Many of us take our problems and needs to the Lord in prayer. We ask Him for help and then we turn around and come up with human viewpoint solutions. We finish praying and then throw the burden right back on our own back. The real problem is that we do not completely believe Him and trust Him as we should. Instead of entrusting the reconciliation of himself and his brother to the Lord, Jacob took it upon himself to appease Esau.

☐ In verses 3-8, he devises a plan to appease Esau. He sends lavish presents to Esau in an attempt to secure his good will.

☐ In verse 9-12, he goes to God in prayer and asks for the Lord to help him.

☐ In verses 13-20, he develops another plan and totally ignores his own prayer.

Jacob arranged his families, his possessions, and his fighting men to the best possible advantage, prepared to put up a good fight or flee if it became necessary. While Jacob is a believer and back in the will of God, he is still reversionistic in his thinking.

1. Any solution you have to your problems apart from doctrine is a manifestation of both arrogance and irrationality.
2. Divine solutions are the only solutions, and human solutions are no solutions. Human solutions may hold off the problem temporarily, but they will not solve the problem permanently.
3. Fear sees the problem; a personal sense of destiny sees the solution.
4. Since problem solving is a major function of the spiritual life of the Church, all divine solutions come from the problem-solving devices in the believer's own soul.
5. As believers we were designed to be spiritually independent of human solutions in life.

In Gen 32:22, Jacob has turned from faith to unbelief, from prayer to scheming, from God to his own fleshly devices. Remember that he has just run from his uncle Laban, and he is on his way to the promised land, and now he is fearing his brother Esau.

Before he even saw Esau, Jacob met someone else he could not handle. Because he was a liar, cheat, and deceiver who was constantly at odds with other men, he had developed a strong physical body. He loved to wrestle because it involved being clever and tricking the opponent. On his way to meet Esau, he stopped at a place called Jabbok, and there he was challenged to a wrestling match. In this match he was not only beaten up badly, but he ended up with a limp for the rest of his life. However, even though he lost, this wrestling match did great things for Jacob as a believer. Since he was such a great wrestler, he assumed that there was no one else better, and he had some pride that needed to be removed. For the first time in the book of Genesis, Jacob was unable to defeat an opponent. Jacob learned the hard way that the Lord Jesus Christ could always out-wrestle him. His opponent was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, and He gave Jacob a body-slam that made him limp for life. It was not a man that fought with Jacob, nor was it an angel; it was our Lord Himself. For

the first time in Jacob's life, he could neither think nor fight his way out of a jam. His real battle is with God, not with Esau. He must make things right with God before he can face Esau and make things right with him.

Jacob's story continues in Gen 32:22-24, "*Now he arose that same night and took his two wives and his two concubines and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. And he took them and sent them across the stream. And he sent across whatever he had. Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak.*" It is not until Jacob is *left alone* with the Lord that his name is changed to *Israel*, a "prince with God." In fact, we all need to have that experience of going through struggles in life alone with God. It is a part of becoming spiritually self-sustained. To be left alone with God is the only true way of arriving at an accurate knowledge of ourselves and our ways. No matter what we may think about ourselves, or what others may think about us, the real question is, "What does God think about us?" The answer to this question can only be learned when we are left alone with Him. Jacob had arranged everything for meeting and pleasing his brother Esau, however, the Lord is going to intervene and reveal some very serious problems that Jacob has. To learn these lessons, Jacob must be humbled; He must be stripped of his own strength, and even given a permanent limp.

Many teach that Jacob was the initiator of this wrestling match, however, Jacob had no desire to wrestle anybody; Uncle Laban is in back of him, and his brother Esau is ahead of him. He is caught now between a rock and a hard place, and he does not know which way to turn. The attack begins with this mysterious antagonist starting the fight with Jacob.

1. Jacob needed to have his "human strength" beaten out of him.
2. Jacob has been relying on human strength, power, viewpoint, and gimmicks to try to obtain blessings in life and solve his problems.
3. Jacob needed to be made conscious of his *standing* with God so that he would stop conniving, plotting, and scheming.
4. God initiates this wrestling match, which ends in the defeat of the old Jacob.

It is God who will "touch the socket of his hip" and Jacob's hip will be dislocated as he wrestles. It is God who breaks the stubborn, willful, self-reliant Jacob and brings him to his senses. Let us establish who exactly this was who wrestled with Jacob, Hos 12:2-5, "*The Lord also has a dispute with Judah, and will punish Jacob [a title for the nation of Israel in apostasy] according to his ways; He will repay him according to his deeds. In the womb he took his brother by the heel, and in his maturity he contended with God. Yes, he wrestled with the angel and prevailed; He wept and sought His favor [the Lord's favor]. He found Him [the Lord Jesus Christ] at Bethel, and there He spoke with us, even the Lord, the God of hosts; the Lord [Jehovah] is His name.*" First, a man wrestles with Jacob and does not prevail. Secondly, Jacob struggles with the man and does prevail. It was none other than Jehovah, the pre-incarnate Christ, who wrestled with Jacob that night. Jehovah, the God of Israel, is dealing directly and personally with Jacob to change his life and to give him a new name. A new name is what God desires to give to all of us. He wills his highest and best for every believer; unfortunately, not every believer receives the highest and best.

God blessed Jacob in the very place that He disabled him.

09/08/02

Genesis 32:24-25 *Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. And when He saw that He had not prevailed against him, He touched the socket of his thigh; so the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with Him.*

We need to note several principles as we continue studying this passage:

1. Jacob is now brought to the point where his human devices and human resourcefulness can no longer serve him purpose. Schemes that he always relied on are now proven inadequate.
2. The Lord touched the hollow of his thigh because He sees whatever is standing in a believer's way and preventing him from receiving His highest and best, and He will weaken it and break it down. It may be money, a business, a relationship, or a friendship. If it is hindering your spiritual growth, it will not be spared; God will touch it.
3. For Jacob, it was the socket of his thigh, an apparently small thing; however, its influence in making Jacob strong in his resistance of God's blessing was the reason that God condemned it. Many times it is the little things in our life that creep up on us and get the best of us.

Every person has a sin that so easily entangles him, Heb 12:1. Worry a little every day and in a lifetime you can lose several years. It is often the little things, positive or negative, that matter in life. In Sol 2:15 we read, *Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that are ruining the vineyards, while our vineyards are in blossom.* As Ecc 10:1 says, *Dead flies make a perfumer's oil stink, so a little foolishness is weightier than wisdom and honor.* This is why we need to ask God to show us what the "socket of our thigh" is, the obstacle that gets in the way of our relationship with Him.

In Gen 32:25, *When He [the Lord Jesus Christ] saw that He had not prevailed against him, He touched the socket of his thigh; so the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with Him.* This seemed to be a defeat for Jacob, but it was not. At times it appears to the world that we have been defeated when in reality we have been promoted. We may not obtain the very thing we seek at the time, but the spiritual strength we acquire in the effort is infinitely more important than the desired goal itself.

Jacob's life had been the struggle of a clever, strong, self-confident, self-sufficient man using his strength and wit to overcome others. However, in this wrestling match, God desired to break his strength and wisdom in order to bestow upon him divine strength and divine wisdom. For many believers, there are times when God intervenes between us and a greatly desired goal that we have been pursuing and counting on as we throw all our human effort into it. In fact, the expectation of accomplishing these goals or possessions have determined our decisions and dramatically shaped our life. It may even seem that God has been encouraging us to achieve these goals. Then, like Jacob, when it is nearly within reach, and when we are ready to seize the opportunity, we are seized by a strong and irresistible hand, the hand of God. Why? It is often God's way of bringing us to a state of mind in which we can receive it as His gift, totally by His power and His grace, 1Co 1:29 *"That no man should boast before God"* Jer 9:23-24, *"Thus says the Lord, 'Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,' declares the Lord."*

Many believers desire to attain their escrow blessings for time and eternity, and they are dedicated to doing so-. Unfortunately, there is a tendency to assume that the accomplishment depends solely on them, and therefore God intervenes. They end up with unexpected obstacles in their path, obstacles that even seem to come from God. Then the questioning comes in: "Does God really want me to do this or accomplish this?" "Am I in the right place for my life?" In many cases it is simply that He does not want any help from us whatsoever, and He desires it to be performed only by His might and power!

We need to learn the lesson of Zec 4:6, *Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts.*

Many believers forget that the possibility of them receiving God's highest and best, which they long for, is not decided by their readiness to pass through any ordeal, spiritual or physical, that may be required, but by God's power and willingness to give it. They may not do this willingly or knowingly; it is something very subtle that the believer can fall into without even recognizing it. In the life of such believers there must come a time when their own energy seems to collapse and they are now in a hopeless, helpless situation, forced to rely completely on the intervention and power of God. In that hour the believer learns the most valuable truth he can learn in his spiritual walk, Rom 9:16, *"So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy."*

We all need to ask God to show us the "socket of our thigh" that gets in the way of our relationship with Him. It may even be your good decisions that cause you to become proud and condemn others for not doing the same. It may be your own personal achievements that hinder your relationship with God, Jer 48:7, "For because of your trust in your own achievements and treasures, even you yourself will be captured." Jacob did not receive the specific thing that he requested in Gen 32:11 when he prayed, "Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother"; instead, he received something greater, a change of nature and spiritual strength. Jacob's nature was changed because he could no longer depend upon human strength but was forced to either believe God or perish. It is the graciousness of God that answers our desires rather than our requests.

In Gen 17:18, Abraham prayed that Ishmael, the son of Hagar, might be his heir. God said "No" to Ishmael becoming his heir; however, He said "Yes" to the desire behind it, for He eventually gave him Isaac. In Gen 18:23-33, Abraham prayed that God would spare Sodom because Lot and his daughters were there. The petition to spare Sodom was answered "No"; the desire that Lot and his two daughters be preserved was answered "Yes." What Jacob sought was deliverance from his brother Esau; what he received was deliverance from himself! It was not that Jacob wrestled with the Lord but that the Lord wrestled with him to reveal to Jacob his weakness, and to compel him to stop relying on his own strength, and then learn to cling to Him with the -grip of a lame man who dare not let go, lest he fall.

In Gen 32:24-25, when the Lord saw that He could not make Jacob give up, He touched the socket of his hip and dislocated it. With his hip out of joint, Jacob could not effectively wrestle any more; he could only prevent his adversary from escaping. The word "touch" shows us how quickly and how easily God could have brought an end to Jacob's resistance and reduce him to helplessness; all He had to do was to "touch the hollow of his thigh," and in a moment Jacob's power to continue wrestling was gone. Jacob was now brought to the end of his own resources. One touch from the hand of God and he was rendered utterly powerless. One of the principal lessons that God desires to teach us through testing and trial is to show us our own powerlessness and teach us to have no confidence in the flesh.

1. In Jacob choosing and arranging the present for his brother Esau, we see the character and activities of the flesh deceiving and scheming.
2. In Jacob's experience with this Wrestler we are shown the worthlessness and helplessness of the flesh.
3. We also learn from this passage that our nothingness can be discovered only we are alone with God.
4. The fact that the wrestling match lasted all night is an illustration of the patience that God exercises toward us and the slowness of His process in dealing with our human nature experientially.
5. In the touching of the socket of Jacob's thigh we see the method God pursues with us, which is to bring us to a vivid realization of our utter helplessness.

6. Many times that which hinders us in our spiritual growth is not so much our weakness but our natural strength.

7. The laming of Jacob's thigh represents the weakening of the strong side of the old sin nature, which hinders our relationship with God.

8. The failure of his natural power is the turning point in the wrestling match, symbolizing the transition in Jacob's life and character from reliance upon self to reliance upon God, his divine Antagonist.

9. If we are to become like Jacob, who became "Israel," a prince with God, dependence on self must be broken and lamed in order that we may grasp the hand that smites us and find divine power for our weakness.

10. At first Jacob held his own; the Lord saw that "He had not prevailed against him." Therefore, at times, the Lord must take some severe measures that will give us no alternative but to give in.

The strength that years ago rolled the stone from the well for Rachel's sheep was still vigorous. We do the same in our own way; we resist the love of God, follow our own plans, obey our own will, and do things our way. We are "strong" in our own self-sufficiency. As the Lord said to Peter in Joh 21:18, "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself, and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go."

The confrontation between the Lord and Jacob continues in Gen 32:26, "Then he [the Lord] said, 'Let me go, for the dawn is breaking,' but he [Jacob] said, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me.'" Jacob refused to let go because by this time he realized this was not an ordinary man with whom he was wrestling. There was something very different and powerful about that touch that dislocated his hip. This Person had the power to bless him, and Jacob wanted that blessing. Jacob is just holding on to Him; he is no longer fighting. Jacob discovered that we do not get anywhere with God by struggling and resisting. The only way is to let go of our human power and strength and learn to rely on His power and strength. God had to cripple Jacob in order to get his attention, and Jacob refused to give in at first, which was typical of his nature.

With His superior strength, at the right time, God pinned him down in a moment. Jacob hangs on tenaciously, and when the Lord says "Let Me go," Jacob replies, "No, I want Your blessing." He is clinging to God now. The struggling and striving are over, and from here on Jacob is going to manifest a spiritual nature that is dependent upon God. Jacob won, but he got the victory, not by fighting and struggling, but by surrendering and giving in to the Spirit of God. What looks like defeat to the world can be an incredible blessing from God, Psa 119:71, "It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I may learn Thy statutes." What a great picture of God's faithfulness we have here in Jacob, and as we know, "these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction," 1Co 10:11. It was not until "the hollow of his thigh" was touched, and he was totally weakened, that his relationship with God dramatically improved and his attitude became serious.

It is not until we fully realize our own helplessness and nothingness that we are driven to cling to God and truly seek His blessing; not only did Jacob say, "I will not let You go," but continues, "except You bless me." This is one of the most notable combats recorded in Scripture. God is often compelled to steer us into a situation of absolute helplessness before our faith will take hold of His strength. God graciously deals with His children according to their need, circumstance, and nature, as He does with Jacob in Gen 32:26-27, "*Then He [the Lord] said, 'Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.' But he [Jacob] said, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me.' So He said to him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.' And He said, 'Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed.'*"

Note that God blessed Jacob in the very place that He disabled him. God's plan calls for the use of God's power alone; God can only be glorified by power equivalent to His own power, and never by

human or angelic power. Failure to utilize divine power means accepting the cheap substitute of human power and dynamics, the wood, hay, and straw, which are burned at the judgment seat of Christ. God blessed Jacob by making him weak and dependent upon the power of God. Neither human failure nor human success are an issue; the issue is: whose power are you using? This is one of the reasons why the Lord said what He did to Gideon in Jud 7:2. Gideon was already outnumbered 135,000 to 32,000, yet the Lord said to him, *"The people who are with you are too many for Me to give Midian into their hands, lest Israel become boastful, saying, 'My own power has delivered me.'"* When a believer serves God, his service is not human power striving to please God or "pay Him back," 1Pe 4:11, *"Whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ."*

Only works performed as the result of God's power glorify Him. Bible doctrine metabolized is the means of receiving this divine power. "Chokmah" (metabolized doctrine) is speaking in Pro 8:14, *"Counsel is mine and sound wisdom; I am understanding, power is mine."* There is a well-organized satanic attack against sound Bible teaching; Satan's goal is to mislead us to produce human good (creature credit) and blind us from the power of God. He loves to take a believer away from doctrine because as Pro 24:5 says, *"A wise man is strong, and a man of knowledge increases power."* This was even true of our Lord in His humanity, Luk 2:40, *"And the child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him."* Wisdom and power are synonymous, and both come from the scriptures Isa 40:29. Satan, as the god of this world, has designed the world system to draw any life, motivation, or momentum out of any positive believer. We need this divine power to be witnesses and ambassadors for the Lord Jesus Christ. A witness is one who gives confirmation to something and whose life is a testimony of what he claims to believe. The Greek word for witnesses is "martus," the origin of the word "martyr." It means that you are willing to give your life for that which you claim to believe. This goes far beyond evangelizing to becoming character witness against Satan in the angelic conflict.

It was obviously not God's intention to send Jacob away without being blessed, but He wanted to show us Jacob's determination and the principle that we must never quit. Life is a struggle, a wrestling match, and at times, it may even mean wrestling with the Lord. However, when God withdraws Himself from any man, it is always with that man's consent. God has a twofold desire—for the unbeliever, 2Pe 3:9, *"The Lord is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance";* and for the believer, 1Ti 2:4, *"He desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."* This is when you, as a Church-age believer, can say with the Apostle Paul in Phi 4:13, *"I can do all things through Him who keeps on pouring His power in me."*

There is a conflict between man and God that is not one of hostility but of friends contending with each other, in which God overthrows, but only to raise us higher. He prevails, He wins. He humbles us, but in the end we are the ones who benefit. The very fact that He has given us a free will means that He has even given us the power to strive with Him, and at the same time He will resist us, fighting both against us and for us. He strikes us with one hand and defends us with the other. To save Jacob from Esau, it was necessary that God should first meet Jacob as an enemy and show him that his real opponent was God Himself, and that he must first deal with Him before he could deal with his brother.

In Gen 32:27-28, *"So he said to him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.' And he said, 'Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed.'" Why should the Divine Wrestler ask Jacob his name? He wanted to emphasize upon the conscience of Jacob the meaning of his name being changed from Jacob—a contender or one who overthrows—to Israel—a prince with God. The name "Israel" has been interpreted as "prince with God," "he strives with God," "God's fighter," "let God rule," "God strives," or "God commands." These all apply in some sense. Being given a new name in Bible times meant a change in nature or relationship. Jacob*

was to become Israel, a title of victory speaking of contending for the faith with power from God. Jacob will not always act as Israel, however, and God will deal with him again later to confirm his new name. In this magnificent struggle Jacob came to realize his own weakness and the superiority of the Mighty One who had touched him. At the moment he yielded to God's will, he became a new man who could receive the blessings of God and assume his place in God's plan. His new name, Israel, indicates royalty, power, and sovereignty among men. He is destined to be a servant of God, a man governed by God's will, instead of a dishonorable supplanter. He has come through defeat into divine power.

