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# CHRISTMAS SPECIAL: THE LIFE OF THE ONE WHO WOULD CHANGE THE WORLD. PART 2.

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In a recent survey conducted by the ASCAPSI - American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers Survey Industry, people were asked; What were the 5 top words that got their attention as a title for a book, song, movie, an article or a thesis? They discovered the following five words drew the attention of their audience, but for the sake of objectivity I will give you the five words but not necessarily the order:

They were the following:

1. Love
2. Murder
3. Sex
4. Marriage
5. Mystery

*2CO 1:3, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort;*

Who in EPH 2:4, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, Because of His love in 1JO 4:9, He sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. Therefore, in 2CO 9:15, Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

So we looked into one of the most neglected mysteries of the year 2011 as it relates to the one who changed the world. The first question that needs to be answered is why do we call the first day of the year January 1st, and why do we call this New Year, 2011? Time is mysterious and complicated enough as far as we are concerned but, added to that is the question where did we get our calendar from? Where did the months, the years, and the centuries, which make up our calendar and all have their origin from a very Catholic and Christian point of view, actually come from? By Catholic I do not mean the Catholic Church but Catholic in the sense of the universal Christian church.

So why do we call this New Year, 2011? It is clear that the world and human history stretch back much farther than that 2,010 years. But the answer to that question is that we are announcing this year to be the year 2011 Anno Domini, usually abbreviated A.D. meaning "the year of the Lord." What this clearly means is that it has been 2,011 years since the birth of Jesus Christ. His love for us and His passion to fulfill the Fathers will, resulted in His death and resurrection which ushered in a new era for the world.

As far as we know, the AD system was developed by a monk named Dionysius Exiguus in Rome in 525, as an outcome of his work on calculating the date of Easter. It was especially at the time of Charlemagne (8th Century) that the AD dating system became widespread in Western Europe. However, the calculations as to the exact year of Christ's birth were not perfect. Today, by surveying history and the data of Scripture it now seems rather more certain that: The Lord Jesus Christ was born closer to what we call today 6 B.C. - Nevertheless the current dating system remains a reference to Jesus Christ. Even the most secular of people calculate their place in time by Jesus Christ. Every

letter that is dated, every check that is written, every appointment that is made is swept up into the life of the one who changed the world. Someone once said that Jesus is Lord of History since history is His-story. The most neglected mystery of all time, known by only a few, although revealed to all.

HEB 4:12, The word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Think about the mystery of the year 2011 pertaining to the life of the one who changed the world. Believe or not, our calendar actually began in eternity past where we read in REV 13:8, the One who would change the world is called the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world.

ACT 2:23, He was delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, and nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men who put Him to death.

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. (ACT 4:27-28)

Consider that the life of the one who changed the world was born in a little-known village called Bethlehem as a child of a peasant woman, 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."

Five hundred years before the birth of the Messiah, the prophet Micah had prophesied the place of His birth. Only a few people realized the Messiah would be born in a place called Bethlehem.

*MAT 7:14, "For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it."*

Though the city of Bethlehem was a very small city, the Lord had chosen it to be the place of birth of the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Messiah. The priests and scribes who studied the Scriptures should have known what the Scriptures said about the birth of the Messiah. But as in many cases, those in positions of authority lack the intestinal fortitude it takes to stand up for the truth and go against the herd.

These are the ones who usually want the crown but not the cross. Or perhaps they did know but they are just like the ones in JOH 12:42-43, 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.

Are you like that? Or like those in MAT 23:5-6, they are those who do all their deeds to be noticed by men; They love the place of honor at banquets, and the chief seats in the churches,

When the priests and scribes failed to believe and apply that Bethlehem was the place of birth of the Messiah, they also failed to know that the city of David was Bethlehem. Their cowardice prevented them from standing up for truth. God chooses the little things of the world to conceal in glory its greatest things. As Gideon said in JDG 6:15, Gideon said to the Lord, "O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel?"

Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house." But in JDG 6:16, The Lord said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat Midian as one man."

Do you recall what Philip said to Nathanel: Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." And Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." (JOH 1:45-46)

Come and see the life of the One who changed the world! We are also taught that the life of the one who would changed the world worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty - LUK 3:23, And when He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, This was the age required by the Law, to which the priests must arrive before they could be installed in their office.

*NUM 4:3, from thirty years and upward, even to fifty years old, all who enter the service to do the work in the tent of meeting.*

At this time we are then told that the life of the one who changed the world then became a traveling preacher, MAR 1:35-39.

MAR 1:35-39, And in the early morning, while it was still dark, He arose and went out and departed to a lonely place, and was praying there. And Simon and his companions hunted for Him; and they found Him, and said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You." And He said to them, "Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, in order that I may preach there also; for that is what I came out for." And He went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out the demons.

Think of this amazing, but almost never considered, fact that the life of the one who changed the world was one who never wrote a book. We can thank God or Himself that He didn't. Because if He did we would be fighting about which book He wrote and who had the original. However, there is a book that was written about Him and the first Christmas that says in HEB 10:7, "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (In the roll of the book it is written of Me) To do Thy will, O God.'"

The life of the one who changed the world would be the one who never held an office; JOH 18:36, Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world."

He never did one thing that usually accompanies greatness with the exception of performing miracles whenever He wanted or desired to. In fact, He would even tell individuals later on not to talk about His miracles. In MAT 8:4, "See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest, and present the offering that Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."

He had no credentials but Himself; JOH 14:11, "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; otherwise believe on account of the works themselves."

While still a young man, the life of the one who changed the world would have public opinion turn against Him.

And coming to His home town He {began} teaching them in their synagogue, so that they became astonished, and said, "Where {did} this man {get} this wisdom, and {these} miraculous powers? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then {did} this man {get} all these things?"

And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his home town, and in his {own} household." (MAT 13:54-57)

The life of the one who changed the world would be marked by His friends running away from Him in time of trouble; MAR 14:27.

MAR 14:27, And Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away, because it is written, 'I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.'

One close to Him would also deny Him, as well as all of His disciples; MAT 26:33-35.

But Peter answered and said to Him, "{Even} though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away." Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you that this {very} night, before a cock crows, you shall deny Me three times." Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You." All the disciples said the same thing too. (MAT 26:33-34)

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a certain servant--girl came to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied {it} before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." And when he had gone out to the gateway, another {servant-girl} saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." And again he denied {it} with an oath, "I do not know the man." And a little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Surely you too are {one} of them; for the way you talk gives you away." Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know the man!" And immediately a cock crowed. And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, "Before a cock crows, you will deny Me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly. (MAT 26:69-75)

The life of the one who changed the world went through the mockery of a trial, MAT 20:18-19.

"Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and will deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify {Him,} and on the third day He will be raised up." (MAT 20:18-19)

The life of the one who changed the world ended up nailed to a cross between two thieves; MAT 27:38, At that time two robbers \*were crucified with Him, one on the right and one on the left.

His executioners gambled for His only piece of property - His coat; MAR 15:24, And they crucified Him, and divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots for them, {to decide} what each should take.

The life of the one who changed the world would have His body laid in a borrowed grave; JOH 19:41, Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been laid.

Twenty centuries have come and gone, and today He is still the centerpiece of the human race. All the armies that ever marched, All the navies that ever sailed, All the parliaments that ever sat, And all the kings that ever reigned put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as that?

That one who changed the world around 2011 years ago. That One Solitary Life.  
He was born in an obscure village.

He worked in a carpenter shop until he was about thirty.  
He then became an traveling preacher.  
He never held an office.  
He never had a family or owned a house.  
He didn't go to college.  
He had no credentials but Himself.  
After preaching three years, the public turned against Him.

His friends ran away.  
He was turned over to His enemies and went through the mockery of a trial.  
He was nailed to a cross between two thieves.  
While He was dying, His executioners gambled for His clothing, the only property He had on earth.  
He was laid in a borrowed grave.  
Nineteen centuries have come and gone, and today He is the central figure of the human race.

All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat,  
and all the kings that ever reigned.

HAVE NOT AFFECTED THE LIFE OF MAN ON THE EARTH AS MUCH AS THAT ONE SOLITARY LIFE."



# THE DOCTRINE OF THE RICHES OF HIS GLORY UPON VESSELS OF MERCY.

01/23/11

We have begun to note what the word of God has to say concerning the subject of human vessels as it is portrayed in the Bible.

Point 1. First of all, the Bible uses vessels as a reference to the doctrine of election where the believer is said to be a chosen vessel unto God. Therefore, as a chosen vessel, Paul needed to be filled with Bible doctrine.

Now Saul [later changed to Paul], still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And it came about that as he journeyed, he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And He {said,} "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but rise, and enter the city, and it shall be told you what you must do." And the men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but seeing no one. And Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank. Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Behold, {here am} I, Lord." And the Lord {said} to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight." But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Thy saints at Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon Thy name." But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine," (ACT 9:1-15)

However, the word instrument in the Greek is the nominative singular noun *skeous* which means a vessel, or an instrument.

But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake." (ACT 9:15-16)

Notice that the calling of God in ACT 9:15, revealed by the phrase he is a chosen vessel of Mine, included in verse 16.

And Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he arose and was baptized; and he took food and was strengthened. Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus, and immediately he {began} to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." (ACT 9:17-20)

Paul was only prepared to communicate the Gospel message because he knew the Christ, the Messiah, as He was revealed in the Old Testament.

Let's look at a few examples;

Jesus is unique among all people in history in that He is the fulfillment of centuries of Messianic prophecies, - which are found in the Old Testament of the Bible, that foretold His place of birth, details of His life, His mission, His nature, His death, and His resurrection. The prophecies are sometimes called "Messianic prophecies" because they refer to the Messiah, which means "anointed one" or "chosen one". Some scholars estimate that there are more than 300 Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament that refer to the Messiah (Jesus). Many people think of Bible prophecies as being predictions about the future. Strictly speaking, they are not predictions, rather they are promises from God. A prediction can be a guess, a prophecy is more than a guess, it is a revelation from God about the future. Some of these prophecies or promises are as follows:

We have the prophecy of certain events which took place around the Cross in PSA 22:6-8.

"But I am a worm, and not a man, a reproach of men, and despised by the people. All who see Me sneer at Me; they separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying, 'Commit Yourself to the Lord; let Him deliver Him; let Him rescue Him, because He delights in Him.'" (PSA 22:6-8)

Totally fulfilled in Luke 23:35, And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, slaying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen one."

The prophecy of His hands and feet being pierced in PSA 22:16, For dogs have surrounded Me; a band of evildoers has encompassed Me; they pierced My hands and My feet."

Fulfilled throughout the Gospels when they nailed His hands and feet to the cross, MAT 27:31 and in MAR 15:24.

MAT 27:31, And after they had mocked Him, they took His robe off and put His garments on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him.

Then there was the prophecy of casting lots for His garments.

PSA 22:18, "They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots."

Fulfilled in MAT 27:35, "And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots;"

The prophecy that not one of His bones would be broken. PSA 34:20, "He keeps all His bones; not one of them is broken."

Fulfilled in JOH 19:34-36, "But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water. For these things came to pass, that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'not a bone of Him shall be broken.'"

The prophecy of the false witnesses.

PSA 35:11, "Malicious witnesses rose up; they ask Me of things that I do not know."

Fulfilled in MAR 14:57-58, And some stood up and began to give false testimony against Him, saying, "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.'"

There is also the prophecy of the betrayal of Judas Iscariot.

PSA 41:9, "Even My close friend, in whom I trusted, who ate My bread, has lifted up his heel against Me."

Fulfilled in LUK 22:47-48 While He was still speaking, behold, a multitude came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was preceding them; and he approached Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of man with a kiss?"

The prophecy that they would offer The Lord Jesus Christ gall and vinegar.

PSA 69:21, "They also gave Me gall for My food, and for My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink."

Fulfilled in MAT 27:34, They gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall; and after tasting it, He was unwilling to drink.

The prophecy of the physical abuse and humiliation of Jesus.

ISA 50:6, "I gave My back to those who strike Me, and My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spiting."

Fulfilled in MAT 26:67, "Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him."

The prophecy that He would come to die for our sins in order to save us,

ISA 53:5, But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.

Fulfilled throughout the entire New Testament, as in ROM 5:8, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

The prophecy that He would be silent as He approached the cross.

ISA 53:7, He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth.

Fulfilled in MAR 15:4-5, And Pilate was questioning Him again, saying, “do You make no answer? See how many charges they bring against You! But Jesus made no further answer; so that Pilate was amazed.”

The prophecy of His crucifixion.

ISA 53:12, “And He was numbered with the transgressors; yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors.”

Fulfilled in LUK 23:33-34, 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. But Jesus was saying, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.

The prophecy of the piercing of Jesus' side.

ZEC 12:10, “They will look on Me whom they have pierced and they will mourn for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born.”

Fulfilled in JOH 19:34, “But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water.”

A part of it will be fulfilled in REV 1:7, Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him.

And Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he arose and was baptized; and he took food and was strengthened. Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus, and immediately he {began} to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.” And all those hearing him continued to be amazed, and were saying, “Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name, and {who} had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?” But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this {Jesus} is the Christ. (Act 9:17-22)

Here is a case of isagogics, the historical setting of the passage, and categorical doctrine, the theology developed from combining Scripture with Scripture. Somewhere, between verses 22 and verse 23, we have 3 years of preparation where Paul learned and lived the principle of not putting the cart before the horse.

For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. (GAL 1:11-12)

Paul had an hostile past. Saul was breathing down the necks of the Lord's disciples, and out for the kill. Paul went to the Chief Priest and got arrest warrants to go to Damascus so that if he found anyone there belonging to the faith, whether men or women, he could arrest them and bring them to

Jerusalem. Paul had an hostile past. Paul is trying to tell them not to grab people by the collar and try to jerk them into the kingdom of God.

Before his salvation Paul was very hostile to the church. The moment that he heard the gospel he responded. God didn't try to persuade him. God simply gave him the facts and he responded to them and welcomed them with open arms as a host would welcome an honored guest.

All that is required is to make the information clear and people will respond. This is true concerning salvation and it's also true after salvation, in learning, living, and loving the spiritual life,

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, (COL 2:6)

And how did you receive Christ Jesus?

by grace, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. (EPH 2:8-9)

and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions. (GAL 1:14)

Notice the description of religion - ancestral tradition is the criterion.

But when He who had set me apart, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, (GAL 1:15-16)

On his way to Damascus, Paul (then Saul) he was dazed by a blinding flash of light and As he fell to the ground, he heard a voice: "Saul, Saul, why are you out to get me?"

ACT 9:5, "Who are you, Master?" "I am Jesus, the One you're hunting down. and I want you to get up and enter the city. In the city you'll be told what to do next."

Notice after salvation.....what?

You need to be told what to do and how to do it.

But when He who had set me apart, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, (GAL 1:15-16)

Notice, the purpose: "To reveal his Son in me." This was God's purpose for Paul, this is God's purpose for every believer. It is God's purpose to reveal the Lord Jesus Christ in every Christian -

GAL 4:19, My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you-- (GAL 4:19)

That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that

you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, (EPH 3:16-18)

On the basis of my intense concentration and confident expectation [a personal sense of destiny] that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but with all confidence, Christ shall even now [in time] as always [in eternity] be glorified in my body, whether by life or by death. For me, living is Christ, likewise dying is profit. (PHI 1:20-21)

As long as we remain on this earth Christ is to be revealed in us by the filling of the Spirit. This is the purpose for Paul, this is the purpose for every believer. Therefore, in order for Christ to be revealed in me I must be filled with the Spirit, I must know how to be filled with the Spirit.

Therefore a principle: No one can fulfill the divine purpose in time apart from a knowledge of Bible doctrine; the filling of the Spirit.

Paul is going to give a defense of his theological training. There was no theological seminary then so he had to get his training directly from God.

Immediately I conferred not or did not consult with flesh and blood is a good way to start the Christian life and it is a good way to live it. Paul didn't confer with anyone. Flesh and blood refers to any member of the human race.

Paul's theological training, of which the Galatians have been the recipients, came directly from God. He went through a very tough theological school out in Arabia. GAL 1:17-18, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus. Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days.

Paul's visit into Arabia took place between Acts 9:22 and verse 23. He was out there for several years and there God revealed to him the information which became the content of his messages. Here he learned his doctrine, out in the desert just as Moses did. Paul has probably been saved by this time up to thirteen or fourteen years, and he is still unknown. No man can have a successful ministry without preparation. He must go unknown in that preparation. David, watching the sheep out in the Judean hills was unknown. God brought him forth at the right time. Joseph in prison was unknown. God brought him forth at the right time. Elijah was for many years unknown. At the right time God brought him into Israel. For a number of years now Paul has been unknown -

GAL 1:22-23....And I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ; but only, they kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy." And they were glorifying God because of me.

Notice it was the message that Paul was first known by, not the man.

Where did Paul go and why?

Well, first of all, we note the principle of doctrine: A vessel is no good when it's empty.

A vessel is only usable when it's filled. Before Paul could be a usable vessel, he had to be filled with the right doctrine. We never fulfill the plan of God designed for us in eternity past until we become filled vessels, until we contain maximum doctrine in our souls.

# THE DOCTRINE OF THE RICHES OF HIS GLORY UPON VESSELS OF MERCY. PART 2.

01/30/11

We are now ready to look at our second point in The Doctrine of the Riches of His Glory upon Vessels of Mercy.

Point 2. Vessels are used to provide an analogy between Bible doctrine and not putting the cart before the horse.

We begin with the fact that in ACT 9:20, after Paul's eyes were open both in the natural and the spiritual realm that we read:

And immediately he {began} to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."  
(ACT 9:20)

Paul was a prepared vessel for this because he was a master of the Old Testament passages.

And all those hearing him continued to be amazed, and were saying, "Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name, and {who} had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?" (ACT 9:21)

They were utterly astounded for two reasons. Saul of Tarsus had a world-wide reputation as a ruler among his people and he was famous for his persecution of Christians. Now they hear this one who has been so vigorous in the earliest persecutions of Christians Paul declaring that he himself is a captive of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that Jesus Christ is the unique person of the universe.

But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this {Jesus} is the Christ - the Messiah. (ACT 9:22)

Somewhere, between verse 22 and verse 23, we have 3 or more years of preparation where Paul learned and lived under the principle of not putting the cart before the horse.

And when many days had elapsed, the Jews plotted together to do away with him, (ACT 9:22)

Now, first of all, we need a background as to where the apostle Paul went and what did he do?

In GAL 1:11-12 the apostle Paul wrote, For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

The phrase nor was I taught - is the aorist tense, the point when the gospel was presented; the passive voice: he received the gospel. Paul was not taught by other apostles but he got it by means of revelation, which implies direct communication from God. In verses 13-14 - Paul had an hostile past. To know just exactly what happened we need to read GAL 1:13-24, For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure, and tried to destroy it;



This is ACT 9:1-2 we are told that Saul was breathing down the necks of the Lord's disciples, and out for the kill. Insofar that he went to the Chief Priest and got arrest warrants to go to Damascus so that if he found anyone belonging to the faith, men or women, he could arrest them and bring them to Jerusalem. Paul had a hostile past. Before his salvation Paul was very hostile to the Church. But the moment that he heard the gospel he responded. God didn't try to persuade him. God simply gave him the facts and he responded to them and welcomed them with open arms as a host would welcome an honored guest.

Paul learned the value of waiting on the Lord and not putting the cart before the horse. All that is required is to be a prepared vessel, make the information clear and people will respond in the own time. Even our Lord operated under this principle of preparation when He said in JOH 14:2, "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you."

In our main passage concerning that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, we are told which He prepared beforehand for glory, ROM 9:23, 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,

As vessels we need to be prepared and as we have seen recently personal suffering is an important part of that preparation. This is true concerning salvation and it's also true after salvation, in learning, living, and loving the spiritual life.

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, (COL 2:6)

And how did you receive Christ Jesus?

by grace, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. (EPH 2:8-9)

and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions. (GAL 1:14)

Notice the description of religion - ancestral tradition or religion and tradition from our ancestors is the criterion or the rule.

But when He who had set me apart, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,  
(GAL 1:15-16)

On his way to Damascus, he was dazed by a blinding flash of light and As he fell to the ground, he heard a voice: "Saul, Saul, why are you out to get me?" In ACT 9:5, Paul said, "Who are you, Master?" "I am Jesus, the One you're hunting down. and I want you to get up and enter the city. In the city you'll be told what to do next."

Notice after salvation.....what? You need to be told what to do and how to do it.

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Notice, the purpose: To reveal his Son in me. This was God's purpose for Paul, this is God's purpose for every believer. It is God's purpose to reveal the Lord Jesus Christ in every Christian - GAL 4:19, My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you--

This indicates that there are variations within the framework of the different stages of spiritual growth. We use this phrase to simply to illustrate the three different phrases of spiritual growth but those are simply categories used to define where a person basically is in their spiritual walk. We use this term until Christ is formed in you to illustrate three different phrases of spiritual growth but those are simply categories used to define where a person basically is in their spiritual walk.

You can call these stages anything that you want to.

You can call them spiritual self-esteem, spiritual autonomy and spiritual maturity. You can call them spiritual self-esteem, spiritual independence and spiritual maturity. If you really want to be technical, you could call them Christ formed in you, GAL 4:19, Christ at home in your hearts, EPH 3:17, or Christ exalted in your body, PHI 1:20. Whatever you want to call these different stages of spiritual growth is fine providing you understand that there are many different stages of spiritual growth that these terms signify.

What the apostle Paul is dealing with in Gal 1:-15-16, is that God wanted to reveal His Son in him as a vessel of mercy and in doing so he would this through what Paul described in three different ways;

Category 1 = Christ being formed in you = SSE.

Category 2 = Christ at home in your hearts = SA.

Category 3 = Christ being glorified in your body = SM.

These are all experiences of the believer who lives and remains in the PPOG and prepares himself as a vessel of mercy for God to make known the riches of His glory. In each stage of spiritual growth there is a different experience. In GAL 4:19, the PPOG is related to the first stage of spiritual growth, spiritual self-esteem. Paul writes to the Galatians and says in GAL 4:19, My children,

This is a reference to the believers in Galatia who were still in spiritual childhood or immature.

GAL 4:19, My children, with whom I am again in labor

Because the Galatians have been so long in spiritual childhood, Paul is saying that he is like a mother who has the pain from labor all over again. The Galatians were still in spiritual childhood because they were involved with legalism and religion. Legalism is degeneracy. It is a system of moral degeneracy.

Religion is defined in ISA 29:13, the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote"

Rote actually is a memorizing process using routine or repetition, often without full attention or comprehension: It is a mechanical routine. So Paul says in GAL 4:19, My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you.

Paul is again in the pains of labor and childbirth. That's because they allowed the Judaizers to come in and they were now legalistic and they went back to their spiritual childhood. Being children this long, they became spiritual morons. So he said I am in the labor pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you.

Until Christ is formed in you is a reference to spiritual self-esteem, which is the first stage of spiritual growth. Christ being formed in you is a reference to His thinking being inside of your soul! The word formed is the aor-pass-subj of the verb morphote which is morphothe meaning to fashion, to shape, to form, it refers to a progressive inward transformation.

It speaks of Christ being formed in the soul of the believer and therefore an edification complex or a soul structure to think with God.

The next stage is category 2, where Christ is said to be at home in your hearts and the believer is at spiritual autonomy or spiritual independence. In EPH 3:14, For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father,

All prayer is directed toward the Father.

EPH 3:15-16, From whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name [the body of Christ universal, on earth and in heaven], That He would grant you, or graciously give to you according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man!

This means that you might become strong or grow up by means of His power! Power refers to the power that God makes available to you in His pre-designed plan. And in the inner man refers to your new man or the new spiritual species.

EPH 3:17, So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith [doctrine]; and that you, being rooted and grounded in virtue-love,

The phrase so that is a result clause and the result is that Christ may be dwell or be at home in your hearts.

And this is a very important phrase because we live in an apostate generation of believers telling everyone that they must ask Jesus into their heart for salvation. And there is not one verse in the entire Bible that says to do that. Here is a verse which is directed toward believers that actually says that "Christ may not be dwelling or at home in the hearts"!

The verb for to dwell is an aor-act-inf of katoikeo which means to dwell, to live, to be at home. It means to be in a place that makes you feel like you're at home, if however, you have a happy home and a place you like.

EPH 3:17, So that Christ may dwell or be at home in your hearts through faith.

The phrase through faith is the preposition dia plus the definite article tes and then the genitive singular feminine noun pisteos which means through the means of doctrine. And when will Christ be at home in your hearts? When you are rooted and grounded in impersonal unconditional agape love.

What kind of love must the believer be rooted and grounded in if Christ is going to be at home in their hearts? It must be authentic and without hypocrisy!

In MAT 5:44, it is a love that loves your enemies, and prays for those who persecute you!

In JOH 14:15, it is the type of love that motivates the believer to stay with doctrine, "If you love Me, you will keep My commands."

It is the type of love that stays with doctrine, not putting aside your doctrinal differences!

In 1CO 13:4, it is the type of love that is patient, gracious, not jealous; does not brag and is not arrogant,

In 1CO 13:5, it is the type of love that does not act improper, is never selfish, is not resentful, does not think evil,

In 1CO 13:6, it is the type of love that does not gloat over other men's sins, but rejoices with doctrine;

In 1CO 13:7, it is the type of love that overlooks faults, believes the best, hopes all things, endures all things.

In 1PE 4:8, it is the type of love that covers a multitude of sins.

In 1JO 2:5, it is the type of love that can only be developed from the intake of doctrine, But whoever keeps His doctrine, in that believer the love of God has truly been matured.

In 1JO 4:20, it is the type of love that has respect for the Royal family of God, If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

In 1JO 5:2, it is the type of love that motivates love for doctrine, By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His doctrines.

2JO 1:6, And this is virtue-love that we walk according to His doctrines. This is the command, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it [PPOG].

All of these principles are related to the type of love that we must be rooted and grounded in for TLJC to be at home in our hearts! Therefore, in EPH 3:17, when it says that Christ may dwell or be at home in your hearts it is referring to spiritual autonomy. This takes place, as vs 17 says, when you are rooted and grounded in virtue-love.

Finally, the third stage of spiritual growth, category 3 is spiritual maturity related to TLJC being glorified in your body, PHI 1:20-21, According to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame or embarrassed in anything, but that with all boldness or confidence, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

There are variations within the framework of all three stages. There may be three stages of spiritual growth but those are simply categories used to define where a person basically is in their spiritual growth. This is why the ultimate goal of the spiritual life is to become a ROM 9:23 believer, in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,

Is God really who He says He is?  
Will He really do what He says He will do?  
Will He really keep His promises?

Our trials are not random persecutions. Heaven is not in a panic and where we are and what we are going through is no surprise to God. We may be knocked down and kicked around by life, but if we have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, we will not be destroyed. Our lives are filled with excess baggage and waste - a cherished sin we refuse to relinquish or an addiction to which we are enslaved.

What about the emotional garbage that weighs us down or our unforgiving spirit that holds us prisoner? Fiery trials come to burn away the guilt of sin and then purify our heart. From those ashes of freedom, the Father then creates a work of beauty. Only God can exchange the ashes of our sin for the beauty of His forgiveness and grace. God alone can replace our despair with His peace that passes all understanding.

Hope can only be found in Him. Our purpose in life is to know and become more like Jesus ... and act just like our Father.

# THE DOCTRINE OF THE RICHES OF HIS GLORY UPON VESSELS OF MERCY. PART 3.

02/06/11

We are looking at the subject of the riches of the glory of God upon vessels of mercy, and being the first Sunday of the month and therefore, as is our custom we celebrate the Lord's supper; and what a great subject, it is, indeed this doctrine of the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy,

For what greater manifestation is there of the glory of God upon vessels of mercy than the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Doctrine of the Riches of His Glory upon Vessels of Mercy.

Point 1. The Bible Uses Vessels as a Reference to the Doctrine of Election Where the Believer is Said to Be a Chosen Vessel unto God.

Therefore, as a chosen vessel, the apostle Paul needed to be filled up with the word of God or Bible doctrine, not because he was an empty vessel lacking the word of God. We know that because he tells in **PHI 3:6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.**

**ACT 26:5b**, notice his reputation, **since they have known about me for a long time previously, if they are willing to testify, that I lived {as} a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion.**

What was it that Paul needed as a chosen vessel? He needed to learn, understand and be able to teach the mystery doctrine of the Church-age.

Point 2. Vessels were used to provide an analogy between the mystery doctrine Bible doctrine resident in the soul and capacity for life among those who are mature believers, **EPH 4:22-24; 2CO 4:7-18.**

Point 3. Vessels are used to illustrate the principle of not putting the cart before the horse and therefore understanding the importance of understanding the mystery doctrine of the Church-age.

The Church-age, which we are all a part of, and its doctrine was never mentioned in Old Testament prophecy, but instead was fully developed in the New Testament Epistles. Paul states in **ROM 16:25-26, COL 1:25-26** and **EPH 3:3-6** that this mystery is now revealed.

**Of this church [Church-age] I was made a minister according to the dispensation from God bestowed on me or your benefit, that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery doctrine which has been hidden from the past dispensations and generations; but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (COL 1:25-27)**

Therefore, there is no excuse for ignorance. Ignorance and arrogance become the two worst enemies of the believer, and cause him to make a wrong assessment of life, and to establish wrong priorities. Bible doctrine must be your #1 priority.

**Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past [in the Old Testament], but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets [the New testament prophets], according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith or to the obedience of doctrine; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen. (ROM 16:25-27)**

The apostle Paul needed a crash diet of the mystery doctrine of the Church-age and therefore was led to the Arabian desert for his teaching and training.

Why?

What was the reason?

Why was it so important?

**For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles--if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of God's grace which was given to me for you; that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery doctrine, as I wrote before in brief. And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; (EPH 3:1-5)**

Church-age doctrine was blacked out in the Old Testament. There are many Old Testament passages which could have mentioned the Church-age but passed over it.

Between the following passages the Church-age occurred and so could have been revealed, but it was passed over in silence:DAN 2:40-41; DAN 7:23-24; DAN 8:22-23; DAN 11:35-36; HOS 5:15; 6:1. So, it is this body of doctrine known as mystery doctrine which sets the Church-age apart from other dispensations. The mystery doctrine of the Church unveils the characteristics unique to the Christian way of life.

Point 2. Vessels were used to provide an analogy between Bible doctrine resident in the soul and capacity for life among those who are mature believers, EPH 4:22-24; 2CO 4:7-18. There is a passage that we use many times, as do many other doctrinal ministries, to communicate the doctrine of rebound but miss out on an even greater principle of application. That is the passage found in EPH 4:22-24, concerning laying aside the old man and putting on the new man.

**that, in reference to your former manner of life, [your former lifestyle], you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, [strong pressures from the sin nature in your area of weakness]. and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. (EPH 4:22-24)**

This passage emphasizes rebound as the beginning of the means of victory over the old sin nature. But, more than that, it also refers to the shattering of the OSN and, at the same time, the emptying of the treasure found in our new nature which is also found in our earthen vessels. These two natures are sometimes referred to as the:

1. New Man - Old Man

2. New Self - Old Self

3. New Creature - Old Creature

4. First Adam - Last Adam

We have heard it in so many ways, in so many different approaches, 66 books written by 40 different authors, all inevitably agreeing and bearing the same message. The flesh [human effort] counts for nothing, (JOH 6:63). If anything is to be done, God must do it.

The only means that God has chosen to use and limit Himself to because of the Angelic Conflict, is found under the principle of *theopneustos* which means breathing in and breathing out, and therefore God-breathed. *Theo* means God, *pneo* means to breathe.

There are many translations which translate this passage by that exact word, "All Scripture is God-breathed" referring to the doctrine of inspiration.

What does the phrase "All Scripture is inspired by God or God-breathed" really mean? It means that God the Holy Spirit so supernaturally directed the human writers of Scripture, that His complete

message to mankind was recorded with perfect accuracy in the original languages of Scripture. One of the sad things is that we cannot get men who are honest translators.

Therefore much of the communication of the word of God is hidden behind a lot of phoney words.

The greatest profit and wealth in the world is contained in the Bible. It is for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; this is a reference to training which produces integrity. It is the teaching of Bible doctrine or the power of the word of God which performs all of these things.

Then the next verse says so that the believer will be proficient, capable, mature and equipped for every good work.

**2TI 3:17, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.**

For this to happen, you must learn the principle of not putting the cart before the horse. Without doctrine there is no legitimate Christian service. This means that understanding the principle of not putting the cart before the horse means that you understand that your spiritual skills must precede your production skills for the performance of divine good.

When 2TI 3:16 says, **All Scripture is inspired by God or God-breathed**, the concept of God-breathed is two-fold: First, the inhale is the ministry of God the Holy Spirit, who communicates to the human author God's complete and coherent message to that generation and all future generations of history. Remember that the soul has lungs, the nous and the *kardia*, the mind and the heart. The Holy Bible was written by men who had old sin natures.

Remember that Jesus Christ did not personally write any of the scriptures, it is His mind and His thinking.

The application of the doctrine of inspiration is found in **HEB 10:35-36, Therefore, do not throw away as worthless your confidence, which keeps on having rich distribution of blessing. For you keep on having need of perseverance**[persistence in perception, cognition, and inculcation of doctrine], **in order that when you have accomplished the will of God, you may carry off for yourself the promise.**

When you neglect Bible doctrine, you are throwing away the only true confidence related to the spiritual life. Anything else is false confidence. This confidence is the extrapolation of the ten problem solving devices in your soul their application in your daily experience. This is how you become a vessel of honor unto the Lord. This is how you store up the treasure found in our earthen vessels. This is confidence which avoids converting the outside pressures of adversity into the inside pressures of stress in the soul.

An so in **JOH 6:63, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."**

If anything is to be done, God must do it. Believers who become vessels prepared to be used for the Master's plan are those who realize their utter unfitness and overwhelming inadequacy to do the works of God on their own.

**For indeed He was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God. (2CO 13:4)**

For we also are weak in Him, yet we shall live with Him because of the power of God directed toward you. The phrase *we are weak in Him*, is not a cliché but a certainty. It bothers us to think of ourselves so useless, but there is where our true strength lies. The problem with many of us is that we're much too gifted; we're dangerously adequate and self-sufficient.

And so we go on our way, believing in ourselves and our own power and personality, relying on our own strength and show. But our self-confidence is our stumbling block. We're so good at what we do we're no good at all.