God blesses Jacob when he returns to his own country, and He continues to bless us in our country, client nation U.S.A.

9/15/02

This week we remembered the tragic events that occurred one year ago on 9/11/01, and it is at times like this that we all realize how weak and inadequate we are, and how our greatest need is to turn to the God of all mercy and the Father of all comfort. It was a time for us to turn to God and to pray as a nation so that the evil attacks against our nation would spread no further. It is also a time for us to remember the comfort and encouragement found in passages like Psa 46:1-11.

Psa 46:1-11 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, and though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains quake at its swelling pride. Selah. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy dwelling places of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. The nations made an uproar, the kingdoms tottered; He raised His voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah. Come, behold the works of the Lord, who has wrought desolations in the earth. He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire. "Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah.

Throughout the year there were those who believed and taught that we were now in the fifth cycle of discipline. We have seen that that is not the case. In the First Cycle of Discipline the general population becomes cowardly and afraid of war, and has no motivation for patriotism or the spiritual life, Lev 26:14-17. In the Second Cycle there is depression, an empty social life, and no national pride, and people work hard for nothing (inflation), Lev 26:18-20. In the Third Cycle, the population is thinned out by violence. Crime spreads out of control, commerce comes to a halt, and there are natural disasters, Lev 26:21-22. In the Fourth Cycle there is great uncontrollable crime, military invasion and the beginning of military defeat, disease from overcrowding, a shortage of food causing starvation, and even greater natural disasters, Lev 26:23-26. The Fifth Cycle of discipline, which includes complete military defeat, is found in Lev 26:27-38 and amplified in Deu 28:49-67. After studying these verses, who can believe that we are even close to the Fifth Cycle of Discipline?

As we have seen, what happened was not the judgment of God upon our nation. However, what happened was a *wake up call* to our nation and also to the church. Remember that everything that happens in life is a result of the *angelic conflict*. It is true that we have problems in our nation; however, we are still the greatest nation in the world. September 11, 2001 was a trigger for a great spiritual revival, and *you* can be part of it with a positive attitude, or you can speculate what cycle of discipline we are in, and claim that this is all the believer's fault. America was attacked because Satan, who promotes all anti-Semitism, desires to destroy Israel. The main reason we were attacked is because of our national stand with Israel.

These so-called "militant" Muslims who have convinced themselves that Israel is evil and that the United States is the great ally of evil and the "great Satan" still do not have the guts to call on their so-called "god" Allah to fight us. And of course their god is not the omnipotent "Lord of Hosts"; their god is the god of this world, Satan.

Just warfare is always from the Lord, 1Ch 5:19 22. Our God teaches us that peace is maintained through a military deterrent. Military victory brings peace. Jesus Christ ordained the principle of peace through military victory, Psa 46:7 9. Jesus Christ controls history through warfare. He protects a righteous nation, Psa 55:20 23. It is our duty to watch and pray and realize what is happening in our nation and how vulnerable and defenseless we really are, and to seek God for spiritual answers. We

all must realize how fragile life really is, how meaningless our portfolio, our 401k, our house, our bank account, and our stocks and bonds really are, and that what is really important is our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gen 32:24-29 Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. And when He saw that he had not prevailed against him, He touched the socket of his thigh; so the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated while He wrestled with him. Then He said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." But he said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." So He said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." And He said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked Him and said, "Please tell me your name." But He said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And He blessed him there.

Jacob desired a blessing, and the Lord Jesus Christ granted his request because the blessing he needed was a change of nature, an elevation of character, making him a stronger, truer, man, and this is one of the greatest blessings God can give.

Gen 32:29 Then Jacob asked him and said, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And he blessed him there.

After the Lord Jesus Christ had asked his name, Jacob felt he must also ask this Man's name. He realized he had experienced a unique encounter with the divine presence, and he never had met God in this form before. He had seen and heard God in dreams and visions, but here is an actual physical Person with whom he had been struggling. Was this actually Jehovah, the God of his fathers, to whom he had so often prayed? From what He had said and how easily he injured him, it must be. Here is a picture of God withholding the answer to one request so that our persistence will allow us to understand our need for greater requests.

Gen 32:30 So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved."

Jacob named the place where he wrestled with the Lord "Peniel," meaning "the face of God." He recognized that this was God manifest in the flesh, a pre-incarnate *theophany* of Jesus Christ.

Gen 32:31 Now the sun rose upon him just as he crossed over Penuel, and he was limping on his thigh.

This was the beginning of a great change in Jacob's life. He will finally become serious and dedicated to Bible doctrine, and he will eventually reach spiritual maturity, where he will be thoroughly tested.

Gen 32:32 Therefore, to this day the sons of Israel do not eat the sinew of the hip which is on the socket of the thigh, because he touched the socket of Jacob's thigh in the sinew of the hip.

With his bodily infirmity, he was a stronger man than he had ever been before, and he was better able to meet Esau as a lame man than he -had been before in the pride of his strength. Strength of soul is the highest form of strength.

God does bear with us for a long time. He bears with our self-confidence and self-sufficiency, but He must and will bring us to the end of ourselves. Not until these truths are comprehended will we cease to contend against God, and gladly take our place as clay in the hands of the Potter, being content for Him to command our lives for us.

The wrestling match that we have now seen in detail was a tremendous event in the life of Jacob. It was the moment in which he stepped up to a new level in his experience—"Israel," a prince with God. However, it is one thing to step up to a new spiritual level; it is quite another to maintain it. Many believers have had tremendous spiritual experiences in which they knew God had touched their lives and blessed them, but unfortunately, they forget their experience and fall off back into the cosmic system, the devil's world.

This is the same type of attitude that the Exodus generation displayed after so much had been done for them, Psa 106:6-13. Some believers, when they reach a new stage of spiritual growth, still continue to grow and are blessed throughout their lifetime. Others, after tasting a great spiritual

victory or experience, eventually withdraw from it. However, after experiencing the power and faithfulness of God, it is all but impossible to actually go back to the devil's world and enjoy it. We see this in Peter's words when the disciples were tested in Joh 6:66-68, "*As a result of this [teaching difficult things] many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore. Jesus said therefore to the twelve, 'You do not want to go away also, do you?' Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life.'*" Once you have tasted the words of eternal life, nothing else will ever fulfill that need.

We saw three major failures of Jacob in Gen 32.

1. The first failure was in his manner of meeting Esau, verses 1-11.
2. The second failure was in the deceit to which he resorted to free himself from Esau's company, when Esau offered him the protection of his armed men, verses 12-16.
3. The third failure was in settling at Shechem, a place he will totally regret and that represents going only "half-way" with the Lord.

After wrestling all night, the first thing Jacob sees is Esau coming with 400 men, and he still thinks Esau is coming to kill him. How often do we find that a great blessing like that which came to Jacob during the night is sent to prepare us for a great trial?! God prepares us and then tests His preparation in us. We should never ever let down our guard after a spiritual victory or during a time of prosperity. In fact, many believers fall away from doctrine because they can not handle the persecution or the pressure that comes with doctrine. We should actually welcome it as people testing and operate in the Royal Family Honor Code of Rom 12:14, "*Bless those who persecute you; bless and curse not*"; or 1Co 4:12, "*When we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure.*" As in Gal 4:29, those who live according to the Spirit will be persecuted by those who are living according to the flesh. Therefore, when persecution does come, we must draw heavily upon all the resources of strength and comfort that have been stored up through our relationship with God and our commitment to His Word. And this is exactly what Jacob did not do!

2 Sam 22:35-36 "*He trains my hands for battle, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. Thou hast also given me the shield of Thy salvation, and Thy help makes me great.*"

It is one thing to step up to new spiritual level, it is quite another to maintain it.

09/22/02

Genesis 32:24-29 *Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. And when He saw that he had not prevailed against him, He touched the socket of his thigh; so the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with Him. Then He said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." But he said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." So He said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." And He said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked Him and said, "Please tell me your name." But He said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And He blessed him there.*

In Gen 32:30 Jacob is well aware of who has wrestled with him: *"So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, 'I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved.'"* Jacob finally realized that he was just another member of the human race, hopeless and helpless without the Lord. This was the beginning of his rebound and his reversion recovery. He recognized that this was none other than God manifest in the flesh, a pre-incarnate manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gen 32:31 *Now the sun rose upon him just as he crossed over Penuel, and he was limping on his thigh.*

"The sun rose upon him"—this was the beginning of a great change in Jacob's life. He will now get serious with His relationship with God, and he is now on the way to spiritual maturity where he will be thoroughly tested.

Gen 32:32 *Therefore, to this day the sons of Israel do not eat the sinew of the hip which is on the socket of the thigh [of the animals they use for food], because He touched the socket of Jacob's thigh in the sinew of the hip.*

With his physical infirmity, Jacob was a stronger man than he had ever been before, and he was better able to meet Esau as a lame man than he had been before in the pride of his strength; this time he had been given strength of soul, the highest form of strength.

Some believers, when they reach a new spiritual stage of growth or attainment, maintain it and are blessed by it throughout their lifetime. Others, after tasting a great spiritual victory or experience, actually withdraw from it. After doing so, they can never truly enjoy life in the devil's world, no matter how hard they try, Heb 10:35-39, *"Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay. But My righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul."* After this tremendous experience, Jacob immediately shrunk back from the glorious level to which the Lord had lifted him, and returned to the garbage pit of the self-life. This decline is indicated by the retention of the name Jacob in Gen 33:1 where we read, *"Then Jacob..."*

In Gen 32:28 we are told that the Lord said, *"Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel"*; in Gen 33:1 we would expect to see his new name, the new title, Israel, a prince with God. However, he could not be called Israel because he had immediately reverted back to the life of the old Jacob. He went right back from the life of clinging to the Lord, to the cringing, crafty, scheming life which he had been leading all too long. The time will come when Israel will become his commonly used name, but he has not yet left behind Jacob, the swindler and deceiver.

God is very compassionate toward us, and if we do not learn His lessons at once, He will present them to us again and again, in one form or another, until at last His objective is accomplished in our lives. The ultimate objective that He will accomplish is found in Rom 8:29, *"For whom He*

foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brethren.”

We see three major failures of Jacob in Gen 33:

1. The first failure was in his manner of meeting Esau, verses 1-11.
2. The second failure was in the deceit to which he resorted, to free himself from Esau’s company, when Esau offered him the protection of his armed men, verses 12-16.
3. The third failure was in settling at Shechem, a place he will greatly regret and which symbolizes going only “half-way” with the Lord.

After wrestling all night, the first thing Jacob sees is Esau coming with 400 men. Jacob still assumes that Esau is coming to kill him. Life in this world is filled with abrupt and sudden changes; many times we find that a great blessing is sent to prepare us for a great trial. God prepares us and then tests His preparation in us. Do not be surprised or discouraged if a time of testing or trial follows a time of fantastic and unusual blessing.

King Asa said to the Jews in 2Ch 14:7, *“Let us build these cities and surround them with walls and towers, gates and bars. The land is still ours, because we have sought the Lord our God; we have sought Him, and He has given us rest on every side.’ So they built and prospered.”* When we have a time of rest and prosperity, it is still a time to build. We should never let down our guard after a spiritual victory or during a time of prosperity. In fact, a believer is most vulnerable to failure after experiencing victory. We should be surprised if, after a great spiritual victory, our local assembly does not come under satanic attack. In Joh 15:20, our Lord said, *“Remember the word that I said to you, a slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.”*

Many believers fall away from doctrinal ministries because they can not handle the persecution and pressure that will inevitably come with Bible doctrine. As Mat 13:21 says, *“They have no firm root in themselves, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away.”* In Joh 16:1-2 the Lord tells us where this persecution will come from: *“These things I have spoken to you, that you may be kept from stumbling. They will make you outcasts from the synagogue [“ex-communicate” you from their church], but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God.”* The persecution of faithful grace believers comes from religion, legalism, self-righteousness, current-day Phariseism, and hypocrites and phonies. Our Lord continues in Joh 16:3, *“And these things they will do, because they have not known the Father, or Me.”* However, we are told to welcome this persecution as people testing, and we are to operate in the Royal Family Honor Code of Rom 12:14, *“Bless those who persecute you; bless and curse not”*; and 1Co 4:12, *“When we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure.”* Remember the reason for persecution, and you will know whether you or your ministry is really being persecuted! The Apostle Paul reminds us in Gal 4:29, *“But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.”*

Those who live according to the Spirit will be persecuted by those living by the flesh. A goal of every local assembly should be to hear what the Apostle Paul said in 2Th 1:4, *“Therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.”* Paul also warns us in 2Ti 3:12, *“And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”*

Gen 33:1-2 Then Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two maids. And he put the maids and their children in front, and Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last.

Jacob arranged his caravan so that, in case of an attack, those whom he loved the most would have the best chance of escape.

Gen 33:3 *But he himself passed on ahead of them and bowed down to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.*

The act of bowing down to the ground was an honor and a tribute paid toward a king or someone highly respected in the ancient world. Here Jacob is compromising with the flesh, living in fear of what a man can do to him. We realize as we study this passage how frail our human life is, Psa 39:5, *“Behold, Thou hast made my days as handbreadths, and my lifetime as nothing in Thy sight. Surely every man at his best is a mere breath. Selah.”* The Hebrew word for “handbreadths” is “*tephach*,” which means a span or a width of the hand—a wave of the hand, and our life is over. Our life is fragile, frail, fleeting, flimsy, and feeble, Psa 39:6, *“Surely every man walks about as a phantom; surely they make an uproar for nothing; he amasses riches, and does not know who will gather them.”* The previous verse, Psa 39:4, in one translation reads, *“Lord, help me to realize how brief my time on earth will be. Help me to know that I am here for but a moment more.”*

In Psa 56:1-4, a poem written by David, we read, *“Be gracious to me, O God, for man has trampled upon me; fighting all day long he oppresses me. My foes have trampled upon me all day long, for they are many who fight proudly against me. When I am afraid, I will put my trust in Thee. In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me?”*

Moses writes in Psa 90:1-6, *“Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were born, or Thou didst give birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God. Thou dost turn man back into dust, and dost say, “Return, O children of men.” For a thousand years in Thy sight are like yesterday when it passes by, or as a watch in the night. Thou hast swept them away like a flood, they fall asleep; in the morning they are like grass which sprouts anew. In the morning it flourishes, and sprouts anew; toward evening it fades, and withers away.”* He is describing human life and how frail it really is.

Psa 90:10-12 *As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, or if due to strength, eighty years, yet their pride is but labor and sorrow; for soon it is gone and we fly away. Who understands the power of Thine anger, and Thy fury, according to the fear that is due Thee? So teach us to number our days, that we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom [doctrine].*

Mal 3:16 shows us what it means to respect and honor Bible doctrine: *“Then those who respected the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who respect the Lord and who esteem His name.”*

Many believers do not realize how much they please God, simply because of their faithfulness to Bible class. We tend to get too subjective and sin conscious to see this principle, and we form a low opinion of our relationship with God. However, there is a book in heaven with a record of attendance in Bible class, of our daily perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine. For most, it is face-to-face teaching, but for others who do not have that opportunity, it can be any other form of teaching that is available. Whatever it is, if it is daily and consistent, it pleases God! The lesson to be learned is that our life is so fragile, yet the average person lives as though his future on this earth is eternal.

In Gen 33 Jacob is living in fear of a man who is not even born again. He has forgotten the tremendous power and omnipotence of God. Back in Gen 32:26 he had said to the Lord, *“I will not let you go unless you bless me.”* In verse 29, the Lord does bless Jacob. Then Jacob says in Gen 32:30, *“I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved.”* Next, he forgets he has seen God and been blessed, and now lives in fear of man once again. There are two ways of meeting our personal troubles—through the means of the flesh or the means of the Spirit. The flesh compromises and anticipates terror, prepares against troubles with fear, many times even prays but in a panic, and then cringes before trouble as Jacob did, who bowed himself to the ground seven times as he approached his brother.

The way of the Spirit is faith-rest and doctrinal application. Some of you may be dreading a meeting with your Esau tomorrow, your most difficult problem. Are you worrying, planning,

scheming, and conniving, as Jacob did? Listen to a far greater way from God the Holy Spirit. Do not lift up your eyes and look for the Esau's of life. Those who look for troubles will find it. The Lord said in Mat 6:34, *"Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."* Learn to look at the solution and not the problem. Those who have seen the face of God (which we can through the intake of doctrine as born-again believers in the Church-age) need not fear the face of man. It is with us as it was with Jacob; to have power with God is to have power over all the evils that threaten us.

Gen 33:4-8 Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. And he [Esau] lifted his eyes and saw the women and the children, and said, "Who are these with you?" So he [Jacob] said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant." Then the maids [concubines] came near with their children, and they bowed down. And Leah likewise came near with her children, and they bowed down; and afterward Joseph came near with Rachel, and they bowed down. And he [Esau] said, "What do you mean by all this company which I have met?" And he [Jacob] said, "To find favor in the sight of my lord."

Esau desired to know the meaning of the herds of cattle that had been sent to him earlier as a present. Jacob's answer is quite frank and shows us where he has placed his confidence; he was depending on his presents, or bribes, rather than God, to pacify or win his brother over. Here is a case in which an unbeliever acts with more morals and values than a believer, Gen 33:9, *"But Esau said, 'I have plenty, my brother; let what you have be your own.'"* The anticipation and the coming problem turned out to be much less than what Jacob expected. Notice the plain implication of Esau's words—we are shown the futility and needlessness of Jacob's deceitfulness and scheming. Jacob had devoted much of his time and energy to the problem of how he could best soothe the anger of his brother, whom he feared. However, his thoughts, schemes, and plans all accomplished nothing. It was all time and labor lost. He had wasted effort in unprofitable labor, as so many believers do while they try to get ahead. God had taken care of Esau and protected Jacob, just as He did when He protected Jacob from his deceitful uncle Laban. How much better it would have been had Jacob just been "still" and trusted in the Lord to act on his behalf. Not only are all our human viewpoint, human planning, and energy of the flesh dishonoring to God, but they are uncalled for and unnecessary. There comes a time when we must stop trying to grab the wheel and let God drive.

What Jacob anticipated never happened, and that is what fear, worry, and anxiety produce.

9/29/02

Genesis 33:1-8 But he himself [Jacob] passed on ahead of them [his family] and bowed down to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. And he [Esau] lifted his eyes and saw the women and the children, and said, "Who are these with you?" So he [Jacob] said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant." Then the maids [concubines] came near with their children, and they bowed down. And Leah likewise came near with her children, and they bowed down; and afterward Joseph came near with Rachel, and they bowed down. And he said, "What do you mean by all this company which I have met?" And he said, "To find favor in the sight of my lord."

The plain implication of Esau's words shows the futility and meaninglessness of Jacob's deceitfulness and scheming. He had wasted his life like so many believers who forget the principle of Psa 127:1-2, "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; it is vain for you to rise up early, to retire late, to eat the bread of painful labors; for He gives to His beloved even in his sleep"; and Ecc 2:11, "Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun." How much better it would have been had Jacob just been "still" and trusted in the Lord to act on his behalf.

Gen 33:10-11 And Jacob said, "No, please, if now I have found favor in your sight, then take my present from my hand, for I see your face as one sees the face of God, and you have received me favorably. Please take my gift which has been brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have plenty." Thus he urged him and he took it.

In the ancient world, if one's present was received by someone in authority, you could rely upon his friendship. If it was declined, you had everything to fear. Therefore, Jacob was persistent in pressing Esau to accept his gift.

What a change we have seen in Jacob, from clinging to the divine Wrestler to prostrating himself before Esau. It is one thing to be privileged with a special visitation or manifestation of God, but it is quite another to live in its power. Jacob's experience reminds us of the Lord's closest disciples who were with Him on the Mountain of Transfiguration in Mat 17. They were deeply impressed with what they saw and heard.

Mat 17:1-5 And six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him!"

Observe what follows. The next day a man brought his "lunatic" son to the disciples, but they could not cure him.

Mat 17:14-20 And when they came to the multitude, a man came up to Him, falling on his knees before Him, and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic, and is very ill; for he often falls into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not cure him." And Jesus answered and said, "O unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me." And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once. Then the disciples

came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" And He said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, move from here to there, and it shall move; and nothing shall be impossible to you."

Unless your faith is active and is put to use, you can not live in divine power.

In Gen 33:12, *"Then Esau said, 'Let us take our journey and go, and I will go before you.'" Notice all the unnecessary fears and the late-night worrying that Jacob had done. How useless worrying, fear, and anxiety are as we conjure up things to alarm us. Have you not ever looked forward with great anxiety to something that was coming, and then when it came, found out that all your anxiety had been pointless? We all have the ability to make ourselves miserable if we look into the future and anticipate the worst. This is the sin of worry, as seen in Mar 4:19; Luk 8:14, 10:41; Mat 13:22, "This is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful."* It is not important to calculate far ahead into the future; if God's people only had more faith in the promises of God and in His character and nature, they would stop worrying about so many things. All of us have at times imagined dangers that looked so intimidating and duties that seemed so strenuous, and became so entangled with these things that we could not see our way through. Then these things have proved to be nothing more than threats designed to frighten us. Once we face them, all their difficulty vanishes, leaving us to think how foolish we have been for having allowed mere shadows to disturb our rest.

Gen 33:13-14 But Jacob said to Esau, "My lord knows that the children are frail and that the flocks and herds which are nursing are a care to me. And if they are driven hard one day, all the flocks will die. Please let my lord pass on before his servant; and I will proceed at my leisure, according to the pace of the cattle that are before me and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my lord at Seir."

It is incredible that Jacob practiced this deception on his generous brother to get rid of him, promising what he never meant to fulfill, which was to visit him at Seir. Jacob at once begins to devise excuses for traveling separately.

Jacob's second failure in Gen 33 was the deceitfulness to which he resorted to free himself from Esau's company. Do not think for a moment that Jacob really meant to go to Seir, for as soon as he had seen the rear of Esau's retiring forces, he headed in the opposite direction to Succoth. All such lies were utterly unworthy of the man who had seen God's angels face to face and even the Lord Himself. Esau replies in Gen 33:15, *"And Esau said, 'Please let me leave with you some of the people who are with me.' But he said, 'What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord.'" Esau suggested that some of his own army should stay behind with Jacob to afford protection while passing through a wild and dangerous country. However, Jacob seems to still suspect some hostile intent behind Esau's offer, so he declines it. Jacob politely refuses to travel with Esau, but he does say that he will follow at a slower pace until he meets him in Seir. Esau sets out for his homeland to the south, Gen 33:16, and we hear of him no more. Jacob, contrary to his word, journeys westward toward the Jordan Valley and stops at Succoth.*

Note that Esau kindly accepted the presents of Jacob to make Jacob feel better about his wrongdoing against Esau. Secondly, Esau kindly received the wives and children of Jacob. Thirdly, he goes on the way before Jacob to make the way clear for him. He acts as his brother's guide and vanguard and shows his forgiveness by deeds as well as by words. Esau is actually depicted in this chapter as a noble character. He for-gives and forgets his brother's past.

Jacob, however, is still mistrustful of the one whom he had betrayed, and he gives Esau the slip by traveling toward Canaan instead of following him as he had promised. Here is a passage where an unbeliever has more character and integrity than a believer. In Gen 33:17, *"And Jacob journeyed to*

Succoth; and built for himself a house, and made booths for his livestock, therefore the place is named Succoth." This sequel is indeed a sad one concerning Jacob.

Succoth was a backward step, spiritually as well as geographically. He had been called to go to Bethel but instead he settled in Succoth in an ungodly atmosphere. This is the third failure of Jacob in this chapter—settling at Shechem. God never said to go to Shechem; He had said, "I am the God of Bethel." Bethel was his appointed goal. Unfortunately, like Jacob, we are all too ready to fall short of God's plan and settle for our human plans. And so Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, and he regressed even more there; he pitched his tent before the city as Lot had pitched his tent before Sodom. How many Christians today are living on the edge of the world, just far enough away to justify a religious profession, yet near enough to run to it for pleasure!

Gen 33:18-19 Now Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan aram, and camped before the city. And he bought the piece of land where he had pitched his tent from the hand of the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money.

He even bought land there in Shechem. Shechem was in the land of Canaan which God promised to Jacob, but it was not the goal of God's plan. Jacob is *buying* what God had promised to *give* to him. The true spirit of faith would have waited quietly, until God had made good His repeated promise. Then in Gen 33:20, "*Then he erected there an altar, and called it El Elohe Israel.*" Jacob sought to relieve his conscience by building the altar, and dedicating it to the God of Israel. However, the very next word Jacob receives from the Lord indicates He is not pleased with the altar. The Lord then repeats His command in Gen 35:1, "*Then God said to Jacob, 'Arise, go up to Bethel, and live there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.'*"

Let us look at a summary of what happened in Succoth, which was the wrong geographical location for Jacob's life.

- ☒ In Gen 34:1, his daughter got involved with the world.
- ☒ In Gen 34:2, she was raped.
- ☒ In Gen 34:7, his sons found out and vowed revenge.
- ☒ In Gen 34:13, they deceived the men of Shechem to weaken them.
- ☒ In Gen 34:25, they murdered every male in the city.
- ☒ In Gen 34:27, they came upon the slain and looted the city.
- ☒ In Gen 34:28, they stole the flocks and all that was in the city and fields.
- ☒ In Gen 34:29, they captured and looted all their wealth and took everything from their wives and children.

Therefore in Gen 34:30, "*Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, 'You have brought trouble on me, by making me odious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and my men being few in number, they will gather together against me and attack me and I shall be destroyed, I and my household.' But they said, 'Should he treat our sister as a harlot?'*" Jacob has gone right back to his fear, and his sons are turning out just like him.

Gen 35:1-2 Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel, and live there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau." So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods which are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your garments."

As you can see, staying in the wrong geographical location was simply not worth it for Jacob.

Let us quickly summarize what has taken place since Jacob's encounter with Esau.

- ☒ In Gen 35:1-3, God tells Jacob to go to Bethel, and he does.
- ☒ In Gen 35:5, as they journeyed, there was a great terror in the cities by which they traveled, and no one pursued them. God was protecting Jacob without Jacob scheming and planning on how to survive.

- ❑ In Gen 35:7, Jacob builds an altar in Bethel and begins to worship God in the *right way* and in the *right place*. Perhaps he learned some things from being in the wrong geographical location.
 - ❑ In Gen 35:9, God appears to Jacob and reminds him of his new name Israel and of the Abrahamic Covenant.
 - ❑ In Gen 35:16-19, Rachel dies while giving birth to Benjamin. Jacob will say just before his death that this was one of the most sorrowful moments of his life.
 - ❑ In Gen 35:28-29, Jacob's father Isaac dies, and Jacob and Esau bury him.
 - ❑ In Gen 37:3, Israel's favorite son was Joseph; he openly loved him more than all his other sons.
 - ❑ In Gen 37:4, all his other sons hated Joseph out of jealousy for their father's love. This reveals Jacob's serious failures as a father, loving one child so much more than the others that they could all see it and resented it.
 - ❑ In Gen 37:27, they threw their brother Joseph into a pit and sold him into slavery.
 - ❑ In Gen 37:32, they all deceived Jacob and told him that that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal (like father, like sons).
 - ❑ In Gen 42:1, there was a famine in the land so Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to buy grain.
 - ❑ In Gen 45:9, God had blessed Joseph, and he was in command of all Egypt under the Pharaoh, and he revealed himself to his brothers and sent for his father to come to Egypt.
 - ❑ In Gen 46:2-4, God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and reaffirmed the Abrahamic covenant and told him to travel to Egypt.
- Gen 47:5-8 *Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. The land of Egypt is at your disposal; settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land, let them live in the land of Goshen; and if you know any capable men among them, then put them in charge of my livestock." Then Joseph brought his father Jacob and presented him to Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How many years have you lived?"*

Jacob's reply gives us a good idea as to what type of life that he led.

Gen 47:9-10 *So Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my sojourning are one hundred and thirty; few and unpleasant have been the years of my life, nor have they attained the years that my fathers lived during the days of their sojourning." And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from his presence.*

We now pick up the life of Jacob in Gen 47:27. We are now down to the sunset years of Jacob's life. Several observations should be noted about the latter years of life on this earth. The older we get in this life, we either get better or worse. No one ever remains the same. What you were ten years ago you are not today. Time lived in our own plans can only make us worse, but time lived in God's power and God's plan will make us great.

“The God who has been my Shepherd all the days of my life”

10/06/02

In our ongoing study of the *Israeli-Arab Conflict*, we have now reached the end of Jacob's life and have seen how it relates to the origin of the Jewish race.

Gen 48:1-4 Now it came about after these things that Joseph was told, “Behold, your father is sick.” So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him. When it was told to Jacob, “Behold, your son Joseph has come to you,” Israel collected his strength and sat up in the bed. Then Jacob said to Joseph, “God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, and He said to me, ‘Behold, I will make you fruitful and numerous, and I will make you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession.’”

The Lord Jesus Christ made this promise to Jacob and said in effect, “I am going to give you this land forever.” Obviously, to possess the land forever, Jacob must live forever, and as we know, Jacob has eternal life. Jacob is saying here that this was one of the greatest moments of his life.

Gen 48:5 “And now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are.”

Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, became two tribes of Israel. Manasseh would die on the vine and become a “shriveled-up,” weak tribe, while Ephraim would become a powerful tribe. Ephraim was a man who grew up and lived by Bible doctrine. Manasseh was just like his grandfather Jacob was for the first 130 years of his life—a selfish, egotistical, self-centered, petty, jealous, bullying deceiver. Ephraim and Manasseh were brothers, yet one learned doctrine and the other would not. This simply reminds us that regardless of the circumstances and events that surround our birth, God gave us life at the right time for us to be born.

Gen 48:6-11 “But your offspring that have been born after them shall be yours; they shall be called by the names of their brothers in their inheritance. Now as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died, to my sorrow, in the land of Canaan on the journey, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).” When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, “Who are these?” And Joseph said to his father, “They are my sons, whom God has given me here.” So he said, “Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them.” Now the eyes of Israel were so dim from age that he could not see. Then Joseph brought them close to him, and he kissed them and embraced them. And Israel said to Joseph, “I never expected to see your face, and behold, God has let me see your children as well.”

God again overrules and blesses the younger son over the first-born.

Gen 48:12-15 Then Joseph took them from his knees, and bowed with his face to the ground. And Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right, and brought them close to him. But Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, crossing his hands, although Manasseh was the first born. And he blessed Joseph, and said, “The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day...”

God took care of Jacob *all the days of his life*. For most of his life, Jacob was a carnal believer. It was for only 17 years at the end of his life that was he a spiritual believer. However, God shepherded him all that time, whether carnal or spiritual, in His unerring faithfulness. Once you belong to Him, He is faithful no matter what you are like. This is grace. Grace is who and what God is like, not what we are like.

God is faithful to us in rebound and recovery, 1Jo 1:9, *“If we acknowledge [name and cite] our sins, He is faithful and righteous, with the result that He forgives us our sins [known sins] and purifies us*

from all unrighteousness [unknown sins].” God knew our sins in eternity past. He imputed them to the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross and judged them. The justice of God is satisfied with the Lord Jesus Christ as our substitute. God is justified to forgive us because He has been propitiated by the sacrifice of *His perfect Son*. Therefore, there is no compromise of His integrity when He faithfully forgives us as we name and cite our sins. A very important principle emerges here—there is no merit in naming a sin. Legalism says you must feel sorry to be forgiven, but grace says that the way you feel is not the issue. When we name and cite our sins, God faithfully forgives us, regardless of how we feel. We can forget the sin and move on immediately.

1. Name it, 1Jo 1:9.
2. Isolate it, Heb 12:15.
3. Forget it, Phi 3:13.
4. Keep moving, Phi 3:14.

God treats us in grace, and that grace is never a license to sin, but it is the motivation to press on to spiritual maturity. The basis of God’s faithfulness is His grace, Jam 1:17, *“Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.”* God’s faithfulness is manifested in His perfect plan, 1Co 1:9, 1Th 5:24, Job 23:14.

As believers, we do not need to worry about the basic necessities that sustain our lives. God will provide everything we will ever need. It was more “difficult” for God to find a way to save us than it was for Him to bless us in time. If He could do the most for us at salvation, He can provide the lesser blessing of *logistical grace support* in time. As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we must never lose sight of the grace and mercy of God. As Israel (Jacob) says, *“The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day.”* As we have seen in our study, through their failures and successes, He was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This should be a great comfort, for there never was a time when God was not totally faithful to us as believers. As the Bible says so many times, in passages such as Lam 3:1-25, *“The Lord’s lovingkindness is everlasting.”*

We will now see a great passage in the Bible concerning the Jews and some fascinating issues related to the prehistoric *angelic conflict* and the proof that God keeps His Word. The angelic conflict is the result of prehistoric creatures being in opposition to God, which began with the fall of Satan and continued until all angelic creatures had made a decision for or against God. This is a vital doctrine of the Word of God that dogmatically and irrefutably proves the faithfulness of God.

The angelic conflict includes the two trials of Satan and the fallen angels, one in prehistoric times, the other during human history. There are only two categories of rational creatures in scripture; those of *prehistoric times* are called angels, Psa 8:3-6, Heb 2:6-9, 2Pe 2:11.

Psa 8:3-6 When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou dost take thought of him? And the son of man, that Thou dost care for him? Yet Thou hast made him a little lower than God, and dost crown him with glory and majesty! Thou dost make him to rule over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet.

Heb 2:6-9 But one has testified somewhere, saying, “What is man, that Thou rememberest him? Or the son of man, that Thou art concerned about him? Thou hast made him for a little while lower than the angels; Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, And hast appointed him over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.” For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the

angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

In their physical beings, angels are quite different from humans; they were apparently created out of light. They are able to move through space at will, and are invisible to the empirical investigation of mankind. They are superior to mankind and existed in the universe before man for an unknown period of time. Angels are created far superior to mankind in power and intellect. However, they are still created beings just as much in need of the grace of God as we are.

Psa 148:1-6 Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights! Praise Him, all His angels; praise Him, all His hosts! Praise Him, sun and moon; praise Him, all stars of light! Praise Him, highest heavens, and the waters that are above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the Lord, for He commanded and they were created. He has also established them forever and ever; He has made a decree which will not pass away.

The *historical* category of rational creatures is mankind. The term “rational” simply means having a soul, a complete soul essence (not that they always behave rationally).

Satan is the most brilliant creature who has ever lived, and he is also the most attractive and most personable. The closest reference we have to his real name is “Heylel” (Isa 14:12), the “son of the morning,” the anointed cherub. There was a time when he was the highest of all creatures. The cherub at that time was the highest form of angelic life. Today the *seraphim* are the highest-ranking angels. Both elect and fallen angels observe the human race and human history.

It can be very difficult for a pastor to teach Satanology and the angelic conflict because the devil hates to be exposed. When the average person thinks of the devil they think of red skin, a pointed tail, horns, a trident, and all the rest, but this is not the devil at all. The devil is the most beautiful creature who ever came from the hand of God. One of the most shocking principles for many people to hear is that the devil is not interested in getting people to sin. He is vitally interested in getting you to perform *human good*. This is why Paul said in 2Co 2:11, “*In order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes.*” Satan is actively involved in putting down any believer anywhere who understands Bible doctrine.