God must frustrate our energy at its source. He wears down our noble determination through the frustrations of life and He squeezes out of us every piece of our self-confidence by disappointment



and defeat. He allows our goals and dreams fall apart or sink in the swamp of human power and strength. The wheels fall off our cleverly contrived programs; our dreams go belly up. He teaches us through our flops and failures until we learn that most precious of all God's promises: We can't. When *can-do* can't, He shows us that He can, and therefore we can. I can't then becomes blasphemy.

For He performs what is appointed for me, And many such decrees are with Him. (JOB 23:14)

Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass. (1TH 5:24)

The demands that have been placed on us are now demands on Him; Our pressures and problems are now His. We are now becoming vessels prepared for the Master's use. Then, we can say with the apostle Paul: 2CO 4:8-12, **we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death works in us, but life in you.**

There are still those problems and difficulties that frustrate us, but they're honorably resolved in His time because we are now vessels who are being prepared for the master's use not for our own use. For we are being prepared to live for others and not for ourselves. ROM 15:1, **Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not {just} please ourselves.**

We're sometimes confused and uncertain, not knowing what to do or say, but when we have to know, we know. We're still hounded and harassed by people, principalities, and powers, but we're shadowed and sheltered under His wings. We get down now and then, but we're never out.

We can, in fact, do all things that must be done, through the One who strengthens us.

**I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. (PHI 4:13)**

God's activity through our fragile humanity is our great assurance. We should then confess ourselves poor creatures, for that is the beginning of being great men and great women. To persuade ourselves that we are something when we are nothing is terrible loss; to confess that we are nothing is to lay the foundation of being something.

Point 4. Shattered vessels are used to describe personal judgements from God.

When David was in reversionism or in a backslidden state in Psalm 31, he wrote:

**Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; My eye is wasted away from grief, my soul and my body {also.} For my life is spent with sorrow, And my years with sighing; My strength has failed because of my iniquity, And my body has wasted away. Because of all my adversaries, I have become a reproach, Especially to my neighbors, And an object of dread to my acquaintances; Those who see me in the street flee from me. I am forgotten as a dead man, out of mind, I am like a broken vessel. (PSA 31:9-12)**

In other words, he felt completely and totally deserted, which is what happens when you get into intensive discipline, that stage of reversionism. In JER 22:28 king Coniah was also a reversionist or a shattered vessel. JER 22:28, **Is this man Coniah a despised, shattered jar? Or is he an undesirable vessel? Why have he and his descendants been hurled out And cast into a land that they had not known?**

They were taken into captivity and the reason was because they were shattered vessels. A shattered vessel holds nothing; it is no longer a container. Shattered vessel means you had every opportunity to learn doctrine, to be filled up with doctrine, to have more doctrine than you've ever had before. But once you are shattered it means you are on the way to the sin unto death, the final and last stage.

Apostate communicators of doctrine can also be reversionistic and be described that way.

**"Wail, you shepherds, and cry; And wallow {in ashes,} you masters of the flock; For the days of your slaughter and your dispersions have come, And you shall fall like a choice vessel." (JER 25:34)**

This is an emotionally unstable person who is trying to rebound by wallowing in ashes.

# LEARNING THE MYSTERY BEHIND THE POTTER, THE CLAY, THE LUMP AND THE VESSEL.

02/27/11

In the doctrine of unity, we are told in REV 2:7, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." For the winner believer Free Will of man + Human volition = self-determination and positive volition toward the divine command from the Potter's wheel of authority.

So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. 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. You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will? On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? (ROM 9:16-20)

When God created man He placed in his soul volition, or free will resulting in self-determination, in order to resolve the angelic conflict. In GEN 1:26 we read, "Then God said, 'Let Us make man [the human race] in Our image.'"

The Hebrew word for image is the noun tselem meaning a resemblance; a representation, a likeness, one's real but invisible essence. It points to something that is real but invisible and this speaks of God. God, though real, is invisible to us. As members of the human race we all have a soul, but that soul is invisible. No one has ever seen a soul.

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

God has real essence but His essence is invisible just as your soul is invisible. People see your face, your body, or portions of your body but they cannot see your soul. Your soul shines through in your personality but the soul itself is invisible. Do you realize what is visible to people is the least important part of you? This does not mean to neglect fine grooming. But, it is a very important point.

What the human eye sees of self and others is the least important aspect of the person. As 1SA 16:7 says, God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

This essence is composed of five parts:

1. The self-consciousness, this means that man is aware of his own existence, LUK 1:46, And Mary said: "My soul exalts the Lord,"
2. The mentality, which is what you think. Self-consciousness is no good without mentality. The mentality is the thinking part of man and is composed of the mind and the heart.
3. The emotion, LUK 12:19, And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years {to come;} take your ease, eat, drink {and} be merry." This is the appreciator of the soul. Emotion responds or reacts to whatever thoughts are in the soul.

4. The conscience. This is the evaluator of the soul. The conscience contains the norms and standards, (ACT 24:16).

5. The soul also contains volition (LUK 12:19), The volition is the ruler of the soul where man's free will functions toward all decision making.

Man has the ability to be negative or positive to anything in life. This is why man was created to resolve the angelic conflict, to utilize the soul and control the entire nature of man. This all began in GEN 2:16-17, where we read 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."

The whole issue is the choice and the free will of man continuing through-out the Old and New Testament and through-out human history. For example, the Lord said to Moses in DEU 30:15-16, "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."

God is totally, eternally, and infinitely fair. Therefore, in perfect righteousness the justice of God provided man with a free will, so that man is a free agent in determining his own destiny. And he must take the responsibility for his own decisions. Therefore man cannot blame the mistakes and errors of his own decisions on perfect and incorruptible God. Mankind has been trying to do this ever since the fall in the Garden of Eden. The blame game is simply a defense mechanism to keep us from having to deal honestly with our mistakes.

We have noted many times how Adam blamed the woman in the garden: 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. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" And the man said, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (GEN 3:7-13)

The blame game started being played right after the fall of mankind. One thing I fail to mention from time to time is that, You don't have to lie to play the blame game. Adam and Eve responded truthfully to God. Eve had given Adam the fruit and the serpent had deceived Eve. So, what they said was true and does have some validity to it.

Adam said, in effect, don't blame me, I didn't take the fruit from the tree; she gave me some fruit and I ate it. I wouldn't have eaten it if it hadn't been for that woman. The woman - Don't blame me. I was tricked into eating it. I wouldn't have eaten it if it hadn't been for that serpent. So how can they be held responsible? Well, as we will see, when we get back to Rom 9, they knew the rules that God, as the Potter, had as the divine authority over the clay (them).

In GEN 2:16-17, 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."

They knew that they were not to eat from the tree about which the Lord commanded them, in GEN 3:17. They had a choice. Since they knew the rule, and rule is in the singular because there was just one negative mandate, which was, "Don't eat from it!" The Lord never said what Satan deceived the woman into believing which was that God had said "You shall not eat from any tree of the garden." In fact, the Lord said quite to the contrary in GEN 2:16, where the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;"

In GEN 3:1, Satan simply added to the Scriptures which is forbidden in PRO 30:6, Do not add to His words Lest He reprove you, and you be proved a liar. And then, apparently, like many ravishing and stunning woman, she was more than likely captivated with her own beauty, looking around at the Garden, enjoying the trees and the animals of the field, looking at the birds of the sky, all flying by. Perhaps she was even admiring that little snake, who in GEN 3:1, the CEV (Contemporary English Translation) says, The snake was sneakier than any of the other wild animals that the Lord God had made.

But most of all she was probably checking out her man, the finest, strongest, most handsome man in the world, looking forward to some wild night in the garden and fulfilling one of her favorite blessings, sex (GEN 2:24). But whatever it was, she was deceived and distracted by it for we read in GEN 3:2-3, her lack of concentration when she said, "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 [and then this time she added to the word of God] or touch it, lest you die.'" God never said, Don't touch it. - She did! She willfully added to the word of God because she did not concentrate on it when it was taught. And the consequence for breaking that divine command from the Potter's wheel of authority was that they were given fair warning and therefore, left without excuse.

The serpent played a role in Eve eating the fruit and Eve played a role in Adam eating the fruit but ultimately, the choice was each of theirs. They didn't have to give in. They were perfect. They had all the power necessary to resist temptation. They were given incentive to stay away. Spiritual death, or to be cut off or separated from God, should have been a good incentive to stay away from something. Besides, they had access to everything else. They just had to stay away from one tree. Adam and the woman had a choice-obey God or disobey God, and they chose to disobey Him. Don't play the blame game with God. We can see from their blaming that in essence they were blaming God for what happened. Adam was basically saying, Don't blame me; you're the one who put this woman here. If you hadn't done that, I wouldn't be in this mess right now.

You can just picture the woman saying, don't blame me; if you hadn't allowed this nasty serpent to be here, I wouldn't be in this mess right now. And, although it doesn't report them doing this, you see Adam and Eve blaming God for their sin because, after all, He was the one who put the tree there in the first place. If You hadn't put that stupid tree right in the middle of the garden like that, we wouldn't be in this mess.

They have valid arguments before God right? Remove the tree, no problems. Remove the serpent, no problems. Remove the woman, no problems. However; remove the choice and there's no free will. Remove the free will, there's no glorification of God in the Angelic Conflict. AND SATAN WINS!

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. 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. (JAM 1:13-16)

It's not God's fault, or other's fault, or even Satan's fault. It's our own evil desire that allows us to be dragged away and enticed. It's our fault, we are to blame. So when we fail to act according to God's will and it doesn't work out, it's God's fault. The reality, however, is we're to blame if we don't seek God's direction or accept God's timing. Often times we're quick to blame God when things go wrong and slow to thank him when things go right. Man's irresponsibility and depravity is never more dramatically portrayed than when he seeks to blame God for his own thoughts, his own decisions, and his own actions. No one can say to God, Why have you made me this way? Because mankind has his own free will. Man is a free agent, he has self-determination. Mankind under the influence of Satanic thinking is always trying to conform God to his human thinking rather than accepting God in terms of divine revelation. Man is always trying to bend God to his own thinking and then saying, "This is God's will."

The quotation from Isaiah 29:16, which Isaiah applied to the nation, Paul applies to the individual Jew and Gentile.

You turn {things} around! Shall the potter be considered as equal with the clay, That what is made should say to its maker, "He did not make me"; Or what is formed say to him who formed it, "He has no understanding"? (ISA 29:16)

To blaspheme and malign the perfect wisdom and justice of God is the irrational act of a desperate person. Irrational because of after having made hundreds of free will decisions, culminating in judgment, and fallen under the principle of the law of responsibility...they still blame God. God is blamed and maligned for thus shifting the responsibility from their erroneous decisions and blaming it on the sovereignty of God.

So, the entire verse in ROM 9:21, Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for dishonorable use.

Paul is saying that if God wants to make a vessel of honor and a vessel of dishonor from the same lump of clay, doesn't He have the right to do so? Yes, but that is not the real issue in this passage. The real issue is the issue of the free will of man responding to what is right before God. The clay does not refer to man as a vessel but in reality, the clay refers to the soul of man, referring to his volition, freewill, and self-determination. The potter refers to God who has, not the right but the divine authority, which mankind's volition, freewill, and self-determination, can respond to or reject.

Therefore, we have the following: On the contrary, who are you [the free will of man as the clay and therefore a part of man's soul which functions under the OSN or NN] O man [the entire soul of man], who answers back to God? [the Potter as the divine authority] The thing [man's free will] molded [the free will's response to divine authority] will not say to the molder [the divine authority of God], "Why did you [the authority of God] make me [free will of man] like this," will it? (ROM 9:20)

Or does not the potter [God as the sovereign One] have a right [divine authority] over the clay [the free will of man] to make from the same lump [the entire soul of man] one vessel [man's entire being - body-soul- and for the believer - HS] for honorable use, and another [man's entire being] for dishonorable use? (ROM 9:21)

God has the authority but that isn't the REAL issue. The real issue is does mankind recognize God's authority and make decisions compatible with that divine authority? That is the issue. The lump of clay is the human volition and human self-determination of the individual. The issue, then, becomes obvious.

The justice of God imputes eternal and divine righteousness to positive volition in the lump while imputing condemnation and punishment to the negative volition in the lump. Therefore in this context a vessel of honor is the Jew who has believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, while the vessel of dishonor is the Jew who has rejected the Lord Jesus Christ and has done so from his own free will. Therefore the justice of God can only condemn the one who has rejected.

The issue is not what we do; the issue is what Christ has done on the Cross. Therefore believing in the Lord Jesus Christ becomes the issue. The lump, again, is the free will of mankind to believe in Christ or to reject Christ. Man is free to go either way. Therefore the honor is possessing the righteousness of God and eternal life, while dishonor is possessing or depending on one's own self-righteousness and function in human life. God is free to bless the vessel of honor possessing God's righteousness, and likewise God is free to judge the vessel of dishonor possessing human self-righteousness.

# LEARNING THE MYSTERY BEHIND THE POTTER, THE CLAY, THE LUMP AND THE VESSEL. PART 2.

03/06/11

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. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" And the man said, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (GEN 3:1-13)

We have noted that the serpent played a role in Eve eating the fruit and Eve played a role in Adam eating the fruit but ultimately, they each made the choice. They didn't have to give in. They were perfect. They had all the power necessary to resist temptation. They were given incentive to stay away. Spiritual death, or to be cut off or separated from God, should have been a good incentive to stay away from something. Besides, they had access to everything else. They just had to stay away from one tree. Adam and the woman had a choice-obey God or disobey God, and they chose to disobey Him. Don't play the blame game with God. We can see from their blaming that in essence they were blaming God for what happened.

Adam was saying in effect, don't blame me; you're the one who put this woman here. If You hadn't done that, I wouldn't be in this mess right now. The woman said in verse 13, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." You can almost picture the woman saying, don't blame me; if you hadn't allowed this nasty serpent to be here, I wouldn't be in this mess right now. And, although it doesn't report them doing this, you can almost see Adam and the woman blaming God for their sin because, after all, He was the One who put the tree there in the first place.

Don't blame us. If you hadn't put that stupid tree right in the middle of the garden like that, we wouldn't be in this mess. They have valid arguments before God right? Remove the tree, no problems. Remove the serpent, no problems. Remove the woman, no problems. However; remove the choice, there's no free will. Remove the free will, there's no glorification of God in the Angelic Conflict, and then SATAN WINS!

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. 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. (JAM 1:13-16)



So, it's not God's fault, or others fault, or even Satan's fault. Rather it's our evil desire that allows us to be dragged away and enticed. It's our fault, we are to blame. So when we act, or fail to act according to God's will and it doesn't work out, it's God's fault. The reality, however, is we're to blame if we don't seek God's direction or accept God's timing. Often times we're quick to blame God when things go wrong and slow to thank him when things go right.

Man's irresponsibility and depravity is never more dramatically portrayed than when he seeks to blame God for his own thoughts, his own decisions, and his own actions. No one can say to God, Why have you made me this way? because mankind has his own free will. Man is a free agent, he has self-determination. Mankind, under the influence of Satanic thinking, is always trying to conform God to his human thinking rather than accepting God in terms of divine revelation. Man is always trying to bend God to his own thinking and then saying, "This is God's will."

To blaspheme and malign the perfect wisdom and justice of God is the irrational act of a desperate person. Irrational because of after having made hundreds of free will decisions, culminating in judgment, and fallen under the principle of the law of responsibility...they still blame God. God is blamed and maligned for thus shifting the responsibility from their erroneous decisions and blaming it on the sovereignty of God.

So the entire verse says, ROM 9:21, Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for dishonorable use.

Paul is saying that if God wants to make a vessel of honor and a vessel of dishonor from the same lump of clay, doesn't He have the right to do so? The answer is yes. But that is not the real issue in this passage, the real issue is the issue of the free will of man responding to what is right before God. For the clay does not refer to man as a vessel but in reality, the clay refers to the soul of man, referring to his volition, freewill, and self-determination. The potter refers to God who has, not the right but the divine authority, which mankind's volition, freewill, and self-determination, can respond to or reject.

Therefore, we have the following:

ROM 9:20, On the contrary, who are you [the free will of man as the clay and therefore a part of man's soul which functions under the OSN or NN] O man [the entire soul of man], who answers back to God? [the Potter as the divine authority] The thing [man's free will] molded [the free will's response to divine authority] will not say to the molder [the divine authority of God], "Why did you [the authority of God] make me [free will of man] like this," will it?

Then in ROM 9:21, Or does not the potter [God as the sovereign One] have a right [divine authority] over the clay [the free will of man] to make from the same lump [the entire soul of man] one vessel [man's entire being - body-soul- and for the believer - HS] for honorable use, and another [man's entire being] for dishonorable use?

God has the authority but that isn't the real issue. The real issue is: Does mankind recognize God's authority and make decisions compatible with that divine authority? That is the issue.

The lump of clay is the human volition and human self-determination of the individual. The issue, then, becomes obvious. The justice of God imputes eternal and divine righteousness to positive volition in the lump while imputing condemnation and punishment to the negative volition in the lump. Therefore in this context a vessel of honor is the Jew who has believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, while the vessel of dishonor is the Jew who has rejected the Lord Jesus Christ and has done so from his own free will.

Therefore the justice of God can only condemn the one who has rejected. The issue is not what we do; the issue is what Christ has done on the Cross. Therefore believing in the Lord Jesus Christ becomes the issue. The lump, again, is the free will of mankind to believe in Christ or to reject Christ. Man is free to go either way. Therefore the honor is possessing the righteousness of God and eternal life, while dishonor is possessing or depending on one's own self-righteousness and function in human life. God is free to bless the vessel of honor possessing God's righteousness, and likewise God is free to judge the vessel of dishonor possessing human self-righteousness.

ROM 9:20, On the contrary, who are you [the free will of man as the clay and therefore a part of man's soul which functions under the OSN or NN] O man [the entire soul of man], who answers back to God? [the Potter as the divine authority] The thing [man's free will] molded [the free will's response to divine authority] will not say to the molder [the divine authority of God], "Why did you [the authority of God] make me [free will of man] like this," will it?

Notice that in grace, God makes all of this impersonal. In His mercy and His grace, He makes it impersonal so that we would not fall under the slavery and bondage of that great culprit called guilt. So, He makes it objective rather than subjective. The thing [man's free will] molded [the free will's response to divine authority] will not say to the molder [the divine authority of God], "Why did you [the authority of God] make me [the free will of man] like this," will it? This is objective rather than subjective. This is the same way the Lord teaches us from the Old Testament.

For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. Now these things happened as examples for us, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved. And do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play." Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty three thousand fell in one day. Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (1Co 10-1-11)

For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. (ROM 15:4)

Let's make sure we have all of this.

ROM 9:20-21, On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? You [Free will] O man [entire being] back to God? [Potter as the divine authority]. The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? The thing [man's free will] will not say to the molder [the divine authority of God], "Why did you [the authority of God] make me [the free will of man] like this," will it? Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, the Potter [God] have a right over the clay [the free will of man] to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use? to make from the same lump [the entire soul of man] one vessel [man] for honorable use [man's entire being], and another [man's entire being] for dishonorable use?

Let's begin with the Potter's wheel. The wheel is the plan of God for the human race and it runs upon the axle of imputed righteousness of God.

O Lord, Thou art my God; I will exalt Thee, I will give thanks to Thy name; For Thou hast worked wonders, Plans {formed} long ago, with perfect faithfulness. (ISA 25:1)

“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.” (ISA 46:8-11)

This means that nothing in the plan of God runs on human righteousness or human ability or human works. In other words, no believer is ever commanded to reinvent the wheel. The wheel is God's plan or God's decree which has existed from eternity past. God's plan keeps rolling no matter what. The wheel must turn on an axle and the axle is based upon the justice and the righteousness of God. And, because of the angelic conflict, God has designed His plan so that the wheel of the Christian life must turn or spin on the axle of the individual's choice.

It's important to note what the wheel represents and how it used in the Bible. For example, JER 18:3 uses the analogy of the wheel as a type that represents the workings of God wherein He molds and shapes either a person or a nation into the kind of vessel He desires.

The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord saying, “Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I shall announce My words to you.” Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something on the wheel. But the vessel that he was making of clay was spoiled in the hand of the potter; so he remade it into another vessel, as it pleased the potter to make. Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, “Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter {does}?” declares the Lord. “Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel. At one moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, or to destroy {it;} if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it. Or at another moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to build up or to plant {it;} if it does evil in My sight by not obeying My voice, then I will think better of the good with which I had promised to bless it.” (JER 18:1-10)

Here, the wheel represents the training He gives, and sometimes the whipping necessary in order that He may obtain the result He wishes to have. In EZE 1:15 wheels always represent progress, motion, purpose, accomplishment.

Now as I looked at the living beings, behold, there was one wheel on the earth beside the living beings, for {each of} the four of them. The appearance of the wheels and their workmanship {was} like sparkling beryl, and all four of them had the same form, their appearance and workmanship {being} as if one wheel were within another. Whenever they moved, they moved in any of their four directions, without turning as they moved. As for their rims they were lofty and awesome, and the rims of all four of them were full of eyes round about. (EZE 1:15-17)

In this Scripture the wheels represent the power of God in action. The rims of these wheels reach unto Heaven to inform us that the purposes and works of GOD are higher than ours, too high for our comprehension. The eyes on the wheels represent the omniscience of the Spirit of God, who knows full well what He is doing, and understands all the purposes of GOD.

When it comes to His wheels, you must decide which axle you will use - the one that God has provided, which is +R; or invent your own which is some form of self-righteousness. If you choose self-righteousness you reinvent the wheel, you dictate to God the course of action. So much then for the perfect plan of God which excludes the ability of man, the personality of man, the morality of man, the works of man, the ideas of man, the schemes of man.

Therefore in perfect righteousness the justice of God provided man with a free will, so that man is a free agent in determining his own destiny. And he must take the responsibility for his own decisions. Therefore man cannot blame the mistakes and errors of his own decisions on perfect and incorruptible God.

# LEARNING THE MYSTERY BEHIND THE POTTER, THE CLAY, THE LUMP AND THE VESSEL. PART 3. HOW THE CLAY IS SHAPED AND MOLDED INTO A VESSEL.

03/13/11

In our study of the Potter, the clay and the vessel, we need to note the potter's wheel as it relates to the plan of God for the human race. Let's begin with a reminder of the Potter's wheel. The potter controls the potter's wheel. This is simply a reminder of COL 1:16-17, 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.

Under the concept of the wheel, God's plan keeps rolling on no matter what. The wheel must turn on an axle and the axle is based upon the justice and the righteousness of God. Because of the angelic conflict, God has designed His plan so that the wheel of the Christian life must turn or spin on the axle of the individual's choice.

It's important to note what the wheel represents and how it used in the Bible. We have noted in JER 18:3, that Jeremiah uses the analogy of the wheel as a type that represents the workings of God as He molds and shapes either a person or a nation into the kind of vessel He desires.

Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something on the wheel. But the vessel that he was making of clay was spoiled in the hand of the potter; so he remade it into another vessel, as it pleased the potter to make.

(JER 18:3-4)

Here, the wheel represents the training He gives, and sometimes the discipline necessary in order that He may obtain the results He desires to have. In EZE 1:15 Wheels always represent progress, motion, purpose, accomplishment.

Now as I looked at the living beings, behold, there was one wheel on the earth beside the living beings, for {each of} the four of them. The appearance of the wheels and their workmanship {was} like sparkling beryl, and all four of them had the same form, their appearance and workmanship {being} as if one wheel were within another. Whenever they moved, they moved in any of their four directions, without turning as they moved.

(EZE 1:15-17)

In this Scripture the wheels represent the power of God in action. The wheel within a wheel in EZE 1:16-18, their appearance and workmanship {being} as if one wheel were within another. This represents the inner motions, purposes and desires of our Lord within Himself. As for their rims they were lofty and awesome, and the rims of all four of them were full of eyes round about.

The rims of these wheels reach unto Heaven to inform us that the purposes and works of GOD are higher than ours, too high for our comprehension. The eyes on the wheels represent the omniscience of the Spirit of God, who knows full well what He is doing, and understands all the purposes of GOD. When it comes to His wheels, you must decide which axle you will use - the one that God has provided

or will you invent your own which is some form of self-righteousness. Therefore, in perfect righteousness the justice of God provided man with a free will, so that man is a free agent in determining his own destiny. And he must take the responsibility for his own decisions. Therefore man cannot blame the mistakes and errors of his own decisions on perfect and incorruptible God.

In PSA 9:17, the psalmist says, The wicked will return to Sheol [grave, abode of death], {Even} all the nations who forget God.

I say that because the reason why JER 18:4 says, But the vessel that he was making of clay was spoiled in the hand of the potter; is because Israel as a nation had forgotten God.

JER 2:32, "Can a virgin forget her ornaments, Or a bride her attire? Yet My people have forgotten Me Days without number.

Like the church at Ephesus, in REV 2:4, "But I have this against you, that you have left your first love."

A voice is heard on the bare heights, The weeping {and} the supplications of the sons of Israel; Because they have perverted their way, They have forgotten the Lord their God. "Return, O faithless sons, I will heal your faithlessness. Behold, we come to Thee; For Thou art the Lord our God." (JER 3:21-22)

Notice how they became unworthy vessels, "This is your lot, the portion measured to you From Me," declares the Lord, "Because you have forgotten Me And trusted in falsehood or lies and false doctrine. So I Myself have also stripped your skirts off over your face, That your shame may be seen." (JER 13:25-26)

"For My people have forgotten Me, They burn incense to worthless gods And they have stumbled from their ways, From the ancient paths, To walk in bypaths, Not on a highway," (JER 18:15)

Notice how many times the indictment was because they had forgotten God. Judah, in the days of Jeremiah, was a nation which had forgotten God. All through the scope of this prophecy, across the forty years or more that Jeremiah ministered to this nation, we are watching a nation being turned into the grave. There was chaos spreading throughout the land. There was corruption widespread in government, morality was constantly declining and evil was infecting the people. The life of the nation, like ours, was gradually becoming more and more hellish -- exactly in accordance with the prediction of the psalmist. Today, as you know, America is a nation which is rapidly forgetting God. We are described in 2TI 3:1-5.

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these. (2TI 3:1-5)

Today, we too are watching the phenomenon of a nation which has forgotten God being turned into hell or a grave--with corruption spreading in the land, the moral fiber of our people losing its

consistency, the government increasingly unable to govern properly. The institutions of American life being shaken by frequent panics and torn with dissension--all this exactly in line with the prediction of the Scriptures.

The message of Jeremiah is that of a growing revelation of the heart of the God who turns a nation into hell. We hear the judgments of God in this book, but what the prophet is being taught as he goes along is to know the heart of the God of judgment. What a different picture that is! The great message of this book to us is to see what lies behind that which appears to be the ruthlessness of God in dealing with a people, and learning, from chapter to chapter, what kind of God is behind the judgment.

In Chapter 17, Jeremiah was taught two great truths: JER 17:9, The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

JER 18:12, "But they will say, 'It's hopeless! For we are going to follow our own plans, and each of us will act according to the stubbornness of his evil heart.'"

Jeremiah was also shown a glorious throne set on high from the beginning.

A glorious throne on high from the beginning Is the place of our sanctuary. O Lord, the hope of Israel, All who forsake Thee will be put to shame. Those who turn away on earth will be written down, Because they have forsaken the fountain of living water, even the Lord. Heal me, O Lord, and I will be healed; Save me and I will be saved, For Thou art my praise. (JER 17:12-14)

This is the story behind Jer 18.

The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord saying, "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I shall announce My words to you." Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something on the wheel. But the vessel that he was making of clay was spoiled in the hand of the potter; so he remade it into another vessel, as it pleased the potter to make. Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, "Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter {does}?" declares the Lord." "Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel." (JER 18:1-6)

When the person or the people, turn to God, healing begins to come back into that life.

Jeremiah was sent down to the potter's house, and there he saw three simple things but they conveyed to him a fantastic lesson. The art of making a pot has not changed through the centuries. The wheel is now turned by an electric motor, but that is about the only difference. The clay is the same as it has always been. The potter is the same, with his capable hands, guided by his intelligence, working to mold and shape the clay into the vessel he has in mind. Today, there are the same ingredients--the potter, the clay, and the wheel.

What did Jeremiah see in this lesson? First, there was the clay. Jeremiah knew, as he watched the potter shaping and molding the clay; that he was looking at a picture of himself, and of every man, and of every nation. We are the clay. So Jeremiah saw the clay being shaped and molded into a vessel.

Then some imperfection in the clay spoiled it in the potter's hand, and the potter crumbled it up, and began a new process of shaping it into a vessel that pleased him.

Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something on the wheel. But the vessel that he was making of clay was spoiled in the hand of the potter; so he remade it into another vessel, as it pleased the potter to make.

(JER 18:3-4)

Jeremiah saw the wheel turning constantly, bringing the clay against the potter's hand. That wheel stands for the turning circumstances of our life, under the control of the Potter, for it is the potter's foot that guides the wheel. The lesson is clear. As our life is being shaped and molded by the Great Potter, it is the circumstances of our life, the wheels of circumstance, which bring us again and again under the potter's hand. The wheels of divine authority and the circumstances of our life under the pressure of the molding fingers of the Potter, shapes the vessel according to his will.

Then, Jeremiah saw the potter, he knew God was the Great Potter, with absolute right over the clay to make it what he wanted it to be. So Jeremiah, watching, learned that an individual or a nation is clay in the Great Potter's hands. He has a sovereign right to make it what He wants it to be. He has the skill and design to work with the clay and to bring it to pass.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (EPH 2:10)

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 1:6)

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. (PHI 2:13)

Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass. (1TH 5:24)

“For He performs what is appointed for me, And many such decrees are with Him.” (JOB 23:14)

Job even realized that the Potter was at work even when it seemed like he wasn't, we call that the silence of God. In Job 23, we have Job's last reply to his friend Eliphaz who has come right out in lambasted Job.

Then Job replied, “Even today my complaint is rebellion and His hand is upon me heavy despite my groaning. Oh that I knew where I might find Him, That I might come to His seat! I would present my case before Him And fill my mouth with arguments. I would learn the words which He would answer, And perceive what He would say to me. Would He contend with me by the greatness of His power? No, surely He would pay attention to me. There the upright would reason with Him and I would be delivered forever from my Judge. Behold, I go forward but He is not there and backward, but I cannot perceive Him;” (JOB 23:1-8)

Why? Because God is silent, this is the silence of God!



“When He acts on the left, I cannot behold Him; He turns on the right, I cannot see Him. But He knows the way I take; When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot has held fast to His path; I have kept His way and not turned aside. (JOB 23:9-11)

Again Job is saying to his friends, I am innocent and your accusations are totally wrong!

“I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth [doctrine] more than my necessary food.” (JOB 23:12)

That's Job's testimony! This means that Job has the doctrine to deal with what he's going through. We know that because he already passed part 1 of evidence testing and suffering for blessing. He said JOB 1:21, “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 of the Lord.” Then he told his nagging wife in JOB 2:10, “You speak 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 has the doctrine, but right now the doctrine is locked up because of interference from his three friends who are being used by Satan to do so! How? They counseled him!

Nothing is more confusing to a person who has doctrine than a lot of counseling from their so-called friends. Since Job is under evidence testing, Satan as the defense attorney has the right of cross examination, and if he desires to use some self-righteous believers to try and get to a mature believer, he has the right to do so. It's the potter's right to do so and to allow this. Job regards this as divine neglect and it's merely the period of cross-examination. Neither Job nor his three friends understand how close Job is to that great principle of maximum glorification of God. And he will pass part three of evidence testing and suffering for blessing in spite of the confusion and the maligning of the three critics, his so-called friends. Job needs to realize that the silence of God demands that he utilizes the inventory of his own doctrine resident in his own soul...that's when believers become great. Do you realize that we live in the dispensation of the silence of God. We live in the dispensation called the Church-age. God does not speak to anyone in this dispensation. Since the Canon of scripture was closed not one person has ever truly heard the voice of God. God now only speaks through His word!

What Job had as his testing is the very basis for making the royal family of God strong...it is the doctrine resident in your soul! That is the greatest power in the world today. So that in JOB 23:13-17, Job expresses the fact that he doesn't understand the silence of God.

“But He is unique and who can turn Him? And what His soul desires, that He does. For He performs what is appointed for me, And many such decrees are with Him. Therefore, I would be dismayed at His presence; When I consider, I am terrified of Him. It is God who has made my heart faint, And the Almighty who has dismayed me, But I am not silenced by the darkness, Nor deep gloom which covers me. (JOB 23:13-17)

Job fails to recognize that the silence of God is the greatest compliment to the doctrine resident in the soul! The silence of God is actually a compliment to the mature believer.

God speaks through His word and the highest compliment ever given to the royal family is the silence of God as the believer uses the greatest power in the world, Bible doctrine. This is when you can make personal application and throw away the crutches and stop depending on this person and that person for counseling. When you have the doctrine in your own soul, you will stop depending on what other's think! Sooner or later, if it hasn't happened already, you are going to have to face the test of the silence of God.

When that test comes remember that it is a compliment...you have learned the doctrine it's just a matter of it's proper application. Always remember 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. Faith is that which is needed during the silence of God.

# THE FUNCTION OF THE DIVINE WHEEL AS IT RELATES TO THE MOLDING OF THE CLAY.

03/20/11

One of the main principles concerning the Potter and the clay is: The function of the divine wheel as it relates to the molding of the clay. If some difficult circumstance or trial comes into your life, that circumstance or trial is a part of the wheel of God to reveal that you might be resisting the pressure of the Potter's hand. Resistance is not a very smart thing to do when it is resisting the Potter's hand or the Potter's wheel. In fact, resisting the Potter or the Potter's wheel is actually a very dumb thing to do and usually brings on self-induced misery. But God has a way of putting us in positions to listen.

And those who err in mind will know the truth, And those who criticize will accept instruction. (ISA 29:24)

Those who got off-track will get back on-track, and complainers and whiners learn eventually to be grateful. It may take some longer than others but, they will learn. The apostle James puts it like this; JAM 1:2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,

We noted the word consider which is a very interesting word which is the aorist, middle, imperative of the verb hegeomai which is a command to believe, think, consider, to be a leader; to rule, command; to have authority over. It has the connotation of adding up all the facts and coming to a doctrinal conclusion. The aorist tense refers to the periods of time that the wheel is used by the potter to conform the believer to God's will and their very own personal sense of destiny. It is in the middle voice here which says that you do this yourself, no one can do it for you. This imperative mood can only be obeyed when you have a knowledge of Bible doctrine. And this is a sane person adding up the facts. This aorist tense also means only at specific times will you use some doctrine that you learn.