Immorality is actually embarrassing to Satan because he is the ruler of this world. His plan is to get humans, especially believers, to produce human good, in order to infiltrate the plan of God with human good. Satan cannot do this to a believer who has a knowledge of doctrine, but an ignorant believer is a sucker for human good every time. Human good appeals to approbation lust, power lust, and the old sin nature. In fact, the presence of sin, chaos, and problems in the world is not due to Satan’s intention to have it so but his inability to control the human race. Therefore, God’s plan for the human race is *not* to clean up the devil’s world; it is to offer salvation to the unbeliever and knowledge of doctrine to the believer. One verse that describes this very accurately and completely is 1Ti 2:4, “*He desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge [epignosis] of the truth.*” In every generation there will be believers who will mature through knowledge of Bible doctrine, which is the only possible way for the believer to grow. Through his cosmic control, the devil will give those believers a great deal of attention because they constitute the greatest threat to his cosmic system on earth today.

Adam was created perfect in the garden of Eden, but as we know, he fell and we fell with him, and now anyone who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ actually becomes greater than Adam was in the Garden. We now have the very righteousness of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the eternal state, the difference between the perfection of Adam in the garden and the perfection we will enjoy is that we have received a nature that can *never* sin, 1Jo 3:9, 1Pe 1:23. When we do sin, we are not sinning as new creatures but in our *old sin nature*, Rom 7:17, “*So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me.*” Adam was created perfect, but he fell and sinned against God, and a *higher category* of humans came into existence called the children of God.

The same is true in the angelic realm. Heylel, or Satan, the son of the morning, the anointed cherub, was created perfect and was the highest-ranking angel at that time. The cherub was originally the most superior angel. And Satan was the greatest of them all. However, just as a higher creature came after Adam in the human race, certain angels were awarded a higher rank than Satan after his fall—the seraphim, angels with six wings. Because of the character and nature of God, in which He is righteous, just, and immutable, we must conclude that, just as members of the human race are rewarded for their faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ, the angels were given rewards for following whatever plan God designed for them. There is the same basic difference among the angels as among humans, 1Co 15:40-42, *“There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for stars differ from stars in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead.”* God never has and never will coerce or force angelic or human volition to make choices. The “elect” angels, who in eternity past made the right grace decisions found in God’s plan, are now in their eternal state and serving the Lord in the current extension of the angelic conflict.

The revelation concerning the angelic conflict begins with the dateless period between the creation of the heavens and the earth in their perfect form, in which they first appeared in Gen 1:1, and the deso-lating judgments that ended that period, when the earth *became* waste and empty, Gen 1:2. In Gen 1:1, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”* This is *not* the beginning of the angels, because the angels were already alive before God created the heavens and the earth, Job 38:4-7, *“The Lord said, ‘Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding, who set its measurements, since you know? Or who stretched the line on it? On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars [angels] sang together, and all the sons of God [angels] shouted for joy?’”*

The angels were already here before Gen 1:1. At some time in eternity past, before the creation of the physical universe as we know it, God created the angelic host. It is important to note in Job 38:7 that when God laid the foundation of the earth *all* the sons of God shouted for joy because they were undivided at that time. Satan and the one third of the angels who would follow him had not yet rebelled in arrogance; therefore they all shouted for joy in unity, when they saw the creation take place. Therefore, in Gen 1:1 the universe, the heavens and the earth, were originally created as the domain of the angels. Here they ruled and performed whatever responsibilities and tasks God had for them. It was between Gen 1:1 and Gen 1:2 that Satan rebelled against God and enticed one third of the angels to follow him, as described in Rev 12:4, *“And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven.”*

The Angelic Conflict, Part 1

10/13/02

We have now begun one of the great doctrines of the Word of God, the doctrine that explains why we are here—the *angelic conflict*. This doctrine is very relevant to the time in which we live and how it all relates to nation of Israel. Our Lord described the historical trends that would precede His return in Mat 24:6-8, *“And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.”*

The angelic conflict is the result of prehistoric creatures (angels) being in opposition to God, which began with the fall of Satan and continued until all angelic creatures had made a decision for or against God. The angelic conflict refers to the two trials of Satan and the fallen angels, one in prehistoric times, the other during human history. To understand what the angelic conflict is all about we must see Satan as he really is—the most attractive, beautiful, and personable creature created by God.

Eze 28:11-12 *Again the word of the Lord came to me saying, “Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, “Thus says the Lord God, “You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.””*

The king of Tyre was one of the few individuals in human history who was possessed by Satan, as the serpent in the garden and Judas Iscariot. In this passage the Lord is speaking to Satan who is indwelling the king of Tyre. The phrase *“You had the seal of perfection”* is very important. Of all the creatures to come from the hand of God, Satan was the greatest in beauty and authority. He is superior in genius, beauty, personality, and persuasiveness, and he is invisible to us. More than that, he is an organizational genius with a great army of demons, Eph 6:10 12.

He is the enemy of Bible doctrine, the Church, Israel, and most of all the Lord Jesus Christ, Rev 12:1-6, *“And a great sign appeared in heaven, a woman [Israel] clothed with the sun [Jacob], and the moon under her feet [the wives of Jacob], and on her head a crown of twelve stars [the twelve patriarchs]; and she was with child [the virgin pregnancy]; and she cried out [the many Jewish Holocausts], being in labor and in pain to give birth [longing for deliverance from this intense anti-Semitism]. And another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon [Satan] having seven heads and ten horns [the revived Roman empire of the Tribulation and the ecumenical religion], and on his heads were seven diadems [crowns]. And his tail [Satan’s power] swept away a third of the stars [angels] of heaven, and He [God] threw them to the earth [in the middle of the Tribulation]. And the dragon stood before the woman [the virgin Mary] who was about to give birth [what Satan tried desperately to prevent], so that when she gave birth he might devour her child [destroy the humanity of Christ]. And she gave birth to a son, a male child [our Lord Jesus Christ in hypostatic union], who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron [capital punishment during the Millennium]; and her child [Jesus Christ] was caught up to God [the ascension] and to His throne [the session]. And the woman [true Israel, Jews who become saved during the Tribulation] fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God [for refuge], so that there she might be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.”* 1260 days (mid-way) into the Tribulation is the time of Satan’s desperation. Current events show how Satan is doing everything he can to stop God from fulfilling His promises to the Jews.

Satan’s outward appearance still has not changed. He was smart enough to know that he was the most beautiful creature who ever lived and to use his beauty and genius to his own advantage. However, if there is anything that destroys genius, smarts, talent, and beauty, or anything else considered worthwhile, it is *arrogance*. Arrogance begins with a thought, then the decision, and finally

the action of arrogance. Satan devised the first conspiracy in the universe and led the first great revolt in the universe, and this is the prehistoric angelic conflict.

The Lord says to Satan in Eze 28:13, *"You were in Eden, the garden of God..."* He was not only perfect in nature, but he lived in *perfect environment*. The original sin among angelic creatures, like the original sin among human creatures, occurred as a negative decision in perfect environment. As verse 12 says, Satan was the sum total of perfection. He had everything people ordinarily think would give them happiness. However, once they have it, they're still not happy; they want something else—*power!* They want approbation and recognition. After all, what good is beauty if no one else says you're beautiful?

Satan also had authority as the "anointed cherub," the Messiah's angel, but he got tired of being second in command! He had everything except God's power and that's what he wanted. This is why the first sin mentioned in God's top seven is arrogance, the original sin of Satan. Arrogance is satanic and is found in many born-again believers. Many of them are so busy trying to "clean up" the devil's world that they that they never learn a thing about the angelic conflict and the real reason they are here. The lust for power has its roots in arrogance, and it goes far beyond the ability to manipulate to people. Power lust does not begin with trying to exercise authority or influence over people. It starts with the *"look at me!"* syndrome; it is all about pre-occupation with self.

Eze 28:13 *"You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz, and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise, and the emerald; and the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared."*

The adorning with jewels indicates his great importance and the glory of his appearance. Even in the Garden of Eden, his name *"nachash,"* translated "serpent," means "shining one." He appears an angel of light, 2Co 11:14, *"For even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light."* These precious stones mentioned in verse 13 are displayed three times as recorded in the Bible:

1. In the high priest's breastplate as a manifesta-tion of divine grace.
2. In the New Jerusalem, which reflects the glory of God.
3. As the covering of this great angel Satan, signaling the highest form of all creation.

The phrase *"the workmanship of your settings and sockets"* refers to the fact that he did not need an instrument to praise and glorify God; he was able to give perfect praise to his Creator. Satan is said to have been the "anointed cherub who covers" by God's appointment-, Eze 28:14, *"You were the anointed cherub [the highest rank of angelic creatures at the time] who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God [the third heaven]; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire."* The word "anointed" refers to the Messiah's angel. Satan was in the throne room of God. The holy mountain of God is the place of His presence in visible glory, where His high priest would stand before Him to fulfill his office, Exo 4:27, Psa 2:6. The cherubim were the group of angels around the throne of God elevated as defenders of His holiness. Therefore, we can conclude that this great angel was created above all angels as a guardian of the throne of God. And it is not surprising when we see others who are supposed to protect and defend the authority over them, but instead attack and discredit it. It started with their father the devil; Christians under the thinking of Satan are called sons (*teknon's* or students) of the devil, 1Jo 3:10.

Eze 28:14-17 *"You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, until unrighteousness was found in you. By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned. Therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor."*

The phrase *“the abundance of your trade”* refers to his genius plans. Satan has come up with many plans for both his angels and for the human race. When Satan sinned, one third of the angelic creatures went with him, and he had plans for them. Perhaps he promised them what a lot of conspirators promise their victims—promotion. Satan organized them against God. Once man was created, Satan had plans for man, which we will study. The word for trade, *“rekullah,”* is also translated “slander,” and it means to go about in order to destroy someone’s reputation by trafficking gossip and slander. The word “Satan” in the Greek language is *“Satanas,”* which means to gossip, malign, slander, and accuse. Satan is a master of conspiracy; in fact, he is the originator of conspiracy. His self-consciousness was parlayed into a tremendous case of pride.

Eze 28:18-19 *“You corrupted [distorted] your wisdom by reason of your splendor [your breathtaking beauty]. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, that they may see you [this is future]. By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade [your dishonest transactions, or conspiracies], you profaned your sanctuaries [Satan’s first fall]. Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; it has consumed you, and I have turned you to ashes on the earth in the eyes of all who see you [his second fall]. All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have become terrified, and you will be no more.”*

All these things will take place before and after the Millennial reign of Christ. God created an angel who was perfect in all his ways, and that angel sinned by opposing the will of God. Through the degenerating power of sin, Satan, as did Adam, became an entirely different being from that which God created. This was accomplished through the choice of his own free will. When God creates a being to fulfill a certain purpose, that creature must be a perfect fulfillment of that divine pattern. God always provides whatever we need to fulfill the purpose He has for our lives. We have logistical grace, the problem solving devices, and the 100% availability of divine power at our disposal.

The reason God created Satan as a beautiful, intelligent angel is not so he would have power to deceive us, but because in creating creatures with a free will, God originally created Satan for a divine purpose. By his sin of rebellion, Satan lost his original holiness and heavenly position, but he retained his wisdom and beauty, and he has turned his superhuman abilities to evil. Satan’s office was originally to protect the throne of God and to forbid the approach of evil. However, like most of God’s creatures, including many born-again believers today, Satan rejected the plan of God for his life and chose his own plans over God’s plan. Independence from the plan of God is the most destructive sin for believers.

Satan is said to have been on the Holy Mountain of God as the “anointed cherub who covers,” and therefore he was the great high priest of his realm. He also appears as the highest angel and therefore the lead king over all creation. Satan was perfect in all his ways, and continued to be for an unknown length of time. He then abused his high office of prophet, priest, and king. God subsequently created Adam to function as a prophet, priest, and king. Adam was to rule over the creation under the authority of God, Gen 1:26. He was to function as a prophet in teaching doctrine to his woman Ishshah and as a priest in worshipping God. However, he failed and he fell, and when no other created being could be found to fulfill this function, the Lord Jesus Christ came forth from the Godhead to become a member of the human race and to perfectly fulfill all three offices. The offices of Prophet and Priest He is already exercising, but not yet that of King. If He had come as a King to set up His kingdom, the result would have been the destruction of all of us since all have sinned, and whatever is sinful must be cast into the lake of fire. Jesus said to Pilate the first time He came to earth in Joh 18:36, *“My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.”* It was necessary for the Lord Jesus Christ to first put away the iniquity of those who would be saved, and He came into the world to do this through the sacrifice of Himself. He will come to earth a second time to claim power

from the hands of Satan, and after casting Satan into prison, He will bring back the creation to its original purity and order, Rev 20:1-3.

Isa 14:12-17 *"How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit. Those who see you will gaze at you, they will ponder over you, saying, 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world like a wilderness and overthrew its cities, who did not allow his prisoners to go home?'"*

The fall here refers to the second fall of Satan, when he is cast out of heaven in the middle of the Tribulation. Satan has three falls:

1. The first fall of Satan took place in eternity past, perhaps billions of years before man existed, in Eze 28:15.
2. In the middle of the Tribulation, Satan has his second fall; he is cast out of heaven permanently, Rev 12:9. Satan presently has access to heaven and spends his time between heaven and earth.
3. After the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ we have the third fall of Satan in Rev 20:10, *"And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."*

In Isa 14:12, the word "star" is Hebrew word "*heylel*," which is sometimes translated "Lucifer." The name Lucifer is not actually found in the original languages; it comes from the Latin and it means "light bearer," "the shining one," or "the translucent one." Two creatures are said to radiate light, making them extremely attractive; one is *heylel* in Isa 14, and the other is *nachash*, the serpent in Gen 3. Satan can transform himself into an angel of light as well as his ministers under him, 2Co 11:14-15. Satan's ministers teach another Jesus, but not the Jesus of the Bible; they talk about the spirit but not the Holy Spirit from God; they present a gospel, but it is not the Gospel of the Bible, 2Co 11:3-4.

Satan will be thrown down to earth and will no longer be able to leave planet earth, Isa 14:12. From the middle of the Tribulation period to the end of history, Satan has to stay on earth. He is addressed as *"You who have weakened the nations!"* As we have noted, he has the greatest mind of any creature, and only one mind is more intelligent than his, the "mind of Christ," 1Co 2:16, Phi 2:5. God offers us the mind of Christ which is much greater than the greatest mind of all time, and the average believer says "No, thank-you!" The word "nations" refers to the divine institution of nationalism, which Satan opposes with internationalism. God's order for the preservation of the human race is nationalism, the principle that nations will benefit from acting *independently* rather than collectively. The first great attack on nationalism came with the tower of Babel, the first "United Nations" organization. To show how God feels about political or religious internationalism, God Himself destroyed the tower of Babel. He divided nations in three ways, (1) racially, (2) geographically, and (3) linguistically.

The original sin among creatures is found in Isa 14:13, *"But you said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven [the third heaven, where God's glory is seen, 2Co 12:2]; I will raise my throne above the stars [angels, Job 38:7, Jud 1:13, Rev 12:3-4] of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north [rulership over the government of the earth, Isa 2:1-4]."* The phrase *"I will make myself like the Most High"* speaks for itself. In spite of the universal stereotypes of the devil, Satan is much like God outwardly. He wanted the glory that belonged to God alone, so he plotted a conspiracy against the throne of God itself. He convinced many in God's congregation that God was unfair and unjust, and he continues to do so throughout human history.

The Angelic Conflict, Part 2

10/20/02

We have been noting the characteristics and traits of Satan, his identity and purpose as found throughout the Word of God, and also how the *angelic conflict* relates to current events.

Even though the Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the body, there are many individuals even in the church who are under the control of satanic viewpoint. Paul says this about them in 2Co 11:13-15, *"For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds."* This is totally foreign to the human concept of Satan; his ministers teach people how to be "righteous." These are the agents of the great deceiver, Satan, who is himself transformed into an angel of light. The purpose of this deception is to imitate the real ministers of Christ and to blind the people from the true righteousness, which is imputed at the moment of salvation as a gift from God's grace and cannot be earned or deserved by man.

These false ministers cannot appear as ministers of Christ unless they gather into their message every available "form of godliness" and cover their lies with the most subtle hypocrisy, 2Ti 3:5, *"Holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these."* Evil will not appear on the outside of these systems but always on the *inside*. The closer it gets to the real thing, the more effective the counterfeit becomes. These false ministers will be very well respected in society, and their lives will be undoubtedly free from the great scrutiny and temptations that come from the kingdom of darkness. They are usually sincere, preaching the best things the "angel of light" motivates them to preach. However, their gospel and teaching is based on *human* viewpoint and appeals to *human* resources. There can be no appreciation of divine revelation in them because they are not filled with the Spirit, 1Co 2:14, *"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 discerned."* They are ministers of human righteousness, whose message should never be confused with the message of grace. Their message is directed only toward the reformation of the *natural* man, while the Lord's message aims at regeneration through the power of God.

False teachers are also usually sincere and full of humanitarian zeal. They are always talking about helping others and doing good, and they get involved with altruistic humanitarianism, philanthropy, socialism, political internationalism, government interference, public welfare, etc. These false teachers and false ministers promote these things in the name of God, and all they are really doing is helping the devil clean up his world. However, any counterfeit system of doctrine that omits the power of God and the grace of God is used by the strategy of Satan to blind the believer from the real truth. Satan can quote the Bible, but he distorts the Bible, as we saw from our study of Gen 3:1. Satan is a master of twisting, distorting, and misinterpreting the scriptures.

In his endeavor to be like God and control God's people, Satan will *allow* and even *promote* some of the great scriptural subjects, but he will always distort them (for example, the subjects of tongues, physical health, life after death, morality, unfulfilled prophecy, the baptism of the Spirit, etc). While those doctrines are all taught in their proper setting and importance in God's Word, the strategy of Satan deceives people by misquoting and misapplying them. This is how many are easily led to fix their attention on secondary things (whether true or untrue) and to neglect the essential principles of the Christian faith.