There are some doctrines that you will be using all the time, there are some doctrines that you will be using occasionally. There are some doctrines designed for pressure and suffering, there are other doctrines which are designed for prosperity.

The word encounter is also interesting because the aorist active subjunctive of the verb peripipto; to fall into something that is all around, to be surrounded with.

JAM 1:2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials.

We begin with the word trials which is the noun peirasmos meaning here testing for blessing, it's a test to prove your faith and application of doctrine. The point that James is making is that to pass these different trials and tests you must have the attitude of James in verse two. Thinking, considering, regarding is the liveliness of Bible doctrine circulating in the soul. To think means the reasoning of the conscious mind, the capability of reasoning, remembering, decision-making and application. So to consider means to think carefully in making decisions. With this verb we have the word joy which is the Greek noun chara meaning happiness based upon having the facts in your in your soul, or doctrine in the right lobe.

This is saying that the only possible way for you to have happiness in a pressure situation is for doctrine to meet the facts of pressure and personal disaster. This is a command according to JAM 1:2 when it says, Consider it all joy or inner happiness. But you have to have it to consider or conclude these trials to be a reflection of the Potter's hand it at work in your life. You cannot conclude what you do not have. Happiness here is a mental attitude that is concluded when you as the special edition of the child of God faces the special occasion of suffering and adversity with this special attitude of inner happiness.

JAM 1:2, Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, the word various is an adjective, poikilos, which simply means many types, many categories, and then the word for trials is the dative plural of peirasmos, which means testing to determine the quality of something. It is a noun for many categories of pressure.

So, a great translation of this verse would be as follows: JAM 1:2-3, My brethren [members of the Royal Family], keep on concluding [after weighing the facts] to keep on having perfect happiness [+H] whenever you become involved in the many categories of pressure. Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

Knowing is the present active participle of ginosko which means to learn from the Potter by means of experience. Remember what our Lord said about this principle;

MAT 11:28, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls."

MAT 11:30, "For My yoke is easy, and My load is light."

However, don't misunderstand and limit the principle of experience. Because, in this case, it means to learn from the experience of PMA of Bible doctrine. The experience of sitting down and listening to Bible teaching. James is relating the principle of PMA of BD to + H and a lot of experiences in the field of listening to doctrine, which build up this fantastic inner happiness.

JAM 1:3, knowing that the testing of your faith

The word for testing is the Greek noun dokimion, which means testing for the purpose of approval. In other words, every pressure in life put on the wheel of your Potter is a test designed for approval, for graduation.

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. (1 Co 10:13)

JAM 1:3, knowing that the testing of your faith produces

Faith is the genitive noun of pistis which is used as a technical word and in its technical use it refers to the whole body of doctrines stored in your right lobe. It also refers to the system of transferring doctrine from the left lobe down to the human spirit, so it is a part of PMA. It is also used for the exhale of faith toward God, which is faith-rest. So it is technical and non-technical.

The potter is at work in you, it means He is working out something on the inside which is being accomplished and achieved in your life. This is doctrine on the inside working out with the result that something is accomplished. That something is endurance, which refers to a stabilized faith on the inside or the stabilized use of doctrine in the believer's life.

Therefore it comes to mean the ability to trust without wavering under the most adverse of circumstances, and even for prolonged periods of time.

The word translated endurance also means patience. Let's note some principles concerning the patience, the endurance and the resultant longsuffering of God who, as the Potter is spinning the clay upon His wheel.

1. First of all the patience and longsuffering of God is related to His lovingkindness and truth, PSA 86:15. It is because the Lord is filled with lovingkindness and truth that He can be so patient with each and every one of us. Think of how patient the Lord has been with you and me over the years.

PSA 86:15 But Thou, O Lord, art a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger [patient and longsuffering] and abundant in lovingkindness and truth. (PSA 86:15)

The last phrase reveals one of the reasons why the Lord is so patient and longsuffering, it's because of His love and His character based upon His lovingkindness which is grace and His truth which is doctrine. Therefore, when a person has love and a godly disposition, that person will have patience and longsuffering.

2. Patience and longsuffering is also related to the compassion of the Lord, in PSA 103:8. Because He is compassionate He operates in patience and longsuffering. PSA 103:8 The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger [patient and longsuffering] and abounding in lovingkindness.

And then His patience and longsuffering is described in PSA 103:9-14, He will not always strive {with us}; Nor will He keep {His anger} forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. Just as a father has compassion on {his} children, So the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him. For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are {but} dust.

A believer who has the patience and the longsuffering of God will be very compassionate.

3. Patience and longsuffering is also related to the power or omnipotence of God, NAH 1:3. When you have perfect power and omnipotence, you are not so concerned with how things turn out. You know that at any moment you have the power to do what has to be done. NAH 1:3, The Lord is slow to anger [patient and longsuffering] and great in power,

4. The patience and longsuffering of God is related to the principle of repentance, ROM 2:4. Many believers throughout the ages can testify with David in PSA 18:35, that the gentleness of the Lord has made them great or matured.

PSA 18:35, "Thou hast also given me the shield of Thy salvation, And Thy right hand upholds me; And Thy gentleness makes me great."

JER 31:3, The Lord appeared to him from afar, {saying,} "I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.

Or what Paul said in ROM 2:4, Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

So, a believer who has the patience and the longsuffering of God will be very sensitive and compassionate to those who are guilty and need to repent.

5. The patience and longsuffering of God is related to the Lord's tolerance and endurance with us, 1TI 1:16.

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service; even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. And yet I was shown mercy, because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus. It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. (1 Ti 1:12-16)

In this passage, we have a picture of our Lord's perfect patience toward the wicked sinner. Patience is a very important virtue for all of us.

How does a believer develop patience in his Life?

Well, first of all, he doesn't. So that ought to be comforting to many of you.

Patience is developed by, and is the production of, God the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Patience and endurance is also developed through the power of the Spirit and the power from Bible doctrine in the soul of the believer.

In COL 1:9-11, For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience;

Steadfastness and patience is developed through the power of God. Patience and steadfastness or endurance is also a system of thinking, it is not an emotion.

COL 3:12 And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart right lobe] of compassion, kindness [grace orientation], humility, gentleness and patience;

A patient person will be slow to anger. He will not get angry quickly. Patience will give us the power and the gracious system of thinking to have great understanding and sensitivity toward others, PRO 14:29.

PRO 14:29, He who is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who is quick-tempered exalts folly.

Patience with others will also help us resolve and reconcile differences, PRO 15:18.

PRO 15:18 A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but the slow to anger pacifies contention.

Patience is a virtue which gives the believer fantastic strength under pressure, PRO 16:32.

PRO 16:32 He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.

Patience will also allow us to be discrete and overlook the sins of others, PRO 19:11.

PRO 19:11 A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook a transgression.

When you're patient with people, you do not hold them accountable for the wrongs they have done against you.

Patience allows us to rest in the Lord and let the supreme court judge handle any unfair or unjust treatment, PSA 37:7.

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.

If someone is carrying out wicked schemes against you, be patient, relax, the Lord has everything under control.

Patience and endurance gives us the strength and power to handle undeserved suffering and maltreatment so that we can bring glory to the Lord.

In 1PE 2:19-23, Peter says For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;

It is having your doctrine and the faith rest drill tested in your life which will give you patience.

As so, JAM 1:3-4, Knowing that the testing of your faith [your doctrine and your faith-rest drill] produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Perfect and complete lacking nothing does not mean sinless perfection, it means maturity and contentment.



# YOUR REAL PROBLEM IN DEALING WITH THE CLAY AS IT AFFECTS THE VESSEL.

03/27/11

Believing in and observing the faithfulness of God always coming through for me, as many of you experienced the His same thing as well.

If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself. (2TI 2:12-13)

Knowing and believing and observing the faithfulness of God always coming through, still there was a question lurking in my mind...that He finally answered in His time. We watched reputations be destroyed and individuals making accusations against others that they were guilty of fulfilling what our Father said is true in:

Therefore you are without excuse, every man of you who passes judgment, for in that you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. (ROM 2:1)

We have all seen many believers walking on a dark spiral downward taking others along with them. In fact, we were warned by our God that this would happen in the last days.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths. (2TI 4:3-4)

We saw it happened, and, in fact, are still observing what the great apostle, the apostle Paul wrote in;

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; (2TI 3:1-4)

Knowing and believing and observing the faithfulness of God always coming through. From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am He (JOH 13:19). Then I faced along with some of you questions like:

Why is there a hell?

Why is there suffering?

Why all the sorrow and pain to the little children?

I received what I truly believe was an answer from God. Then I believe I found an answer that was already inside my soul. I find it pleases Him when I can testify, I'll trust my God to do what's best and wait to find out why. And even though I believed MAT 10:30, "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." I also believe 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? Yet knowing all this and believing and observing the faithfulness of God always coming through, I still had one more question: What about my family? My parents? Especially, My children? And He taught me and many of you.

“Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household. 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. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.”  
(MAT 10:34-38)

We were even taught, even concerning our children,

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. But many {who are} first, will be last; and the last, first.”

(MAR 10:29-31)

Observing the faithfulness of God always coming through by operating under such principles as ROM 3:3, For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

Even though I had all my questions answered like Abraham did in Gen 18. In effect, Abraham said something like this. Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak only this once more. And then, believe it or not, the first passage I read to you this morning answered the main question. Not only did it answer how GBC and RMBM was built and it also answered a question concerning another issue I wanted solved. The answer was given in three passages:

1. PSA 127:1-2, Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman keeps awake in vain. 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.

2. PRO 22:6, Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.

3. PSA 37:25, “I have been young, and now I am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Or his descendants begging bread.”

JOB 5:25, “You will know also that your descendants will be many, And your offspring as the grass of the earth.”

The point is no matter who you are or where you are, the faithfulness. God keeps His word. He has never made a promise He has not kept, Psa 119, There never was a time when God was unfaithful. It is blasphemy to think so. Therefore, unfaithfulness is totally incompatible with the very nature and essence of God, MAL 3:6, “For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.”

HOS 14:4, "I will heal their apostasy, I will love them freely, for My anger has turned away from them."

The very existence, function, and provision of blessing for the Royal Family of God, both now and forever, depends on the faithfulness and character of God. God is always prepared. He is never caught off guard. God's nature is to be faithful. How refreshing it is to know that in spite of all this there is One who is faithful. He is faithful in all things, at all times, even unto the end.

DEU 7:9, "Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;"

This quality is essential to His being, without it He would not be God.

LAM 3:22, The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail.

Now, it is one thing to accept the faithfulness of God as truth, it is another thing to act upon it. God is faithful to us and He is not only faithful to tell us the good things but He is also faithful to tell us the bad things. He has faithfully described the ruin that negative volition toward doctrine leads to. He has faithfully diagnosed the terrible results and effects of sin. So God is faithful in all things.

The Bible states many ways in which God is faithful. For instance, God is faithful in keeping His promises;

For as many as may be the promises of God, in Him they are yes; wherefore also by Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. (2 Co 1:20)

God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? (NUM 23:19)

Think of all the rebellion that the children of Israel fell into and yet God was faithful. Many times they were faithless but He was faithful! Why? Because in Titus 1:2, it is impossible for Him to lie. In Hebrews 10:23, He who promised is faithful. The permanence of God's character guarantees the fulfillment of his promises.

ISA 54:4-10 has an application to us and though it was said to the Jews, think how more applicable it is to the Church.

"Fear not, for you will not be put to shame; Neither feel humiliated, for you will not be disgraced; But you will forget the shame of your youth, And the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. For your husband is your Maker, Whose name is the Lord of hosts; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, Who is called the God of all the earth. For the Lord has called you, Like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, Even like a wife of {one's} youth when she is rejected, Says your God. For a brief moment I forsook you, But with great compassion I will gather you. In an outburst of anger I hid My face from you for a moment; But with everlasting lovingkindness I will have compassion on you, Says the Lord your Redeemer.

For this is like the days of Noah to Me; When I swore that the waters of Noah Should not flood the earth again, So I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, Nor will I rebuke you. For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, But My lovingkindness will not be removed from you, And My covenant of peace will not be shaken, Says the Lord who has compassion on you.”(ISA 54:5-10)

# RESPONDING TO THE POTTER'S WHEEL OF PROGRESS BY MEANS OF BROKENNESS.

04/03/11

The Potter's wheel of progress refers to such doctrinal principles such as that which Paul stated in:

2CO 4:15, For all things are for your sakes,

ROM 8:28, To those who love God causes all things to work together for good.

This means that whether the believer is progressing or retrogressing, the Potter's wheel is for our own benefit. In fact, many times what appears to be retrogressing is progressing, or what appears to be demotion is in reality promotion.

For those of you who have studied the doctrine of Spiritual Metabolism with me, it is like the principle of anabolism and catabolism. Metabolism is defined as the process that takes organic and inorganic substances such as proteins and water and changes them into energy for the physical body. Metabolism refers to the chemical changes in living cells by which energy is provided for activity and action. In metabolism, new material is taken in and digested to repair the waste. Just as metabolism takes place in the physical realm it also takes place in the spiritual realm. This is how the believer becomes strengthened or filled with spiritual energy. A very interesting process takes place in metabolism. For instance, there is what is known as anabolism:

Anabolism is that part of metabolism that is converted for good; it is called the constructive part of metabolism. It takes small cells of energy and enlarges them. Then there is catabolism which comes from the Greek kata bole which means to throw down, and that's the part that is broken down and destroyed - this process breaks down the cells which could be destructive. The Potter's wheel of progress does two things...it destroys some things that are no good and it builds you up. It's just like Bible Doctrine.

Bible doctrine doesn't always build you up; sometimes it tears you down. That is why the pastor-teacher is given delegated authority. For example, the apostle Paul said in 2CO 10:8, For even if I should boast somewhat further about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I shall not be put to shame, Or 2CO 13:10, For this reason I am writing these things while absent, in order that when present I may not use severity, in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me, for building up and not for tearing down.

So the Potter's wheel of progress includes both positive and negative feature. For the believer who responds to the Potter's wheel, the result is genuine humility followed by genuine brokenness that reveals to the humble and broken believer that his outward man and his inward man are not in harmony or agreement with one another. And therefore as AMO 3:3 says, Can two walk together, except they be agreed? This verse becomes a major issue in the spiritual life. So, just like in metabolism, it is the purpose of the Potter's wheel to strengthen the new man or nature while at the same time weakening the old man or the old nature. The believer who responds to the Potter's wheel of progress by means of genuine brokenness realizes the inability of his unregenerate man (old man)

to submit to the control of God the Holy Spirit rendering him incapable of obeying God. No matter what you think about mankind it's what God thinks that really counts.

ROM 3:10-18, as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one. Their throat is an open grave, With their tongues they keep deceiving, The poison of asps is under their lips Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; Their feet are swift to shed blood, Destruction and misery are in their paths, And the path of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Our Lord described the human race in ISA 1:5-6 when He said, Where will you be stricken again, as you continue in your rebellion? 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, Not pressed out or bandaged, Nor softened with oil.

JER 17:9, The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

PSA 39:5b, "Surely every man at his best is a mere breath. Selah."

ISA 64:6, "For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a menstrual rag;"

So, the clay that is being turned and broken will quickly discover that the greatest difficulty lies in the distractions and hindrances from the outward man as it hinders him from learning and advancing in God's plan. Remember, the three great enemies of the believer --- the world, the flesh and the devil. They seek to hinder us from glorifying God. These enemies do not want us to apply truth to our lives. They desire to enslave us to the circumstances of life and prevent our spiritual growth. We overcome these enemies as we maintain our fellowship with God, through daily operating in His power.

In the early chapters of Genesis, these three enemies are introduced to us in reverse order: The devil (Gen 3 - the temptation and fall); the flesh (4:1-15; "sin crouching at the door"); and, the world (4:16-26; where we see the descendants of Cain making progress, but it is progress without God.

Now, the goal of the Potter's wheel is two-fold: First, to teach us in ROM 6:6, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with {Him,} that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin;

GAL 5:24, Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Then secondly, EPH 4:24, and put on the new self, which in {the likeness of} God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Putting on the new self means that when we are living in God's power as the new man, we think as Christ thought. It means when we're tested to go independently of God, we value what Christ valued (the Father's will). Putting on the new man means when we are tempted to fear, we handle problems as Christ handled problems, with confidence and obedience. This is because God's servants are not

able to do even the most basic requirements because they have not only learned but also experienced that verse we noted on Wednesday evening;

MAT 26:41b, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Or they have struggled with JOH 3:30, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

For many believers, due to the distractions of the outward man, their spiritual life does not seem to function properly basically because the outward man has never been dealt with. Eventually, one way or another, the believer learns that there is just one basic element that can enable man to be useful before God: Brokenness.

We must learn and come to know that the vessel of honor who can serve and honor God is the one whose inward man can be released. However, there must be some brokenness on the part of the vessel for that which is within the vessel to leak out, or better yet to flow out. However, if we have never learned how to release our inward man by breaking through the outward man, we are not able to serve God properly. Nothing can hinder us so much as the outward man motivated by the OSN. Whether our works are fruitful or not depends upon whether our outward man has been broken so that the inward man can pass through that brokenness and come forth. This is the basic problem.

The Lord wants to break our outward man in order that the inward man may have a way out. When the inward man is released, both unbelievers and believers will be blessed. This is the principle of 2CO 4:12, So death works in us, but life in you. This is the motivation of the believer who has the attitude of the apostle Paul had described for us in such passages as;

ACT 20:24, But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

JOH 12:24, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

As usual the isagogics is important to this interpretation because our Lord's audience according to verse 20, was basically Greeks and resurrection was entirely foreign to the thinking of Greeks and Greek culture. However, at this time, the crowd has been intrigued by the fact that someone - namely Lazarus, - has been brought back from the dead. Now the Greeks are going to learn something about resurrection and they are going to understand it from the framework of their own culture and the purpose of death and brokenness. To the Greeks, they understood the principle of death and life which is what our Lord pointed to in JOH 12:24, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone;" To the Greeks, before the wheat comes up so that the Greek cities were provided for and preserved for another year, the seed must die before the roots emerge in the ground and the stalk comes up.

First of all, there must be a seed. In MAT 13:38, The people of God are the seed where the Lord takes His children and plants them in soil where they will produce the best results for Him.

Secondly, then the seed must fall into the earth and die; JOH 12:24, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone;"

Thirdly, the seed must be rooted into the ground. This speaks of the believer who in EPH 3:17b being rooted and grounded in virtue-love,

COL 2:7, "having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith,"

Fourth, it brings forth the harvest which provides and preserves for those who are in need, JOH 12:24, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

"it remains by itself alone" is the present active indicative of meno which describes the seed after it is planted. It keeps on being alone. It's a reference to the fact that when Jesus Christ was on the cross He was alone. When you are broken by the Potter's wheel of progress, you will also be alone.

GAL 6:5, For each one shall bear his own load.

PSA 23:4, Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil;

So, notice after death there is the multiplication of fruit. In resurrection and ascension is where there is multiplication of bearing much fruit, but on the Cross, Christ was not only unique as the God-Man but He was alone when bearing our sins. There can be no body of Christ, no dispensation of the Church, no believers in this Age until the cross occurs and Christ is. When He was on the cross God the Father poured out the sins of the world on Jesus Christ. This qualifies Jesus Christ to be the only celebrity in Christianity. HEB 2:9-14, by being alone, He brings many sons into glory.

So Jesus explains to the Greeks the necessity for the uniqueness of His death and His resurrection, and He explains it from a very common procedure, the standard operating procedure of the Greeks for a thousand years. The point that our Lord tells us in JOH 12:24, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Life is in the grain of wheat, but there is a shell, a very hard shell on the outside. As long as that shell is not split open, the wheat cannot grow.

What is this death? It is the cracking open of the shell through the working together of temperature, humidity, etc., in the soil.

Once the shell is split open, the wheat begins to grow. So the question here is not whether there is life within, but whether the outside shell is cracked open.

The Scripture continues by saying, JOH 12:25, "He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal."

The Lord shows us here that the outer shell is our own life, (our soul life) while the life within is the eternal life which He has given to us.



Now, when it says in JOH 12:25, "He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal."

To allow the inner life to come forth, it is imperative that the outward life be lost. Should the outward remain unbroken, the inward would never be able to come forth.

Therefore, let's look at that group of people who have the Lord's life. Among those who possess the life of the Lord can be found two distinct conditions:

1. One includes those in whom life is confined, restricted, imprisoned and unable to come forth.
2. The other includes those in whom the Lord has manufacture a way and life is thus released from them.

The question is not how to obtain life, but rather how to allow this life to come forth.

When we say, "We need the Lord to break us," this is not merely a way of speaking, nor is it only a doctrine. It is a vital principle that we be broken by the Lord. It is not that the life of the Lord cannot cover the earth, but rather that His life is imprisoned by us. It is not that the Lord cannot bless the Church, but that the Lord's life is so confined within the church, that there is no flowing forth. If the outward man remains unbroken, we can never be a blessing to His Church, and we cannot expect the Word to be blessed by God through us.

# GOD'S INTENTION THAT YOU JUST FLOW THROUGH LIFE AND PRODUCE FRUIT.

04/10/11

Have you ever wondered why God doesn't just zap us up out of this chaotic world once we have made a decision to believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ? What is the reason for leaving us behind here on planet earth?

What is the Christian life all about once we become Christians? What comes after salvation?

You may answer the question by saying: Well God needs us on the earth to tell others about Him! But, if that were the case why did our Lord say to some of the Pharisees "I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!" (LUK 19:39-40)

So, what is the reason for leaving us behind?

JOH 15:16, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and {that} your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you."

The apostle Paul said in ROM 7:4, Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God.

In the parable of the sower the Lord speaks about four categories of those who hear the Word. The second and the third category were those ones that became unfruitful, while in the last one, in the commendable category, those "who hears the Word and understands it who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

What God intended for Christians was not just to believe but also to change. If we remain the same kind of tree as we were before and produce the same kind of fruit we were providing before, something is wrong. Our fruitfulness does matter to God.

It is not God's intention that you just flow through life. God created you a unique creature, He gifted YOU, and He did that uniquely, and then He also commissioned and empowered you to do one thing: to go forth and bring fruit.

God has gifted each and every child of His, from the youngest to the oldest, from the poorest to the richest. He has gifted them uniquely and desires for them to bear much fruit. JOH 15:8, "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and {so} prove to be My disciples."

Notice JOH 15:1-2, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every {branch} that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit."

The point is that God the Father rejoices when His children produce fruit. This is why He takes special care to prune, to cleanse, those that bring fruit so that they bring more! The Father does not want to just have vine branches. He wants them to become fruitful branches, branches that give fruit to their full potential. And He does so because it is to their own benefit that they do.

“In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” (ACT 20:35)

Today many believers are sitting idle on the sidelines, waiting for somebody else to run the show for them. Professionals, they are not. Take Peter and the others - most of them fishermen of the first century were not professionals in this sense. They didn’t graduate from any seminary, nor did they need to. The only degree they had was the one in fishing.

There are others again that though they have believed, you can really see no fruit or change in their life. We must be very careful here, because we don’t want to become legalistic or works oriented and misinterpret passages like JAM 2:14, What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save or deliver him?

Or in JAM 2:18-20, But someone may well say, “You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.” You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

Are you willing to be shown proof, that faith apart from good works is inactive and ineffective and worthless?

JAM 2:21-23, Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," and he was called the friend of God.

Abraham's faith was cooperating with his works, and his faith was completed and reached its supreme expression when he implemented it by [good] works. Abraham believed in, trusted in, and relied on, God, and this faith was accredited to him or imputed to him as righteousness.

Jam 24-26, You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone. And in the same way was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works, when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

Christian life without change, or the Christian life without fruit, is an oxymoron. An oxymoron is a figure of speech in which two words with opposite meanings are used together intentionally for effect; Therefore, it is a contradiction in terms.

For example, let me give you a sentence or two which will give you a clear illustration of an oxymoron:

It’s an “open secret” that the “larger half” in the marriage is “clearly confused”.

The point is that the serious believer does not compromise or settle for less. The believer who has experienced genuine brokenness from responding to the Potter's wheel of progress, wants to get closer and closer to God the Father and His Son. They want to manifest a love and passion that protects them from REV 3:15-16, "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth."

As the Potter over the clay, the believer who has this sought of passion for God is one who has passion and love for the Lord Jesus Christ and fulfills 1CO 16:22 and never falls into REV 3:15-16.

1CO 16:22, If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed. Maranatha.

The word for love is the pres-act-ind of phileo which means a personal, more passionate love that is pleasurable and precious experientially as well as emotionally. It has the connotation of a love that is more emotionally dependent and therefore, in the invisible realm, it connotes an emphasis on the personal.

So, the question emerges: What is fruit? Putting it simply, fruit is a changed life, a Christ centered life, a life where we have died to ourselves so that Christ will live through us, (GAL 2:19-20). Godly fruit is a life that seeks to satisfy God rather than self or people. A life whose central theme, focus and priority is the plan of God.

Let's see what the Scripture says:

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (EPH 2:10)

God has already prepared the good works in which we should walk; He has already gifted each one us uniquely, like a tree planted and destined to make fruit. All that we have to do is to walk in what God has already prepared. Doing this is destined to please the Father and bring forth fruit. Whether our works are fruitful or not depends upon whether our outward man has been broken by the Lord so that the inward man can pass through that brokenness and come forth.

This is the basic problem. The Lord wants to break our outward man in order that the inward man may have a way out. When the inward man is released, both unbelievers and Christians will be blessed.

The Lord Jesus tells us in JOH 12:24, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

Life is in the grain of wheat, but there is a shell, a very hard shell on the outside. As long as that shell is not split open, the wheat cannot grow.

What is this death? It is the cracking open of the shell through the working together of temperature, humidity, etc., in the soil. Once the shell is split open, the wheat begins to grow.

So the question here is not whether there is life within, but whether the outside shell is cracked open enough. The Scripture continues by saying, JOH 12:25, "He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal."

The Lord shows us here that the outer shell is our own life, (our soul life) while the life within is the eternal life which He has given to us. To allow the inner life to come forth, it is imperative that the outward life be lost. Should the outward remain unbroken, the inward would never be able to come forth.

Therefore, let's look at that group of people who have the Lord's life. Among those who possess the life of the Lord can be found two distinct conditions:

1. Those in whom life is confined, restricted, imprisoned and unable to come forth.
2. Those in whom the Lord has manufacture a way and life is thus released from them.

The question is not how to obtain life, but rather how to allow this life to come forth. When we say, we need the Lord to break us, this is not merely a way of speaking, nor is it only a doctrine. It is a vital principle that we be broken by the Lord. It is not that the life of the Lord cannot cover the earth, but rather that His life is imprisoned by us. It is not that the Lord cannot bless the Church, but that the Lord's life is so confined within the church, that there is no flowing forth. If the outward man remains unbroken, we can never be a blessing to His Church, and we cannot expect the Word to be blessed by God through us.

In MAR 14:1-10, After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people. And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. And Jesus said, "Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.

The Bible tells of the pure spikenard or perfume used as being very precious; to show that it is truly spiritual. But if the alabaster box is not broken, the pure spikenard will not flow forth.

Strange to say, many are still treasuring the alabaster box, thinking that its value exceeds that of the ointment. Many think that their outward man is more precious than their inward man. This becomes the problem in the Church. One will treasure his cleverness, thinking he is quite important; another will treasure his own emotions, esteeming himself as an important person. Others highly regard themselves, feeling they are better than others, their eloquence surpasses that of others, their actions and exactness of judgment are superior, and so forth.

However, we are not antique collectors; we are not vase admirers; we are those who desire to smell only the fragrance of the ointment. Without the breaking of the outward, the inward will not come forth. And so, individually we have no life or fragrant aroma flowing out of us, and as a result, the Church does not have it as well. By church, I mean the one you are a part of.

Why then should we hold the life that we possess as being so precious, if our outward life contains, instead of releases, the fragrance? The Holy Spirit in union with the Potter's wheel has not ceased working. One event after another, one thing after another, comes to us. Each working of the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the Potter's wheel has but one purpose: To break our outward man so that our inward man may come through.

Yet here is our difficulty: We complain and fuss over petty things, we murmur at small losses. We mock at verses like PHI 2:14, Keep on doing all things without complaining, grumbling or arguing; Instead, we say I'm not keeping one bit of this quiet, I'm laying it all out on the table; my complaining to heaven is bitter, but honest. Then as JOB 7:11 says, Therefore, I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

Look at NUM 11:1, Now the people became like those who complain of adversity in the hearing of the Lord; and when the Lord heard it, His anger was kindled, and the fire of the Lord burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp.

When the people complained it displeased the Lord. You wouldn't want to do that, would you? These types of individuals are usually failures.

JUD 1:16, These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.

The Lord is preparing a way to use us, yet we are too busy fighting against Him...even to the extent of quarreling with God and becoming negative in our attitude.

How about this attitude instead? I am Thankful...I am thankful for the husband who complains; when his dinner is not on time because he is home with me. For the teenagers who complain about doing dishes because that means they are at home and not on the streets. For the taxes that I pay, because it means that I am employed. For the mess to clean after a party, because it means that I have been surrounded by friends. For the clothes that fit a little too snug, because it means I have enough to eat. For my shadow that watches me work, because it means I am out in the sunshine. For a lawn that needs mowing, windows that need cleaning, and gutters that need fixing, because it means I have a home.

For all the complaining I hear about the government, because it means that we have freedom of speech. For the parking spot I find at the far end of the parking lot, because it means I am capable of walking and that I have been blessed with transportation.

For my huge heating bill, because it means I am warm. For the lady behind me in church that sings off key, because it means that I can hear. For the pile of laundry and ironing, because it means I have clothes to wear. For weariness and aching muscles at the end of the day, because it means I have been capable of working hard. For the alarm that goes off in the early morning hours, because it means that

I am alive. And finally for a pastor who reads corny things like this to me because it means I have someone thinking of me.

# EASTER SPECIAL 2011

04/24/11

Something went on that first Easter morning that was very strange and definitely over-looked. I'd like to begin with an illustration that I heard recently that motivated me to go in the direction we will go in this morning. One night a man was dreaming that God the Father was taking him through the universe and they were traveling from galaxy to galaxy until they finally stopped at one particular planet. As they got closer and closer to this planet, the man noticed that this particular planet was entirely inhabited by dogs, and he was puzzled by that.

They were dirty and filthy and nasty vicious dogs. The man said to God the Father, "Why are you showing me this?" God the Father said, "Well you see, I happen to love those dogs! I know that their dirty and filthy and nasty vicious creatures, but I still happen to love them." "In fact," God said, "that's why I'm showing them to you because I want you to go down there and tell them that I love them." So the man willing to obey God the Father said that he would.

Then the Father said, "Well you need to understand something else, when you go down there to give them the message that I love them, they're not going to receive it. In fact, they're going to tear you in pieces and kill you. But that's okay because I'll resurrect you! And so the man said, "Okay whatever you want I'll do for you!" Then the Father said, "Well there's something else that you need to understand, in order to go down there and give that message, you'll have to become a dog." And so the man said, "Well you're the boss, whatever you say!" And then the Father said, "But there's one more thing you need to understand, that even when you go down there and deliver that message and they tear you to pieces and I resurrect you, you'll have to remain a dog forever!"

Suddenly this silly little childish illustration takes a rather sobering turn. Because you and I tend to presume that when the Creator of the universe became a man and dwelt among us that that was only for 33 and a half years. We also presume that when He went to the Cross and died for us and was resurrected three days later, that somehow He finished all the work and it was all over. However, the thing that we fail to really comprehend, which is God becoming a man, is far more involved that you and I have any ability to imagine. Perhaps that's when 2CO 8:9 might become more of a reality to us when it says, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."

When we first study the Bible and become aware of God's truth, probably the first thing that hits us is the incarnation. The incarnation is a theological term for the coming of God's Son into the world as a human being. Jesus participated fully in all that it means to live a human life. He became hungry, thirsty, tired etc. In fact, the ability of the Lord Jesus Christ to reveal God to us and to bring salvation depends upon His being fully God and fully man at the same time. Our human minds cannot understand how Jesus can be both fully God and fully man. We realize EXO 33:20, "No man can see God and live!" We realize 1TI 6:16, "He dwells in unapproachable light."

Therefore, can we only know Him from a distance? No! God has come near in the person of Jesus, 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."

God has taken on a form in which He can be seen, experienced and understood by us as human beings.



And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, (JOH 1:14)

No man has seen God [the Father] at any time; the only begotten God [God the Son], who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him. (JOH 1:18)

Our Lord Jesus Christ lived out His human life by experiencing all the pressures, temptations, and limitations that we experience.

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. (HEB 4:15)

He can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness; (HEB 5:2)

The concept that the Creator of the universe became a man and dwelt among us and actually walked on the earth as a man is a staggering concept. As you grow spiritually and begin to understand the gulf that exists between God and man, another amazing truth is that on the throne of God is a man. I would like to present to you something that I never really considered until recently. Something that I think the majority has overlooked.

“Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades he [the rich man] lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame.’” (LUK 16:22-24)

Notice that the rich man recognized Lazarus after he had died! However, there is something strange found in the Gospels and that is the fact that after our Lord was resurrected, there seems to be a problem...not a big one but one that seems to be overlooked. You can't help but notice that from that resurrection day, from that morning on, everybody seems to have trouble recognizing Him. This took place on the first Easter morning which of course should not be called Easter from the pagan goddess Ishtar but should be called Resurrection Day.

In JOH 20:11, But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping;

This is Mary Magdalene. Remember that Mary Magdalene witnessed most of the events surrounding the crucifixion while all the apostles with the exception of John ran away and forsook the Lord Jesus Christ.

and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; and she beheld two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. And they said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.” When she had said this, she turned around, and beheld Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. (JOH 20:11-14).

Notice, she did not know Him. The rich man recognized Lazarus. But here is a woman who walked and talked with our Lord for three years, and she was very close to Him but...did not recognize Him.

This was not a casual acquaintance. She loved Him. Not many days ago she washed His feet with her tears. But now she didn't recognize Him. She didn't know that it was Jesus.

Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher). (JOH 20:15-16)

Notice that she didn't realize who He was until she heard His voice. She recognized the voice because she had heard His voice so many times before but she thought our Lord in His resurrection form was nothing but the gardener.