Isa 14:12-14 *"How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'"*

Here are some important principles to note concerning Satan:

1. Satan's major purpose behind these five "I will"s is to be like the Most High as far as taking the title "possessor of heaven and earth."
2. As a part of his strategy, those under his influence teach others how to improve *human nature* while ignoring the *new creature* created by God. Most believers are too busy cleaning up the old man to make him presentable to the Lord, which is an impossibility.
3. The presence of gross evil in the world is not due to Satan's intention to have it so, but rather indicates Satan's *inability* to be like the Most High. Therefore, Satan promotes any programs, Christian or otherwise, that are designed to "improve the world."
4. Satan's ambition to be like God has led him to take on more than he can handle; he can not control planet earth, let alone the universe.
5. Satan deceives the world and even Christian churches to believe that he is totally opposite of God (which is true *inwardly*); however, what makes his deceptions so great are the *overt* similarities that he has with God.
6. The one thing Satan is after is worship from man, so much so that during the Tribulation period he will demand the worship of the people of the earth, or they will pay the penalty of death, Rev 13:15.
7. Any plans to clean up the world and make it "a better place to live" *complements* Satan's evil policies and his goal to be like God. Therefore, when believers get involved with improving the world, they will find little opposition, as they are contributing to promoting Satan. In fact, improving the devil's world will be rewarded by Satan.
8. All the counterfeit systems Satan has simply reveal his desire to be like the Most High. In other words, Satan watches what God does and then tries to counterfeit it as best as he can.
9. Religion is Satan's great counterfeit, and therefore he has:
 - a. A counterfeit Gospel, 2Co 11:3 4.
 - b. Counterfeit ministers, 2Co 11:13 15.
 - c. Counterfeit doctrine, 1Ti 4:1.
 - d. A counterfeit Communion table, 1Co 10:19 21.
 - e. Counterfeit spirituality, Gal 3:2 3.
 - f. Counterfeit righteousness, Mat 19:16 28. The Mosaic Law is distorted into self righteousness, which rejects faith in Christ for relationship with God. This self-righteousness is based on morality in the cosmic system.
 - g. Counterfeit righteousness (self-righteousness), Mat 23:13 36.
 - h. Counterfeit power and dynamics (miracles, healing, tongues, etc.) 2Th 2:8 10.
 - j. A counterfeit system of gods, 2Th 2:3 4.

Isa 14:15-17 *"Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit. Those who see you will gaze at you, they will ponder over you, saying, 'Is this the one who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world like a wilderness and overthrew its cities, who did not allow his prisoners to go home?'"*

Being "thrust down to Sheol" is the third fall of Satan, which will be fulfilled at the end of the Millennium, Rev 20:10. Satan will spend eternity in the lake of fire, Mat 25:41, Rev 20:10, and he will be there with all members of the human race who rejected Christ as Savior, Rev 20:12-15. His prisoners are his fallen angels, whom he could never release from Tartarus. Before his fall, he was the prime minister for God here on this earth. Therefore, this earth became the theater of the in-visible war. Here, where the fall took place, the Lord Jesus Christ glorified the Father, Joh 17:4.

It is true that Satan is still the god of this world, however, we will see this office taken from him when the Lord comes back to reign as the King of this earth. Earth will be the scene of the final

triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ and Satan's final defeat. Before Satan's original fall, there was *one will* in the universe, the perfect will of God. There was no previous example of sin; this was the beginning of rebellion against the Most High God. Satan's sin is especially monstrous because he was created beautiful and perfect; he lacked nothing as the greatest of all creatures. However, like many humans, he was ungrateful and therefore devised his conspiracy.

There are many adverse results of Satan's rebellion, including the corruption of his character and the perversion of his power. In Isa 14:12, he will also be banished from heaven. Although he still retains some dignity from his original position (only God has the authority to rebuke him, Jud 1:9), he is destined to the "pit" of Isa 14:15 and Rev 20:3,10.

Some may ask the question, "Why did a holy and righteous God who is all-powerful and all-knowing allow the fall of Satan and his angels to occur?" It introduced sin into the universe, affecting angels, all mankind, and even God Himself in the sense of His policies toward His creatures; as we know, nothing can ever change who and what He is. From the Bible we may presume the following reasons:

- ☐ God is perfect, therefore His plan is perfect, and He allowed evil to come into being. Therefore, we have to trust in the character and nature of God and believe that He knows exactly what He is doing and what is best for His creation.
- ☐ Perhaps He allowed angels to rebel in order that He might give an explicit example of the wretchedness and degeneration of sin.
- ☐ He used the test to gain a group of angels to serve Him from their own free will and personal love.
- ☐ It may have been necessary to allow the fall of angels to finally show the grace of God in the preserving of some angels and in the redemption of unworthy, sinful man who fell because of Satan. In man, God will magnify His grace forever before the angels.

There are two categories of fallen angels under the command of Satan—those who are actively involved in the invisible war surrounding planet earth, and the incapacitated (non-operational) fallen angels imprisoned under the earth. We will first study the non-operational demons. These include two groups of angels who are in prison at this time and will be released in the future. The angels of Gen 6, who were involved in the angelic attack designed to infiltrate the human race, are now incarcerated underneath the ground in a compartment of Hades called Tartarus. These are the angels who cohabited with human women and conceived super-creatures who were half angel and half human, Gen 6:4, "*The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God [angels] had sex with the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.*"

The second category of incapacitated angels is the first *demon assault army* currently incarcerated in the abyss. They are not permitted to come out of the abyss until the middle of the Tribulation period. The abyss holds "criminal" demons who violated the boundaries of the angelic conflict, and is the location of Satan's second-in-command, called Abaddon in the Hebrew (Apollyon in the Greek), who will play a major role in the tribulation; he is mentioned once in the New Testament and six times in the Old Testament. In Rev 9, Abaddon is allowed to leave this prison when Satan is cast out of heaven with the key to the abyss, never to return to heaven again. In Mat 8:32, the demons who indwelt the man called "Legion" begged our Lord not to send them to this place called the abyss when He cast them out. The abyss is the fourth compartment of Hades and is the prison for demons who have disobeyed the rules for the angelic conflict in human history. It is translated the "bottomless pit" and the "abyss" in the book of *Revelation*. The Church today is the focal point of *invisible* warfare, and therefore we are required to become *invisible* heroes. What comes out of the abyss will result in *visible* warfare during the Tribulation.

This first demon assault army will invade the earth during the Tribulation period, Rev 9:1-12. They are released from their prison to become part of the administration of discipline to cosmic

believers and punishment to unbelievers. At that time, the invisible angelic conflict will become visible. There will once again be visible heroes among believers, e.g., Moses and Elijah and the 144,000 Jewish evangelists. These events indicate a tremendous change in God's plan after the Rapture of the Church occurs. When Satan is cast down to the earth, he will be permitted to release his three "hard-core" demon armies, and they will physically attack human beings. These demons will torture members of the human race to the point that they will want to die but will not be permitted to die. The attack will be made over a period of five months against man with only two restrictions, (1) only those in the cosmic (world) system can be attacked (believers in the plan of God are protected by the "wall of fire"), and (2) they cannot be killed. What we are about to study, according to the Bible, could happen three and a half years from today. There will come a time on this earth called the Great Tribulation when Rev 9 will become a reality. It will be:

- ☒ A time of wrath, 1Th 5:9; Rev 6:16-17, 11:18, 14:19.
- ☒ A time of judgment, Rev 14:7, 15:4, 16:5-17.
- ☒ A time of indignation, Isa 26:20-21, 34:1-3.
- ☒ A time of punishment, Isa 24:20-21.
- ☒ A time of trial, Rev 3:10.
- ☒ A time of trouble, Jer 30:7.
- ☒ A time of destruction, Joe 1:15.
- ☒ A time of darkness, Joe 2:2, Zep 1:14-18.

It is a very difficult time to be alive. However, if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ today, you will not be here during this period.

Rev 9:1-2a And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven [Satan] which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. And he opened the bottomless pit [the abyss].

The fifth angel is one of the elect angles who have privileges and authority for glorifying our Lord during the first angelic rebellion. The word translated "bottomless" is "*abussos*," where we get the word "abyss." The word "pit" is the noun "*phrear*," which means a well and refers to the pit of the abyss. Before God the Father throws Satan to the earth, he gives him the power and authority to release the first demon army. Satan will actually torture his own servants because he is an ungrateful master. Once he can no longer use those in the cosmic system, he tries to destroy them in his satanic frustration. The tragedy is that today there are also born-again believers who serve the will of Satan.

Satan seeks to defeat God in the angelic conflict, and when he is cast to the earth and given the key to the abyss, he immediately uses what God has given him to destroy those that have served him against God, both carnal believers and unbelievers.

Rev 9:2b And he [Satan] opened the abyss; and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air became darkened by the smoke of the pit.

This "smoke" explains several verses related to the demon prisons in Hades. There are two areas where demons are in prison, Tartarus, which contains smoke, and the abyss. They are chained in clouds of darkness.

Rev 9:3 And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

The Bible must be interpreted in the time that it was written, and these are not literal locusts or scorpions. The destructive behavior of the locust and the deadly venom of the scorpion were the best ways in which the first demon assault army could be described in the ancient world. The locust plague is used as an analogy for an army of destruction several times in the Bible. A swarm of locusts can destroy everything in its path, and even darken the sky. Nothing can stop the invasion of this demon army.

This passage is a manifestation of the grace of God—it is warning before judgment. Grace always precedes judgment. This is God’s last appeal to the believer to get out of the cosmic system and to the unbeliever to become born again and saved. There is never a judgment that destroys even a fragment of the human race until after all those involved have an opportunity to repent. For the unbeliever, repentance simply means salvation: *“Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved.”* For the believer, repentance means a change of mind toward Bible doctrine and returning to the plan of God.

The Angelic Conflict, Part 3: The Demon King Abaddon and the Demon Assault Armies

10/27/02

As we continue studying the vital doctrine of the *Angelic Conflict*, we have begun to note the two categories of fallen angels under the command of Satan, beginning with the non-operational (incapacitated) demons. There are two groups of angels who are now in prison but will be released in the future. The first is the angels of Gen 6 who infiltrated the human race with a line of half-angelic creatures, and who are now incarcerated underneath the ground in Tartarus, a compartment of Hades. The second group is the demons in the abyss who transgressed the boundaries and the rules of the angelic conflict in human history. The abyss is the location of the demon king, Satan's second-in-command, Abaddon. He will play a major role in the Tribulation period. In Rev 9:1-3, in the middle of the Tribulation period, Satan is allowed to open the abyss and release these fallen angels.

Rev 9:4-5 *And they [the demon assault army] were told [commanded] that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torture for five months; and their torture was like the torture of a scorpion when it strikes a man.*

For many individuals, this is their last chance to be saved—they have hit “rock bottom” in life. For believers, the only means of protection will be their decision to rebound and recover. After five months of terrible torture that drives them to the point of suicide, many of them will still not understand the issue, and that they are alive because their volition still has the opportunity to respond to the grace of God. This is warning before disaster, *grace preceding judgment*. This is God's final appeal to the believer to get out of the cosmic system and to the unbeliever to become born again and saved. This magnitude of torture and pain can serve as motivation, but in many cases pain only makes the person a lot worse. Pain, suffering, and adversity either make a person stronger or weaker, but *never* leaves them the same. Just like He always has throughout history, God provides the solutions *before* the problem.

Rev 9:6 *And in those days [the last half of the Tribulation period] men [believers and unbelievers living in the cosmic system] will seek death and will not find it.*

The phrase “*those days*” is important, because this has absolutely nothing to do with *these days*, the present time. At this time, we *cannot* be physically attacked by demons. Our greatest danger from demons lies in our residence in the cosmic system under the stages of reversionism, where we allow ourselves to be influenced by demons.

Satan, who is an evil and an unjust ruler, will now attempt to rule the world with his demon assault armies. This is something that has never happened before in all of his reign over this world. And he will turn his own kingdom into shambles.

Rev 9:7 *And the appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads, as it were, crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men.*

These demons are described in terms of a cavalry, representing mobility and firepower. They have a military insignia, crowns “like gold.” It implies that they already consider themselves a victorious army. Their faces are “like men” indicating that demons can appear as men, although they have greater intelligence, power, and adaptability. The last time demons visibly appeared as men was in Gen 6, in Noah's generation. From that time to the middle of the Tribulation, they are invisible.

Verse 8 talks about the “demon beauty parlor”; these demons are very beautiful and attractive as the demons of Gen 6, having “hair like women,” Rev 9:8, “*And they had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions.*” The woman's hair depicts beauty and physical attractiveness, as we read of Satan in Eze 28:12, “*You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and*

perfect in beauty.” The phrase “the teeth of lions” indicates that behind the facade of beauty is the ruthless desire to destroy.

Rev 9:9 continues, “*And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle.*” “Breastplates of iron” were considered to be the best armor in the ancient world, making its wearer extremely difficult to attack. It emphasizes the fact that demons are not vulnerable to human attack, and therefore human beings have no protection against these demon armies, unless they are behind the “wall of fire” of the predesigned plan of God. The noise of the battle is awesome, “like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle.” Even before they strike, they have already paralyzed their victims with fear. One of the great powers of the cosmic system is vulnerability to fear. When a person becomes frightened, he stops thinking and starts emoting, and emotions cannot think. The victims are attacked, not because God made this happen, but because they made negative decisions from a position of weakness, and willfully rejected His divine protection. Bad decisions in the cosmic system from false doctrine result in demon influence and even demon possession of unbelievers. The greatest power we carry in our soul is a greater power than the attack of demons, our volition responding to Bible doctrine. God gave us *free will* in order to resolve the angelic conflict. Physical violence on the part of fallen angels is not permitted today because God the Holy Spirit is the Restrainer. When He is removed in His function as the Restrainer in 2Th 2:7, those in the cosmic system will be vulnerable to an attack that has never before occurred in all of human history.

In Rev 9:10, we see the “scorpion” description of the first demon army: “*And they have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt [torment or torture] men for five months.*” They have power, but it is limited; they cannot go beyond what God allows them.

In Rev 9:11, “*They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.*” “Abaddon” is a word that occurs quite often in the Old Testament as a synonym for *Sheol* or *Hades*, as in Job 26:6. Abaddon is also the name of the demon prince being held in the abyss (it is perhaps his *title* as opposed to his real name, just as “Satan” and “the devil” are titles). “Apollyon” is very close to “Apollo,” the Greek name for one of the demons most heavily involved with the great attack of Gen 6; he may not have actually had sex with women, but apparently committed crimes and violations that may have been even worse, since he is now incarcerated in the abyss. Apollo was the demon God of *light*, who was very much involved with the kingdom of darkness and Satan himself. Apollo was one of the forerunners of demonic attack as an “angel of light.” Apollo (along with Zeus) was the most widely revered and influential of all the Greek gods. He was known for death and terror, and his name actually means the “exterminator” in Greek. Next to Satan he is the highest-ranking demon out of the millions who followed Satan in the prehistoric angelic revolt. The only other fallen angel who is probably on an equal level with him is a demon prince called “Beelzebub.” He is Satan’s masterful minister of deceit. Beelzebub deals with the realm of deceit whereas Apollyon deals with the realm of military action.

Abaddon will reign for 3½ years, the second half of the Tribulation, Rev 13:5 (“42 months”), Dan 7:25, 12:7 (“a time, times, and half a time”—literally, one year plus two years plus half a year). It is important to understand that he is a different fallen angel from Satan. Paul describes Abaddon as the “man of sin” in 2Th 2. In Rev 17:5, he is the beast that the woman, the “mother of harlots,” is riding (she represents all the false religious systems of this world). In Dan 7 and Rev 17, he will be the foremost leader of the *new world order* (which will last for only a very short time). In Dan 7, he is called the “little horn,” separate from the “ten kings.” He will become the ruler of the entire earth in the ultimate and final realization of Satan’s governmental system, Rev 13:4. In 2Th 2, he will take a seat in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God. In Dan 8:10, he will lead his military of fallen angels against the elect angels and even accomplish a temporary victory over some of them, which

will, of course, be very short-lived. After the Israelites have returned to the Holy Land, Abaddon will summon his rulers and their armies to in his all-out effort to destroy them, Eze 38-39, but he will fail, Rev 19:19-20:3, as all anti-Semitism inevitably fails.

In Rev 9:12-21, there is a *second* demon assault army stationed underneath the Euphrates River. The Apostle John writes in Rev 9:12-13, *"The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things. And the sixth angel sounded [a winner angel from the original angelic conflict blowing a trumpet], and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God."* The golden altar is analogous to the golden altar of incense which was in the Tabernacle and the Temple, and it represents the *imprecatory* (invoking harm and defeat on one's enemies) prayers of the Tribulational saints in Rev 6:9-11. The four horns of the golden altar remind us that all answer to prayer, including imprecatory prayers, are based on the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross. This alone is what gives us the privilege and opportunity of answered prayer.

In Rev 9:14, the order to release the commanders of the second demon assault army is given: *"One commanding the sixth angel who had the trumpet, 'Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates [one of the four rivers that flow from the Garden of Eden, a river of great significance]."* This is a command to release four demon princes (or generals) who have been restrained until now. They are under the earth, and they cannot operate in human history at this time; we do not know *when* and *why* they were imprisoned, but only that they have been there since the beginning of the human race. (The only demons allowed to operate on planet earth at present are disembodied spirits.) Each one of these demon generals commands a great demon assault army, probably divided into 50,000,000 demons each. These demon armies have impressive physical bodies, weapon systems, and uniforms and patches, and they are a fully developed and organized military. So fierce was this army that it was held in a separate "maximum security" prison from the demons who are in Tartarus, and once these four demon officers are released, they will do the rest. This is a very hard-core "search and destroy" military.

In Rev 9:15, we see the time and the objective of the second demon assault army: *"And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released..."* This group will be composed of four hard-core armies, probably sent to the North, South, East, and West. Their objective is stated at the end of this verse: *"...so that they might kill a third of mankind."* It is no wonder that God reveals more about this period of time than any other period in history. There is going to come a time on this earth when Rev 9 will become a reality, and the fallen angels who are now underneath the ground will be released on this earth. The comfort for us as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ today is that we will not be here during this period.

The only ones this army will not kill will be believers in the plan of God and certain demon-possessed unbelievers, who will be used later in the final attack against God's plan in the Tribulation. This final attack will be *religion*, found in Rev 17-18.

Rev 9:16-18 *And the number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: the riders had breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone. [This demonic assault forges straight ahead with great success, with great power, and with great shock.] A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone [sulfur], which proceeded out of their mouths.*

This fire, smoke, and sulfur are fatal (killer agents). This demonic army takes no prisoners. The casualty list is *one third* of the world's existing population, members of the human race living in the cosmic system. After one fourth of the world's population has already been destroyed (Rev 6:7-8), a third of the survivors will be killed. In totality, *one half* of all mankind will have been destroyed at this point. And all anyone has to do to be spared from this holocaust is respond to the grace of God. As for Church-age believers, we can take comfort in the fact that our Lord will take His Bride out of the

world before any of this happens, 1Th 4:17-18, *“Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.”*

The Angelic Conflict, Part 4: Beelzebub and his Satanic Deception Against the Human Race

11/02/02

Now that we have begun to study the fallen angels who are still fully operational and who are all around us today, we should recall scriptures such as 2Ti 1:7, "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind"; and 1Jo 4b, "Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." This is the second category of fallen angels under the authority of Satan in the angelic conflict.

We have already noted one of Satan's most powerful demons, Abaddon, who is incapacitated (non-operational) at this time, imprisoned in the abyss. There is only one other fallen angel who is probably on an equal basis with him, and his name is Beelzebub, Satan's master of deceit. Beelzebub deals in the realm of deceit whereas Apollyon deals in the realm of the military. Beelzebub is the prince in charge of covert warfare against the human race; a good example of his work is "operation fake healer," Satan's plan to give demons and false teachers credibility in the Christian community. Satan's human deceivers include sorcerers who perform necromancy, exorcists, so-called "divine healers," and anyone involved in satanic signs and wonders, including the reproduction of the gift of tongues. No one has spoken in the legitimate gift of tongues since A.D. 70, 1Co 14:21-22.

1Co 14:6-9 But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching? Yet even lifeless things, either flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the harp? For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle? So also you, unless you utter by the tongue speech that is clear, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.

This is a warning against exactly the kind of religious nonsense going on in many churches today, and this religious emotionalism is why many people are turned off from Christianity. Unfortunately, they do not realize it is Satan's counterfeit religion systems. The Apostle Paul continues in 1Co 14:10-12, "There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and no kind is without meaning. If then I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be to the one who speaks a barbarian, and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me. So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church." Those are the gifts that build up and edify the body of Christ, and not oneself.

1Co 14:18 I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all; however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind, that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.

Tongues were a sign to the *unbeliever* rather than the believer, 1Co 14:20-22, "Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be babes, but in your thinking be mature. In the Law it is written, "By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people, and even so they will not listen to Me," says the Lord.' So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers, but to those who believe. If therefore the whole church should assemble together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad?" The modern tongues movement, along with other deceptions such as healing, miracles, and signs and wonders, is the work of an angelic covert aggressor named Beelzebub.

God will at times directly heal a person in response to prayer, however, the great power in the post-canon period of the Church-age is the power of the Word of God. Even the Lord Jesus Christ did not heal everyone He met. Satan and his demons, especially Beelzebub, promote miracles rather than

living the spiritual life that God has provided. This is always one of the signs of the kingdom of darkness and evil, Mat 12:39, *“An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign.”* In 2Th 2:9, we are told of the Antichrist, *“He is the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders.”* Teachings that promote tongues, miracles, signs and wonders are evil in our day and age. Carnal, emotional people desire a miracle over living the spiritual life that God has provided.

Beelzebub is the head of a great demon organization that practices miracles of healing; in fact, even the Pharisees knew that Satan would use miracles to deceive the human race, Mat 12:22-24. When Beelzebub orders demons out of a human body, the illnesses they have been causing are instantly healed. There are three categories of illness, (1) physiologically-induced illness related to the functions of the body, (2) mentally-induced (psychosomatic) illness, and (3) demon-induced illness. Certain forms of demon possession can cause illness, and when the victim goes to a so-called “divine healer” (who is only working for Satan), Beelzebub orders the demons to withdraw, resulting in an instant and real cure. People assume that the fake healer has great power and must be from God, and they listen to his false doctrine. This is how even born-again believers are led astray.

In addition to the two demon assault armies we have already noted (one led by Abaddon and the other by the four demon generals), there will come a third demon army commanded by Satan himself. These fallen angels, who currently reside in heaven, will attack at the sounding of the seventh trumpet in Rev 11:15-12:17, launching a vicious assault upon all Jews in the greatest wave of anti-Semitism the world has ever seen. This army will even be engaged in warfare in heaven, but will be defeated by the angelic order of battle led by Michael the archangel, Rev 12:7-8. As a result of this defeat, this third demon army will attack planet earth, Rev 12:9. This attack is specifically directed against the Jews and is Satan’s final attempt to wipe out every Jew on the earth.

The fact that Satan has an organization of fallen angels means that he is prepared to attack the human race. His structure and his organization is described in Eph 6:12, which says in corrected translation, *“For our warfare is not against blood and flesh [the souls of other people and their sin nature], but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”*

- ☐ Rulers (*archás*) = the highest-ranking demons in Satan’s organization, such as Abaddon and Beelzebub.
- ☐ Powers (*exousías*) = demon officers with great authority. They are extremely well-trained under a phenomenal system of leadership, and they control the cosmic system.
- ☐ World forces (*kosmokrátoras*) = Satan’s demon ambassadors who control many of the rulers of this world.
- ☐ Spiritual forces of evil (*pneumatiká teés poneerías*) = demons in the atmosphere around the earth, the stellar universe, and even in the presence of God, representing Satan.

During the Church-age, demon attacks on the unbeliever come in two forms—demon *possession* and demon *influence*, in which “doctrines of demons” enter the soul of the unbeliever. Demon attacks on believers are limited to demon influence, in which the doctrines of demons invade the right lobe of the believer’s soul, as in 1Ti 4:1-3. This takes place because of negative volition toward doctrine, which creates a vacuum in the soul and takes in the false concepts Satan has developed to distract people from the plan of God. This happens to the believer under demon influence, beginning with the process of wiping out all the doctrine he has learned. As our enemy in the angelic conflict, Satan employs strategies against us, 2Co 2:11, *“That no advantage be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his strategies.”* Satan can easily take advantage of us unless we understand his strategy and the reason we are here.

Eph 6:11 commands us to “put on” Bible doctrine in our soul: *“Put on the full armor from God so that you may always be able to stand firm [hold your ground] against the schemes [strategies] of the*

devil. For anyone who wonders why the devil is allowed to use strategies of deception on the human race, the answer is simply this: we are in the middle of a conflict between two kingdoms, and both kingdoms are after our soul! Satan's offensive action necessitates dependence on the Lord and the wall of fire on our part. The commands for *defensive* action against Satan, such as Eph 4:27, are very important to the Christian life: *"And do not give the devil an opportunity."* The Greek noun for "opportunity" is *"topos,"* meaning a *place* or a *room* in your soul; Paul is warning us not to give one room in our soul to the devil. This defensive action, commanded in many passages such as Eph 6:13, Jam 4:7, 1Pe 5:8-9, is a *grace* function for believers dependent upon the grace provision of God.

What God has provided for us He provides in grace, therefore we need to learn the value of grace. Grace for our defensive action has no weaknesses. However, when we use our human strengths and abilities against Satan, we are defeated and overrun. We are to take a defensive stand against Satan because he and his angels attack with offensive action, and God created the human race to resolve the angelic conflict. In human history, the sovereign will of God and free will of man coexist by divine decree, because human history is an extension of the prehistoric angelic conflict.

One question that needs to be answered is, "Why did a holy and righteous God, who is all-powerful and all-knowing, allow the fall of Satan and his angels to occur?" Based on God's Word, we may presume the following reasons:

- ☐ As we noted before, God is perfect, therefore His plan is perfect, and He allowed evil to come into being. Therefore, we must trust in the character and nature of God and believe that He knows exactly what He is doing and what is best for His creation. He does not desire His creatures to be robots, and in His justice He created them with free will.
- ☐ God allowed Satan and the fallen angels to rebel so that the elect angels and the human race would see the evil of sin and rebellion.
- ☐ God allowed sin because he wanted the angels to have a free-will choice to serve Him from their own personal love. Therefore, it was necessary to allow the fall of angels to show the *grace of God* in saving the elect angels and in the redemption of the human race. In man, God will magnify His grace forever before angels.

Eph 2:4-9 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.

Satan learned in the prehistoric angelic conflict that he cannot attack the incorruptible sovereignty of God, so he attacks the *volition* of God's creatures, trying to coerce them to choose against the Creator and for the creature. (If you can't get to the parents, try the children.) Since man was created in history to resolve the prehistoric angelic conflict, Satan attacks at the weak point—the volition of mankind. The greatest attack on human volition occurred in the dispensation of the hypostatic union against the humanity of Christ. Our Lord was attacked constantly and was tempted beyond anything we will ever know, Heb 4:15, *"For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."*

Satan's offensive began in the prehistoric angelic conflict when he revolted against God with the thought, *"I will be like the Most High God."* The angelic conflict began with the satanic revolution in eternity past. Like all revolution and conspiracies, it began with a thought. Satan, as the most powerful of all creatures, succeeded in persuading one third of all angelic beings to revolt with him, Rev 12:4. The result of the conflict was a great trial, in which Satan and all fallen angels were condemned to the eternal lake of fire, Mat 25:41, *"Depart from me you who have been condemned into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels."* Satan was already judged and condemned before

the creation of the human race. However, he appealed the judgment, and God granted his appeal, and therefore mankind was created to resolve the angelic conflict. All witnesses in the appeal trial are *members of the human race*.

Satan's offensive strategy is directed entirely toward the volition of mankind, especially believers. Satan no longer attacks the volition of elect angels. His strategy is designed to attack the human race and corrupt human volition at two critical points, (1) the Gospel and (2) Bible doctrine. He will try anything to obscure the content of the Gospel and to corrupt the message of faith in Christ alone for eternal salvation. His objective is to establish systems of religion in which the works of mankind replace the function and mechanics of the grace of God, 2Co 4:3-4. Another attack on the Gospel is salvation by works, or faith plus some form of human effort, and of course this is a direct attack against scripture, Gal 2:16, Rom 3:28. Satan attacks the volition of the believer in the hope that he will reject doctrine. He seeks to obscure the importance of Bible doctrine through false doctrine, legalism, distraction, false scales of values, and any other form of pressure he can use. By neutralizing the importance of Bible doctrine, he hinders the believer from executing the predesigned plan of God. The goal of that predesigned plan is the glorification of God in the angelic conflict.

Another legitimate question that people may ask is this: "If the devil and his angels have already been sentenced to the lake of fire, then why does God allow them to roam free today?" An excellent answer is found in Rom 9:22-23, "*What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory.*" In context, this deals with the unbelief of the Jews and the salvation of the Gentiles, however, the principle can still apply to Satan and the fallen angels. God is enduring with much patience "vessels of wrath prepared for destruction," namely Satan and the fallen angels, and He does so in order to reveal "the riches of His glory" upon "vessels of mercy," members of the human race.

Because Satan cannot directly attack God, he must concentrate his attack on humans who are vulnerable to his offensive strategy. His hope and plan is to persuade mankind to attack the character and nature of God as the third party in the conflict. This was his whole purpose in attacking the man named Job. It is very interesting to note that the first book of the Bible ever written is the book of *Job* (written in Archaic Hebrew). *Job* was written long before Moses wrote the first five books in the Bible (*Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy*). It is fascinating to see that the very first written book that God gave to mankind opens with a scene in the courtroom of heaven and the angelic conflict, as a man is being entered into *evidence testing* as a witness for the prosecution (God's case against Satan). The book of *Job* is a phenomenal revelation of the angelic conflict and provides great insight into the reason we are here. And we are all here for one reason only, and that is to bring glory to God as His witnesses!

The Angelic Conflict, Part 5: It is God's grace being manifested that brings glory to Him in the angelic conflict.

11/10/02

It is extremely significant that the first book God gave mankind opens with a scene in the courtroom of heaven as a human is being entered into the angelic conflict as a witness for God. *Job* is a book that gives us great insight into the angelic conflict and the reason we are here.

Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job, and that man was blameless, upright [respecting God], and turning away from evil [Job was a spiritually mature believer].

We now see an illustration of Satan's offensive action against God's mature believers in *Job 1:6-10*, *"Now there was a day when the sons of God [angels] came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. And the Lord said to Satan, 'From where do you come?'" Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it." And the Lord said to Satan, "[since you have been roaming about on the earth] Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil." Then Satan answered the Lord, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land."* God has prospered Job financially, and Job been successful in business.

Next comes Satan's contention in *Job 1:11*, *"But put forth Thy hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse Thee to Thy face."* Then the Lord said to Satan, *'Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.'* So Satan departed from the presence of the Lord." Being entered into the angelic conflict and suffering for blessing comes to the mature believer without notice, without warning, and without explanation, and always hits at the peak of his spiritual life. Most believers want to run away from the problem when they appeal to the grace of God, but this not what the Lord intended, *Joh 16:33*, *"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."* We can use the grace of God to go *through* any situation in life but not as a means of "escape" whenever we get in a jam. The issue in glorifying God in the angelic conflict is very simple and very powerful—the Giver of grace must be more important to you than His gifts. The mature believer has the assurance that God is working all things together for good even though he has no immediate explanation for the cause of the suffering. In glorifying God in the angelic conflict, there must be realization of God's personal love for the believer. God must be more real than the even nightmare of undeserved suffering. Glorifying God at spiritual maturity is the challenge to trust God, to continue our intake of doctrine and personal love for God, and remain occupied with the Lord Jesus Christ, no matter how unexplainable or intense the suffering may be. The greatest attack on human volition occurred in the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union against the humanity of Christ, *Heb 4:15*, *"For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."*

Satan's first assault and the result of Job's first test are found in *Job 1:13-22*, *"Now it happened on the day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, that a messenger came to Job and said, 'The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, and the Sabeans attacked and took them. They also slew the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.' While he was still speaking, another also came and said, 'The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you.' While he was still speaking, another also came and said, 'The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and took them and slew the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you.' While he was still speaking, another also came and said,*

'Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died; and I alone have escaped to tell you.' Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. And he said, *'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name [person] of the Lord.'* Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God."

This is the highest category of suffering in life, and when this test is passed by the mature believer, it results in a great phenomenon that occurs perhaps only once or twice in every generation—a doubling of escrow blessings. At the end of Job's testing in the angelic conflict we read in Job 42:12-13, *"And the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning, and he had 14,000 sheep, and 6,000 camels, and 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 female donkeys. His possessions also were 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys."* In Job 2 the second session is held in the Supreme Court of heaven, and Satan refuses to admit that he was wrong about Job. He walks into court still as proud as ever, Job 2:1-5, *"Again there was a day when the sons of God [angels] came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord. And the Lord said to Satan, 'Where have you come from?' Then Satan answered the Lord and said, 'From roaming about on the earth, and walking around on it.' And the Lord said to Satan, 'Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to ruin him without cause.'* And Satan answered the Lord and said, *'Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. However, put forth Thy hand, now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse Thee to Thy face.'"*

In this second test, Satan was able to inflict upon Job loss of health, but he was not allowed the power to take his life. Demon-induced illness is very much a factor in demonic deception today, as it has been almost since the beginning of human history. Many illnesses are caused by demon *oppression* or even demon *possession*. Satan is the source of various illnesses in Job 2:6-8; Mat 12:22 cf. Luk 13:16; Act 10:38.

Job 2:6 *"So the Lord said to Satan, 'Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life.'"*

This is one of the greatest believers of all time, and God is turning him over to Satan to be *tortured*? This gives us some concept of what it means to glorify God in the angelic conflict, and its impact and importance. In all of this, there is never any human explanation. God is letting Satan have Job for a while to cross-examine him in the courtroom trial of angelic conflict. Satan is given the right to attack flesh and bone, but not the soul. Bible doctrine resident in the soul is more powerful than any pain that can be experienced in life.

Job 2:7 *Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils [skin cancer] from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.*

Job was not only in maximum pain, but at the same time he was totally disfigured. He has gone from handsome to loathsome, from successful to destitute.

Job 2:8-9 *And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes. Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!"*

What brings out the best in Job brings out the worst in his wife! What brings out the best in the mature believer brings out the worst in the carnal believer.

Job 2:10 *But he said to her, "You are speaking as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.*

Job stayed in fellowship with God and is going to accept this as a gift from God just as he accepted all the prosperity.

In our study of the angelic conflict and how it relates currently to the Church and anti-Semitism, we must remember that Satan has one goal in the life of every believer. His goal is to lead all

believers astray from the real reason that they are here and the accurate precise plan of God based upon the intake of doctrine. Any area in which you do not have sound doctrine in is an area open to deception. This means that anything that we think or do that is not oriented to the way God thinks is open to deception. The worst of all is to deceive ourselves, as in 1Co 3:18, *“Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become foolish [realize that he is a fool] that he may become wise.”* Only Bible doctrine resident in the soul protects the believer from deception. People are easily deceived unless their soul is *loaded* with truth. Paul writes in Eph 4:14, *“We are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming.”* Peter instructs us in 2Pe 3:17, *“You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the deception of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness.”*

There are three important principles concerning the Christian way of life from which most people are blinded.