The question you should ask is why? Now, if it was just this passage you might find some way to rationalize why she couldn't recognize Him. This was early in the morning and maybe she was emotionally drained because of all she had been through. So let's go to early afternoon in Luk 24. In that afternoon we have a couple of guys who are on their way to Emmaus.

And behold, two of them [these are disciples] were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. And they were conversing with each other about all these things which had taken place [that is in Jerusalem]. And it came about that while they were conversing and discussing, Jesus Himself approached, and {began} traveling with them. But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. (LUK 24:13-16)

I wonder why? Now these guys were at the Cross three days ago and they will even be in the upper room in the evening. They were not casual acquaintances of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, they also did not recognize who He is. They're going to, before the trip is over, something is going to tip them off.

And He said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?" And they stood still, looking sad. And one of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, "Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?"

(LUK 24:17-18)

The Lord walks right up to them and says, "What are you talking about?" They turned around said, "Where have you been, don't you know what's been going on in Jerusalem?" Now, if you want some scriptural proof that Jesus Christ has a sense of humor, look at LUK 24:19, And He said to them, "What things?" Here's our Lord who just three days ago was arrested in the middle of the night, put through six illegal trials, was beaten so much He no longer looked human, was crucified on the Cross, buried, resurrected from the dead that morning, and He can look them in the eye with a straight face and say "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him up to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that He was alive. And some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see." And He [the Lord] said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!" (LUK 24:20-25)

Then in verse 26, the Lord begins to speak to them in the third person, He says to them: "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" He's talking to them and they don't know who He is and He just plays along! Then He gives them a seven mile Bible study.

And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. (LUK 24:27)

How would you like to be these guys walking with Christ for seven miles and having Him teach you all the Scriptures in the Old Testament concerning Himself.

And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He would go farther. And they urged Him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is {getting} toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." And He went in to stay with them. Now notice they still do not recognize Him. And it came about that when He had reclined {at the table} with them, He took the bread and blessed {it,} and breaking {it,} He {began} giving {it} to them. (LUK 24:27-30)

That's weird because in a Jewish household the one who breaks the bread and passes it is the host not a guest. And so in LUK 24:31, And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight.

That finally had to get to get their attention, I imagine! However, I want you to notice that they only recognized Him in the breaking of the bread! What did they see when He broke the bread? They saw the nail scarred hands!

ZEC 13:6 tells us what they saw, "And one will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your arms?' Then he will say, {Those} with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."

PSA 22:16, "They pierced my hands and my feet."

So, they have walked with Him for seven miles. He has taught them the Scriptures, and it blew them away. You can tell by what they said in LUK 24:32, And they said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?" They didn't realize who He was until they saw the nail prints. Now that's strange! Why can't they look in His face and see who He is.

And they arose that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them. They immediately went back that seven miles to go tell the disciples. saying, "The Lord has really risen, and has appeared to Simon." And they {began} to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread. (LUK 24:33-35)

You see again they link the recognition of him to the breaking of the bread.

And while they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst. But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. (LUK 24:36-37)

The fact that they were startled we can understand but this says that were also frightened.

And He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." (LUK 24:38-39)

He is not a transparency or a spirit. He is tangible.

[And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.] And while they still could not believe {it} for joy and were marveling, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; and He took it and ate {it} before them. (LUK 24:40-43)

Why can't they look in His face and see who He was? The disciples are in Galilee, and they are frustrated, they're frightened and confused. They're trying to sought through what is going on. When you're under a lot of stress, it's usually good to resort to some activity, which you will have success in. Remember these guys were fishermen. Four of them were partners in the fishing business. So what's natural for them to do? Go fishing.

Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will also come with you." They went out, and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing. But when the day was now breaking [morning], Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus therefore said to them, "Children, you do not have any fish, do you?" They answered Him, "No." And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you will find {a catch}." They cast therefore, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish. That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved [John] said to Peter, "It is the Lord." And so when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment on (for he was stripped {for work}), and threw himself into the sea. (JOH 21:3-7)

There goes Peter again, ready-fire-aim. So he jumps in the water and starts swimming to the Lord.

But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about one hundred yards away, dragging the net {full} of fish. And so when they got out upon the land, they saw a charcoal fire {already} laid, and fish placed on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have now caught." Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come {and} have breakfast." None of the disciples ventured to question Him, "Who are You?" knowing that it was the Lord. (JOH 21:8-12)

What's John trying to say here? None of the disciples ventured to question Him, "Who are You?" because they knew it was the Lord. And I want you to notice that every time we look through the scripture, every time He appears there seems to be some kind of a doubt concerning who He is. Let's see if we can understand why. Now, as we have noted there are many prophecies in the Old Testament, which are fulfilled in the New, and so it probably shouldn't surprise us to discover, there are more detailed descriptions of the crucifixion in the Old Testament than in the New.

Psa 22 was written by David, but it reads as if it was dictated by Jesus Christ as He hung on the Cross. It opens and closes with the first and last words on the Cross PSA 22:1, My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?

PSA 22:14, I am poured out like water, And all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It is melted within me.

PSA 22:16, For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet.

This is describing crucifixion, which they did not practice in David's day and this was written eight centuries before Christ was born.

PSA 22:17 I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me;

PSA 22:31 They will come and will declare His righteousness To a people who will be born, that He has performed {it.} [the Hebrew says It is finished]

And you all know that the last thing the Lord said was Tetelestai, JOH 19:30 "It is finished!"

However, I think our answer to why no one could recognize the Lord is found in Isa 53.

Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no {stately} form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being {fell} upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living, For the transgression of my people to whom the stroke {was due?} His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth. But the Lord was pleased To crush Him, putting {Him} to grief; If He would render Himself {as} a guilt offering, He will see {His} offspring, He will prolong {His} days, And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand. As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see {it} and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors. (ISA 53:1-12)

You must remember that chapters and verses were added in the 13th or 14th century and this one of those places where they did not make a good break. The passage should begin with ISA 52:13-14, Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up, and greatly exalted. Just as many were astonished at you, {My people,} So His appearance was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men.

The Hebrew says that His face was so marred from looking like a man that His appearance was not that of a son of man or He did not look human! Remember what they did to our Lord three days before His resurrection in Ma 26:67, Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him,

MAT 27:30, And they spat on Him, and took the reed and {began} to beat Him on the head.

The Roman soldiers before the cross beat Him up so badly that He was a bloody mess. Now how bad did they beat Him up? Well in Isa 50 and I suspect that here we have a clue as to what was going on that resurrection morning and resurrection day.

ISA 50:6 I gave My back to those who strike {Me,} And My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting.

Note that they ripped off His beard and that His face was smashed. He must have looked so different without His beard and with all the wounds in His resurrection body. He must have had scar tissue where the beard use to be. You see, the question is in Jesus' resurrection body does He bear scars...and the answer is of course.

The nail prints, the wound in the side, the marks on his head from the crown of thorns.

As Zechariah prophesied in ZEC 13:6, "And one will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your arms?' Then he will say, ' {Those} with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'" The point is that if His beard was ripped off what does His face look like? I think it's disfigured! That's what ISA 52:14 suggests.

Let me give you a few translations; ISA 52:14, Just as there were many who were appalled at him-- his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness-- (NIV)

ISA 52:14 They shall stand dumbfounded, speechless in his presence. They shall see my Servant beaten and bloodied, so disfigured one would scarcely know it was a person standing there. So shall he cleanse many nations. (TLB)

If it's true that His resurrected body will bear the wounds He endured on the cross, than think of what He is going to look like in the eternal state. You and I will have a perfect body without scars and wounds, our Lord will not! As ZEC 12:10 says, "They will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born. They will see His nail prints, they will see the wound in His side. The only man made things in heaven for all of eternity will be the scars upon TLJC. In REV 5:6, John saw Him in heaven, And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain,

Now had been slain but as if slain. If you take that literally, like I believe that you should, then we should believe that He was there standing in heaven with His wounds. The question that lurks in our minds is "I wonder what His face looks like?"

I'm told of a story of a woman who has a little girl. The woman happen to have a very bad disfigured face. And when the little girl went to school, the kids made fun of her and teased her because of the strange appearance of her mother...you know how cruel kids can be. Often the little girl came home crying because she didn't know how to deal with this, having her mother made fun of by all these kids.

One day when the girl was old enough, the mother explained to the little girl that when she was a baby there was a fire in the apartment and she was able to rescue the little girl by enduring very serious burns. And the result the fire left on the mother....was the disfigurement of her face among other things. From that day on the little girl was not embarrassed anymore...because every time she looked into her mother's face, she knew how much she was loved. I think most of us recognize that the physical aspect of the cross is probably the least significant of what it cost our Lord so that you and I might have eternal life. But I wonder.....that when we're in heaven and we look into His face; I wonder if we're going to get a glimpse of just how much He loved us so that you and I might live with Him for all eternity.

# EVERY INDIVIDUAL IS PRECIOUS TO GOD; BELIEVER AND UNBELIEVER, HE DIED FOR US ALL!

May 01, 2011

In ROM 9:22, Paul is still dealing with the principle of vessels as they are related to the New Testament passages. In ROM 9:21, he tells us about one the vessel of honor and the vessel of dishonor. In 2TI 2:20, vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor.

However, in ROM 9:22, the apostle Paul tells us about the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction and in verse 23 the vessels of mercy which He prepared beforehand for glory. In other words, God is using one type of vessel designed to show his angry displeasure, while another type to reveal His glory and graciousness.

PRO 16:4, The Lord has made everything for its own purpose, Even the wicked for the day of evil.

God has made everything with a place and purpose; even the wicked are included.

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

JOB 21:30, "For the wicked is reserved for the day of calamity; They will be led forth at the day of fury.

Satan may even use carnal negative believers to distract positive believers from the PPOG. In fact, the only reason God sustains the lives of some negative believers is to use them to train others. I didn't call them an echthros tou Theou - enemy of God, the Holy Spirit did! God the Holy Spirit so supernaturally directed this half brother of Jesus Christ, who was not a believer until after the resurrection, to record in perfect accuracy in the original languages of Scripture, the very words of God. This without tampering with his human intelligence, or individuality, or personal feelings or any other human factor.

God inspired James to put into writing God's complete and distinct message to man recorded in perfect accuracy that there were in the early Church "enemies of God." This is called verbal plenary inspiration of the Scripture. These "enemies of God", JAM 4:4, are still members of the royal family around today and the only role they can play in the glorification of Christ is to be a test for positive believers.

Because of their own failures to execute the PPOG, they become merely a means of building strength in someone else. Obviously, this is not a Christian's highest calling. These subtle self-righteous Christians are sometimes very sweet, sincere, and highly legalistic individuals who have distorted Christianity into a religion of human good works. They may be moral degenerates rather than immoral degenerates. Jesus called them "ravenous wolves in sheep's clothing," MAT 7:15. Paul said they were slaves to their own lusts,  
(ROM 16:17-18).

Satan's servants who disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, 2CO 11:13-15.



False brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty, GAL 2:4.

Hypocrites and liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, 1TI 4:2.

Evil men and impostors, 2TI 3:13.

Again, all falling under the principle that in ROM 9:22-23, God is using one type of vessel designed to show His angry displeasure, while another type to reveal His glory and graciousness. Our subject is the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction or the vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory.

God paid a great price for all unbelievers. We noted this under the principle of the phrase found in ROM 9:22 and ROM 9:23. 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 And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, In both cases we dealt with the noun translated vessels which is the nominative plural of the Greek noun skeuos used for containers in the ancient world and here it is without the definite article "the" placed in front of it.

In the Greek language, the linguistic rule is that the absence of the definite article emphasizes the high quality or price that God sets on that which is mentioned, here it refers to all unbelievers. In other words; God placed a great value upon and paid a great price for all unbelievers. There are two important doctrines that reveal how precious every individual is to God. You might wonder why? The answer to that question is simple. It is that God sees potential. God sees the possible.

ROM 3:10, There is none righteous, not even one;

ROM 3:23, For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

God sees the potential. God sees the possible.

MAT 19:23-26, And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." And when the disciples heard {this,} they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?" And looking upon {them} Jesus said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Let us consider, in context, what our Lord was showing by His illustration. His context has to do with entering the kingdom of GOD. In the previous chapter He had warned that in MAT 18:9, "And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out, and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into the fiery hell."

In MAT 19:13-14, Then {some} children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

We all know the eagerness and excitement children have for learning. Children never seem to tire of asking, "how come?" or "Why"? If we are to discover that hidden kingdom of GOD, we also must not

only remove from us anything that may offend, but also we must with childlike meekness ask to receive answers and knock so as to have doors opened unto us.

In Mark's gospel, concerning this very same passage, we come to one verse in question. A wealthy man had come to the Lord Jesus Christ seeking what he must do to "inherit eternal life".

After hearing the Lord's response, Mark wrote in MAR 10:22, But at these words his face fell, and he went away grieved, for he was one who owned much property.

He was sad, and he was grieved because the Lord's response was not the answer he had hoped for. He didn't realize that greater wealth than he had ever dreamed of could be his if he accepted the Lord's answer. This man was as the seed sown amongst thorns. He was acquainted with accumulating "great possessions" but he was not acquainted with laying up "treasure in heaven."

"And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, and the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful." (MAR 4:18-19)

And as He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and {began} asking Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments, 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'" And he said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up." And looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But at these words his face fell, and he went away grieved, for he was one who owned much property. (MAR 10:17-22)

He may have known "the commandments" but he didn't know the Word of GOD. It is interesting that before the Lord gave him his answer, the Scripture says that the Lord "loved him". The Lord didn't desire to deprive this rich man of his wealth. He was simply showing him the way into the kingdom of GOD. The Lord was offering him treasures much more superior to any that moth and rust could corrupt. The desire for riches is not to be underestimated in its ability to deceive and divert one from the narrow way that leads unto life. Many people living in the Bible lands at the time when the Gospels were written erroneously believed that all wealth was a blessing from GOD. If one was poor, then the people believed that he must surely be cursed by GOD, but if one was rich he must surely be blessed by GOD. This is why the disciples then "were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?" (see MAR 10:26)

They thought that if the rich found it difficult to enter the kingdom of GOD, what chance did the rest of them have? Much of the Lord's teaching endeavored to correct the false assumption that wealth is always a blessing from God. The truth is more the other way. Usually the pursuit of wealth separates us from the workings of God in our lives.

But those who desire to get rich fall into temptation and a trap also into many stupid and harmful desires or lusts which drown those individuals into ruin and destruction. For you see the love of money keeps on being a root of all sorts of evil through which [love for money] certain ones by intensively desiring it [money] have gone astray from the doctrine and pierced themselves with many types of pain. (1TI 6:9-10)

It can choke the word sown in our hearts and rob us of eternal treasures God desires for us to obtain. Many stumble at this and are sad and go away grieved, having found no answer that pleases them. A few however are willing to set aside secondary pursuits and seek with all their heart to know Him who knew them “before the foundation of the world” (EPH 1:4).

“For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s shall save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?”

So, there are two important doctrines that reveal how precious every individual is to God.

(MAR 8:35-36)

The doctrine of the tree of life.

The tree of life is associated with perfect life and environment in the Garden, as well as the perpetuation of right relationship with God in the Garden,

And out of the ground the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (GEN 2:9)

Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.” (GEN 3:22)

Then man sinned and was driven out of the Garden, he was cut off from the tree of life, (GEN 3:24).

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. (GEN 3:24)

The tree of life is not seen again by man until the Eternal state.

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.” (REV 2:7)

In the middle of its street. And on either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (REV 22:2)

Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. (REV 22:14)

The tree of life is related to doctrine.

How blessed is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gains understanding. For its profit is better than the profit of silver, And its gain than fine gold. She is more precious than jewels; And nothing you desire compares with her. Long life is in her right hand; In her left hand are riches and

honor. Her ways are pleasant ways, And all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who hold her fast. (PRO 3:13-18)

Positive volition is related to the tree of life in PRO 13:12, Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

The tree of life will be located forever in the New Jerusalem.

In the middle of its street. And on either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (REV 22:2)

Eternal happiness is associated with the tree of life, REV 22:14, Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.

The doctrine of the Unlimited Atonement defined as the saving work of Christ on the cross.

Atonement is the reconciliation between God and man, accomplished by the efficacious sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross. Hence, unlimited atonement and propitiation remove the barrier between God and man, so that every person in the human race can have eternal salvation.

# THE BOOK OF LIFE AND HOW EVERY INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER OR UNBELIEVER IS TO GOD.

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In ROM 9:22-23, we are noting two phrases that reveal how precious every individual including believer or unbeliever is to God. The Bible speaks of vessels of mercy and vessels of destruction, which God specifically made for His purpose, ROM 9:21-22. We have to be careful here because whether you are a vessel of wrath or a vessel of mercy, both have been prepared by God.

There are two important doctrines that reveal how precious every individual is to God:

1. The Doctrine of the Book of life.
2. The Doctrine of the Unlimited Atonement.

We have been noting the first one, the Book of life. In eternity past the book of life is a registry containing the names of every member of the human race who would ever be born. In time, the book of life has to do with a two-fold concept:

1. All members of the human race who are alive, both believers and unbelievers.
2. A registry of all believers and also those who will be rewarded as winner believers or overcomers.

Please notice that there is a two-fold concept here before we go on with our teaching. We have been looking at the winner believer and have noted what belongs to him as a principle which we have noted in the past. First of all, the winner believer is mentioned as a distinct individual in the book of revelation, (see REV 2:7,11, 17, 26, 3:5, 12, 21). The winner is also mentioned one other time in REV 21:7.

However, there is a difference between overcoming the world and being a winner in the eternal state.

To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. for you were elected for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. (1PE 3:8-9)

Notice again that blessing is related to election. The first thing that is obvious about your blessings being deposited in eternity past is that under the principle of election, you could never work for any divine blessing in time. All divine blessings were willed for you by God before you were alive to perform any good deed. That's why EPH 1:3-4 says, 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, [he blessed us] just as He elected us in Him before the foundation of the world,

Long before you existed, your blessings were designed just for you. Therefore, we could not possibly earn or work or deserve blessing. This means that we are not blessed by personality improvement, by morality, by self-sacrifice or by Christian service. These things are only meritorious if they happen to result from maturity and spirituality but they are not the means. Many of these blessings become yours in time only when you fulfill the purpose of election. You can only fulfill the

purpose of election when you stay out of the devil's world, the cosmic system, and live in the PPOG. This wealth was deposited in eternity past for those believers who reach the point of maturity and who are consistent and have proper motivation from metabolized doctrine.

This is why Paul said in COL 2:2 that their hearts [or their right lobes] may be encouraged,

There are two things in life that you must have no matter who you are, what you are, or where you're going. You must have motivation in life. You must have a dynamic mental attitude. From your motivation and mental attitude comes your capacity for life and happiness and blessing.

that their hearts may be encouraged, (through metabolized doctrine), having been knit together by means of love [the filling of the spirit and impersonal unconditional love], and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding. (COL 2:2)

The full assurance of understanding points to the riches or the wealth that God has for us. And this results in the true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself.

In whom [the Lord Jesus Christ] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (COL 2:3)

All treasures are hidden in Christ. They were placed in Christ in the heavens or in eternity past. So many people are motivated to find earthly treasure. There are all kinds of records and books written about people searching for treasure. But we as believers have the greatest treasure of all and it's right here in COL 2:3, "In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Your motivation for treasure hunting is revealed by your daily availability to Bible doctrine. Everyone of us should be willing everyday to take in Bible doctrine because that Bible doctrine is the greatest treasure in the history of the human race. And this is when such principles of doctrine emerge such as; DEU 28:12, "The Lord will open for you his good storehouse."

The apostle Paul mentions both election and the tremendous blessings that accompany the believer's salvation in EPH 1:17-18, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling [His electing you], what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

What is the hope of His election? It is the fact that everyone of us will have God's very highest and best. That's why Peter said in 2PE 1:10, Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make His calling and election sure; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;

Why would we ever have to make His calling us and electing us sure, if election meant that God chooses you and your free will has nothing to do with it? And what part of election are we to make sure if all that election means is salvation? In eternity, it is the registry of all believers forever. We will note under the doctrine of the unlimited atonement and the divine decrees that when a person dies as an unbeliever, his name is removed from the book of life. Therefore, in eternity future only the names of believers are in the book of life (see PHI 4:3; REV 13:8; REV 17:8; REV 20:12,15, 21:7).

And he stood on the sand of the seashore. And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous

names. And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; and they worshiped the dragon, because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?" And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. (REV 13:1-8)

I want you to notice the phrase the book of life of the Lamb. If not, you're going to be confused by this because in eternity, this book also contains the new title of royalty for each winner believer or overcomer.

In REV 17:8, "The beast that you saw was and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth will wonder, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come."

In REV 20:12, And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

Then in REV 21:24-27, And the nations shall walk by its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it. And in the daytime (for there shall be no night there) its gates shall never be closed; and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

So, a number of passages in the Bible refer to a book called the "the book of life," a figurative expression that originated in the ancient world. For example, an ancient custom was to keep the various kinds of genealogical records as in a book known as a book of life as in NEH 7:5. This was a natural book for all residents who were born. They would also have a book of life for registering citizens for numerous purposes, (JER 22:30; EZE 13:9).

Therefore, when it comes to books, God is represented as having records of men, of their works, and of God's dealings with them. One such record is called "The book of life." That's why we read in Rev 20:12, And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

In addition to the book of life, there are other categories of records or books mentioned in Scripture.

These are: (a) Book of Wars: NUM 21:14. This was a collection of war songs celebrating the glorious acts of God on behalf of Israel. (b) The Book of Jasher: JOS 10:13; 2SA 1:18. This was an early chronicle of the history of Israel. (c) Book of Remembrance: MAL 3:16-17; PSA 56:8.

Then those who feared [respected or revered] 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. "And they will be Mine, says the Lord of hosts, on the day that I prepare {My} own possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him." (MAL 3:16-17)

This was a book of remembrance for special blessings and rewards for faithfulness. (d) Book of Those Physically Alive (a dooms day book EXO 32:32-33). This refers to a register of the physically living. To be blotted out meant to experience physical death; (EXO 17:14; DEU 29:20; PSA 9:5-6). (e) The Book of Works: REV 20:12-13.

This consists of a record of the deeds of unbelievers as a basis of their judgment proving they all fall short of the righteousness of Jesus Christ; DAN 7:9-10; ROM 3:19-24. Therefore, when the phrase the "book of life" is used in the New Testament, everyone knew exactly the connotation of what was being said.

#### Point 2. Passages Referring to the Book of Life.

One of the first passages that reference the book of life is the Exodus passage when the Jews made the golden calf. Moses became very angry with them but still interceded on their behalf before the Lord. So we pick up the passage in EXO 32:30-33, And it came about on the next day that Moses said to the people, "You yourselves have committed a great sin; and now I am going up to the Lord, perhaps I can make atonement for your sin. Then Moses returned to the Lord, and said, "Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. But now, if Thou wilt, forgive their sin and if not, please blot me out from Thy book which Thou hast written!" And the Lord said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book."

The sin mentioned in this passage is the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ and His word and the worshipping of golden calf. However, here the book is a reference to the registry of life on this earth. This is why Moses said in EXO 32:32, "But now, if Thou wilt, forgive their sin and if not, please blot me out from Thy book which Thou hast written!" Now, one of the responsibilities that Moses had was to develop a registry of the tribes and families of Israel. Not only that, but also to record respectively, the acts and different transactions in the desert and in the promise land that they would be responsible for.

This is why under the doctrine of requirement that there is one point in the doctrine that a lot of believers overlook. That is the principle of omission and accountability. Moses developed a registry of the tribes and families of Israel and their responsibilities in the desert and in the promise land. However, the Bible says that they would still be responsible even though they refused to listen. For example, in DEU 18:17, "And the Lord said to me, "They have spoken well."

"I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him." (DEU 18:18-19)



Some believers are stupid enough to think that if they don't listen to the word of God that they will not have to be responsible for that which they do not hear. And that is not true. The point is that under the doctrine of requirement that a lot of believers overlook the principle of omission and accountability. Yet they forget the importance of the doctrine of requirement.

Let me give you some illustrations of this.

“And surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.” (GEN 9:5-6)

God is for capital punishment and therefore He requires a life for a life and this was even before the Mosaic Law.

The Lord also requires from us:

- a) To be occupied with Him.
- b) To be governed by His doctrine.
- c) To love and to serve Him.
- d) To have our soul in complete submission to Him.

All five parts of the soul including emotion, self-consciousness, volition, mentality and conscience. Since we are in the book of Deuteronomy look at DEU 10:12, “And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul,”

God will also require you to fulfill any vow that you have made to Him or His people, DEU 23:21, “When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not delay to pay it, for it would be sin in you, and the Lord your God will surely require it of you.”

When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it, for {He takes} no delight in fools. Pay what you vow! It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. (ECC 5:4-5)

The Bible also teaches that only those who are under the influence of evil think that God will not require anything from them, PSA 10:13, “Why has the wicked spurned God? He has said to himself, “Thou wilt not require {it}”.

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. (ECC 8:11)

God also requires pastors to exhort and warn their congregation, (2TI 4:1-2; HEB 13:17). God requires that we operate in justice, love mercy, (grace in action) and walk in humility, MIC 6:8, He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justice, to love grace, And to walk humbly with your God?

# HOW GOD HAS DESIGNED THE BELIEVER TO UNDERSTAND THE MYSTERY DOCTRINE AND TO STIMULATE OUR CURIOSITY.

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The question that the apostle Paul asked as a rhetorical question that wasn't to be answered, but was really designed to stimulate our curiosity. His questions that I'm referring to are found in ROM 11:33-36,

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. (ROM 11:33-36)

What Paul reveals was not based upon his human I.Q. because that would be a contradiction of what he taught in such passages like GAL 3:26-28.

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (EPH 3:26-28)

Equal privilege and equal opportunity reveals that all of us have had to have our name written in the book of life.

For the Bible teaches us that Adam and the woman were created perfect; we were born in sin. They were in perfect environment; we are in the devil's world.

They were objects of the personal love of God; we are fallen sinners and under the justice of God. They were under one negative mandate only.

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." (GEN 2:16-17)

They were under one negative mandate only; we are under many commands, as JAM 2:10 teaches. However, the thing we have going for us over them is that we are under the grace of God, EPH 2:8-10, COL 2:6. And grace can do more for us than love!

For example, love cannot save, grace can. In JOH 3:16, "For God so loved the world,"

However, in 2TH 2:10, they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

On the other hand EPH 2:8, For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

This is why I said the justice of God can provide blessings in time which exceeds the blessings of the Garden of Eden.

If God provided the greater, blessings in time from His justice, it follows a fortiori that He can provide the less, blessings in eternity.

It is much easier for God to bless us in eternity where there is no old sin nature, no devil, no sin, and no distractions. And remember blessings in time glorify God as well as being a source of something wonderful to us.

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; The branch of My planting, The work of My hands, That I may be glorified."

In JOH 14:13 our Lord said, "And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

So, blessings in time glorify God as well as being a source of something wonderful to us. In fact, blessings in time for the mature believer are greater than what Adam had in the garden. And you will notice always who gets the credit.

There is the grace pipeline which has on one end the justice of God, and on the other end there is the imputed righteousness of God. It's a grace process all the way. So the justice of God does something better for us than the love of God could do for Adam and the woman in the garden.

The justice of God takes the environment of the devil's world and produces an encapsulation through the baptism of the Holy Spirit's retro-active positional truth which produces a more secure and better environment for the imputation of blessing to the mature believer. This encapsulation is what we might also call the wall of fire!

Paul never got familiar with God's word which allowed him and motivated as to write such things as the apostle did in;

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. (ROM 11:33-36)

ROM 5:12, Therefore, just as through one man [Adam] sin [the sin of Adam] entered into the world [the area in which it entered, the devil's world], and death [spiritual death] through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned [all sinned when Adam sinned].

Then in ROM 5:13, for until the Law,

The word Law is nomou and it refers to the Mosaic Law. This refers to a certain period of history from Adam to the Law. And that includes the dispensation of the Gentiles and part of the age of the Jews. It includes man's time of perfection in the Garden. It includes the fall of man. It goes from Adam

to Abel to Enoch to Noah to Abraham to Isaac to Jacob to Joseph all the way to Moses and when the Law was given.

So it covers a certain period of human history.

ROM 5:13 for until the Law sin [that's personal sin] was in the world;

We have the nominative singular from hamartia which refers to personal sin which is defined by the Mosaic Law.

Now remember again about personal sins. None of us are spiritually dead because of our personal sins. We are spiritually dead because Adam's original sin was imputed to its genetic home, the old sin nature at the point of physical birth.

The point is that from Adam to Moses spiritual death still existed even when there was no Law to follow. And we sin because we have the trends of Adam that were passed down to us from Adam to our genetically formed old sin nature in the body. This simply means that spiritual death was in the world before any laws from God were given to follow.

Therefore, man's problem was not his personal sins, since there was no law to identify all personal sins, man's problem was inherited sin or the fact that he has an old sin nature and he was born spiritually dead.

Personal sin is the result of spiritual death not the means. And part of the Mosaic Law's function is to define personal sin and the Mosaic law as a definer of personal sin, did not exist from Adam to Moses.

The point that Paul is making is that with or without the Mosaic Law, man is spiritually dead because personal sins are not the basis for spiritual death. We are spiritually dead without any personal sins on our part being involved.

Whether personal sin is defined by the law or not, the condemnation of spiritual death is there already. Condemnation from the justice of God originates from the imputation of Adam's sin to the human race and not the imputation of personal sins. This is why 2CO 5:19 says, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

ROM 5:13, for until the Law sin [personal sin] was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law or when the Mosaic Law did not exist.

This does not mean that we are not disciplined for personal sin; it simply means that it was not imputed to us. The imputation of one man's sin, Adam's original sin, is the basis for condemnation while the imputation of One's righteousness, God, is the basis for justification. This means that we have one imputation to condemnation and one imputation to justification.

When you receive the first imputation, you are born. When you receive the second imputation, you are born again. Between the two imputations, the issue of personal sins was taken care of by God. All personal sins in all of human history were collected and imputed to Christ and judged. Therefore,

condemnation comes to the human race at birth while justification comes to the human race at the new birth.

ROM 5:13, For until the [Mosaic] Law, [personal] sin was in the world, but [personal] sin was not imputed when the [Mosaic] Law did not exist.

Paul wrote this because some of the Jewish believers in Rome had distorted the Mosaic Law into a system of legalism. They contended that man must keep the Law to be saved or to be blessed by God. And they held the opinion that man is condemned for failure to live up to the Law's perfect demands.

But Paul disarms these legalists by taking the Law out of their hands. In illustrating God's actions toward sin, Paul deliberately chooses the period of history when the Law did not exist. That's why in ROM 5:13, Paul explains that our personal sins were not imputed to us. In fact, they had not yet been committed when we were condemned.

All mankind was condemned at the same time, in Adam before any of us sinned personally. We were totally condemned at the Fall, long before personal sin was defined and categorized for the Jews at Mount Sinai.

The Mosaic Law is an indispensable part of the Word of God; it includes far more than the Ten Commandments. It defines human freedom and morality according to the laws of divine establishment. The Mosaic Law also defines personal sin, in terms of man's failure to match up to the essence of God, and relates sin to its original penalty, spiritual death. The Law reveals man's condemnation, denounces man's resources as a means of reaching God, and excludes human righteousness as a claim on divine blessing.

The Law was never designed to produce self-righteousness. The Law has a limited role; it is a minor actor that entered the stage to play a minor part, as we will see in ROM 5:20. The Law actually served in the role of a marriage counselor, it tells us in no uncertain terms that we have a bad marriage to the tyrannical old sin nature. And it points the way to divorce and to remarriage to the Lord Jesus Christ by faith at salvation.

Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. So then if, while her husband is living, she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress, though she is joined to another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God. (ROM 7:1-4)

The Law served in the role of a marriage counselor telling us that we have a bad marriage to the old sin nature. It points the way to divorce and to remarriage to the Lord Jesus Christ by faith at salvation.

So, the Law ex-poses sin, that's its purpose!

ROM 3:20, because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

Look at ROM 7:7, What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "You shall not covet."

The Mosaic shows us we have a problem, and reveals the solution in a detailed delineation of the Gospel. But the Law itself is not the solution to sin. And before the time of Moses, everyone sinned; after Moses, everyone still sins, 1JO 1:8, 10. In other words, the coming of the Law made no difference.

This also means that the Mosaic Law has nothing whatever to do with our condemnation. In fact, before the Law came on the scene, we were already totally condemned.

Personal sins, so clearly defined by the Law, are not imputed to man for condemnation. This has always been the case, long before and long after Moses climbed Mount Sinai. This is why Paul defines the Gospel specifically in terms of the non-imputation of personal sins.

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 [imputing] 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. (2CO 5:18-21)

This is the Gospel or the good news! David, who lived in the Age of Israel after the Mosaic Law had been given, rejoiced in the fact that personal sins are not imputed to anyone but Christ. This is the doctrine of unlimited atonement from the standpoint of personal sin.

David said in PSA 32:2, How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity,

In fact Paul quotes this verse also in ROM 4:6-8, just as David also speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works: Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, And whose sins have been covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account.

In His omniscience, God found a way to save man without compromising His own integrity.

# HOW GOD HAS DESIGNED THE BELIEVER TO UNDERSTAND THE MYSTERY DOCTRINE AND TO STIMULATE OUR CURIOSITY. PART 2.

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We noting one of the most important doctrines the apostle Paul could ever teach us concerning the sovereign will of God and how it relates to the free will of man in that plan given for man to understand his place in that plan.

This principle is a vital part of God's plan for man to be totally confident and convinced of his calling and his election, both of which guarantee and promise the believer of a fantastic life in time, but most of all, for all of eternity.

Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; (2PE 1:10)

Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life [that is this life] and godliness [the spiritual life], through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

(2PE 1:3)

Then there's the second half of the statement which is man's calling and election guarantee and promise the believer of a fantastic life in time, but most of all, for all of eternity.

In 1TI 4:7-8 the Message Bible translation says, Stay clear of silly stories that get dressed up as religion. Exercise daily in God no spiritual flabbiness, please! Workouts in the gymnasium are useful, but a disciplined life in God is far more so, making you fit both today and forever.

So the first subject Paul wants us to master concerning the book of life is the three-fold doctrinal principle concerning imputation.

ROM 5:12, Therefore, just as through one man [Adam] sin [the sin of Adam] entered into the world [the area in which it entered, the devil's world], and death [spiritual death] through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned [all sinned when Adam sinned].

In ROM 5:13, for until the Law...

The Greek word for law is nomou and it refers to the Mosaic Law. This refers to a certain period of history from Adam to the Law. That includes the dispensation of the Gentiles and part of the age of the Jews. It includes man's time of perfection in the Garden. It also includes the fall of man. It goes from Adam to Abel, to Enoch to Noah, to Abraham to Isaac, to Jacob to Joseph, all the way to Moses and when the Law was given. So it covers a certain period of human history.

ROM 5:13, for until the Law sin [that's personal sin] was in the world

We have the nominative singular from the Greek word hamartia which refers to personal sin and which is defined by the Mosaic Law. None of us are spiritually dead because of our personal sins. We are spiritually dead because Adam's original sin was imputed to its genetic home, the old sin nature at the point of physical birth. The point is that from Adam to Moses spiritual death still existed even when there was no Law to follow.

We sin because we have the trends of Adam which were passed down to us from Adam to our genetically formed old sin nature in the body. This simply means that spiritual death was in the world before any laws from God were given to follow. Therefore, man's problem was not his personal sins, since there was no law to identify all personal sins, man's problem was inherited sin or the fact that he has an old sin nature and he was born spiritually dead.

Personal sin is the result of spiritual death not the means. Part of the Mosaic Law's function is to define personal sin and the Mosaic law as a definer of personal sin, did not exist from Adam to Moses. The point that Paul is making is that with or without the Mosaic Law, man is spiritually dead because personal sins are not the basis for spiritual death.

We are spiritually dead without any personal sins on our part being involved. And whether personal sin is defined by the law or not, the condemnation of spiritual death is there already. Condemnation from the justice of God originates from the imputation of Adam's sin to the human race and not the imputation of personal sins.

This is why 2CO 5:19 says, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. And remember that we are spiritually dead before we commit our first personal sin.

ROM 5:13, for until the Law sin [personal sin] was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law or when the Mosaic Law did not exist.

This does not mean that we are not disciplined for personal sin; it simply means that it was not imputed to us. The imputation of one man's sin, Adam's original sin, is the basis for condemnation while the imputation of One's righteousness, God, is the basis for justification. This means that we have one imputation to condemnation and one imputation to justification. When you receive the first imputation, you are born. When you receive the second imputation, you are born again. Between the two imputations, the issue of personal sins was taken care of by God. This is because all personal sins in all of human history were collected and imputed to Christ and judged.

Therefore, condemnation comes to the human race at birth while justification comes to the human race at the new birth.

ROM 5:13, For until the [Mosaic] Law, [personal] sin was in the world, but [personal] sin was not imputed when the [Mosaic] Law did not exist.

Paul wrote this because some of the Jewish believers in Rome had distorted the Mosaic Law into a system of legalism. They contended that man must keep the Law to be saved or to be blessed by God. They held the opinion that man is condemned for failure to live up to the Law's perfect demands. But Paul disarms these legalists by taking the Law out of their hands.

In illustrating God's actions toward sin, Paul deliberately chooses the period of history when the Law did not exist.



That's why in ROM 5:13, Paul explains that our personal sins were not imputed to us. In fact, they had not yet been committed when we were condemned.

All mankind was condemned at the same time, in Adam before any of us sinned personally. We were totally condemned at the Fall, long before personal sin was defined and categorized for the Jews at Mount Sinai.

Now, the Mosaic Law is an indispensable part of the Word of God; it includes far more than the Ten Commandments. It defines human freedom and morality according to the laws of divine establishment. The Mosaic Law also defines personal sin, in terms of man's failure to match up to the essence of God, and relates sin to its original penalty, spiritual death.

The Law reveals man's condemnation, denounces man's resources as a means of reaching God, and excludes human righteousness as a claim on divine blessing. The Law was never designed to produce self-righteousness. The Law has a limited role; it is a minor actor that entered the stage to play a minor part, as we will see in ROM 5:20.

The Law actually served in the role of a marriage counselor, it tells us in no uncertain terms that we have a bad marriage to the tyrannical old sin nature. It points the way to divorce and to remarriage to the Lord Jesus Christ by faith at salvation.

This is what ROM 7:1-4 is all about.

Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. So then if, while her husband is living, she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress, though she is joined to another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God. (ROM 7:1-4)

The Law exposes sin, that's its purpose!

Because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. (ROM 3:20)

ROM 7:7, What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, You shall not covet.

The Mosaic Law shows us we have a problem, and reveals the solution in a detailed delineation of the Gospel. But the Law itself is not the solution to sin.

Before the time of Moses, everyone sinned; after Moses, everyone still sins, 1JO 1:8, 10. In other words, the coming of the Law made no difference.

This also means that the Mosaic Law has nothing whatever to do with our condemnation. In fact, before the Law came on the scene, we were already totally condemned. Personal sins, so clearly

defined by the Law, are not imputed to man for condemnation. This has always been the case, long before and long after Moses climbed Mount Sinai. This is why Paul defines the Gospel specifically in terms of the non-imputation of personal sins.

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 [imputing] 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.

(2CO 5:18-21)

This is the Gospel, the good news! David, who lived in the Age of Israel after the Mosaic Law had been given, rejoiced in the fact that personal sins are not imputed to anyone but Christ.

# HOW GOD HAS DESIGNED THE BELIEVER TO UNDERSTAND THE MYSTERY DOCTRINE AND TO STIMULATE OUR CURIOSITY. PART 3.

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We are noting how God has designed the believer to understand the mystery doctrine of the Church-age and to stimulate our curiosity concerning that same mystery doctrine. Therefore, we have been noting some of the reasons why the apostle Paul seems to be closing out the book of Roman's then he seems to change his mind.

Finally, he hits us with passages like; ROM 7:21-8:1, I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Or in ROM 8:31-39, What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 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? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, "For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Does he close out the book? He does not!

We also have an illustration in ROM 11:33-36, Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

Does he close out the book? He does not!

ROM 16:25-27, Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

Probably one of the main principles of doctrine that blew Paul away was based upon the baptism of the Holy Spirit with emphasis upon both Jews and Gentiles being in union with TLJC. I mean some believers are too familiar with many of the important doctrinal viewpoints which accompany the doctrine of the baptism of the Spirit. Think about it, at the moment of salvation God the Holy Spirit places every believer in union with Christ.

EPH 4:4-5, There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

This instantaneous ministry of the Holy Spirit is called the baptism of the Holy Spirit; 1CO 12:13, For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, This is how you became a new creature or a new spiritual species' 2CO 5:17, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new [spiritual] species.

Paul wrote all of this and more because some of the Jewish believers in Rome had distorted the Mosaic Law into a system of legalism. They contended that man must keep the Law to be saved or to be blessed by God. They held the opinion that man is condemned for failure to live up to the Law's perfect demands. But Paul disarms these legalists by taking the Law out of their hands. In illustrating God's actions toward sin, Paul deliberately chooses the period of history when the Law did not exist. That's why in ROM 5:13, Paul explains that our personal sins were not imputed to us, For until the [Mosaic] Law, [personal] sin was in the world, but [personal] sin was not imputed when the [Mosaic] Law did not exist. They had not yet been committed when we were con-demned.

The Mosaic Law is an indispensable part of the Word of God; it includes far more than the Ten Commandments. It defines human freedom and morality according to the laws of divine establishment. The Mosaic Law also defines personal sin, in terms of man's failure to match up to the essence of God, and relates sin to its original penalty, spiritual death. The Law reveals man's condemnation, denounces man's resources as a means of reaching God, and excludes human righteousness as a claim on divine blessing. And the Law was never designed to produce self-righteousness. The Law has a limited role; it is a minor actor that entered the stage to play a minor part, as we will see in ROM 5:20.

The Law actually served in the role of a marriage counselor, it tells us in no uncertain terms that we have a bad marriage to the tyrannical old sin nature. And it points the way to divorce and to remarriage to the Lord Jesus Christ by faith at salvation. This is what ROM 7:1-4 is all about.

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The Law served in the role of a marriage counselor telling us that we have a bad marriage to the old sin nature. It points the way to divorce and to remarriage to the Lord Jesus Christ by faith at salvation. So, the Law ex-poses sin, that's its purpose!

because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. (ROM 3:20)

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This is the Gospel or the good news! David, who lived in the Age of Israel after the Mosaic Law had been given, rejoiced in the fact that personal sins are not imputed to anyone but Christ. This is the doctrine of unlimited atonement from the standpoint of personal sin. David said in PSA 32:2, How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity,

In fact Paul quotes this verse also in ROM 4:6-8, just as David also speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, And whose sins have been covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account."

Apart from Adam's one original sin imputed to Adam himself, sins are never charged to the one who commits them. Does that sound as though people were getting away with anything? Don't worry; this is not a miscarriage of justice. It is proof of God's justice! In His omniscience, God found a way to save man without compromising His own integrity.

And so we will see the book of life included the names of every member of the human race who would ever be born. We will note under the doctrine of the unlimited atonement and the divine decrees that when a person dies as an unbeliever, his name is removed from the book of life.

So, let's close this introduction to the unlimited atonement with an introduction or setting up of some groundwork with the correct order of the five elective decrees which are as follows:

A. God decreed the creation of all mankind with free will in the status of perfection for two reasons: To resolve the prehistoric angelic conflict, and to bring many sons into glory.

For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. (HEB 2:10)

The phrase being brought into glory, means there is a Christian way of life, a way to glorify God after salvation.

B. 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.

C. Then God decreed to provide eternal salvation for all mankind under the doctrine of unlimited atonement. God is fair and provides for all. God doesn't arbitrarily assign creatures to Hell. By unlimited atonement is meant 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.

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

E. God decreed simultaneously in eternity past both election and predestination for believers only.

Under this point we have the decree for historical election includes the election of true Israel--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. In election is the expression of the sovereignty of God who wills the highest and best for every believer in Jesus Christ. 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. God decreed to apply salvation to everyone who believes in Christ.

This subject has been technical and complex and you might wonder why is it so important? It is because we need to understand the purpose and plan of God. The plan of God has to do with God gathering into one all-inclusive plan, all the objects of salvation, whether in heaven or earth, in Christ.

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 fulness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. (EPH 1:9-10)

It is also called the mysterious purpose or plan that had been hidden for ages in God, which it now made known to His saints.

And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; 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. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, (EPH 3:4-11)

# THE DOCTRINE OF THE BOOK OF LIFE.

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The two doctrines we are noting are the Book of Life and the Unlimited Atonement.  
The Doctrine of the Book of Life.

Point 1 is our definition. We noted the important principle that first of all, to be crystal clear on this doctrine, you need to understand that the book of life is one thing in time and something different in eternity. The issue is very clear:

What think ye of Christ? (MAT 22:42)

“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.” (JOH 3:18)

“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (JOH 3:36)

There are the three different phases of the book of life:

Phase 1 - the book of life has to do with members of the human race who were selected by God in eternity past.

Phase 2 - In time, it has to do with being a registry of all believers who are given the opportunity to become a winner in the book of life.

Phase 3 - In eternity, it is the registry of all believers, losers momentarily at the JSOC, but saved forever.

Point 2. Passages Referring to the Book of Life.

Point 3. The Book of Life In Relation to Believers.

Point 4. The Results of the Believer Who Doesn't Have His Name Blotted out of the Book of Life.

Point 5. The Book of life in Relation to Unbelievers.

Those points have been covered in our Philippians series, and will not be covered here. I want to go to Point 6 which deals with The Motivation Believers should have toward Unbelievers because of the Book of Life.

Because it is not God's will that any should perish, 2PE 3:9, and that all men should be saved, 1TI 2:3-4, this should be the mind of Christ as manifested in the believer. Now, part of our understanding this subject is found in 2Co 5 beginning at verse 14.

Occupation with TLJC is one of the first giant steps for the Christian way of life.

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; (2CO 5:14)



One of the first signs that you are getting somewhere in your spiritual life is the verb *sunecho* which means a complete change in your spiritual motivation. This is what the word *controls* means. It means that your love for Christ motivates you. Great motivation begins when the believer personally loves God. This results first of all in excitement over His word and then His plan. The word *controls* is the present active indicative of the verb *sunecho* which means to hold something together so that it doesn't fall apart, it also means to retrain, to enclose, to press, or to pressure.

Your spiritual life is going to fall apart from time to time, but motivation from your love for Christ will keep you going. People may let you down from time to time, the church may let you down; however, your love for Christ keeps you going. I don't mean church hopping every time you have a personality conflict, I mean once you identify your pastor-teacher and submit to his ministry, you don't let people come in between you and the calling of God upon your life.

*Sunecho* also means to overpower or to rule, hence it connotes motivation for the believer, a thought or a doctrine that overrules the soul. In other words. It means to be totally controlled and overruled by what you think. You do not, repeat, do not, let your emotions rule and dictate over you. Once you reach personal love for God and spiritual self-esteem, from then on you are motivated by your doctrinal thoughts or by what you think. This means when you are alone you are happy and content. When you are in a crowd you are happy and content.

For the love of Christ keeps on motivating us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; (2CO 5:14)

Notice that it says "the love for Christ keeps on motivating us," not "the love for people."  
Why?

Having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died. If all died then why look to the dead for life. The Book of life and love for TLJC will motivate you to reach out for others even if you particularly care for them. For example, Jonah was one of the most successful evangelists in the Old Testament, but he didn't like those to whom he was sent, the people of Nineveh, JON 3:1-4:11.

Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you. So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three days' walk. Then Jonah began to go through the city one day's walk; and he cried out and said, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown." Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them. When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered {himself} with sackcloth, and sat on the ashes. And he issued a proclamation and it said, "In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let man, beast, herd, or flock taste a thing. Do not let them eat or drink water. "But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands. Who knows, God may turn and relent, and withdraw His burning anger so that we shall not perish? When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do {it.} But it greatly displeased Jonah, and he became angry. And he prayed to the Lord and said, "Please Lord, was not this what I said while I was still in my {own} country? Therefore, in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that Thou art a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity. Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for death is better to me

than life." And the Lord said, "Do you have good reason to be angry?" Then Jonah went out from the city and sat east of it. There he made a shelter for himself and sat under it in the shade until he could see what would happen in the city. So the Lord God appointed a plant and it grew up over Jonah to be a shade over his head to deliver him from his discomfort. And Jonah was extremely happy about the plant. But God appointed a worm when dawn came the next day, and it attacked the plant and it withered. And it came about when the sun came up that God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on Jonah's head so that he became faint and begged with {all} his soul to die, saying, "Death is better to me than life." Then God said to Jonah, "Do you have good reason to be angry about the plant?" And he said, "I have good reason to be angry, even to death." Then the Lord said, "You had compassion on the plant for which you did not work, and {which} you did not cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight. And should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know {the difference} between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?"

Jonah learned that the Lord Jesus Christ died for everyone. Jonah learned that the Lord Jesus Christ died for those who hated Him. He died for those who despised Him. He died for everyone, and that is grace! That is why the fact that every member of the human race had their names written down in the book of life is one of the most magnificent grace illustrations in the entire Bible. Christ didn't die just for you nor did He die just for the elect - He died for everyone, Therefore, every member of the human race had their names written down in the Book of Life. Christ died for those who hated and despised Him...and that is grace. That is impersonal unconditional agape love. When He was hanging on that Cross and the crowd ridiculed, laughed at Him and blasphemed Him, but that didn't keep Him from bearing the imputation of their sins. That is one of the most magnificent and obvious illustrations of grace that appears to all men.

"Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." (LUK 23:34)

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, (TIT 2:11)

Back in 2CO 5:14, why does verse 14 say for the love of Christ keeps motivating us?

For the love of Christ keeps on motivating us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; (2CO 5:14)

The phrase having concluded is the aorist active participle of the verb krino which means to judge, to reach a conclusion, to make the proper evaluation. Paul is actually saying, because we have reached this conclusion. And the conclusion is going to come from the unlimited atonement, or the fact that every member of the human race has their name written down in the book of life.

So, what is the conclusion?

2CO 5:14...having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died;

God in His grace found a way for the sins of the world to be judged. While we do feel the repercussions of our sins now and then, we are not being judged for them. Your sins, my sins, the sins of the entire world were judged only once, on the Cross. This is why the evangelist who makes an issue out of your sins is wrong. The issue is not sin, the issue is Christ. Christ has already been judged

for your sins. The Lord Jesus Christ is your substitute and therefore the issue is ACT 16:31, Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved.

So, you don't renounce your sins to be saved. You don't repent from your sins to be saved. You don't do anything about your sins to be saved. That's where evangelism becomes heretical, misleading and evil. The yapping, yelling, screaming and goofy Bible pounding evangelist is an insult to the character and nature of God. Sin is not an issue in salvation (MAT 22:42). Sin is not an issue in the judgment of the believer (2CO 5:10). Sin is not an issue at the last judgment for the unbeliever (REV 20:11-15). Sin is only an issue at the Cross, which occurred 2,000 years ago, and the doctrine of the book of life and the unlimited atonement says "DO NOT MAKE SIN AN ISSUE!"

When you think of sin you have to think of two things.

- a. The Cross, where all sins were judged.
- b. The law of volitional responsibility.

While you will never be judged for your sins, you must take the responsibility for your volition and the sins incurred by your own decisions. That's where sowing and reaping comes in. The result of sin is self-induced misery...you may pay the piper, sort of speak, but you are not going to pay the penalty.

When it comes to the book of life, we need to look at the concept of reconciliation.

Reconciliation is that concept and that doctrine of soteriology recognizes a barrier between God and man. It is a barrier that can only be removed by God. There are actually three parties involved in reconciliation:

1. God the Father who is the reconciler. When any Greek word for reconciliation is in the active voice, God the Father is always the subject.
2. God the Son who is the agent of reconciliation. That of course is through His blood or His saving work on the Cross.
3. And then there is mankind who is the beneficiary of reconciliation. So, that officially the doctrine says man is reconciled, God is the reconciler and the Lord Jesus Christ is the agent of reconciliation. Also, it's important to understand that man is reconciled to God, not God to man.

Reconciliation is for the entire human race under the doctrine of the unlimited atonement. When the Lord Jesus Christ was on the Cross and judged for the sins of the world the barrier went down and man was reconciled to God. The barrier was sin, ROM 3:23, For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. The penalty was separation from God, ROM 6:23, For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. This was solved by expiation.

Then there was the problem of physical birth, PSA 51:5; 1CO 15:22, solved by regeneration. There was also the barrier because of the character of God,

PSA 145:17, solve by the doctrine of propitiation. There was also the barrier of man's righteousness, ISA 64:6, solved by the doctrine of justification, GAL 2:16. There was the problem of our position in Adam, 1CO 15:22, solved by our new position in Christ by means of the baptism of the Spirit.

We will see in our passage that this is the meaning of the phrase "All things are from God who has reconciled us to Himself through Christ." All of these things refer to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross plus the new creation, the escrow, and the divine plan or MAT 7:14. God the Father is the author of the divine plan. He is the provider of our escrow blessing. He is the architect and

manufacturer of the principles found in predestination including the equal privilege and equal opportunity that we all have. He is also the creator and designer of our very own predesigned plan which is unique for everyone of us.

Now, there are two categories of reconciliation.

1. That which is accomplished for the entire human race for both believers and unbelievers alike.
2. That which is accomplished for the believer only the reason is that when anyone believes in the Lord Jesus Christ or steps across that line there are other barrier situations that immediately go down but they are accomplished for the believer only.

So, our next principle is what is accomplished for the human race at the doctrine of reconciliation. This all begins with spiritual death at birth. The fact that any member of the human race is born physically alive and at the same time spiritually dead means that they have been chosen under the doctrine of selection. I said selection not election. God the Father is the one who imputes human life to the soul, ISA 57:16.

“For I will not contend forever, Neither will I always be angry; For the spirit would grow faint before Me, And the breath {of those whom} I have made.” (ISA 57:16)

No one can enter into this world without the imputation of human life from God the Father. God the Father imputes human life to the human soul and human life resides in the human soul forever. This is true for both believer and unbeliever, and we call that selection. The very fact that God created life and gave life to each one of us at birth means selection. It means that God has a purpose and desire for each member of the human race, 1TI 2:4; 2PE 3:9.

No matter where the individual is geographically, how fantastic his circumstances are, what barriers exist between him and civilization, when anyone receives human life at birth it is selection. And, selection simply means that God decided to let a person become a person with a human volition. However, at the moment of human life Adam’s original sin was imputed to you as well.

Therefore, you as all members of the human race were born in sin (PSA 51:5; 58:3; ROM 5:12,17-18; 1CO 15:22). You were condemned at the moment of physical birth. Before you ever committed your first personal sin, you were condemned.

# HOW THE DIVINE DECREES REVEAL THE GLORY OF GOD

062611

ROM 9:22-26, 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 to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. As He says also in Hosea, "I will call those who were not My people, 'My people,' And her who was not beloved, 'beloved.' And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, 'you are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God."

The Doctrine of Divine Decrees.

Point 1. Definition and Description.

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.

This definition begins by expressing the source of the decrees which is found in the word comprehending referring to the omniscience of God. The definition also expresses the attributes of God in terms of divine will in human history. The definition emphasizes that the omniscience of God knew simultaneously in eternity past everything that would happen in human history (the thought, action, and decision of every person in his life).

Furthermore, the omniscience of God knew everything in relation to all of the things pertaining to it. So that the several contents of this one eternal purpose are, because of the limitations of our faculties, necessarily perceived by us in partial aspects and logical relations (from Scripture).

Therefore, we classify the decrees as being plural, but in reality it is all one decree.

While all of this will be technical, it is very important for you to understand this because, while it is technical, it is a reminder to you that billions and billions of years ago before man existed God had you personally in mind. This entire principle is basically discussed in Eph 1.

EPH 1:3-6, 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 pre-destined 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.

Or 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 as 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. By decrees is meant the eternal plan by which God has rendered certain all of the events of the universe (angelic history, 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 His eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will whereby for His own glory He has foreordained whatever comes to pass.

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."

PRO 16:4, The Lord has made everything for its own purpose, Even the wicked for the day of evil.

2TI 1:8-9, Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,

The decrees are the all-inclusive will and purpose of God concerning all that ever was or ever will be, which originates wholly within Himself.

Because of the fact that God is omniscient, He knew everything that would ever happen in one moment of time. So, the decrees are the all-inclusive will and purpose of God concerning all that ever was or ever will be, which originates wholly within Himself and which He Himself alone must have objectively designed 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, should cause believers to take their calling and election seriously. So by accommodation to creatures of time and space subject to subdivisions reaching out to such minute details as the falling of the sparrow, all decrees were simultaneous, not given by stages.

It is somewhat unfortunate that our finite mind must understand these things by stages rather than as one divine decree. Because of the finite mental limitations of man, we must perceive them by logical and chronological progression. The human mind, when thinking properly, thinks according to logic and chronology.

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 of all from the standpoint of the word efficacious which means that which is directly wrought by God from His sovereignty.

Secondly, from the standpoint of permissiveness. Permissive means that which is appointed by God to be accomplished by secondary causes or by the free will and action of agents (the free will of man).

So we need to note two words here, efficacious and permissive. Efficacious refers to the sovereign will of God. Permissive refers to the free will of man or the volition of mankind. This is where 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:

1. First of all, the decrees are all comprehensive. That means that not the slightest uncertainty could 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. Everything you think, why you think it, and the environment in which you 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 some of you that your life has been blended perfectly together by God, in heaven you will understand that it was! God is perfect and therefore He gave you life at the exact time that He knew would be the best time and environment for you personally.

He picked your parents!  
He picked the color of your skin!  
He picked your gender  
He picked your environment!  
He even picked what genes you would have!

Everything that every person does or will do has always been known to God and God has decreed for all these things to exist. Everything you think, why you think it, and even the environment in which you think it, was all known to God in eternity past.

2. 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 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.

3. 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 does not always appear that way as they relate 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.

4. 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.

5. The fifth characteristic, the decrees are the free choice of God in eternity past. This is the most important point to understand, one which many theologians do not understand. God is not bound to follow any necessary path.

Everything in the divine decrees ultimately will bring glory to God. Whether elect angels like Michael and Gabriel or fallen angels like Lucifer and Abaddon. Whether believers or unbelievers. Whether loser believers or unbelievers! The divine decrees have been ultimately designed to bring glory to God. This means that God is going to be glorified with or without us.



# THE DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINE DECREES. PART 2.

## THE MYSTERY OF THE OMNISCIENCE OF GOD.

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Definition and Description.

First of all, the decree of God refers to God's infinite, holy, wise and sovereign purpose, comprehending simultaneously all things that ever were or will ever be.

Secondly, when you think of the divine decree of God I also want you to derive comfort from God's holy and perfect integrity and the fact that He would never leave you or ever forsake you.

ISA 42:1-9, "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one {in whom} My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry out or raise {His voice,} Nor make His voice heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break, And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not be disheartened or crushed, Until He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law. Thus says God the Lord, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk in it, I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations, To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon, And those who dwell in darkness from the prison. I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images. Behold, the former things have come to pass, Now I declare new things; Before they spring forth I proclaim {them} to you."

HEB 13:5, for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"

HEB 6:18, says about our God, in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie,

Thirdly, God comprehends all things at the same time that ever were or will be in their causes, conditions, successions, and the inevitable results and consequences.

GAL 6:3 For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

GAL 6:7-8, Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.

The definitions emphasize that the omniscience of God knew simultaneously in eternity past everything that would happen in human history, the thoughts, actions, and decisions of every person in this life.

However, remember that the divine decrees deal with one primary ultimate eternal purpose but because of the limitations of our mental ability or capacity faculties, necessarily perceived by us in partial aspects and logical relations (from Scripture).

Therefore, we classify the decrees as being plural, but in reality it is all one decree. While all of this may be technical, it is very important for you to understand this because, while it is technical, it is a reminder to you that billions and billions of years ago before man existed God had you personally in mind.

Omniscience is a divine attribute that once the believer comes to comprehend is a very comforting one.

Omni = all, science = knowledge. God is all knowing, God knows all things.

He is one Who is perfect in knowledge.

JOB 37:16, "Do you know about the layers of the thick clouds, The wonders of one perfect in knowledge,"

David described the omniscience of the Lord in a fantastic way in PSA 139:1-6,12.

God's knowledge is not based upon time. It is not related to or limited by time. We usually can go back and evaluate things that have happened in the past, see our failures and hopefully, learn from them. We can even speculate about the future and even make some pretty accurate guesses. But none of us knows exactly what will happen tomorrow. We are slaves to time! We are limited by time! However, God is not and therefore His knowledge is superimposed over time.

We continue to learn as long as we live on this earth. However, God has never had to learn a thing! He has always known everything. Every thought, every motive, every event, and every action of every person who would ever live! And He knew this billions and billions of years before they existed. He knows the end from the beginning.

ISA 46:8-12, "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. Listen to Me, you stubborn-minded, Who are far from righteousness."

Notice verse 8 again, it says remember this and be assured, recall it to mind you transgressors. This is why I said that to the believer who understands omniscience it is a very comforting attribute to understand! It means that there is nothing in your life that could ever happen that God didn't know about billions and billions of years ago. And knowing about it, and being perfect, He provided a perfect provision and perfect solution for every problem we would ever face! Our Lord shared this principle with His disciples when He said in MAT 10:29-30, "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And, yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father's knowledge," but the very hairs of your head are numbered."

Because God is omniscient, He knows what is best for those who trust in Him! We may not understand the adversities and the sufferings which come into our lives; yet in the end we will discover that God knew all along exactly what we needed and what was best for us! The Lord Jesus Christ said to Peter one day in JOH 13:7, "What I'm doing you do not realize now, but you shall understand later on".

No one in the human race can ever really understand in depth the principle of omniscience, we can only touch the surface! As the Apostle Paul said 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 are His ways."

However, it is God's intention that every believer come to understand everything in the Bible, and that is "in time"! Anything which God did not intend for us to know was not included in the canon of scripture. As DEU 29:29 says, "the secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and our children forever." Certainly, you will not understand the doctrinal content of the Bible all at once, for knowledge is built on knowledge, but if you stay with it long enough it can be done! Remember every book in the Bible was written by a human author who understood what he was recording.

Now all three members of the Godhead are omniscient. The Father is said to be omniscient and perfect in knowledge (JOB 37:16, MAT 6:8; MAT 10:29-30, ACT 1:24). The Son knows all things (JOH 18:4, MAT 9:44, JOH 2:25).

The H.S. is even called the Spirit of wisdom and understanding...counsel and knowledge ISA 11:2. The Spirit searches all the deep things of God in 1CO 2:10. In 1CO 2:11 the H.S. knows the thoughts of God the Father!

Knowing these things increases your personal love for God! 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. By decrees is meant the eternal plan by which God has rendered certain all of the events of the universe (angelic history, human history) past, present, and future. So the decrees of God are the chosen and adopted plan of God for all of His works.

When we deal with a subject like this, it requires a tremendous amount of concentration. No one expects you to learn the entire doctrine in one week...it takes time! So, just relax and let God the Holy Spirit communicate to you what you are able to comprehend.

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.

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."

PRO 16:4 The Lord has made everything for its own purpose, Even the wicked for the day of evil.

2TI 1:8-9, Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us, and called us

with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,

The decrees are the all-inclusive will and purpose of God concerning all that ever was or ever will be, which originates wholly within Himself. Because of the fact that God is omniscient, He knew everything that would ever happen in one moment of time.

# THE DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINE DECREES. PART 3.

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The Doctrine of Divine Decrees.

Point 1. Definition and Description.

By decrees is meant the eternal plan by which God has rendered certain all of the events of the universe (angelic history, human history) past, present, and future. So the decrees of God are the chosen and adopted plan of God for all of His works.

When we deal with a subject like this, it requires a tremendous amount of concentration. 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.

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."

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

2TI 1:8-9, Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,

The decrees are the all-inclusive will and purpose of God concerning all that ever was or ever will be, which originates wholly within Himself. Because of the fact that God is omniscient, He knew everything that would ever happen in one moment of time.

So, the decrees are the all-inclusive will and purpose of God concerning all that ever was or ever will be, which originates wholly within Himself and which He Himself alone must have objectively designed 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.

By accommodation to creatures of time and space subject to subdivisions reaching out to such minute details as the falling of the sparrow, all decrees were simultaneous, not given by stages. Therefore it is most unfortunate that our finite mind must understand these things by stages rather than as one divine decree.

Because of the finite mental limitations of man, we must perceive them by logical and chronological progression.

The human mind, when thinking properly, thinks according to logic and chronology. 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 of all from the standpoint of the word efficacious which means that which is directly wrought by God from His sovereignty.

Secondly, from the standpoint of permissiveness, permissive means that which is appointed by God to be accomplished by secondary causes or by the free will and action of agents (the free will of man).

So we need to note two words here, efficacious and permissive.

Efficacious refers to the sovereign will of God.

Permissive refers to the free will of man or the volition of mankind.

From this comes that 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.

A. The decrees are all-comprehensive.

That means that not the slightest uncertainty could 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. Everything you think, why you think it, and the environment in which you think it, was all known to God in eternity past. This also says everything in life is a chain of cause and effect events.

God is perfect and therefore He gave you life at the exact time that He knew would be the best time and environment for you personally. He picked your parents! He picked the color of your skin! He picked your gender! He picked your environment!

He even picked what genes you would have!

B. 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 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.

C. 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 does not always appear that way as they relate 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."

D. 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.

E. Characteristic, the decrees are the free choice of God in eternity past. This is the most important point to understand, one which many theologians do not understand. God is not bound to follow any necessary path. Having decreed, however, He is bound by His infinite faithfulness and truth to complete what He has begun.

This includes completing the work He has begun in you!

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.

The “free choice of God” is very important because 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, remember that 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 that we exist.

However, 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.

ROM 11:36, For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

So the decrees of God are the adopted and chosen plan of God for all His works. Even the plan to crucify TLJC 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.

Did God the Father make them do it? Did He violate their free will and make them crucify His Son and then send them to eternal damnation?

No, He did not, in fact, He could not!

That would make Him unjust and God cannot be anything but just and righteous.

LUK 22:21-22, “But behold, the hand of the one betraying Me is with Me on the table. For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!”

Now the question arises: Did God make Judas betray TLJC and make Herod and Pontius Pilate order His execution or did they do it on their own? I think that the last half of this verse answers that question, woe to that man or that person by whom He is betrayed.

Now, it is true that we noted in one of our definitions on the decrees that 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.

However, foreordaining something does not mean to violate human volition. Foreordination in theology is the belief that God has set all events before they happen but not to the extent that He must destroy human freedom, an important part of being created in His image.

Bear in mind those five characteristics as we approach all sorts of things, like the potter and the clay.

- All-comprehensive
- Eternal
- Perfect
- Unchangeable and certain.
- The free choice of God in eternity past.

EPH 2:10, For we are His production [we have the provision of the invisible assets which we have been given as well as our election and predestination], having been created in Christ Jesus [the formation of the Royal family of God and a new spiritual species resulting in positional sanctification by which every believer becomes the heir of God and has equal privileges under predestination]

It's amazing of how the divine decrees tells us of so many of the wonderful things that God has done for us billions and billions of years ago. What a fantastic concept of the grace of God when you think of it in billions and billions of years ago.



# THE DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINE DECREES. PART 4.

071711

This week we have been noting five important and unique characteristics of the divine decrees:

- 1) All-comprehensive
- 2) Eternal
- 3) Perfect
- 4) Unchangeable and certain.
- 5) The free choice of God in eternity past.

All-comprehensive means that not the slightest degree of uncertainty could exist as to the smallest or most insignificant of events without confusion to all.

Eternal - God's decrees are not subject to time.

God has authority over time.

2PE 3:7-8, But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

PSA 90:4, For a thousand years in Thy sight Are like yesterday when it passes by, Or {as} a watch in the night.

The point is that God is not gaining in knowledge. Knowledge is that which, next to virtue, truly raises one person above another. Knowledge gives us confidence in face of the difficulties of life. Now, I want you to notice some things that the divine decrees and the Knowledge of God and His plan for your life will do for you.

In the book of knowledge, the book of Wisdom known as the Proverbs, notice what the mind of Christ thinks about knowledge. For the Bible is the very mind or thinking of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- The knowledge of God concerning His divine decrees or His divine desire for your life comes from, first of all, respect for the Lord, PRO 1:7, The respect or reverence for the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Notice that fools reject teaching! They reject knowledge.

LUK 6:40, "A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher."