1. Bible doctrine is the least publicized of all priorities in this world because this is the devil’s world.
2. Invisible heroes, like Bible doctrine, are the least publicized of heroes. Invisible heroes are described in 2Co 6:9, *“We are unknown yet well-known”*—unknown in human history but well-known in the angelic world where we are being watched very closely.
3. Like Bible doctrine and invisible heroes, the trial of the angelic conflict is the least publicized of all trials.

It is God’s intention that every believer recognizes these principles and the reason they are here in relationship to glorifying God in the angelic conflict. It is God’s will that every believer masters this information.

When Paul said in Phi 4:12 that he had learned the “mystery,” he was referring to the mystery doctrine of the Church-age, which is used to bring glory to God in the angelic conflict. He then made the great statement in verse 13: *“I can do all things [bear all tests] through Him who keeps on pouring His power into me.”* The angelic conflict is so profound that it must be revealed in increments. It is so magnificent that our frail design requires that it be revealed piece by piece until we get the full picture. Daily doctrine is so vital, a little here, a little there, Isa 28:10, *“For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little.”*

Eph 3:10 *In order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places [the elect and fallen angels].*

The word “manifold” is the Greek adjective *“polupoikilos,”* which describes the *multifarious, many-sided, multi-faceted* wisdom of God. The greatest example is always the Cross. The Cross resolves the angelic conflict, Col 2:14-15. The Cross is the redemption solution for mankind, Col 1:20, the means of propitiating God the Father, Heb 12:2, and the means of glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ, Gal 6:14. There was something could not be discovered about God until the Church began. Until members of the church came on the scene, there was something that the angels could not discover about God in heaven. It was not until our Lord was born a member of the human race that a great mystery was revealed to the angels, 1Ti 3:16, *“And by common confession great is the mystery of the unique spiritual life: He [God] who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, beheld by angels, proclaimed among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.”*

Angels watched our Lord Jesus Christ, God Almighty, become a member of a lower creation than them, the human race. They realized that God was now going to do something magnificent in the angelic conflict which would ultimately bring glory to Him. The information revealed about the wisdom of God in the Church-age radically changes their universe. It resolves a conflict that has been raging in the universe for thousands of years. In every generation, there will be a few who will truly make a difference, not only in human history, but in the angelic conflict. They are the invisible heroes, the winner believers who will be applauded by angels in heaven. Winners will be acknowledged by

the Lord Jesus Christ before His Father and the angels, Rev 3:5, *“To the winner, I will acknowledge his name before My Father, and before His angels.”*

It is the mystery doctrine of the Church-age that brings glory to God when believers learn and understand it. Satan’s entire effort is directed toward misdirecting you from this truth and dislocating pastors dispensationally, therefore misleading congregations thoroughly!

Every time anyone in this age chooses to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, God does something for them that staggers the minds of the elect and fallen angels. In choosing the plan of God at salvation through faith in Christ, regenerate mankind becomes positionally *superior* to angels through the baptism of the Spirit and resultant *positional sanctification*. This not only makes us Royal Family of God, but also a new spiritual species, making it possible for the first time in history for all believers to live the unique spiritual life of freedom instead of an independent life of slavery. The born-again regenerate member of the human race is now positionally higher than angels, since we are in union with Christ who is now seated at the right hand of the Father and higher than angels. This is a phenomenal, unique privilege given in this unique dispensation, the Church-age.

The Angelic Conflict, Part 6: Proper Motivation and Momentum

11/24/02

The doctrine of the *Angelic Conflict* reveals how God is glorified by man. The fact that God takes care of everything in our lives results in His glorification and gives our lives meaning and purpose. God does not depend on us for His pleasure or His glory; He enjoyed these things in eternity past when no one else existed. God does not depend on us for His pleasure and glory, but rather expresses His pleasure and glory toward us. Because God is to be glorified, we are to be the recipients of His blessings and divine provisions. God is not glorified by our system of human works but by meeting our every need.

Isa 26:15 *"Thou hast increased the nation, O Lord, Thou hast increased the nation, Thou art glorified."*

Isa 60:21 *"Then all your people will be righteous; They will possess the land forever, The branch of My planting, The work of My hands, That I may be glorified."*

Psa 50:15 *And call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will glorify Me.*

God is glorified when He rescues us, rather than when we do "great things" for Him.

Exo 33:18-19, *Then Moses said, "I pray Thee, show me Thy glory!" And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion."*

God's pleasure is to bless His creatures, to give to His creatures! This is why Elihu said in Job 36:11, *"If they hear and serve Him, they shall end their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures."* The only Christian service and production that counts is what results from the perception of doctrine. Christian service and Christian works are not the means of attaining spiritual maturity or of glorifying God. Spiritual growth is not measured in works but in momentum. Where there is proper momentum in the plan of God, there will be production. That production will be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

1Co 3:11 *For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.*

The pattern for glorifying God in the Church-age is based on the three R's—the reception, retention, and recall of Bible doctrine:

- ☐ Reception of Bible doctrine must be top priority.
- ☐ Retention is the metabolization of Bible doctrine, where *epignosis* doctrine in the right lobe provides the basis for momentum in the predesigned plan of God.
- ☐ Recall is comparable to wisdom, the application of doctrine.

These are the only means by which we can learn and understand the problem-solving devices and the unique characteristics of the Church-age:

1. The baptism of the Holy Spirit.
2. The unique predesigned plan of God.
3. Unique equality (equal privilege and equal opportunity).
4. The portfolio of invisible assets.
5. The two royal commissions given to every Church-age believer.

The royal ambassadorship.

The royal priesthood.

6. The unique “mystery” doctrine of the Church-age.
7. The indwelling of each Person of the Trinity in the body of the believer.
8. The unique availability of divine power.
9. The age of no prophecy.
10. The dispensation of invisible heroes.

True motivation is described for us in 2Co 5:14, *“For the love for Christ motivates us, having concluded this, that one [Jesus Christ] died for all [the human race, under the doctrine of the unlimited atonement], therefore all [the entire human race] died.”* The Greek word for “motivates” is *“sunechei,”* meaning to motivate, hold together, compel, preoccupy, or urge. The passage continues in 2Co 5:15-21, *“And He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. Therefore from now on we recognize no man according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*

Motivation is what is located inside an individual’s soul impelling or inciting action. Every decision we make in life has some type of motivation behind it, even when it comes from the subconscious. You do not have to *feel* like doing something to have genuine motivation and produce divine good, Jam 4:17, *“Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.”* You can do what you do not feel like doing because your mental attitude says to do it; this is proper motivation. Mental attitude is the key to motivation (not the feelings or emotions).

A motive is any thought that determines a choice or induces action. Proper motivation can encourage, influence, convince, or persuade an individual to do what is right. However, doing what is right is not the ultimate purpose, it is the motivation that is most significant.

Pro 16:1-2 *The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.*

All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, but the Lord weighs the motives.

Included in motivation are inducement and *objective optimism*, an attractive consideration held out to persuade an individual to make positive decisions. Objective optimism is rooted in grace and truth, Phi 4:4, *“Keep on having perfect happiness by means of the Lord at all times; Once more I repeat the command, keep on having perfect happiness”;* and Phi 3:1, *“Finally, my brethren, keep on having inner happiness in the Lord. On the one hand, to be writing the same doctrines to you is not troublesome to me, while on the other hand, it is a safeguard [a basis of security] for you.”* Objective optimism and proper motivation are something within that brings about an action, the desired result. Objective optimism maintains a cheerful attitude under pressure.

Act 23:11 *But on the night immediately following, the Lord stood at his [Paul’s] side and said, “Take courage.”*

The Greek word translated “take courage” is *“tharseo,”* which literally means to be of good cheer or to be comforted. The Jews were determined to kill Paul, but the Lord tells him to be of good cheer. God delights in giving to us in grace, blessing us in ways that we could not possibly earn or deserve, Job 42:10, *“And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the Lord increased all that Job had twofold.”* Joe 2:25 is a comforting verse: *“Then I will make up to you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the creeping locust, the stripping locust, and the gnawing locust.”* You

may think that you have wasted a lot of years, but God can restore them all, and it will all make sense. Here we can have objective optimism and be of good cheer, because He will compensate us beyond what we can imagine, not only in this life, but in the one to come.

Again, a motive is any thought which determines a choice or induces action. Proper motivation can encourage, influence, convince or persuade an individual to do what is right. However, doing what is right is not the ultimate purpose, it is the motivation which is most significant. On the other hand, there is also *impulse* which is an involuntary feeling prompting to act. Many people do things based on an impulse, which is a sudden wish or urge towards a certain action, positive or negative. Even when we have an urge or a feeling to do something, we must always check into the word of God for divine guidance from doctrine before we act. In Mat 16:21-22, Peter had an impulse to stop the Lord from going to Jerusalem where He would suffer, and in Mat 6:23 the Lord said to Peter, *"Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."* Peter had a sincere impulse but he was sincerely wrong.

Motivation is a mental state or emotional force that induces an act of volition. The Lord will test your motivation even when it does come from the emotions, Psa 7:9, *"For the righteous God tests the right lobes [hearts] and the emotions."* Motivation is the design or object one has in any action; it is one's intention or purpose. This is important because in 1Co 4:5 we read, *"Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God."* Our *motivation*, our reasons why we do what we do, give what we give, serve how we serve, and learn what we learn, will be evaluated. In the Christian life, the believer is either motivated by Bible doctrine in the soul and the filling of the Holy Spirit, which produces personal love for God, or by the lust pattern of the old sin nature and Satan's cosmic system, which produces human good and evil. This is why James said in Jam 4:3, *"You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your lusts."* Your attitude toward doctrine and spiritual growth determines proper motivation.

The Word of God is the critic of motivation, Heb 4:12. Doctrine judges your motivation. As you sit and listen to doctrine, there are certain areas of your life where doctrine hits you right between the eyes. The Bible is a book that is alive and active, and is said to be sharper than any "two-edged sword." The living and active Word of God performs two functions; (1) it "pierces" (cuts through the garbage, confusion, excuses, rationalization, and tradition of man), and (2) it "judges" (critiques, discerns, and evaluates).

Heb 4:12-13 *For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. [The word of God will critique, judge, discern, and evaluate your intentions and motivations in life.] And there is no creature hidden from His sight. [It is universal in scope, no one is hidden from God's sight!]*

He knows everything about us including our innermost secrets, all the skeletons in our closet, and all the mistakes we are going to make for the rest of our life! When God deals with any issue, all things are exposed. Therefore, there is no limit to what the Word of God can accomplish because it is universal in scope, limitless in exposure, and able to bring all our failures and successes to light.

God's two-edged sword reveals the thoughts of your heart and the motivation behind your actions. It is able to go beyond the action to the motive and the system of thinking, exposing and revealing to us the true meaning behind our thoughts, words and actions, if we simply listen to His doctrine, 1Sa 16:7, *"God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."*

False motivation hinders spiritual growth, while true motivation comes from God the Holy Spirit, Job 17:11, Phi 2:13-14, *"For it is God [the Holy Spirit] who is at work in you, both to will [give you*

motivation] *and to work* [give you the power to execute] *above and beyond His good pleasure. Keep on doing all things without sullen discontent* [pouting] *or argumentations* [undermining authority]." Many believers do the *right thing* but in the *wrong way*, with false motivation. They give, serve, pray, learn, and even apply what they learn, but with false motivation.

If you are going to advance through the stages of spiritual growth, it takes authority to get you there. If you are going to succeed in the Christian way of life you must do it under the authority of your right pastor without pouting, arguing, or disrespecting authority. The great issue in spiritual giving is motivation.

2Co 9:7 "*Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart* [been motivated in his right lobe]; *not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful or a joyful giver.*"

The Angelic Conflict, Part 7: The Existence of Free Will in the Human Race

12/01/02

Our study of the doctrine of the *Angelic Conflict* has now brought us to the subject of our motivation and momentum, and the role of our free will in the historical trial of Satan.

Our Lord addressed evil motivation in Mar 7:14-15, *“And after He called the multitude to Him again, He began saying to them, ‘Listen to Me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside the man which going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man. If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.’ And when leaving the multitude, He had entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the parable. And He said to them, ‘Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him; because it does not go into his heart [where his motivation is and where he can be defiled], but into his stomach, and is eliminated?’ And He was saying, ‘That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.’”* False motivation is what hinders spiritual growth, Phi 2:14, Job 17:11.

Phi 2:13-14 *For it is God [the Holy Spirit] who is at work in you, both to will [giving you motivation] and to work [giving you the ability to execute] above and beyond His good pleasure. Keep on doing all things without sullen discontent [pouting] or argumentations [undermining authority].*

The right thing can be done in the wrong way, with false motivation. Many believers give, serve, pray, learn, and even apply what they learn, but they do it all with false motivation. If we are going to advance in the Christian way of life, we must do it under the authority of our right pastor-teacher without pouting, arguing, and disrespecting authority. Even in giving, the great issue is motivation, 2Co 9:7, *“Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart [motivated in the right lobe], not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful [joyful] giver.”*

For the mature believer, God turns the evil motivation of his enemies into grace blessing, Deu 23:5, *“The Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you because the Lord your God loves you”*; Gen 50:20, *“And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.”* The motivation of the mature believer is often maligned. No Old Testament saint was ever more maligned than Moses, who was a mature believer with great humility and great motivation, Exo 17:3, *“But the people thirsted there for water; and they complained against Moses and said, ‘Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?’”* There was nothing wrong with the motivation of Moses but everything wrong with those who criticized it. They did so because Moses was a constant challenge to their pride, and finally their pride exploded and triggered the mechanism of jealousy, vindictiveness, implacability, etc.

After seeing the role we play in the angelic conflict with our spiritual motivation and momentum it is also important to understand the existence of free will in the human race—a principle that many Christians reject. One of the false teachings that have been perpetuated by the kingdom of darkness is the idea that man does *not* have a free will or a choice. This is promoted by hyper-Calvinists who teach that man cannot choose God or the plan of God, and therefore God must choose Him. They teach the “limited atonement,” denying that our Lord died for the entire human race. This results from misinterpreting passages concerning the sovereignty of God and not comparing scripture with scripture. This is a serious deception in the angelic conflict because it compromises the justice and righteousness of God. Many hyper-Calvinists hold to the doctrine of

double predestination, which says that God has predestined some to be saved and actually predestined others to the eternal lake of fire. Let us look at what the Scripture says about predestination.

Act 2:23 *This Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.*

Act 4:27-28 *For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur.*

Rom 8:29-30 *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

The term “predestination” is *always* applied to our Lord and to believers. Nothing is ever mentioned about a predestination of unbelievers or being predestined to hell.

1Co 2:7 *But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory.*

Eph 1:5 *He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will.*

Eph 1:11 *Also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.*

The doctrine of double predestination is heresy, and it is an attack on the justice of God and an on the character and nature of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We were all born guilty in sin as David said in Psa 51:5, *“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.”* We did not have anything to do with becoming a sinner; we were born in sin, and not by our own choice. Therefore, David also wrote in Psa 58:3, *“The wicked are estranged from the womb; these who speak lies go astray from birth.”* We did not become sinners through the our own volition, but through the imputation of Adam’s original sin.

Rom 5:12 *Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned [when Adam sinned].*

Every member of the human race has been born into sin ever since Adam and the woman sinned willfully in the Garden of Eden. Every member of the human race since then has been born into sin *without* their consent. Therefore, if God sent them to hell because they were born sinners, He would be unjust in doing so. We are not responsible for imputed sin.

Man is not free to choose whatever he wants and always get away with it, because there are consequences to his decisions. However, he does have the choice to spend eternity in heaven or the lake of fire. This is why the Lord Jesus Christ came to take away the sins of the world, Joh 1:29, *“The next day he [John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming to him, and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’”* The Lord Jesus Christ as the lamb of God took away the sin of the *world* (not just the elect or the chosen); *everyone* has the opportunity to make the decision to believe in Jesus Christ and be saved, and those who do not have the mental capacity to make that choice will all go to heaven. All children who die before the mental age of accountability are given eternal life, 2Sa 12:23, and the same is true for all those who mentally retarded and mentally incapable of making a decision to believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, Jon 4:11.

Joh 3:15 *That whoever believes may in Him have eternal life.*

Not “whoever is chosen,” but “whoever believes”!

Joh 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged;*

he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

This passage makes it very clear why people go to the eternal lake of fire and are judged—it is not because they are sinful and immoral, but because they refused to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Joh 12:46-47 "I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness. And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world."

Rom 5:6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

2Co 5:19 God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them

1Jo 4:14 And we have beheld and bear witness that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

1Ti 2:4 He desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

1Jo 2:2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

1Ti 4:10 For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

In Heb 2:9 we are told that the Lord Jesus Christ *"tasted death for everyone."*

Man has a free-will choice to either choose or reject the Lord Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. Therefore, double predestination is a false doctrine. "Predestination" is a term that applies to *believers only*. No one has *ever* been predestined to hell! No one has ever been predestined to eternal damnation! People only go to the lake of fire because of their own negative volition.

Joh 3:18 "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

The verb translated "believes" is *"pisteuon,"* and here in the *active voice* it means that mankind literally makes his own willful decision to believe. The verb for "has not believed" is *"pepisteuken,"* and in the active voice it means that he has willfully *refused* to believe in Jesus Christ! The perfect tense in both of these verbs reveals that they had every opportunity to do so.

2Pe 3:9 The Lord is not willing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

It would be an obvious contradiction for the Lord to predestine anyone to hell when He is not willing for anyone to perish.

The kingdom of darkness enthusiastically promotes this type of lie because it attacks the character and nature of God, which is the central issue of the angelic conflict. Hyper-Calvinism says the only reason you ever believed in Christ was because you were elected and denies the very existence of the angelic conflict. Not only does this ignore the part played by human volition in human history and the reason we have been created, but it seriously compromises the work of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross, when He said *"It is finished!"* Our Lord's substitutionary sacrifice dealt with the sins of the entire human race, once and for all, and that is why our Lord is victorious in the angelic conflict. If He had only dealt with "some sins" on the Cross, then He could not say that He conquered sin and defeated the kingdom of darkness. No wonder Satan promotes the "limited atonement" as much as he can!