If the teacher is a reversionist, the pupil will be one when it comes to the spiritual life. A reversionistic pastor is a case of the blind leading the blind, both fall into the ditch of reversionism. And such a congregation becomes a program church. They love simple things, a simple church, and then they will scoff at doctrinal teaching and doctrinal understanding.

PRO 1:22-33, "How long, O naive ones, will you love simplicity? And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing, And fools hate knowledge? Turn to My reproof, Behold, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you. Because I called, and you refused; I stretched out my hand, and no one

paid attention; And you neglected all my counsel, And did not want my reproof; I will even laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes, When your dread comes like a storm, And your calamity comes on like a whirlwind, When distress {and} anguish come on you. Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently, but they shall not find me, Because they hated knowledge, And did not choose the respect for the Lord. They would not accept my counsel, They spurned all my reproof. So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way, And be [say-she-aided] satiated with their own devices. For the waywardness of the naive shall kill them, And the complacency of fools shall destroy them. But he who listens to me shall live securely, And shall be at ease from the dread of evil."

- Knowledge of God and His plan for your life comes from respect for the Lord.

- The knowledge of God and His divine decrees or desires for your life comes from dedication and commitment to truth, it has a price on it.

PRO 2:4-5, If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will discern true respect for the Lord, And discover the knowledge of God.

PRO 23:23, Buy truth, and do not sell {it,} {Get} wisdom and instruction and understanding.

There's no shame or embarrassment in not knowing, the shame lies in not finding out.

- Knowledge of the divine decrees will also give you inner peace and happiness, PRO 2:10-12, For wisdom will enter your heart, And knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; Discretion will guard you, Understanding will watch over you, To deliver you from the way of evil, From the man who speaks perverse doctrines;

You see, it's not the quantity but the quality of knowledge which determines the mind's inner peace and happiness and dignity.

- The knowledge of God and His divine decrees or desires for your life comes from storing up doctrine in the soul. The trouble with the world is not that people know too little, but that they know so many things that are not true. PRO 10:14 Wise men store up knowledge, But with the mouth of the foolish, ruin is at hand.

- Knowledge of the divine decrees or God's desire for your life delivers the believer from people trying to destroy him. PRO 11:9, With {his} mouth the godless man destroys his neighbor, But through knowledge the righteous will be delivered.

- The knowledge of God and His divine decrees or desires for your life comes from discipline in the realm of learning.

PRO 12:1, Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, But he who hates reproof is stupid.

PRO 19:27, Cease listening, my son, to discipline, {And you will} stray from the words of knowledge.

This is why students of TLJC were called disciples or disciplined ones! However, always remember, Knowledge becomes wisdom only after it has been put to practical use.

- Knowledge of God and His plan for your life should be coveted more than the prosperity this world can offer.

PRO 20:15, There is gold, and an abundance of jewels; But the lips of knowledge are a more precious thing.

- Knowledge of the divine decrees or God's desire for your life gives your very own soul structure and personal power.

PRO 24:3-6, By wisdom a house is built, And by understanding it is established; And by knowledge the rooms are filled With all precious and pleasant riches. A wise man is strong, And a man of knowledge increases power. For by wise guidance [doctrine resident in the soul] you will wage war, And in abundance of counselors [doctrinal principles counseling the soul of the believer] there is victory.

Knowledge is power. The essence of knowledge is, having it, you should apply it; not having it, you should confess your ignorance. Remember the principle again, there's no shame or embarrassment in not knowing, the shame lies in not finding out.

- Knowledge of the divine decrees or God's desire for your life gives confidence under pressure, PRO 24:14, Know {that} wisdom is thus for your soul; If you find {it,} then there will be a future, And your hope will not be cut off.

For those who think that knowledge puffs up or makes someone arrogant, you might want to remember this statement, Knowledge fills a large brain; it merely inflates a small one.

- The knowledge of God and His divine decrees or desires for your life is what preserves a nation, PRO 28:2, By the transgression of a land many are its princes, But by a man of understanding {and} knowledge, so it endures.

HOS 4:6, My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

To not know God is tantamount to rejecting Him.

GAL 4:8, However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods.

Ignorance of God is a characteristic of pagan nations and unbelievers.

JER 9:3, "They bend their tongue {like} their bow; Lies and not truth prevail in the land; For they proceed from evil to evil, And they do not know Me," declares the Lord.

JER 9:6, "Your dwelling is in the midst of deceit; Through deceit they refuse to know Me," declares the Lord.

The Lord said to Israel in ISA 1:3, "An ox knows its owner, And a donkey its master's manger, {But} Israel does not know, My people do not understand."

This is why simply professing to know God is not enough TIT 1:16, They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed.

When you have knowledge of doctrine and you're in spiritual adulthood, your knowledge is used to correctly interpret history and God's plan for your life. And we are told that it is the motives that the Lord weighs in PRO 16:2, "All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the Lord weighs the motives."

1CO 4:5, 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.

The apostle Paul even tells us that if we do something great but with the wrong motives it absolutely useless in 1CO 15:32, If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me?

We are even warned about pastors or men in the position of pastors who do not have the gift, Paul says in PHI 1:17, The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.

You can be a teacher of the Bible and have wrong motives! Even our prayers can be hindered because of the wrong motivation in JAM 4:3, You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend {it} on your pleasures.

The apostle also tells us how the message of grace motivated him in 1CO 15:10, But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

This is why he said in TIT 2:11, For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,

Please notice that salvation is brought to all men through common grace!

Then notice what grace does, TIT 2:12, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,

Notice that grace motivates us and instructs us!

2CO 5:14, personal love for TLJC motivates us as well, For the love for Christ motivates us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died;

We are even told that no matter what we do we better be motivated from a "willing heart" or a desire to do so,

Paul said to Philemon after asking him to forgive Onesimus, PHM 1:14, But without your consent I did not want to do anything, that your goodness should not be as it were by compulsion, but of your own free will.

And so we live in a time which is relatively normal. Overt disaster is not present as of yet, but in the meantime, people find themselves without motivation. And as a substitute for motivation they accept some form of human stimulation. They look for some form of self-gratification to take up the slack for no motivation in life. A person who loves his job, who enjoys what he is doing, always has a better social life because motivation from one factor over-flows into motivation in other factors. There are people who are enthusiastic about sports or music or theater and that enthusiasm serves as motivation.

When people enjoy their job, enjoy life, enjoy what they're doing in life, when people have a wonderful spiritual life, then they are going to have a wonderful social life, business life, etc. God wants us to enjoy life!

ECC 9:9, Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your passing life which [woman] He [God] has given to you under the sun [in this life]; for this is your reward in life, and [enjoy life] in your work in which you have labored under the sun.

# THE DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINE DECREES. PART 5. IMPORTANT AND UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DIVINE DECREES CONCERNING TIME.

07/24/11

We have seen how God has authority over time.

2PE 3:8, But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

One of the most interesting and fascinating subjects in life is this word "time"? We all have the same amount whether we are absolutely without a dime or whether we are among the wealthiest people on earth! Think of how much of it is woven into our lives on a daily basis! For throughout the day we hear things like;

What time is it?

What time does the meeting start?

What time do you want me there?

I don't have time?

How much time will it take?

Don't waste your time on that!

It's time for us to go!

The time is up!

Or sometimes you might hear between two people, it's time we had a long talk?

In sports we hear, How much time left in the game? Or, Time out!

Time!

Suppose your banker called you up and said that he had some very good news for you! He tells you that an anonymous donor who loves you very much has decided each morning for the rest of your life to deposit in your bank account, 86,400 pennies each morning. That's 4.00. He says there's one stipulation however, you must spend all the money that day! No balance would be carried over to the next day. Whatever sum you failed to use, you would lose. So 864.00 a day times 7 =,048.00 a week.

Times 52 = \$ 314,496.00 for the year. Now, here's the point, every morning someone who loves you very much deposits into your bank of time, 86,400 seconds which represents 1440 minutes which of course equals 24 hours.

Then He tells us in EPH 5:16, Make the most of your time, because the days are evil.

God gives you a certain amount of time that you might use it for His glory. Remember why you were created and why you are here?

ISA 43:1, But now, thus says the Lord, your Creator, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine!

Notice, the Lord is called the creator of Jacob, and the one who formed Israel. According to the accounts in Genesis, Jacob continued to "take hold of" the possessions of others, 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.

ISA 43:2-7, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you. For I am the Lord your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I have given Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in your place. Since you are precious in My sight, {Since} you are honored and I love you, I will give {other} men in your place and {other} peoples in exchange for your life. Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, And gather you from the west. I will say to the north, 'Give {them} up!' And to the south, 'Do not hold {them} back.' Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth, Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made. Bring out the people who are blind, even though they have eyes, And the deaf, even though they have ears.

You often heard that the name Jacob means supplanter or swindler. Do you know what the word supplant means? Supplant means to overthrow by force or treachery or deception. So they named Jacob "one who overthrows"! From his birth he seems to have that ingrained trait to out do his brother or anyone else in his path. Jacob had a nasty habit of deception and he handled it marked with the habit of lies. His family trends and family traits made him a good liar.

HEB 10:25 is a very misunderstood passage, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some; but exhorting one another:

It doesn't say exhorting one another, it says for the purpose of encouragement.

The present active participle of the Greek verb parakaleo means to be encouraged.

But this is a participle used as a noun in the Greek, and so it should be translated "encouragement." Furthermore, this is what is known as a telic participle which indicates the purpose of the action of the verb not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.

So we assemble for the purpose of encouragement.

What is encouragement in assembly? Perception of Bible doctrine, not Christian fellowship. Most of the problems that you face in life, you face alone, and therefore you are to derive your strength from within not from without. This is what it means to be spiritually self-sustained.

The apostle Paul said in PHI 4:13, I can do all things through "him" who strengthens me. Not through people, or the body, but through him!

HEB 13:5, let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for he himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"

People will leave you and forsake you, the Lord will not!

HEB 13:6, so that we confidently say, "the lord is my helper [not people], I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?"

PRO 9:12, if you are wise, you are wise for yourself, and if you scoff, you alone will bear it.

God has decreed that most of the problems that you face in life, you face alone, and therefore you are to derive your strength from within not from without. The apostle Paul commanded believers to continue with doctrine no matter what. He said in 2TI 3:13, but evil men [men influenced by satanic evil] and impostors [individuals who claim to be something they are not] will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving others and being deceived.

Then He said in 2TI 3:14, You, however, continue not with the body, Or with those you love in the local assembly, Or with the building God has called you to...But 2TI 3:14 You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them;

The point is that you derive your strength and encouragement from your fellowship with God, not your fellowship with people. Therefore, Bible doctrine must have #1 priority in your life. And without that you will never have fellowship with invisible God. In fact, the manifestation of invisible God is Bible doctrine. The only way you can have fellowship with invisible God is to "learn" His plan concerning the divine decrees which metabolized doctrine gives you to execute and fulfill the PPOG for your life.

Many believers cannot assemble consistently for Bible doctrine and encouragement from the word of God. They are isolated because of geographics, handicaps, illness, lack of transportation or many other reasons. However, they are not violating this verse.

Bible doctrine is the purpose of assembly worship, and they can learn Bible doctrine alone.

So since they are getting doctrine, they are in effect assembling themselves. In other words, the priority is to get doctrine to have fellowship with God. While some believers are isolated from Christian fellowship, they are not isolated from the communication of Bible doctrine. Therefore, God always supplies a right pastor with doctrine for positive believers.

HEB 10:25-26 is a command given by the Lord through the ministry of God the Holy Spirit to not forsake assembling your self together with other believers. For example, a friend drops by so you can't make Bible class! You got home too late, you don't feel like rushing. You're tired and you have to get up early. The kids have to get their sleep. Excuse after excuse. And it's just a matter of pleasing self and not pleasing God.

HEB 11:6, And without doctrine resident in the soul it is impossible to please Him,

For the average believer, there is no thought of the duty he owes to God....no sense of requirement. That's because they do not love God with all of their strength! How many times do I have to say that before it actually has an impact on some of you?

MAR 12:30, "and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength".

LUK 10:27, And he answered and said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."

DEU 6:5, "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."



The point is that for the average believer, there is no thought of the duty he owes to God. no sense of requirement! That's because they do not love God with all of their strength. God gives you a certain amount of time that you might use it for His glory. Nothing is ever carried over so that you might credit it to the next day! This is why the mature believer regards every day alike, ROM 14:5-6. Everyday we live is a gracious gift from God. God has created you for His glory and until you believe that and then live for that purpose, you will never find true happiness and contentment in life. So God does give you a certain amount of time that you might use it for His glory! This is why the mature believer regards every day as the Lord's day, ROM 14:5-6.

ROM 14:5, One man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord.

Everyday we live is a gracious gift from God and it should be a day that we have time set aside for our relationship with Him. Remember that the only time we possess to honor God in this life is the number of days He provides for us in the Christian life, PSA 90:12; JAM 4:13-15.

James reminds us how frail our life really is in JAM 4:14, Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

The fact that the believer lives another day is a sign of divine grace and the faithfulness of God, LAM 3:22-23, The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Thy faithfulness.

This is why it is important to learn Bible doctrine every day as MAT 4:4 teaches.

Remember what Job said in JOB 23:12, "I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food."

The word for treasured is the Greek verb *tsaphan* which means to esteem; to admire, appreciate, respect, and even worship. Remember that it is Biblical to praise God's word as David did in Psa 56.

PSA 56:4, In God, whose word I praise, in God I have put my trust;

PSA 56:10, In God, whose word I praise, in the Lord, Whose Word I praise,

So everyday is a day when we should be learning doctrine and preparing ourselves to glorify God! If we do not purchase time by taken in doctrine consistently, we lose days! This is why we are told that days of life are lost through divine discipline, PSA 102:23, "In the course of my life, He broke my strength, He cut short my days."

This is also the reason why we are told to purchase time each day or to buy back the time in EPH 5:16-17, Constantly buying time, because the days are evil. [you purchase time with doctrine, doctrine is the capital needed to but time] Because of this, stop being ignorant, but completely understand the will [purpose] of the Lord.

# THE DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINE DECREES. PART 6.

07/31/11

God's decrees include:

1. His directive will.
2. His permissive will.
3. His overruling will.

We have been noting how the only way any believer can really know the difference between God's directive will, His permissive will or His overruling will is found in having their spiritual senses trained or exercised says HEB 5:13-14; Ti 4:7-8.

HEB 5:13-14, 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.

We need to get serious with our spiritual faculties being trained or exercised or we might find ourselves being rejected by God and God's man as they both classify you under category fool. You do not want the Divine Decrees to categorize you as a fool. According to the word of God, the following passages give us some wisdom and warning concerning. Fools always think they're right in everything; PRO 12:15, the way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel.

PRO 14:16 A wise man is cautious and turns away from evil, But a fool is arrogant and careless.

According to the Divine Decrees God has decreed that in PRO 26:1, Honor is not fitting for a fool. PRO 26:3, rather "A rod for the back of fools."

According to the Divine Decrees God has decreed that in PRO 29:11, A fool always loses his temper, But a wise man holds it back.

ECC 5:4, When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it, for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow!

According to the Divine Decrees God has decreed that fools are consumed by their tongue, ECC 10:12, Words from the mouth of a wise man are gracious, while the lips of a fool consume him;

ECC 10:14, Yet the fool multiplies words.

JER 4:22, "For My people are foolish, They know Me not; They are stupid children, And they have no understanding. They are shrewd to do evil, But to do good they do not know."

JER 10:8, But they are altogether stupid and foolish In their discipline of delusion-- their idol is wood!

So, decreed by God;

EPH 5:14-18, 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. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,

In JOB 12:11, Does not the ear test words, As the palate tastes its food? Job is replying to all of the nonsense coming from his so-called "friends! It bothers me when mature believers have to be sidetracked by legalistic pip-squeaks and have to even answer carnal legalistic believers, but so be it, it's a part of our spiritual growth.

In chapter 12 vs 1 Job begins his reply! Now he starts out with fact that self-righteous arrogance gets what it deserves. JOB 12:1-2, Then Job responded, "Truly then you are the people God's special people, And with you wisdom will die!

Wisdom will die with you! You are the ones who know! You guys know everything! Job is saying, "You are God's special people, and when you die wisdom will die too!" This is what Zophar has been saying. He is a spiritual-know-it-all, and Job is treating him as such. However, Job's sarcastic reply is not only directed toward Zophar but his other two friends as well.

PRO 26:5 says, "Answer a fool as his folly deserves, Lest he be wise in his own eyes."

This is what we call sanctified sarcasm! Elijah used it when he taunted the prophets of Baal, he said in 1KI 18:27, Elijah mocked them and said, "Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is occupied or sitting on the toilet, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened."

The apostle Paul used it when he said to the Corinthians, 2CO 11:19, For you, being so wise, bear with the foolish gladly.

1CO 4:10, We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor.

Paul used sanctified sarcasm in GAL 5:12, concerning circumcision when he said Would that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves.

In fact, he said if they circumcise themselves for a false God they should cut it off for the true God! You see you don't see these things in the English language all the time, especially in the thundering version of the King James Bible.

Back in JOB 12:2-3, Truly then you are the people [God's special people], And when you die wisdom will die! But I have intelligence or a mind as well as you; I am not inferior to you. And who does not know such things as these?

It was all basic doctrine to Job except for some of the silly things like the altar call that Zophar gave. Job is saying in effect, "What you're saying is common knowledge, Zophar, who doesn't know those things?" But you see there is something going on behind the scenes, Job knows it but his three friends do not! It is very difficult for a mature believer to try and explain what's really going on to the legalistic or immature ignorant believer.

Zophar is then type of believer who not only makes false applications of doctrine to others but false application of doctrine to himself. He is the type that assumes that because he is moral and has observed a few taboos of Christianity, which are generally erroneous taboos, he assumes that he's a great believer. And all because he is not hurting at the moment, because he's not suffering at the moment, and because someone else is, they're wrong! And today he would go to them and say such things like:

"you can't dress like that and be a Christian"

"you can't dress like that and come to this church"

"you can't smoke and be a Christian"

"you can't drink and be a Christian"

You see he has used the little doctrine that he knows to set himself up as the little demi-god! And the doctrine is out! What little doctrine he has, he has related it to his only self importance. All he does is to apply what he wants to and then makes statements like God is punishing you because you are wrong!

Prin - According to the Divine Decrees God has designed people testing in two categories:

a) In personal love or admiration, the object of your love can often control your life and provide for you unhappiness, unless you have attained spiritual self-esteem, and function with the ten problem solving devices. Many times, in wanting to please the one you love personally, you find yourself being a different person and not following your normal function.

b) The second category of people testing can come in personal hatred or resentment, when the object of your antagonism or irritation often has control of your life or happiness, unless you have advanced to spiritual adulthood. Under the PPOG, God designed His plan so that your happiness will always reside in you, and you do not depend on people or things for your happiness. As a function of your royal priesthood it all comes from within.

You are supposed to have personal control of your life, a personal sense of destiny, self-confidence from metabolized doctrine, and therefore, poise and command of self. Therefore, you bring your happiness to others, but do not lean on others or circumstances for your happiness. People are easily led away from the PPOG and doctrine by their friendships, love life, and even hatred.

So unless you attain spiritual adulthood, every time you fall in love or acquire a friend, the object controls your life and your happiness. Without impersonal love from spiritual autonomy, you become a slave to people. When you fall in love, look how you act, how you change your modus operandi, how you begin to think in different terms relating everything you do to that person. So when you make a friend or fall in love, when you become jealous, possessive, when hate anyone who has it over you; you've immediately become a slave. You've manufactured for yourself many problems, and they're not all the fault of the object.

According to the Divine Decrees God has decreed that the solution to people testing is found in the combination of personal love for God and impersonal love for all mankind. The function of spiritual autonomy in the use of virtue love. Spiritual autonomy is the prerequisite for solving all problems of human relationship, i.e., of people testing, also accompanied by system and thought testing. This is what happened to a lot of major denominations in our day and age!

Let's notice this once again, JOB 12:1-4, Then Job responded, "Truly then you are the people [you're God's special people], And with you wisdom will die! [sarcasm] But I have intelligence or a mind as well as you; I am not inferior to you. And who does not know such things as these? I am a joke to my friends. The one who called on God, and He answered him; The just and blameless man is a joke."

He has become a laughingstock to his neighbors. Friends and neighbors make sport of him and mock him. And he says "I am the one who called on God, and He answered me."

Job was a man who called upon God and was known for God answering him. He was known as a man of God. And boy do people love to hear that a man of God is having problems! They love it! They thrive on it! They can't wait to hear more!

JOB 12:4, "I am a joke to my friends. The one who called on God, and He answered him; The just and blameless man is a joke."

He is saying the just and blameless man is a joke. The man who is just and the man of integrity has become a laughingstock or a joke! People are laughing and mocking. It's all a big joke! But they won't be laughing and mocking for long! You would be shocked how many people would laugh and mock when a mature believer falls or seems to be falling!

Back in JOB 12:4-5, "I am a joke to my friends. The one who called on God, and He answered him; The just and blameless man is a joke. He who is at ease holds calamity in contempt [or men at ease have contempt for misfortune], as prepared for those whose feet slip.

In other words, those who prosper and live in ease have contempt and hatred and look down on those who have failed! Remember, having people malign you, having people judge you. This is all a part of suffering for blessing and the Divine Decrees.

People love for a believer who respects God to fail, and Job is saying that their calamity and contempt in vs 5 is like that which is prepared for those whose feet slip.

JOB 12:6, "The tents of the destroyers or robbers prosper [a reference to those who bring on the destruction], And those who provoke God are secure, Whom God brings into their power."

Job is actually rebuking Zophar, Bildad and Eliphaz for saying "if he was without sin that he would be prospering."

The Taylor translation for JOB 12:6 says, "For robbers prosper, go ahead and provoke God, it makes no difference! He will supply your every need anyway!"

This is a reference to logistical grace. Now, when you are faced with believers who think that they know more than you, you can't teach them with doctrine so Job is now going to use the animals to teach his friends!

He is going to bring them to the zoo!

JOB 12:7-10, "But now ask the animals, and let them teach you; And the birds of the heavens, and let them tell you. Or speak to the earth, and let it teach you; And let the fish of the sea declare to you. Who among all these does not know That the hand of the Lord has done this, In whose hand is the life of every living thing, And the breath of all mankind?"

Animals live because of the grace of God! Every breath that you take is courtesy of the grace of God! You are breathing because God in his grace permits it! And if you really want to get a glimpse of the unbelievable grace of God, just remember Zophar is breathing! In other words, whether it is the animals, the dogs, the cats, the rats, the fleas, the cockroaches, or humans, we are all here courtesy of the grace of God! If God can provide life for a rat, and he does, He can also provide life for you, and that's what Job is saying! Job is saying that we are all here by the grace of God.

And others are going to think they are, when in reality in their self-righteous arrogance, they are merely dancing to Satan's tune! Satan plays all the tunes for those kind!

JOB 12:11, "Does not the ear test words, As the palate tastes its food?"

Whatever God provides is perfect, and as a part of your escrow blessings, the gifts from God have been tailored to fit you perfectly. Therefore God has given you a pastor-teacher. Now the gift is perfect, but the one who possesses it is not! This is why we have passages such as ACT 20:28 which teach that the holy spirit assigns a certain pastor to a certain congregation or group of people.

ACT 20:28, be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

The phrase has made is the aor-mid-ind of tithemi which means to place, to appoint, to assign. Here it means to place and appoint and assign a certain man over a certain or particular flock of believers. It may be for your entire life or it may be for a short time, but you will have the ability to discern that if you truly seek for doctrine!

According to ACT 20:17, Paul is addressing elders or pastors and this verse says that the holy spirit had made them overseers. overseers is the noun episkopos which means a guardian of the flock, overseer, supervisor, superintendent, and policy maker.

So once again, Acts 20:28, Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made or placed, appointed, assigned you overseers [supervisor, superintendent, and policy maker], to shepherd [to care, to rule] the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

By the way the word flock and the word church are both nouns in the singular, illustrating that there is one pastor for one congregation. In this verse the pastors are not to shepherd flocks or churches, but a flock or a church in the singular. The word church in the singular cannot refer to the entire church because it would be totally impossible for any pastor or even all those attending this pastor's conference to take care of the entire church.

So the principle in this verse:

1. One flock and one shepherd over that flock.
2. One church and one overseer over that church.
3. And one pastor assigned or appointed by the Holy Spirit.

On the other hand, 1PE 5:3 teaches that there are certain believers who are allotted or assigned to a certain pastor.

1PE 5:1-2, Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, or being driven and forced from pressure, but voluntarily [willingly], according to the will of God

Please notice that it is according to the will of God.

God's will is perfect and He has a perfect will regarding what pastor should be shepherding and exercising oversight over a certain group of believers.

1PE 5:3, Nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

By the way not lording it over those allotted to your charge refers to the pastors or those who think that they are pastors who violate the royal priesthood of the believer. These are the bullies behind the pulpits. The legalists. The manipulators. The liars. The self-righteous arrogant ones.

The phrase allotted to your charge is the Greek word *kleros* and it refers to the following;

- a. Those assigned to the charge of a certain pastor.
- b. Those allotted or distributed to a certain pastor.
- c. The New Thayer's Greek English Lexicon says concerning this word that in this particular verse those whose care and oversight has been assigned to one Presbyter or pastor teacher.

1PE 5:3, Nor yet as lording it over those allotted or assigned to your charge but proving to be examples to the flock.

The word *examples* is the nominative masculine plural of *tupos* which means a mark, or impression, or a pattern. It does not mean a clone but it means to be a pattern or example of that which you teach. A pastor's mark, a pastor's impression, or a pastor's pattern is what he leaves behind as a legacy of Bible doctrine. Remember the simple principle; it is always the message that counts, never the man. And so when we say that it is the message and not the man, we are pointing to the fact that it is the doctrine which comes from the pulpit that counts.

# THE DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINE DECREES. PART 7.

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We have been looking at three of the different types of the will of God:

1. His directive will.
2. His permissive will.
3. His overruling will.

There is a tremendous difference and distinction between what God permits and what He desires. God's principle desire is for all men to be saved, that's why we teach the doctrine of the unlimited atonement; 1TI 2:3-4; 2PE 2:9. God knew who would accept Him as well as who would reject Him. Therefore, when a person rejects Christ as Saviour, God knew all about that in eternity past. However, He still provided the opportunity for them to believe. And why did He do so? Because of the following passages:

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."

2SA 22:31-33, "As for God, His way is blameless; The word of the Lord is tested; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him. For who is God, besides the Lord? And who is a rock, besides our God? God is my strong fortress; And He sets the blameless in His way.

We have also noted that God is also just. God's holiness includes His justice as well as His righteousness. As a part of God's justice, God is fair. It is impossible for God to be unfair: 2CH 19:7, for the Lord our God will have no part in unrighteousness, or partiality, or the taking of a bribe.

Justice always administers what righteousness demands. The justice of God is actually the guardian of his divine essence. And, it was the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross that allowed the justice of God to release the one attribute that most individuals always focus in on i.e., love. The fact that God's justice is satisfied frees God to love us and bless us. Justice is the source of grace. Justice is the believer's point of contact with God. God is also love as we have noted in 1JO 4:8.

Since God is eternal and immutable, His love is unchanging and enduring. The motive behind God's love is grace! The scriptures teach in ROM 8:38-39, that no matter how a believer fails, no matter what he does, God keeps on loving him. God's love always depends on God's character never on man's character. God's love has no strings attached to it. And so, by now you should be familiar with ROM 11:32, For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all. Remember that God is the one who has done this.

This is not the only passage that teaches this, look at GAL 3:22. In GAL 3:22, I want you to notice that the Scripture is the one that has done this. Gal 3:22, But the Scripture has shut up all men under sin, that the promise by or based upon faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. GAL 3:22 teaches that man is said to be restricted by divine decree to be under sin. GAL 3:22 continues the promise by faith or the promised based upon faith.

As we have noted God is said to have confined all in unbelief that they might become the objects of divine mercy. This brings glory to God in the angelic conflict. So, God's desire is for all men to be saved



but that desire is not fulfilled because of the free will of mankind. However, He still provided the opportunity for them to believe. The same thing is true after salvation. Under election, God willed His highest and best for every believer and therefore He deposited in escrow blessings for time and greater blessings for eternity.

However, He knew every believer who would reject the PPOG, but He still willed His highest and best for that person. This is why believers suffer loss of rewards. They didn't earn rewards and then lose them, they were elected to have them but they rejected that aspect of God's election.

1CO 3:15, If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss [escrow blessings for eternity]; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

This is why Peter tells us in 2PE 1:10, Be motivated even more to make certain about His calling and election;

God's desire is to bless you, and He has, however your desires can cause you to reject His blessings. Here's the reason why-God knew all your negative decisions and programmed them into the divine decrees because He will not interfere with your free will. For this would prevent the angelic conflict from ever being settled.

For example, while sin and death are displeasing to God and incompatible with His divine nature, nevertheless, they belong to the decrees under the category of the fall of man. While loser believers are displeasing to God and incompatible with His sovereign will, nevertheless, they belong to the decrees, having a printout from their own free will.

This means that many things that occur are results of angelic or human free will acting contrary to God's desires. However, He nevertheless decided or willed that these things would take place, thus making our volition truly free.

God's decree rendered all things as certain to occur and He decided that they would exist. In doing so, He did not interfere with angelic or human free will. In fact, He decreed that we would have free will. In giving us volition, He also decreed that our decisions, whatever they might be, would certainly take place, even those that are contrary to His desires.

The decrees include a lot of things that are not God's desires, because the decrees include all the things you think, say or do. Therefore, many things in the decrees are not the desires of God. For example, sin, human good, and evil are not the desires of God but are in the decrees because they are performed by our free will. This means that God desires His perfect will and sovereignty, but both angelic and human creatures use their God-given free will and self-determination to violate the desires of God.

All of God's desires are a part of the divine decrees but we can reject those desires for our personal life. So the decrees contain both the will of God and desires of God. However, many things in the decrees God did not desire to happen but He must allow them to happen because of the free-will of His creation. For example, God does not desire to cast His creatures into the Lake of Fire forever, but it is so decreed under the printout of retribution for all who express negative volition at God-consciousness and at Gospel hearing. He must confine the wicked in an eternal prison or else there would be a constant war throughout the universe for all of eternity. The wicked would get more and more wicked and if they had the freedom to chose, there would be nothing but chaos in the universe.

This is why REV 22:11 says, "Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and let the one who is filthy, still be filthy;"

On the other hand, verse 14 says, Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.

REV 22:15, Outside [the city, the eternal Heaven] are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.

However, they are confined to the eternal prison of the Lake of fire described in REV 14:11 as a place where their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night.

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.

REV 20:15, And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

REV 19:20, it is described as the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.

REV 21:8, "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

God does not desire to cast His creatures into the Lake of Fire forever, but it is so decreed under the printout of retribution for all who express negative volition at God-consciousness and at Gospel hearing.

God does not desire the discipline of believers, but it is decreed for all believers who live in carnality, apostasy and reversionism.

Unlimited atonement is the demonstration that the sovereignty of God desires that no one should perish.

Yet human volition can and does reject the saving work of Christ. Therefore, the alternative is the lake of fire.

The point is that we all have a print-out with our name on it, expressing our positive or negative volition toward God's sovereign will for our lives. God's eternal and sovereign will for every believer is expressed in the divine decrees, having printouts such as election, glorification, justification, and predestination.

Therefore, your life and the decisions that you would make were read by God but not altered. You have privacy and can you make good or bad decisions. This is why REV 20:12, And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

REV 20:13, And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.

The divine decrees contain all data or facts regarding the function of the free will of man in human history. God fed, as it were, all the facts into the divine decrees simultaneously in eternity past. The facts include everything you ever think, decide, or do in the past, present, and future. Therefore, this doesn't tamper with your free will.

All logistical grace, and those who would be blessed and their blessings, were fed into the divine decrees. God knew every problem, heartache, and situation you would face before you ever existed. Therefore, you insult God when you pray "God help," as if He didn't already know you needed help.

ISA 65:24, "It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear."

MAT 6:8, "Your Father knows what you need, before you ask Him."

The divine decree then prints out facts about believers under the categories of election, foreknowledge, predestination, justification and glorification.

This is how God observes our life, from the finish point.

This is why our Lord said in JOH 17:4, "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do.

JOH 19:30 When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit.

The divine decree also prints out facts on the unbeliever under the categories of reprobation, condemnation and retribution.

Let's note the distinctions between what God permits and what He desires. First of all there is the permission of sin. A distinction is made in the divine decrees by dividing them into two combinations, the decrees which are efficacious and those which are permissive. The efficacious decrees are those which determine the affairs of this life directly by physical causes, such as in Job 28.

JOB 28:24-27, "For He looks to the ends of the earth, And sees everything under the heavens. When He imparted weight to the wind, And meted out the waters by measure, When He set a limit for the rain, and a course for the thunderbolt, Then He saw it and declared it; He established it and also searched it out.

The efficacious decrees are also those which determine the affairs of this life in the spiritual realm.

PHI 2:13, for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

EPH 2:8-10, 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. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

On the other hand, the permissive decrees allow those things which are evil and sinful. The term permissive means that God does not actively promote the execution of the decrees even though they have been determined by Him to take place.

ACT 14:14-16, But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they tore their robes and rushed out into the crowd, crying out and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you in order that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them. And in the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways;

With respect to His permissive will, God determines not to hinder the course of action which His creatures pursue; but He does determine to regulate and control the boundaries and the results of such actions. Because Jesus Christ controls history, He will only permit wickedness and evil to go so far. If He did not do this, the universe would self-destruct. God's permissive will is His will to permit whatsoever He thinks fit to permit or not to hinder; while what He wills or determines to permit, he also intends to regulate and not to behold as an idol unconcerned spectator.

Therefore, the divine permission of evil in the human race extends beyond the one sin of Adam. For example, it is written that God hardened Pharaoh's heart so that a demonstration of His divine power might be fully displayed. This does not mean that God reached down in the heart of Pharaoh and made his heart hard. It means that God brought in circumstances and situations that He knew would cause Pharaoh to harden his heart. And that's why we read three times in the book of Exodus that Pharaoh hardened his own heart.

In EXO 8:15, But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

EXO 8:32 But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and he did not let the people go.

EXO 9:34 But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned again and hardened his heart, he and his servants.

The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart by bringing in situations that he knew would cause Pharaoh to reject the warnings of God. One of the reasons being is that by the demonstration of divine power, the whole multitude of the Egyptians came to know something of Jehovah, EXO 14:4.

EXO 14:4 "Thus I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will chase after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord."

In JOS 2:10, Rahab said to the two spies, "For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt,

Now, concerning God's attitude toward sin, it is obvious that God commanded Adam and the woman not to sin, and yet, unless Adam did sin, there would be no need for the Savior who was decreed in eternity past before Adam to be slain, REV 13:8. The same thing is true about King Saul. Saul was told that if he had kept the commands given to him, his house would have been established forever, (1SA 13:13). Yet, by decree it was determined and the prophecy was given that the everlasting throne and kingdom for Israel was to come through the tribe of Judah and not through the tribe of Benjamin, to which tribe Saul belonged, (GEN 49:10).

GEN 49:10, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to Him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

This principle of being given permission to perform evil is also revealed in the altercation between the Lord and Satan as recorded in the first two chapters of Job. Satan admits that he can bring no testing upon Job apart from the permission of the Lord and it is stated that the Lord gave Satan this permission, JOB 1:12; JOB 2:6. Even the experience of an individual who sins reveals the fact that God permits sins but it is not a part of His will. After the sin has been committed, the one who sins could say: God is to be blamed. He could have prevented me from sinning, but He did not. However, the sinner does not say that since there is within him a consciousness that he alone is responsible.

Martyrs could have prevented the sin of murder on the part of their murders if they had retracted from their position relative to the truth in question. Even Christ Himself could have prevented many individuals from the measureless sin of the crucifixion of the Son of God, had He come down from the Cross. All this suggests the obvious fact that the mere avoidance of sin is not always the primary issue. With all these situations in view, the intelligent mind refuses to predicate sin to God either directly or indirectly.

It may be concluded, then, that sin is in the universe by the permission of God who hates it perfectly and who, being sovereign, had power to keep it from manifestation, had He chosen to do so. That He did not hinder the manifestation of sin, demonstrates that He, being what He is, must have a purpose in view other than the averting of sin. Here as nowhere else in the affairs of the universe, the end justifies the means.

The decrees include a lot of things which are not God's desires, because the decrees include all the things His creatures would think, say or do. This means that many things in the decrees are not the desires of God. Therefore, we can conclude that sin is in the universe by the permission of God who hates sin and Who, being sovereign, had power to keep it from manifestation had He chosen to do so. However, the fact that He did not hinder the manifestation of sin, demonstrates that He, being Who and what He is, must have a purpose in view other than the averting of sin.

Here as nowhere else in the affairs of the universe, the end justifies the means. And what is the end? The end is that God will be glorified. Perhaps this is another reason why PSA 89:33 says, Even if they sin and rebel I will not deal falsely in my faithfulness. We have a tendency to think that God hates sin so much that He has nothing to do with the sinner....as if God is afraid of sin. Or, as if He must turn His back on sin wherever He sees it.

However, what does the Bible teach?

PSA 37:23-25, The steps of a man are established by the Lord; And He delights in his way. When he falls, he shall not be hurled headlong; Because the Lord is the One who holds his hand. I have been young, and now I am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Or his descendants begging bread.

God is greatly honored when His children go through failure and have the proper thoughts toward Him and recognize His divine attributes in action. The sooner we trust Him in all of our affairs, being fully persuaded and convinced of His love toward us, the sooner we will find true contentment in life.

# THE DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINE DECREES. PART 8.

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One of the principles that we noted this past week under the divine decrees is that God has placed all mankind under a complete indictment of total depravity.

This is where the Calvinist "TULIP" comes from. TULIP is the acronym for the basic ideas of classical Calvinism.

T - Total depravity. This doesn't mean people are as bad as they can be. Sin is in every part of one's being, including the mind and will, so that a man cannot save himself.

U - Unconditional election. God chooses to save people unconditionally; that is, they are not chosen on the basis of their own merit.

L - limited atonement. - we simply theologically and dogmatically reject the limited atonement. The sacrifice of Christ on the cross was for the purpose of saving the entire world not just the elect.

I - Irresistible grace teaches that God's inward Call is perfectly effectual and sufficient forever from the grace of God.

P - Perseverance of the saints or eternal security. This is not the idea that no matter what a believer does he or she cannot lose his or her salvation.

PHI 1:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

JOH 6:37-39, "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day."

Whenever God creates faith in our hearts and joins us to Christ and His saving work, He will sustain that faith, that saving relationship with Christ, causing us, by His grace, to persevere in grace and faith.

Let's take a fast stroll throughout the New Testament.

1JO 2:1-2, My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

He died not only for our sins only says but for the sins of the whole world.

In JOH 1:29, The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

JOH 3:16-17, "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."

JOH 4:42, and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."

JOH 6:32-33, Jesus therefore said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.”

JOH 6:51, “I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh.”

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.”

2CO 5:18-19, 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.

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 2:3-6, This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time.

1TI 4:10, For this reason, we [pastors] work hard to the point of exhaustion, and we hang in there tough [keep on contending], because we have confidence in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

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, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

2PE 2:1, But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

Now, you should have ENOUGH proof of the scriptural outlook on the unlimited atonement.

One of the principles that we noted this past week under the divine decrees 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, For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all.

One of the principles missing when the Divine decrees are being taught by theologians is the fact that the mercy of God is ignored. Most theologians miss out on the importance of understanding the place of Grace and Mercy in the decrees. We have noted in the past that mercy is grace action. Grace is

free, unmerited love and favor from God alone. It is because of grace that God gives to us. 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.

How?

Well, it all began billions and billions of years ago in eternity past, when God that decision in ROM 11:32 to shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all.

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. If the purpose of God redeeming man is the production of the greatest amount of happiness, then Christianity is one thing, if the end be the glory of God, then Christianity is another thing. You have been created for His glory and He has given you all the grace and mercy you would ever need.

He is not your enemy, He loves you! He is your Father. He is on your side. He is for you.

Everything else you have heard from others or think within yourself is a lie from the pit of hell.

ROM 8:31, What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

Grace and mercy is God's policy toward you. Grace comes from God in the form of gifts but it returns to God in the form of glory. Once you understand these principles, life is exciting, meaningful, significant, rewarding, filled with purpose and meaning.

Grace and mercy is God's policy toward you.

Therefore, what is our responsibility toward Him when we understand these exciting principles?

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 you recognize that in eternity past God decreed for you to be treated with grace and mercy because ultimately this is what brings glory to God. Then you be 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. You have been created for that very purpose.



Don't wait until it's too late!

REV 2:1-5, "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: 'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary.' But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place--unless you repent."

EPH 2:6-7, 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.

God's plan throughout all the ages is that He might be glorified by the grace that He dispenses to undeserving creatures. And that is why God say 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 you have someone in the condition that requires mercy.

1TI 1:12-16, I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service; even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. And yet I was shown mercy, because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus. It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.

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. 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. Therefore, in grace, God gives to all mankind His Son and if mankind receives His Son he is a recipient of the mercy of God. After salvation, God still gives as His grace and therefore mercy.

Here's where some exciting application comes in. Grace comes from God in the form of gifts (PSD, invisible assets, etc) but it 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, mercy is grace in action. 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.

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.

So we have received mercy to handle any problem or difficulty in life.

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.

After all this I want to close with the doxology in verses 11:33-36. A doxology is an expression of praise to God, especially a short hymn sung as a part of Christian worship.

It comes from the Latin doxologia taken from the Greek word doxa referring to glory and it means glory through words.

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!

Paul is absolutely blown away by God's purpose to mankind throughout human history that is defined as being merciful. That is why He used the word mercy in verses 31, 32, and 33. Paul is reaching appreciation for the gaps of the profound wisdom of the mercy of God as never before. The word unfathomable means incapable of explanation in terms of human viewpoint. Phenomenal is this thing about the mercy of God being decreed from eternity past that no member of the human race could have ever sat down and originated this thing...and said I wrote that, I thought up that plan.

Even Paul cannot give us the correct vocabulary of the Divine viewpoint even with the revelation and illumination he has received. 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!

How un-searchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! His ways refer to His decrees. He 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 in ROM 5:16, 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.

All 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.

When Paul says how un-searchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!

His ways refers to His decrees. Paul is receiving a glimpse of the essence of God as it performed in eternity past under the Divine decrees and how phenomenal it is. Paul is being blown away by the mercy of God behind the Divine decree.

ROM 11:34-36, For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

We do not glorify God by what we give to God, God is glorified by what He gives to us. Paul is in overwhelmed at the awesomeness of God. By the way when you are in awe of God you express that awe in worship.

Notice the phrase “glory forever” and that means into and throughout the ages. Then Amen, which simply means I believe it! Amen means that the final conclusion of this is that the grace and mercy of God will be glorified forever and ever. Grace comes from God in the form of gifts but it returns to God in the form of glory.

EPH 1:3-6, 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.

One of the definitions I gave you was that 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. Everything in the divine decrees is designed to bring glory to God.

Now, the passage I really wanted to show you that points out the awesomeness of the divine decrees is found in Rom 11. In Rom 11, Paul is dealing with the fact that God has rejected the Jews as His people to represent Him on earth and has now accepted the Gentiles or the church to represent Him on earth. And He is warning the Church not to be arrogant against the Jews and then He tells them why.

ROM 11:25-32, For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in; and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. And this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins." From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, so these also now have been disobedient, in order that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all.

# THE DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINE DECREES. PART 9.

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Another principle in the Doctrine of the Divine Decree deals with being a vessel for honorable use or one for dishonorable use. In order to do that we must understand to what extent is the human will free.

In a sense the human will is in bondage. It is bondage to the potter's wheel or the rules that God has set up for us to be engaged in.

The Scripture teaches that there are restraints upon human volition and in reality 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. For example, concerning unbelievers it is declared that they, being children of disobedience, are energized by Satan in EPH 2:2. They are not free from God and free from Satan, but 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 noun pneumatos, (Greek) used as an adjective, and of course it has many meanings, here it refers to a spirit higher than man but lower than God.

It can also refer to demon influence, and in some cases even demon possession, it also refers to the disposition or influence that fills and governs the soul of anyone. The point is that 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.

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.

I say developed instead of create because Satan doesn't have the ability to create. All Satan can do is take the flawless creation that God creates and pervert it into evil. So, in reality there is an outside power and system contending for your soul. 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. The human race thinks that they are free birds. However, the Bible teaches they are in are in cages.

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.

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 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.

There is a natural seed of Abraham and a spiritual seed of Abraham. 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];

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 8:38-39, "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."

ROM 4:3, For what does the Scripture say? “And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.”

JOH 8:40-41, “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.

# FEAR WILL TORMENT YOU AND PUNISH YOU.

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ROM 9:17-19, 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. You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?"

And then the apostle Paul mentions or gives the answer to:

ROM 9:20-24, On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use? 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, even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

This is a verse that teaches that God is not a respecter of persons and that salvation in time and in eternity is available to all members of the human race. In time, salvation actually refers to deliverance. In eternity, it refers to eternal life. Why do we need salvation or deliverance in time? Well, there is one verse that the writer of the book of Hebrews tells us the main reason why we need deliverance.

HEB 2:14-15, 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.

All of this has to do with subject of fear. A subject we all have to deal with from time to time. So let's stop for a moment and look at the doctrine of Fear.

I will begin this subject with my final point.

Point 10. Summary.

- 1) Fear is met and destroyed with courage.
- 2) When you face your fear, most of the time you will discover that it was not really such a big threat after all.
- 3) Fear defeats more people than any other one thing in the world.
- 4) Most of our problems would be totally solved if, instead of fearing to face them, we should make up our minds to walk boldly through them.
- 5) Whenever we're afraid, it's because we don't know enough. If we understood enough, we would never be afraid.
- 6) Whenever we fear something, we give that which we fear power over us.
- 7) You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face.
- 8) Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear--not absence of fear.

So, we begin this subject by noting that fear is used two ways in the Bible.



Fear is used for a mental attitude sin, characterized by panic when in a dangerous situation as well as intimidation. Fear is a painful emotional distress aroused by impending pain, danger and disaster, evil or by illusions regarding the same. It can be fear of something that is real or imaginable.

But the point is fear will torment you and punish you. Fear is self-induced misery.

This is why John said in 1JO 4:18, There is no fear in virtue-love; but mature love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not matured in love.

Fear is worry, apprehension, consternation, or horror. Consternation is when a person becomes paralyzed toward their problems. Usually they run away from the problem like a frightened horse or they close their doors and hide from society. In fact, it's not death that a man should fear, but he should fear never beginning to live. That's what fear will do it will paralyze you.

Fear is also an active feeling of dread, of which fright and terror are the more intense degrees.

Fear is also used in the Bible for reverence, respect, or awe. It is a reverence manifesting itself in obedience. In this respect, fear is a Christian virtue, 1PE 2:17, Honor all men; love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

So the meaning of the word "fear" in the Bible is determined by the context in which it is used. Neglect or rejection of the mystery doctrine of the Church-age and failure to utilize its fantastic problem-solving devices result in many problems, including fear. Fear is also lack of thinking under pressure. It is a general problem in life.

We are designed by God to be rational creatures but fear makes us irrational. Fear is an irrational and emotional sin. In fact, many believers have discovered that when you face your fear, most of the time you will discover that it was not really such a big threat after all. For the believer, fear is failure to learn and apply Bible doctrine to the problems of life, and failure to learn and utilize the problem-solving devices.

Fear is also a part of the emotional complex of sins. Fear is made up of a whole system of sins that include worry, anxiety, insecurity, incapability of doctrinal application, and therefore inability to use the problem-solving devices. The word worry comes from the word to choke, to strangle, and it is an extension of fear.

By the way, we always have to throw this in, if you have fear, worry, anxiety or insecurity in your life, you are sinning in those areas.

ROM 14:23b, whatever is not from faith is sin.

Fear includes all the problems of emotionalism, for fear is an emotional sin. Many sins involve only thinking but fear involves emotion and no thinking. The Christian loser is bogged down and hindered from his advance by various categories of sins and arrogance related to fear. Fear defeats more people than any other one thing in the world.

The only thing we have to fear is HEB 4:1-4, 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. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, "As I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter My rest," although His works were finished from the foundation of the world.

Only when we are no longer afraid do we begin to really live.

Look at HEB 13:6, so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?"

And this is a quotation of PSA 56:4, "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?"

To face your fears and not be afraid is the final test of maturity. Fear is crippling, it shackles those who could do great things and keeps them from even attempting that which they could possibly achieve. Fear chokes and kills dreams and creativity and the most interesting thing about fear is that it is a learned behavior. A subject we all have to deal with from time to time.

Then there is what we call the snowballing principle of fear. The more things you surrender to fear, the more things you fear. Today you may be worried about only one thing; tomorrow about two things, etc. And soon you become so emotionally involved in fear that you have no identity. Irrationality means loss of identity, which means the accumulation of fear until you are afraid of life. And fear is something that, if not controlled, continues to develop in your life until you have no capacity to enjoy life and as a believer you become a loser.

Speaking of the ungodly David said in PSA 53:5, "There they were in great fear where no fear had been;"

You see fear is irrational thinking, there was no reason to fear. One of the motivations for becoming addicted to drugs or alcohol is fear of life, anxiety, worry, and tension. So the extent to which you surrender to fear, the greater is your capacity for fear. To the extent to which you surrender to fear, to that extent fear controls more and more of your life. And increasing fear means increasing insecurity, which destroys your capacity for love, life, happiness, and blessing. And no set of circumstances in life will ever make you happy. No matter how much wealth you have, success, prosperity, you'll have all kinds of fears.

PSA 55:1-5, (For the choir director; on stringed instruments. A Maskil of David [a Maskil is a song or poem of instruction]). Give ear to my prayer, O God; And do not hide Thyself from my supplication. Give heed to me, and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and am surely distracted, Because of the voice of the enemy, Because of the pressure of the wicked; For they bring down trouble upon me, And in anger they bear a grudge against me. My heart is in anguish within me, And the terrors of death have fallen upon me. Fear and trembling come upon me; And horror has overwhelmed me. That is what fear will do!

Fear destroys happiness. Where the fear is, happiness is not. And that's because there is no way you can have true love or true happiness apart from a healthy mental attitude. And fear destroys the mental attitude. So the greater your capacity for fear, the more you increase the power of fear in your

life. And the more you increase the power of fear in your life, the greater your mind set as a loser believer and the greater your chances of failure to execute the PPOG through the mechanics of the spiritual life under equal opportunity.

The greater your chances of failure to execute the PPOG of God, the sooner you cancel your equal opportunity to glorify God. The sooner you cancel your equal opportunity to glorify God, the sooner you live a life of total misery through the law of volitional responsibility. So the more things that acquire the power of fear in your life, the greater your capacity for fear.

Most of our problems and obstacles would melt away if, instead of shrinking in fear before them, we should make up our minds to walk boldly through them. This is what happen to the children of Israel in when Moses told them to “stand still” and stop being afraid.

EXO 14:10, And as Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them,

The verb to look is qal imperfect of the Hebrew word nasa which means that they kept staring and concentrated on Pharaoh’s army, the oncoming problem. And by concentrating on Pharaoh’s army, the problem, they were overwhelmed by fear and they completely forgot the grace of God and the power of God and the marvelous deliverance that they had experienced just a week or so before.

They concentrated on the wrong thing! They concentrated on the problem! And they not only panicked but they began to do something which all of us have been guilty of at some time “they began to whine and complain.”

Whining and complaining Christians are not going to solve their problems! If you’re complaining, you’re concentrating on the wrong thing! We have all done this at some time in our lives! We concentrate on the circumstances of pressure rather than the principles of doctrine. We concentrate on the disaster rather than the solution. The point is that you have to know what to concentrate on in times of pressure. And one of the main distractions in time of pressure is mentioned in verse 10, emotion which is described by the word frightened.

Notice the next part of the verse, EXO 14:10...and they became very frightened; so the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord.

The reaction of fear and panic removed any possibility of applying doctrine. They had seen the power of God in their deliverance from Egypt, but they made no application from that doctrine to this disaster.

Why?

Because they failed to concentrate on what they had learned and allowed fear and panic to control the soul. And they expressed their fear rather than their faith. And so they screamed in panic to the Lord!

EXO 14:11-14, Then they said to Moses, “Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, Leave us alone that we may serve

the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." But Moses said to the people, "Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent."

Notice that first they had to be stabilized in their mentality or else some of them would have turned back to the Egyptians "begging to be slaves"! And you'll live like a slave unless you learn to become stabilized under pressure! The Jews faced extermination from the pursuing chariot army of Pharaoh...they were not trained in war...they were in a hopeless situation!

So Moses told the Jews "do not fear!" When you're in a hopeless situation that's when you need to think! And here is a hopeless situation. The Lord will fight for you while you will keep your mouth shut!

It's the same thing as David said in 1SA 17:47, "And that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hands."

And in the Church-age, it's the same thing, ROM 8:31, What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

You see that's the whole concept of the faith rest drill. In grace, the Lord fights our battles! Now, when you are afraid of a thing, you give that thing power over you. When you're afraid of a person, you give that person power over you. And so fear is proof of a degenerate mind. In fact, what was the first thing Adam did after he sinned. He hid himself, right?

Why?

GEN 3:10, "I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself."

The greater your capacity for fear, the greater your capacity for arrogance and becoming a loser. For fear causes you to become totally preoccupied with yourself. And once in the arrogance complex, all the rest of the mental attitude sins come quickly. The combination of fear and arrogance causes many people to become mentally ill, psychotic and neurotic. The more things that acquire the power to promote fear in your life, the more punitive suffering and self-induced misery you bring on yourself.

The more things that acquire the power of fear in your life, the greater your capacity for fragmentation and becoming a loser in the Christian life. And as a loser, your capacity for life, love, and happiness is completely destroyed. The greater your mindset as a loser-believer while living, the greater the intensification of your fear when dying.

You will be afraid of death! So remember that fear is an emotional sin. And emotions cannot think! Emotion has no true courage. It has a pseudo courage. Arrogance and emotional domination of the soul produce cowardice. And fear is irrational and irresponsible. It creates three things: the arrogance skills, the arrogance complex of sins, and the emotional complex of sins.

# FEAR WILL TORMENT YOU AND PUNISH YOU. PART 2.

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The next part of our study on fear is found in Exo 14, a passage that shows fear is lack of doctrinal thinking under pressure. It is a general problem in life.

We are designed by God to be rational creatures but fear makes us irrational. But there is actually a command and it tells us that there is only one thing to fear:

HEB 4:1-3, 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. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, "As I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter My rest," although His works were finished from the foundation of the world.

Only when we are no longer afraid do we begin to really live.

HEB 13:6, so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?"

This is a quotation of PSA 56:4, 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?

Let's get some principles:

1. To face your fears and not be afraid is one of the great tests of spiritual maturity.
2. Fear is also crippling, it shackles those who could do great things and keeps them from even attempting that which they could possibly achieve.
3. Fear chokes and kills dreams and creativity and the most interesting thing about fear is that it is a learned behavior.
4. Fear is something that, if not controlled, continues to develop in your life until you have no capacity to enjoy life and as a believer you become a loser.

Speaking of the ungodly David said in PSA 53:5, "There they were in great fear where no fear had been;"

You see fear is irrational thinking, and in this verse there was no reason to fear! No matter how much wealth you have, success, prosperity, you'll have all kinds of fears.

PSA 55:1-5, (For the choir director; on stringed instruments. A Maskil of David [a Maskil is a song or poem of instruction].) "Give ear to my prayer, O God; And do not hide Thyself from my supplication. Give heed to me, and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and am surely distracted, Because of the voice of the enemy, Because of the pressure of the wicked; For they bring down trouble upon me,

And in anger they bear a grudge against me. My heart is in anguish within me, And the terrors of death have fallen upon me. Fear and trembling come upon me; And horror has overwhelmed me.”

That is what fear will do! Fear destroys happiness. Where fear is, happiness is not. That’s because there is no way you can have true love or true happiness apart from a healthy mental attitude. Fear destroys the mental attitude. Most of our problems and obstacles would melt away if, instead of shrinking in fear before them, we should make up our minds to walk boldly through them. This is what happen to the children of Israel in when Moses told them to “stand still” and stop being afraid.

EXO 14:10, And as Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them,

The Hebrew verb for to look is qal imperfect of nasa which means that they kept staring and concentrated on Pharaoh’s army...the oncoming problem. By concentrating on Pharaoh’s army, the problem, they were overwhelmed by fear and they completely forgot the grace of God and the power of God and the marvelous deliverance that they had experienced just a week or so before. They concentrated on the wrong thing! They concentrated on the perceived problem! They not only panicked, but they began to do something which all of us have been guilty of at some time, they began to whine and complain. Whining and complaining Christians are not going to solve their problems!

If you’re complaining, you’re concentrating on the wrong thing! We have all done this at some time in our lives! We concentrate on the circumstances of pressure rather than the principles of doctrine. We concentrate on the disaster rather than on the solution. The point is that you have to know what to concentrate on in times of pressure.

And one of the main distractions in time of pressure is mentioned in verse 10, emotion that is described by the word frightened.

Notice the next part of the verse, EXO 14:10...and they became very frightened; so the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord. The reaction of fear and panic removed any possibility of applying doctrine. They had seen the power of God in their deliverance from Egypt, but they made no application from that doctrine to this disaster.

Why?

Because they failed to concentrate on what they had learned and allowed fear and panic to control the soul. They expressed their fear rather than their faith. And so they screamed in panic to the Lord!

EXO 14:11-14, Then they said to Moses, “Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.” But Moses said to the people, “Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent.”

Notice that first they had to be stabilized in their mentality or else some of them would have turned back to the Egyptians begging to be slaves! You will live like a slave unless you learn to become stabilized under pressure!

The Jews faced extermination from the pursuing chariot army of Pharaoh. They were not trained in war. They were in a hopeless situation! So Moses told the Jews “do not fear”! When you're in a hopeless situation that's when you need to think. Here is a hopeless situation. But Moses says the Lord will fight for you while you will keep your mouth shut!

It's the same thing as David said in 1SA 17:47, “And that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hands.”

In the Church-age, it's the same thing, ROM 8:31, What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? You see that's the whole concept of the faith-rest drill. In grace, the Lord fights our battles.

Now, when you are afraid of any thing, you give that thing power over you. When you're afraid of a person, you give that person power over you. In fact, what was the first thing Adam did after he sinned? He hid himself, right?

Why?

GEN 3:10, “I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.”

The greater your capacity for fear, the greater your capacity for arrogance and becoming a loser. Fear causes you to become totally preoccupied with yourself. Once in the arrogance complex, all the rest of the mental attitude sins come quickly. The combination of fear and arrogance causes many people to become mentally ill, psychotic and neurotic.

So remember that fear is an emotional sin. And emotions cannot think! Emotion has no true courage. It has a pseudo courage. Arrogance and emotional domination of the soul produce cowardice. And fear is irrational and irresponsible.

It creates three things: the arrogance skills, the arrogance complex of sins, and the emotional complex of sins.

Remember when we noted Abraham and his cowardice?

GEN 26:7, When the men of the place asked about his wife, he said, “She is my sister,” for he was afraid to say, “my wife,” {thinking,} the men of the place might kill me on account of Rebekah, for she is beautiful.

Fear not only removes Bible doctrine from number one priority in the life, but fear fragments and destroys the function of your spiritual life and moves you into the different stages of reversionism. Fear is also a function of self-absorption. You are absorbed with yourself and your problems. You want the world to center around you. You want everyone to stop what they're doing and help you. Meanwhile you are filled with fears and very emotional.

Some people think emotion is a criterion for the spiritual life. And to make emotion the criterion for the spiritual life is a wedding between the arrogance skills and the emotional revolt of the soul. Emotion can be normal or evil, good or bad. However, regardless of what it is, emotion is never a tool of cognition. You do not learn by emotion.

God gave us emotion as an enjoyer of what is truth. But emotion is not a criterion for the spiritual life. Emotions were never designed to be problem solving devices. Sinful emotional activity such as fear, worry, anxiety, hatred, anger, revenge, guilt are reactions and totally rejected by the absolutes of Bible doctrine. Emotional reactions, such as emotional revolt of the soul or false spirituality by ecstasies, are a distraction to the execution of the PPOG.

Given some testing, the loser believer under emotional revolt of the soul will scream loud and clear, find someone to blame, and fall apart. The fear principle explains the sin unto death, 1JO 5:16b, "There is a sin face-to-face with death."

The function of worry and anxiety in living results in the function of fear in dying. There is a sin believers commit while taking the journey through their very own death-shadowed valley: fear, reaction to the fact you are dying, bitterness. But for the mature believer, PSA 23:4, Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me;

So fear is a key that unlocks many doors, starting with the door of arrogance. You cannot be afraid without putting an abnormal emphasis on yourself. To the extent that you become frightened by anything, to that extent you set up a new circuit in your life which is arrogance.

#### Point 2. The Snowballing Principle of Fear.

First of all, the more things you surrender to fear, the more things you fear. Today you may be worried about only one thing; tomorrow about two things, etc. Soon you become so emotionally involved in fear that you have no identity.

Irrationality means loss of identity, which means the accumulation of fear until you are afraid of life. Fear is something that, if not controlled, continues to develop in your life until you have no capacity to enjoy life and as a believer you become a loser. One of the motivations for becoming addicted to drugs or alcohol is fear of life, anxiety, worry, and tension.

So the extent to which you surrender to fear, the greater is your capacity for fear. To the extent to which you surrender to fear, to that extent fear controls more and more of your life. And increasing fear means increasing insecurity, which destroys your capacity for love, life, happiness, and blessing. And no set of circumstances in life will ever make you happy. No matter how much wealth you have, success, prosperity, you'll have all kinds of fears.

So the greater your capacity for fear, the more you increase the power of fear in your life. And the more you increase the power of fear in your life, the greater your mind set as a loser believer and the greater your chances of failure to execute the PPOG through the mechanics of the spiritual life under equal opportunity. And the greater your chances of failure to execute the PPOG of God, the sooner you cancel your equal opportunity to glorify God. The sooner you cancel your equal opportunity to glorify God, the sooner you live a life of total misery through the law of volitional responsibility.

Fear is proof of a degenerate mind. In fact, what was the first thing Adam did after he sinned. He hid himself, right?

Why?



GEN 3:10, "I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself."

The greater your capacity for fear, the greater your capacity for arrogance and becoming a loser. For fear causes you to become totally preoccupied with yourself. Once in the arrogance complex, all the rest of the mental attitude sins come quickly. The combination of fear and arrogance causes many people to become mentally ill, psychotic and neurotic. The more things that acquire the power to promote fear in your life, the more punitive suffering and self-induced misery you bring on yourself. The more things that acquire the power of fear in your life, the greater your capacity for fragmentation and becoming a loser in the Christian life.

As a loser, your capacity for life, love, and happiness is completely destroyed. The greater your mindset as a loser-believer while living, the greater the intensification of your fear when dying. You will be afraid of death!

So remember that fear is an emotional sin, and emotions cannot think! Emotion has no true courage. It has a pseudo courage. Arrogance and emotional domination of the soul produce cowardice. Fear is irrational and irresponsible. it creates three things: the arrogance skills, the arrogance complex of sins, and the emotional complex of sins.

The last three stages of reversionism destroy all previously learned Bible doctrine and hinder any use of problem solving devices. The last three stages of reversionism:

Blackout of the soul.

Scar tissue of the soul.

Reverse process reversionism.

Fear is also a function of self-absorption. You are absorbed with yourself and your problems. You want the world to center around you. You want everyone to stop what they're doing and help you. Meanwhile you are filled with fears and very emotional. Some people think emotion is a criterion for the spiritual life. To make emotion the criterion for the spiritual life is a wedding between the arrogance skills and the emotional revolt of the soul. Normal emotional activity in the soul functions in subordination to the absolutes of Bible doctrine circulating in the soul.

Emotion can be normal or evil, good or bad. However, regardless of what it is, emotion is never a tool of cognition.

You do not learn by emotion. God gave us emotion as a enjoyer of what is truth. But emotion is not a criterion for the spiritual life. Emotions were never designed to be problem solving devices. Sinful emotional activity such as fear, worry, anxiety, hatred, anger, revenge, guilt are reactions and totally rejected by the absolutes of Bible doctrine.

Emotional reactions, such as emotional revolt of the soul or false spirituality by ecstasies, are a distraction to the execution of the PPOG.

Given some testing, the loser believer under emotional revolt of the soul will scream loud and clear, find someone to blame, and fall apart. Emotion as the criterion of the spiritual life converts reality into unrealistic expectation, illusion, denial, projection, and hallucination. So the believer must distinguish

between normal emotional response (like watching a good movie) or abnormal emotional reaction to life in the form of the emotional revolt of the soul (using drugs).

The function of worry and anxiety in living results in the function of fear in dying. There is a sin believers commit while taking the journey through their very own death-shadowed valley: fear, reaction to the fact you are dying, bitterness. But for the mature believer, PSA 23:4, Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me;

Destruction of capacity for life, love, and happiness increases your capacity for arrogance and emotionalism, and therefore, your capacity for fragmentation. So fear is a key that unlocks many doors, starting with the door of arrogance. You cannot be afraid without putting an abnormal emphasis on yourself. To the extent that you become frightened by anything, to that extent you set up a new circuit in your life that is arrogance. From that fear comes many manifestations of arrogance.

- a. Jealousy. If you're afraid of losing someone, you become jealous when they show any favoritism toward anyone else.
- b. Bitterness. You become bitter toward that person because they don't give you the affection and attention you think you deserve.
- c. Vindictiveness.
- d. Implacability.
- e. Revenge motivation.

From all this comes a series of functions in your life that absolutely destroy any capacity. Therefore, you cannot be distinguished from the unbeliever, except that you are far worse than many unbelievers. They have handled fear through establishment principles. But you have something so much greater and so much easier compared to how they must handle fear. Yet it's amazing how many unbelievers are superior to Christians in their life style, conquering such things as fear the hard way through establishment principles. Arrogance, fear, worry, anxiety, anger, and emotionalism are all irrational. And irrationality is a total contradiction to the PPOG which manufactures invisible heroes.

So fear manufactures losers. Fear is lack of thinking under pressure. And of course, if you don't think under normal circumstances and in prosperity, you will be filled with fear during abnormal circumstances. Fear is the mental attitude of worry, anxiety, apprehension, trepidation, and despondency. Inevitably, fear leads to arrogance, the narcissus syndrome, and even to psychosis. Fear cannot coexist with the function of the PPOG in your life. The function of the PPOG means first the function of Bible doctrine.

When you have a point of doctrine, you can say as David did when facing Goliath, "The battle is the Lord's." That overcomes the problem of fear and so releases your ability to go into action, which is exactly what David did. Fear and the function of your spiritual life are mutually exclusive. People who live by fear are intimidated by life. For the believer who lives in a state of fear, the fear increases like a disease. As the cancer of fear increases, that individual becomes intimidated by life. Fear eliminates a personal sense of destiny, so that the loser believer cannot overcome emotional sins like fear, worry, anxiety, guilt, denial, projection. Fear of death will never prevent your dying, but it will prevent your living. Fear is being overcome by the problem, becoming enmeshed in the disaster. The disaster destroys the spiritual life rather than the advancing the spiritual life as designed by God.

A personal sense of destiny is inculcated with the solution, therefore involved in the function of the problem solving devices for the application of doctrine to experience.

PSA 56:3-4, 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?

2TI 1:7 "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and a sound mind."

Arrogance produces irrational self-deception, which in turn spawns fear, worry, anxiety, and the unhappiness of self-induced misery. Arrogance causes loss of personality identity. Many women have lost their personality identity because they wanted to feel wanted and loved, but ended up merely being used. This is abnormal self-deception. Some people have great capacity for unhappiness, for they can only complain and grumble about life. And the more you develop your capacity for unhappiness, the farther away goes your chance of having any happiness in this life.

Because of arrogance, you do not know who you are or what you are, for you cannot see your soul in the mirror. And with loss of personality identity, you fall into a total state of fear so that you begin to retreat from any form of reality, becoming psychopathic or neurotic. The only hope is that, while you're still partially normal, to function under the perception, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine. For cognition of Bible doctrine inside the PPOG can remove the fear, arrogance, self-deception, and the retreat from reality which makes it impossible for God's grace to break through and be utilized in your life.

When you become a total loser, having no understanding of God's grace, you are totally miserable. So fear is the beginning of the end for you, which you do to yourself.