The Angelic Conflict, Part 8: The Heir and the Slave

12/22/02

One of the false teachings that has been perpetuated by the kingdom of darkness is that man does *not* have a free will or a choice, and that the Lord Jesus Christ did not die for the sins of the entire world. Therefore, we have been noting what the Bible has to say about this subject and how it relates to the angelic conflict.

Deu 30:10-20 "...If you obey the Lord your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and soul. For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it. See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the Lord your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You shall not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

Because of the existence of the free will in the human race the angelic conflict is perpetuated in two realms—first, in evangelism where mankind as a free agent in the devil's world can believe in Jesus Christ and receive eternal life, or reject salvation and receive eternal condemnation, sharing the judgment of Satan and his fallen angels; and second, in the predesigned plan of God for the Church-age. As Royal Family of God, every Church-age believer can execute this plan and glorify God, sharing in our Lord's victory in the angelic conflict, or he can live in the cosmic system and follow the trends of independence from God established by Satan. Every Church-age believer is given full access to divine omnipotence for this purpose. Through rejection of Christ or rejection of the plan of God, mankind chooses the plan of Satan, which can include religion, legalism, socialism, all forms of arrogance, emotionalism, atheism, or any other form of independence from God.

Because of the extension of the angelic conflict into human history, the sovereignty of God and the free will of man coexist by divine decree. The sovereignty of God makes the decision; the omnipotence of God provides the fantastic power for us to accept His will. However, whether we are positive toward Christ and the plan of God or not, no matter how we fail or suffer, there is no way we can hinder the glory of God. God will be glorified by either our failure or our success. How you live now will determine your blessings now and in eternity. Freedom guarantees *inequality*, and the greater the freedom, the greater the inequality that will exist. This is especially true in the spiritual life; heaven is a perfect place, and in heaven there will be great inequality. Some people use their freedom to succeed in God's plan by taking advantage of divine power and living the spiritual life; some choose to use human power and live independently from God.

In the Church-age, the results of choosing the plan of God are threefold:

1. Phase 1: Salvation. In choosing the plan of God at salvation through faith in Christ, regenerate man is now *positionally higher* than angels since he is in union with Christ, who is now seated at the

right hand of the Father and higher than angels. This is unique to the Church-age. Born-again believers are made positionally superior to angels through the baptism of the Spirit and resultant *positional sanctification*, Heb 1:1-14. This makes us Royal Family of God and a new spiritual species. For the first time in history, believers can live the unique spiritual life. We can choose a life of freedom in God's plan instead of an independent life of slavery. Because you are positionally superior to your elect guardian angel, that invisible angel is serving you right now, Heb 1:14, "*Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?*"

2. Phase 2: Experiential sanctification. Through the fulfillment of the predesigned plan of God in time, by means of divine omnipotence, the believer not only receives his escrow blessings for time, but also glorifies God in the angelic conflict. By living in our very own predesigned plan, we can be superior to angels *experientially*.
3. Phase 3: Eternity. At the resurrection of the Royal Family of God, believers become *physically superior* to all angelic creatures in their resurrection body. No other believer from any other dispensation is given a resurrection body at this point. For seven years, during the Tribulation until the Second Advent, Church-age believers in resurrection bodies are a demonstration to demons that their position was totally wrong and that God's judgment of them is totally right. The fallen angels react strongly to this, seen in their three invasions of planet earth during the Tribulation. If we were given physical superiority now in time, there would be no contest in the angelic conflict; we must be an inferior rational creation to resolve the angelic conflict. This is why we will judge angels in the future, 1Co 6:3, "*Do you not know that we shall judge angels?*"

The apostle Paul makes a statement in Gal 4:1 that is very applicable here: "*Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything.*" Paul states that while the heir is in his youth, or immature, there is no difference between him and the slave, because the heir has not *recognized* all the assets that belong to him. He is not old enough or mature enough to recognize it, therefore he does not know what it means to be an heir and he does not appreciate it. Even though he has great wealth in his portfolio of investments made on his behalf, he does not act any differently from the slave because he does not *know* or *recognize* or *appreciate* or *utilize* those assets! The analogy is that before born-again believers reach spiritual adulthood and understand the divine solutions, they act just as unbelievers. There is really no significant difference in lifestyle between the born-again believer who is carnal and the unregenerate unbeliever.

Paul wrote in 1Co 3:1-3, "*And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?*" When the believer is not cognizant of the available divine solutions, there is no difference between his walk and conduct of life and that of an unbeliever. Even when the believer knows the divine solutions, those solutions still must be *utilized*, or he will operate the same way in a crisis as an unregenerate person would.

Gal 4:1 *...As long as the heir [the believer] is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave [an unbeliever] although he is owner of everything.*

All believers, being in union with Christ, are joint heirs with Christ, and are therefore adopted as sons at the moment of salvation, Gal 3:26.

Gal 4:2-7 *But he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father. So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying,*

“Abba! Father!” Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

When a believer begins to develop a personal sense of destiny and use the problem-solving devices, he attains the first stage of spiritual adulthood and enters the adult spiritual life and only then does the lifestyle and the character of the heir begin to obviously differ from that of the slave. This is why we must continue to, as 2Pe 3:18 puts it, *“grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”*

The purpose of the ministry of the pastor-teacher is to get the born-again believer out of the experiential stage of slavery and into the experiential stage of heirship and sonship, where he will find liberty and spiritual freedom, Gal 5:1, *“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.”* Until the believer learns and metabolizes the divine solutions, he is still under the control of the circumstances and people around him; he is still like a slave, as Gal 4:2 says, under guardians and managers. A believer lives as a slave to the degree that he relies on the human solutions used by unbelievers.

All of this applies to the angelic conflict because positionally there is a great difference between a Christian and an unbeliever, in fact even more of a difference than there is between angels and human beings. The believer’s recognition of his sonship and union with the Lord Jesus Christ and his use of the divine solutions in the unique spiritual life are what experientially sets him apart from both the unregenerate man and the carnal Christian.

In the mystery doctrine of the Church-age is found every solution for every problem you could ever face, whether it has to do with people, circumstances of history, or even angels in spiritual combat. The greatest pressure a believer can experience is that which he faces when he is attacked by the kingdom of darkness, and God has a perfect solution for this as well.

Eph 6:10-11 Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Take up and put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

We take up the full armor from God by applying the divine solutions. As a born-again believer, there is nothing that separates you from an unbeliever experientially until you take up and put on the armor of divine solutions. So much separates us from an unbeliever *positionally*, including our eternal salvation and home in heaven, but it is not until we learn the divine solutions of the unique spiritual life that we are *experientially* separated from the unbeliever.

The angels are amazed that there are more differences between them and us than between them and the unbelievers. We cannot afford to be ignorant of Satan’s many devices in 2Co 2:11. He has many means of enticing believers away from the spiritual life by setting before them other priorities, which seem worthy in themselves but become unworthy when compared to the Word of God. Satan has many means of intimidating or coaxing believers away from the unique spiritual life, away from the *provision* of the local assembly, away from the *gift* of pastor-teacher, away from the *mentorship* of God the Holy Spirit, and away from all the volitional *assets and power* that God has given in the Church-age. The believer is led into a life of such small concepts of blessing and friendship and pleasure, which they may even think in their self-deception is the Christian way of life. Therefore they will say, *“Doctrine isn’t that important—I’m being blessed and promoted in this life without it!”* They may even be used as cosmic evangelists to take positive believers away from Bible doctrine.

The mystery doctrine of the Church-age is the means by which ordinary people can become invisible heroes and glorify God as a witness for the prosecution. To become a witness against Satan and the fallen angels is to have a tremendous impact that will be recognized in future ages forever and ever—but which is not recognized now in the world. Invisible heroes are as 2Co 6:9 says, *“unknown yet well known.”* This is what glorifies God in the angelic conflict, and therefore the objective of Satanic deceptions is to blind you from the real reason you are here and drag you away from the pastor-teacher who has been assigned by God to teach you the mystery doctrine of the Church-age, Act 20:28.

In every generation, there are evil individuals who are used by the kingdom of darkness to try to silence the messengers of God. In Mat 11, John the Baptist has been imprisoned and sentenced to death, and in verses 2-6 he sends his disciples to ask the Lord a question: *“Now when John in prison heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples, and said to Him, ‘Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?’ And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Go and report to John what you hear and see: the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me.”*

Then in Mat 11:7, *“And as these were going away, Jesus began to speak to the multitudes about John.”* John had spent a long time speaking to these crowds about the Lord, and now the Lord is going to speak to these same crowds about John. As a true friend, which is extremely rare to find, he speaks very highly of John in this passage. He also points out what an evil generation is—a generation that continually tries to silence messengers of God like John the Baptist.

The Lord continues in Mat 11:7, *“What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed [a stalk of a plant] shaken by the wind?”* This is a metaphor for a person who is made to waver or vacillate under the pressure of difficult circumstances, and this was not by any means a description of John. In Mat 11:8 the Lord goes on, *“But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ palaces.”* The clergy of those days wore long robes, and phylacteries and tassels on their garments; therefore John’s clothing certainly would not fit the bill. Too many people were conscious of these trivial things. They thought that John had been thrown in jail because he had been defeated and was being disciplined by God, but they are about to hear something entirely different from the Lord.

One of the truths of the word of God that is not very popular but is very real is the fact that the faithful believer *will* come into times of great perplexity and adversity and persecution as Paul said in Phi 1:29, *“For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”* The winner believer readily accepts this reality while the loser believer says, *“I know it says that in the Bible, but that’s just not realistic today!”* It is the goal kingdom of darkness to plant preconceptions in the minds of God’s people, especially concerning the one God has provided to teach them His Word. Satan always encourages the pettiness that makes personality and lifestyle the issue rather than the message.

The Angelic Conflict, Part 9: Angelic Observation and Opposition in Human History

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Luke 15:7-10 *"I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety nine righteous persons who need no repentance. Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!' In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."*

All angels intently observe members of the human race, and the elect angels rejoice over the salvation of even one person. In the Church-age, angels observe members of the Royal Family of God in both their success or failure to execute the predesigned plan of God, Eph 3:10, 1Ti 5:21, 1Pe 1:12, 1Co 4:9, *"For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men."* The Greek word for "spectacle" is *"theatron,"* the origin of the English word "theater," and it means a place for public shows, a play, or a place for the performance of dramatic representations. In Eph 3:10 the Apostle Paul wrote, *"In order that the manifold [multi faceted] wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places."* Angels also observe Church-age believers receiving commands, 1Ti 5:21, *"I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality."* In the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union, angels closely watched every day of our Lord's First Advent; in 1Ti 3:16 the Lord Jesus Christ is *"He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, beheld by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory."*

Elect angels have a great desire to see the things that so many of God's people take for granted, 1Pe 1:12, *"It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look."* The Greek word for "long" is *"epithumeo,"* which means to have a desire for, to long for, and to set the heart upon. Angels were first used by God to bring doctrine to men, as in Act 7:38,53. However, man is now being used by God to bring doctrine to angels, Eph 3:10.

In Mat 18:10 elect angels protect children: *"See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you, that their angels in heaven continually behold the face of My Father who is in heaven."*

In Luk 16:22 angels were present when a believer named Lazarus died, and they escorted him to paradise,

Luk 16:22, *"Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom."*

In 1Co 11:10 angels observe the attitude that the woman has toward her husband and the symbol of his authority: *"Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels."*

There is tremendous demon army organized by Satan to hinder Church-age believers from fulfilling the predesigned plan of God. Fallen angels are organized to resist and oppose positive believers, Eph 6:12 17; Job 1:6, 2:1 3; 1Pe 5:8, *"Be of sober spirit [attain spiritual self-esteem], be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."* The observation and opposition of the fallen angels has two goals, (1) to blind the minds of unbelievers from accepting Christ, and (2) if they do believe in Christ, distract them in every way possible from God's plan, and hinder them from maintaining Bible doctrine as their top priority.

Demons do not sit in the “theater” and watch us as the elect angels do; the demons are on the playing field actively opposing us.

1. Satan and his angels are the enemy of the unbeliever, 2Co 4:3 4, 2Th 2:7 10, Col 2:8, Luk 8:12, *“And those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved.”*
 2. They are the enemy of the Church-age believer, Jam 4:6 10; 1Pe 5:6 9; 2Co 11:3; Eph 6:10 17, 2Co 2:11, *“In order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes.”* “Resist the devil” in Jam 4:7 means to avoid involvement in controversies that will sidetrack you from learning and applying the whole realm of doctrine.
 3. They are the enemy of the Church, Rev 2:8-10,12-13. In Rev 2:8-10 John writes, *“And to the messenger of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this: I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”* These persecutions and hindrances come from the kingdom of darkness in the Church-age. We must keep our eyes on our enemy and off people, Eph 6:12, *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.* Rev 2:12-13 continues, *“And to the messenger of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two edged sword says this: ‘I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My doctrine, even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.’”* Here God allows a faithful believer to be martyred under dying grace.
 4. They are the enemy of Bible doctrine, Mat 13:19,39.
 5. They are the enemy of Israel, Rev 12:13-15, *“And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth [thrown out of heaven at the Rapture], he persecuted the woman [Israel] who gave birth to the male child [our Lord, who defeated Satan]. And the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, in order that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood.*
 6. They are the enemy of the hypostatic union, Rev 12:4, *“And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven, and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.”*
 7. They are the enemy of nations, Rev 12:9, 20:3,8.
 8. They are the chief antagonists of the extension of the angelic conflict into human history, Heb 1 2. The application of God’s power against our enemy Satan is found in 1Jo 4:4, *“Greater is He who is in you [the omnipotence of the Father indwelling us and the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit in the predesigned plan of God] than he who is the world [Satan and his cosmic system].”*
- The angelic conflict in human history answers basic questions about life, including the reason man was created. The answer of course is that mankind was created, as an inferior creature to angels, to resolve the prehistoric angelic conflict. Consequently, we were created to glorify God.
- Heb 2:1 *For this reason [because of the angelic conflict in chapter 1] we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.*
- The completeness and perfection of our Lord’s humanity as being higher than the angels is revealed by seven references in Heb 1.
1. In Heb 1:4-5, He has inherited a more excellent name (title) than the angels.
 2. In Heb 1:6, He will be worshipped by them as the Firstborn.

3. In Heb 1:7, He created them.
4. In Heb 1:8, He sits on the divine throne.
5. In Heb 1:9, He is anointed above the angels.
6. In Heb 1:10-12, He is the Creator of the universe, immutable and eternal.
7. In Heb 1:13-14, He has a higher place than the angels, as a man.

In the angelic conflict, the human race is warned not to reject Christ as Savior.

Col 1:19-20 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

After the angels fell, they were given a way of salvation, which is alluded to in this passage, though not specifically declared or mechanically outlined. The human race is warned to regard the angels and their fallen state, which was comparable to the fallen state of the human race, and remember that these angels are doomed to the lake of fire forever, Mat 25:41. The human race is to learn a lesson from the angelic conflict, to not make the same choice the fallen angels made. Do not reject the free offer of salvation provided by God! The member of the human race who refuses to accept Jesus Christ as his Savior will share the eternal destiny of Satan and the fallen angels.

Heb 2:1 For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.

The Greek verb translated "pay much closer attention" is "*prosech-ein*." "*Pros*" means face-to-face, and it refers to looking the object directly in the face; "*echo*" means to have and to hold. This verb means to apply the mind, or to concentrate, in this case, on the doctrine being taught. This was God's gracious warning to Jerusalem, which was about to be destroyed in three years.

Heb 2:1 For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it [God's Word].

The phrase "lest we drift away" means to let the doctrine drift past you or flow by you; it is being presented, but you are ignoring it. There are three stages at which believers can reject Bible doctrine.

1. Refusal to hear the teaching of God's Word on a consistent basis.
2. Refusal to metabolize the doctrine after hearing it, and therefore the failure to convert *gnosis* (knowledge) into *epignosis* (wisdom). This means failure to be filled with the Spirit or concentrate as you listen.
3. Refusal to apply the doctrine after metabolizing it, and therefore the doctrine becomes unusable or forgotten.

Drifting away from doctrine is usually not intentional; it happens slowly, but (unfortunately) surely. This is the warning of Heb 2:1. If we do not pay close attention and concentrate on what the Spirit is saying to the

local church, we will end up drifting away from the message, Heb 3:13-14, "*But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called 'Today,' lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end.*" You will still be saved, but you will not be a partaker of the divine nature unless you "*hold fast to the beginning of your assurance firm until the end.*"

Heb 4:1 Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it.

Heb 10:23-25 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near. See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less shall we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven.

The Bible teaches that when believers reject doctrine over a long enough period of time God will bring in a “famine” of doctrinal teachers, Amo 8:11-12, *“Behold, days are coming,” declares the Lord God, “When I will send a famine on the land, not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, but rather for hearing the words of the Lord. And people will stagger from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they will go to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, but they will not find it.”*

Never become familiar with God’s Word and take it for granted, or just assume that your local assembly will always be there whenever you feel like coming back.

Heb 2:5 reveals the ultimate triumph of regenerate man in the angelic conflict: *“For He [God the Father] did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking.”* The ultimate triumph of regenerate man occurs in the *world to come*, a reference to the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ. Angels will not have rule or control during the Millennium, but humans will. During the Millennium, no angel will be in charge of anything on earth. During the Church-age, Satan and his angels reign on planet earth, but in the Millennium, man will rule, specifically, Jesus Christ, the Son of David. And the Lord Jesus Christ will use winner believers of the Old Testament and winner believers of the Church-age to rule the world with Him during this great 1,000-year period of perfect environment.