PHI 1:27, Only live in your Heavenly privileges in a manner worthy of the good news doctrines of the Christ; in order that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm by means of one and the same Spirit, with one soul since you have joined in the conflict for the doctrines of the gospel;

# FEAR WILL TORMENT YOU AND PUNISH YOU. PART 3.

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We continue with Point 3. The Solution to Fear.

The PPOG is designed to remove all the cobwebs of fear in your soul and replace them with confidence in doctrine, which leads to confidence in the Lord. That is the only true basis for spiritual self-esteem, which is confidence in yourself and your relationship with God through Bible doctrine in your soul. Doctrine in your soul reminds you of the fact that ROM 8:31, If God is for us, who is against us?

This inevitably results in the greatest courage in life. It's more than moral courage; it is a mental attitude courage in all relationships and in all circumstances of life. Fear is met and destroyed with courage. When you face your fear, most of the time you will discover that it was not really such a big threat after all. Paul stated this to Timothy who was intimidated by his congregation. It is a command which belongs to the PPOG

2TI 1:7, For God has not given to us a lifestyle of fear, but of power, and of virtue-love, and of sound judgment.

Whenever we're afraid, it's because we don't know enough knowledge or judgment. If we understood enough, we would never be afraid. The biggest fear in life is fear of the unknown. If you know something, you can deal with it.

You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face.

PSA 3:6, "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people Who have set themselves against me round about."

PSA 56:4, "I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me?"

Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear--not absence of fear. The brave man is not he who feels no fear.

That would be unrealistic and irrational. The brave man is the one who masters his fears and is willing to face his problems head on. We all need the strength to endure the things that we cannot change. But we also need the courage to change the things that should be changed. Most of all we need the wisdom to know one from the other. Every time fear comes into your life, you know you are not living the Christian way of life. You know immediately that you are not executing the PPOG.

True courage is virtue-love, i.e., personal love for God the Father, impersonal love for all mankind, and occupation with Christ. True courage means sound judgment, thinking under pressure, and good judgment at all times. Sound judgment comes from Bible doctrine, not from emotion. The person with real courage is the person with doctrine in their soul.

When David faced Goliath, he had doctrinal courage that was far superior to Goliath's loud-mouthed macho courage. So living in the PPOG is a life of courage. The execution of the PPOG is learning courage. What passes for courage is often not courage at all, but macho arrogance and stupidity. Sound judgment is the result of utilizing the problem-solving devices.

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.

John is saying that if you have personal love for God the Father and you understand His integrity, you don't need to claim specific promises for every situation. You rest on the entire essence and integrity and person of God. If you love God, you therefore know God. Therefore, once you have virtue-love, you're not afraid of anything whereby you need promises, for now you know the One who makes the promises. You understand God's integrity, and therefore, you are dependent on Him.

If you are dependent upon God and His integrity, then having fear is not only an insult to God, but it is blasphemous and sinful. Fear actually causes two categories of punishment. First, you punish yourself through self-induced misery. Then when fear gets into arrogance, divine punishment follows.

So you can be punished three ways by fear: by yourself, by your peers, and by God. Mature believers are not afraid. Virtue-love, mentioned three times in this passage, represents all the problem-solving devices. So the great problem-solving devices of spiritual adulthood eliminate fear by equating living with dying and adversity with prosperity. Fear of death destroys capacity for life; it is a sign that you are still in spiritual childhood.

HEB 2:14-15, 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.

Death is the last thing in the world that should concern you, for you have no control over the manner of your death or time of your death. When you realize your death is strictly in the Lord's hands, the one time when the Lord's wisdom will prevail over your volition, there is no excuse for having fear of death. When you understand there is nothing to fear in death, then you begin to realize there is nothing to fear in life.

Fear is a great motivation in life for most people. Yet fear is totally destructive; it destroys love. Making wrong decisions out of fear destroys your capacity for life. Many people spend so much time being afraid of death, or of dying, or of starving, or of being poor, etc., that they do not enjoy life. They have no zest for life and no capacity for life. The one person in this world who has zest and capacity for life is the spiritually mature believer.

Fear of adversity destroys capacity for prosperity. When prosperity comes, you're so afraid that you will lose it, and with that fear, you have absolutely no capacity for that prosperity. You may stash it all away for a rainy day. That's no capacity for life. Therefore, you do not enjoy prosperity when it comes.

So fear is the enemy of the PPOG. It destroys any possibility of suffering for blessing in its three stages. Fear makes you herd bound so that you come to depend on others. The Church-age believer cannot think, apply doctrine, or solve problems through the thinking or mind of another believer. You must have the doctrine in your own soul and solve your own problems. To the extent that you depend upon others for your spiritual application to life, to that extent you are a loser.

People are simply afraid of too many things. The fear of being wrong or making a mistake is the prime inhibitor of the creative process in man. Fear defeats more people than any other one thing in the world. Winners are those people who make a habit of doing the things losers are uncomfortable

doing. Fear of failure must never be a reason not to try something. If you're never scared or embarrassed or hurt, it means you never take any chances.

And only when we are no longer afraid do we begin to live. The greatest test of courage on earth is to bear defeat without losing heart. It is far better to attempt to do mighty things and to win glorious victories even through failures than to join the ranks of those poor boring individuals who don't enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live a life that knows no victory or defeat.

One man with courage can affect the majority.

1SA 17:8-11, Goliath stood and shouted to the soldiers of Israel, and said to them, "Why do you come out to draw up in battle array? Am I not the Philistine and you servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will become your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall become our servants and serve us." Again the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day; give me a man that we may fight together." When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

1SA 17:20-23, So David arose early in the morning and left the flock with a keeper and took the supplies and went as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the circle of the camp while the army was going out in battle array shouting the war cry. And Israel and the Philistines drew up in battle array, army against army. Then David left his baggage in the care of the baggage keeper, and ran to the battle line and entered in order to greet his brothers. As he was talking with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine from Gath named Goliath, was coming up from the army of the Philistines, and he spoke these same words; and David heard them. When all the men of Israel saw the man, they fled from him and were greatly afraid.

1SA 17:26, Then David spoke to the men who were standing by him, saying, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine, and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?"

By the way that's what happens in your life every time you let fear take over. That thing or person is taunting the people of the living God, you! It is an insult to your Father when you allow the circumstances of life to produce fear.

You wouldn't want your children to live in fear!

MAT 7:11, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!"

So you know the rest of the story so I just want to skip down to 1SA 17:45-51, Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day the Lord will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hands." Then it happened when the Philistine rose and came and drew near to meet David, that David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand into

his bag and took from it a stone and slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead. And the stone sank into his forehead, so that he fell on his face to the ground. Thus David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and he struck the Philistine and killed him; but there was no sword in David's hand. Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.

Now notice how one man with courage can affect the majority.

1SA 17:52, And the men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted and pursued the Philistines as far as the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the slain Philistines lay along the way to Shaaraim, even to Gath and Ekron.

The truth that many people never understand, until it is too late, is that the more you try to avoid suffering the more you suffer, because smaller and more insignificant things begin to torture you in proportion to your fear of being hurt.

Fear is crippling, it shackles those who could do great things and keeps them from even attempting that which they could possibly achieve. The tragedy of life doesn't lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in not having a goal to reach for.

Summary.

- a. Fear is met and destroyed with courage.
  - b. When you face your fear, most of the time you will discover that it was not really such a big threat after all.
  - c. Fear defeats more people than any other one thing in the world.
  - d. Most of our problems would be totally solved if, instead of fearing to face them, we should make up our minds to walk boldly through them.
  - e. Whenever we're afraid, its because we don't know enough. If we understood enough, we would never be afraid.
  - f. Whenever we fear something, we give that which we fear power over us.
  - g. You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face.
  - h. Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear--not absence of fear.
- And so, we begin this subject by noting that fear is used two ways in the Bible.

Fear is used for a mental attitude sin, characterized by panic when in a dangerous situation as well as intimidation. Fear is a painful emotional distress aroused by impending pain, danger, disaster, evil or by illusions regarding the same. It can be fear of something that is real or imaginable. But the point is fear will torment you and punish you.

Fear is self-induced misery. This is why John said in 1JO 4:18, There is no fear in virtue-love; but mature love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not matured in love.

Fear is worry, apprehension, consternation, or horror. Consternation is when a person becomes paralyzed toward their problems. Usually they run away from the problem like a frightened horse or they close their doors and hide from society. In fact, it's not death that a man should fear, but he

should fear never beginning to live. That's what fear will do it will paralyze you. Fear is also an active feeling of dread, of which fright and terror are the more intense degrees.

Another way that fear is used in the Bible is for reverence, respect, or awe. It is a reverence manifesting itself in obedience. In this respect, fear is a Christian virtue, 1PE 2:17, Honor all men; love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

So the meaning of the word fear in the Bible is determined by the context in which it is used. Neglect or rejection of the mystery doctrine of the Church-age and failure to utilize its fantastic problem-solving devices result in many problems, including fear. Fear is also lack of thinking under pressure. It is a general problem in life. We are designed by God to be rational creatures but fear makes us irrational.

Fear is an irrational and emotional sin. In fact, many believers have discovered that when you face your fear, most of the time you will discover that it was not really such a big threat after all. For the believer, fear is failure to learn and apply Bible doctrine to the problems of life, and failure to learn and utilize the problem-solving devices. Fear is also a part of the emotional complex of sins.

Fear is made up of a whole system of sins which include worry, anxiety, insecurity, incapability of doctrinal application, and therefore inability to use the problem-solving devices. The word worry comes from the word to choke, to strangle, and it is an extension of fear. By the way, we always have to throw this in, if you have fear, worry, anxiety or insecurity in your life, you are sinning in those areas.

ROM 14:23b, whatever is not from faith is sin.

Fear includes all the problems of emotionalism, for fear is an emotional sin. Many sins involve only thinking but fear involves emotion and no thinking. The Christian loser is bogged down and hindered from his advance by various categories of sins and arrogance related to fear. Fear defeats more people than any other one thing in the world.

HEB 4:1-3, 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. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, "As I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter My rest," although His works were finished from the foundation of the world.

Only when we are no longer afraid do we begin to really live. Look at HEB 13:6, so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?"

This is a quotation of PSA 56:4, 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?

To face your fears and not be afraid is the final test of maturity. Fear is crippling, it shackles those who could do great things and keeps them from even attempting that which they could possibly achieve. Fear chokes and kills dreams and creativity and the most interesting thing about fear is that it is a learned behavior. A subject we all have to deal with from time to time. Then there is what we call the snowballing principle of fear.



The more things you surrender to fear, the more things you fear. Today you may be worried about only one thing; tomorrow about two things, etc. Soon you become so emotionally involved in fear that you have no identity. Irrationality means loss of identity, which means the accumulation of fear until you are afraid of life. Fear is something that, if not controlled, continues to develop in your life until you have no capacity to enjoy life and as a believer you become a loser.

Speaking of the ungodly David said in PSA 53:5, "There they were in great fear where no fear had been;"

You see fear is irrational thinking, there was no reason to fear. One of the motivations for becoming addicted to drugs or alcohol is fear of life, anxiety, worry, and tension. So the extent to which you surrender to fear, the greater is your capacity for fear. To the extent to which you surrender to fear, to that extent fear controls more and more of your life. And increasing fear means increasing insecurity, which destroys your capacity for love, life, happiness, and blessing. And no set of circumstances in life will ever make you happy.

# FEAR WILL TORMENT YOU AND PUNISH YOU. PART 5.

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This past week we noted that the greatest battles in history are those that take place in your soul. This is why the Lord Jesus Christ, the apostles Paul and Peter, said be on the alert! Our Lord made this crystal clear in MAT 7:24-27, when He said, "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and {yet} it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall."

You can strive to build all the dreams in the world that you desire. But without God at the very center of every area of your life, you will live a life of defeat.

PSA 127:1-2, (A Song of Ascents, of Solomon.) Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman keeps awake in vain. 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.

Satan and the kingdom of darkness with their many philosophies and lies will keep on throwing them in your direction until they finally see one hit. You will be faced with projections from the kingdom of darkness designed to distract you and keep you down here living the spiritual abundant life. Our Lord said to the religious Jews in JOH 8:23, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world."

If you live the life that the Lord has called you to live, you will live of life that is from above and free from fears. If not, you will end up being attacked by Satan and the kingdom of darkness surrounding your soul and trying to construct large strongholds against you. Satan and the kingdom of darkness uses fears and thoughts and projections to do so. That's why we are told in EPH 6:16, in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one.

Those flaming missiles are the philosophies of life! Those flaming missiles are the weapons of the king surrounding the small city of your soul. Satan has invisible missiles that attack the soul and cause fears and human viewpoint on the part of believers which neutralizes them and draws them away from the PPOG. From the day in which you believed in Jesus Christ, from that very day you were placed under the fear panic ploy. You are going to have times when you are faced with fears stress and other problems as well. Due to the fact that these are Satanic strategies, as a part of spiritual growth, you are to have testing along the way. In fact, we are tested at every stage.

Just as you are tested in school and before you advance to the next grade, you have to past certain tests, so you have to pass certain divine tests along the way. Everyday you are going to have the charge of the mosquito, things that disturb you, things that bother you, things that make you jealous, bitter or vindictive. All of these things have to be dealt with by the word of God.

Peter said in 1PE 5:9, But resist him [Satan] by being firm in your doctrine. The kingdom of darkness throws thoughts and ideas at us through the media, friends, family members, believers, unbelievers, enemies, and sometimes even from our own presumptuous ideas. Then if that doesn't work, there is a direct attack made upon you which is much closer. One of the ultimate goals of Satan and the kingdom of darkness is to attack your soul with fears and do whatever they can to take you away from the PPOG and the teaching of Bible doctrine.

MAR 4:15, "And these are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them."

The king led by Satan and the kingdom of darkness says I'll give you a plan that works! Listen to me. Give up all that other stuff that you hear in doctrine class. You know that biblical stuff won't work in this day and age. I'll even give you a plan where you can rationalize around wrong says the king. You can bend it so that you won't even have a guilty conscience!

JER 49:23-24, Concerning Damascus. Hamath and Arpad are put to shame, For they have heard bad news; They are disheartened. There is anxiety by the sea, It cannot be calmed. Damascus has become helpless; She has turned away to flee, And panic has gripped her; Distress and pangs have taken hold of her Like a woman in childbirth.

One of the biggest areas of the deception of fears is Fear of Failure. It is hard to fail, but it is worse never to have tried to succeed. In fact, there are times that you can fail your way to success. Our doubts are traitors, and cause us to lose the good we might have won, by fearing to attempt. Then if that doesn't work, there is a direct attack made upon you that is much closer! The ultimate goal of Satan and the kingdom of darkness who attacks your soul is to do whatever he can to take you away from the PPOG and the teaching of Bible doctrine. Satan knows that if he can influence the believer with his flaming missiles and large siegeworks and get his garbage in the believer's soul that he can cause tremendous problems and stress for born again believers.

What kind of problems? Problems that relate all the way from personality dysfunction to mental disorders of one kind or another. This is why the major target for Satan's missiles is the soul and the thought pattern of the believer

Three principles:

1. Some of his missiles are targeted to distract the believer from the perception of doctrine. Too busy for doctrine. Too tired!
2. Some of his missiles are targeted to distract the believer from the metabolization of doctrine. They hear the doctrine but they are not filled with the Spirit or they listen but do not concentrate. Concentration on doctrine is the highest form of worship in the universe!
3. Some of his missiles are targeted to distract the believer from the application of doctrine, once that doctrine it is located in the soul.
4. And the most successful attack that Satan makes with his flaming missiles at this point is to get the believer involved with the arrogant complex of sins or the emotional complex of sins.

The ultimate goal is to take the believer out of the historical phase of the angelic conflict. Get the believer off the playing field and on the permanent disabled list or the injured list. So Satan's flaming missiles are designed to destroy the spiritual life of the believer.

2CO 10:3-5, For though we walk in the flesh [we live in the world] we do not war according to the flesh. For the equipment and weapons of our warfare or conflict are not of the flesh [human attributes] but divine power [Bible doctrine] for the destruction of fortresses [Satan's flaming missiles and siegeworks from the cosmic system etc.] Destroying or assaulting speculations [these are Satan's flaming missiles]

The Greek word for speculations here is the accusative masculine plural from the noun logismos which means thoughts and reasons. Such as thoughts and reasons on why you don't have to continue with doctrine and the PPOG.

2CO 10:5-6, Destroying or assaulting speculations [Satan's flaming missiles] and every obstacle of pride, which raises up or attacks the knowledge or doctrine of God, and taking every thought [human viewpoint system of thought] captive to the authority of Christ, And we are ready [the Christian soldier] or on the alert to punish all disobedience [deviation from obedience], whenever your obedience is complete [spiritual maturity].

I would like to give you some principles concerning fears and warfare that will give you some idea as to what we will face in the devil's world.

1. All warfare is based on deception.
2. Therefore when capable, fake incapacity.
3. When possible make it appear that you are far away, when far away, that you are near.
4. Offer the enemy bait to lure him; fake weakness and disorder then strike him.
5. When he concentrates, prepare against him; when he is strong, avoid him.
6. Anger his general and confuse him.
7. Pretend inferiority and encourage his arrogance (90% to 10%).
8. Keep him under pressures and fears and wear him down.
9. When he is united divide him.
10. Attack where he is unprepared and he does not expect you.

These are the strategist's keys to victory."

We are told in the Bible that we have an enemy. That enemy is said to have a tremendous power to deceive us.

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

Let me illustrate this while they were all at the Last Supper in John 13, Peter could have been very fearful because Jesus had just told him how badly he was going to fail and betray him. Fear of failure is one of the most powerful fears the kingdom of darkness uses to try to get believers to lose sight of their faith in Jesus Christ.

JOH 13:36-41:1, Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you shall follow later." Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You." Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a cock shall not crow, until you deny Me three times. Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me."

So what was one of the very first things the Lord said to Peter after telling Peter how totally Peter was going to fail?

He says, "Do not let your heart be troubled!" There is no chapter break in the original language - sometimes people quote "Don't let your heart be troubled," but they don't realize Jesus is saying this

right after telling Peter how badly Peter is going to betray Him 3 times! No matter how bad you're going to fail - you don't need to fear the future, the unknown, or your own inevitable failures. So Jesus always wanted Peter to remember - no matter how badly you fail, or how hopeless the situation appears - don't let your heart be troubled or fearful! No matter how hard you fall or what the future holds.

Cowards are constantly fearing the worst. Worry is a form of fear, and all forms of fear produce fatigue. Where fear is present, wisdom cannot be. The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown.

Gen 3: 8-14, And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" And the man said, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." And the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly shall you go, And dust shall you eat All the days of your life;"

# YOUR HEART IS WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS.

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We looked at the principle of not living to attain material possessions. The flip side of that coin is, “lay up your treasures in heaven”.

MAT 6:19-21, “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.”

We saw that this is the beginning of Our Lord’s great teaching in Mat 6 on anxiety caused by material concerns. Jesus wants us to be: Free from anxiety, especially about finances. Jesus spoke of treasure or money quite frequently. By faith in His Word and His promises God frees us from anxiety. He wants us to live in this freedom so we won’t crave treasures on earth anymore.

Jesus also wants us continually seeking his kingdom, pursuing God and his righteousness is the fundamental occupation in the Christian way of life. Do not make material things first on your list of priorities. If you make your fortune on the earth, you have made a fortune, and stored it, in a place where you cannot hold it. We also saw that material things will not make you happy without the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus used three examples to illustrate the principle of the uncertainty of earthly treasures: moths, rust and thieves.

Moths and rust destroy that which is valuable changing their very make-up. Thieves can steal that which is still valuable. Either way, valuable earthly possessions can be lost. There is no absolutely firm, unshakeable security to be found in material things. Jesus Christ says of treasure laid up upon earth: Earthly treasure is insecure. Man can never guarantee his hold on anything he may possess. He has it today; he is never sure of it tomorrow. We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. No amount of money will bring genuine security and contentment; God alone gives that.

Earthly treasure is temporary. When you set your life to store up the wealth of this world, you are setting your life after that which cannot last. You may amass a fortune, but you won’t be able to keep it, eventually the money you worked so hard for will slip from your hands and into the hands of others. At the point of death the only thing a person can take with them is their soul. Everything else stays behind. But death cannot touch the soul - it lives forever. The content of your soul is part of your eternal treasure.

LUK 12:15, And He said to them, “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.”

What folly to store your treasure in the place you must soon leave! We are not to live as if this world is the only world there is, for it is not.

Earthly treasure is enslaving.

Materialism promises so much but cannot give us what we need most. Our consumer society is constantly telling us that life at its best consists of having more and more possessions and pleasures. As Christians, we know this is patently false. But, the tug is so strong that many of us try a balancing act between what the Bible teaches and what this world bombards us with. We struggle between the spiritual riches God offers us in Christ and the worldly treasures that cannot feed our soul. Sadly, some of us lose our focus, and the results are devastating. We become slaves to that which we seek and possess.

We saw the story of how to catch a monkey - Where hunters in the jungles have a clever way of trapping monkeys. They slice a coconut in two, hollow it out, and in one half of the shell cut a hole just big enough for a monkey's hand to pass through. Then they place an orange in the other coconut half before fastening together the two halves of the coconut shell. Finally, they secure the coconut to a tree with a rope, retreat into the jungle, and wait. Sooner or later, an unsuspecting monkey swings by, smells the delicious orange, and discovers its location inside the coconut. The monkey then slips his hand through the small hole, grasps the orange, and tries to pull it through the hole. Of course, the orange won't come out; It's too big for the hole. To no avail the persistent monkey continues to pull and pull, never realizing the danger he is in. While the monkey struggles with the orange, the hunters simply stroll in and capture the monkey by throwing a net over him. As long as the monkey keeps his fist wrapped around the orange, the monkey is trapped. The poor monkey could save its life if it would only let go of the orange. It rarely occurs to a monkey, however, that it can't have both the orange and its freedom. That delicious orange becomes a deadly trap.

Maybe a simplicity, but Jesus is warning us not to be trapped by the things of this world. In the Day of Judgment, nothing of our earthly riches shall remain.

Let us not stand there trying to explain why we idolized them and let them distract our minds from Him. Worldly ambition has a strong fascination for us.

The lure of materialism is very hard to break. The popular bumper sticker which reads: He who dies with the most toys wins! There is a deadly plague reigns everywhere throughout the world - many men have an insatiable desire of gain.

There is nothing wrong with riches in and of themselves; you must have food to eat and clothes to wear. But if they spend all their days thinking about what they shall eat, or what they shall wear, they are missing the purpose of the Christian life. But, if they recognize the Father's faithfulness to supply all of their needs, then they are living in the light of eternity. Jesus is not advocating financial poverty as a means of attaining spirituality. The problem He is addressing is when we allow wealth to become our god or idol, or our main priority. Jesus is not teaching that believers are to be careless in handling their money. It is the duty of all persons to provide for those who depend upon them - children, aged parents or relatives, those under our care. Solid financial plans produce good stewards of the earthly resources that God has entrusted to us. Jesus does not say we cannot have a financial plan but is saying that the financial plan is not to be the object or goal of our life's work. It is not a sin to have the things that money can buy as long as you don't lose the things that money can't buy (eternal life).

MAT 16:26, "For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Don't have any false confidence because the bank account looks good. Wealth can't be trusted. Money cannot take us to heaven. Money cannot rescue us from death.

Money cannot conquer death, and money cannot go with us, but we can use it wisely while we have it. Although a powerful resource, its power is limited to this world.

Unfortunately, this world is all many people think of.

A well-known pastor was invited to dinner in the home of a very wealthy man in Texas. After the meal, the host led him to a place where they could get a good view of the surrounding area. Pointing to the oil wells punctuating the landscape, he boasted, "Twenty-five years ago I had nothing. Now, as far as you can see, it's all mine." Looking in the opposite direction at his sprawling fields of grain, he said, "That's all mine." Turning east toward huge herds of cattle, he bragged, "They're all mine." Then pointing to the west and a beautiful forest, he exclaimed, "That too is all mine." He paused, expecting the pastor to compliment him on his great success. However, the pastor placed one hand on the man's shoulder and pointed to heaven asking, "How much do you have in that direction?" The man hung his head and confessed, "I never thought of that."

How many souls have lived with this attitude? The real measure of a man's wealth is what he shall own in eternity! A heart designed for God and eternity is degraded by being fixed on those things that will not last. We, as Christians, have desires as passionate as those of any man. Passions are the story of human life. It is all right to have passions and possess wealth. But the method by which we possess and the purpose we desire to possess make all the difference.

It is most wise to fulfill that passion for possession by making your fortune, not for the present; but for the future, the eternal.

MAT 6:20, "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;"

This is a positive command from our Lord to do something as opposed to a command to stop doing something. Make it the habit of our lives, day in and day out, to store up eternal treasure in heaven.

Day by day we should seek to increase our eternal account, because it is only worth having that which we can have forever. Our time, talent and treasure are given to us from the Grace of God. Therefore, they should be held subject to God's will and used according to His purpose. Do not hold the earth's treasures with too firm a grasp.

He who is in touch with eternal realities will consider earthly possessions of secondary importance. The concentration of our efforts and the desires of our hearts will reveal where our real treasure is. Our life is measured by our motivation.

The whole teaching of Matthew 6:19-21 may be summarized in six simple words: Invest in that which lasts forever!

COL 3:2, Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.



# THE MENTAL ATTITUDE OF SIN.

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2CO 10:3-5, For though we walk in the flesh [we live in the world] we do not war according to the flesh. For the equipment and weapons of our warfare or conflict are not of the flesh [human attributes] but divine power [Bible doctrine] for the destruction of fortresses [Satan's flaming missiles and siegeworks from the cosmic system etc.] Destroying or assaulting speculations [these are Satan's flaming missiles]

There is a war, and a battle, but it's not with people and it's not in the natural realm. The Greek word for speculations is very interesting, it is the accusative masculine plural from the noun logismos which means thoughts and reasons. Such as thoughts and reasons on why you don't have to continue with doctrine and the PPOG.

2CO 10:5, Destroying or assaulting speculations [Satan's flaming missiles] and every obstacle of pride, which raises up or attacks the knowledge or doctrine of God, and taking every thought [human viewpoint system of thought] captive to the authority of Christ,

Ultimately the attacks of Satan's flaming missiles are against Bible doctrine.

2CO 10:6, And we are ready [the Christian soldier] or on the alert to punish all disobedience [deviation from obedience], whenever your obedience is complete [spiritual maturity].

Lets note some principles concerning fears and warfare that will give you some idea as to what we will face in the devil's world:

1. All warfare is based on deception.

Remember that Satan has one goal in the life of every believer. His goal is to lead all believers astray. Any area that you do not have sound doctrine in, is an area open to deception which means that anything that we think or do, that is not oriented to the way God thinks, is open to deception.

Deception is demonization of the soul and personality of the believer or unbeliever living in the cosmic system. And there are degrees of deception. As a believer, it depends on how long you reside in the cosmic system without the use of recovery or rebound. Deception is thought transference of demon doctrine to the believer or unbeliever in the cosmic system. By thought transference I do not mean that you are thinking like members of the occult, but I am referring to human viewpoint or worldly thinking! All believers and unbelievers in the cosmic system are under some form of satanic deception. This is why the apostle Paul said in COL 2:4, I keep on communicating these things in order that no one may delude you with persuasive argument.

So many individuals think they are intelligent and wise, when in reality they are under extreme deception and delusion. And this type of deception is the worst kind, it is deceiving yourself, In 1CO 3:18, Paul said, 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.

Remember, even the woman in the garden, who was perfect and didn't have an O.S.N. ended up deceived by the craftiness and subtlety of Satan. This is why in 2CO 11:3, the apostle Paul said, But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray [deceived] from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

Notice that it is the “mind” which is led astray, not the body! And according to the Bible, she was not just tricked and partially deceived, but in 1TI 2:14, quite deceived.

1TI 2:14, And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being “quite” deceived, fell into transgression. She was completely and totally deceived and she didn’t have an O.S.N. like we all do.

So, deception is the invasion of the soul, especially the mind, emotion, and self-consciousness of the soul. And the result is the invasion of the human personality of the believer or unbeliever who lives in the cosmic system. Deception is also the infiltration of satanic thought. It isn’t just expressed in terms of evil, but in terms of improving this world, doing nice things for your fellow man, and supporting crusades.

Therefore, deception is the invasion of the soul with thought that is false thinking, i.e., the policy and principles by which Satan operated prior to the creation of man and afterwards as the ruler of this world. Now, the unbeliever is protected from both deception and demon possession by adherence to the laws of divine establishment. However, the believer is protected from deception by Bible doctrine only! The only hope for protection against deception is doctrine resident in the soul.

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;

2PE 3:17, You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the deception of unprincipled men [men with no principles], you fall from your own steadfastness,

Only the truth can keep false thinking and false doctrine out of the soul. If the believer only understands the laws of divine establishment, that gives him some protection. But the greatest victims of deception are believers, which is a direct result of the genius plan of Satan to distract them from the PPOG.

The cosmic system, Satan’s classroom for deception. The cosmic system is Satan’s strategy as the ruler of this world to control believers. It is his policy for the rulership of this world. Satan’s cosmic system is composed of two separate power spheres. Cosmic one emphasizes preoccupation with self, cosmic two emphasizes antagonism toward the truth. When the believer gets outside of the PPOG, he inevitably enters into cosmic one or cosmic two.

In cosmic one is the whole system of prehistoric sins, which are connected to arrogance. Cosmic one is Satan’s exploitation of believers through their own arrogance. This is his means of controlling the human race. Satan invented arrogance, for arrogance was his original sin. Cosmic one represents Satan’s attitude at the time of his prehistoric fall. [the 5 “I wills”]

Cosmic one emphasizes the individual being totally independent from God and not willing to even adhere to any divine principles. And if the sins of arrogance are allowed to continue, it is inevitable that the believer in cosmic one will become an abnormal person. Once this abnormality sets in, there is a system of locked-in arrogance that totally rejects truth or distorts truth by hallucination.

Cosmic two is comprised of all the historical sins. Cosmic two is Satan’s propaganda and indoctrination college to educate and promote antagonism toward anything related to God, especially

the grace of God. Cosmic two represents Satan's attitude at the time of Adam's fall in the Garden of Eden. Cosmic two emphasizes antagonism and intolerance toward the plan, purpose, and will of God, as well as toward all Christians executing it. Cosmic two is Satan's philosophy in human history as the ruler of this world.

In cosmic two, we become antagonistic toward bible doctrine. Cosmic two emphasizes human viewpoint living in contrast to the divine viewpoint of spiritual living. So the believer out of fellowship can commit either prehistoric or historic categories of sins. Cosmic one is rejection of doctrine because you're preoccupied with yourself, which is an indirect rejection of doctrine. People who are preoccupied with self, seeking pleasure and approbation for self, have no time for doctrine; rather, they substitute self-indulgence for learning doctrine. Cosmic two is also negative volition toward doctrine, but true rejection is due to antagonism toward doctrine.

Therefore, one enters the cosmic system through an active or a passive decision from the free will. And once inside the cosmic system, negative volition towards true doctrine creates a vacuum through which demon doctrine enters, EPH 4:17. In fact, apostasy is, in effect, the degrees of deception of the believer in the cosmic system. In 1CO 2:5, the "wisdom of man" illustrates deception in the cosmic system through Greek culture and religion.

1CO 2:5, Your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

The quickest way to get into the cosmic system is to sin, 1JO 3:4-10, which says in effect, when anyone commits a sin, he has become the agent of the devil. Just as the devil invented the cosmic system, so he also invented sin. But Christ destroyed the basis for Satan's entire system when he judged sin at the Cross. However, through cosmic living instead of spiritual living, the believer all too often continues the lifestyle of spiritual death by living in Satan's cosmic system.

In cosmic one, he grieves the Holy Spirit;

In cosmic two, he quenches the Holy Spirit.

All spiritual living occurs inside the PPOG under the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit. Living in the PPOG is called the Filling of the Spirit. Functioning in the PPOG is called walking by means of the spirit. Therefore, in 1JO 2:15-16, we have a warning to church age believers not to superimpose the life of spiritual death on the Christian way of life.

1JO 2:15-16, stop loving the cosmic system or anything in the cosmic system. If anyone keeps loving the cosmic system [cosmic one and two], the love for the father [personal love for God] is not in him. For all that is in the cosmic system, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, and the arrogant pattern of life, is not from the father but is from the cosmic system.

Loving the cosmic system means deception of your motivation, of your thought pattern, of your decision making, and of your action. The love of the father refers to virtue-love, one of the highest problem solving device in the Christian life. The lust of the flesh is the old sin nature seeking to control the soul. The lust of the eyes is motivational evil in cosmic one. The arrogant pattern of life is the functional evil of the other forms of arrogance in cosmic two.

As the leader of all fallen angels and as the ruler of planet earth, Satan has been able to compile a cosmic system which is a mass of thoughts, opinions, speculations, systems of false doctrines, panaceas, plans, systems of all categories for deceit, policies, and objectives by which Satan seeks to control the world which he rules.

However, although Satan is the ruler of this world, he does not necessarily control the people of this world; that depends upon individual volition. Satan seeks to control both mankind and the millions of fallen angels still loose, called demons. For example, in cosmic two, Satan has provided a communion table to complement real spiritual death. The apostle Paul warned about this in 1CO 10:21, when he said, "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and at the same time the cup of demons."

In other words, the believer who is out of fellowship, out of the PPOG, is under deception, drinking from the "cup of the demons." You cannot partake of the table of the lord [Eucharist] and the table of demons. The table of demons is cosmic living in Satan's cosmic system.

In cosmic two, Satan's false doctrine results in the human viewpoint of life, which resents Bible doctrine and any truth.

1TI 4:1-2, But the Spirit [God the Holy Spirit] explicitly communicates that in latter periods of time some believers will fall away from doctrine, giving attention to deceitful spirits, even doctrines from demons [deception in cosmic system]. By means of hypocrisy of liars, they are seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron.

This passage teaches thought telepathy from demons. Doctrine means a system of teaching that is transferred to anyone who resides in the cosmic system. And believers believe liars because of their facade of sweet and pleasing words, and the warmth of their personality. In cosmic living, you are so preoccupied with yourself that you assume that any speaker who pleases you, stimulates you, and warms you, must be telling you the truth. And a burned-out or seared conscience is a result of deception.

Deception destroys the norms and standards of truth. When a believer or unbeliever remains in the cosmic system long enough, all his norms and standards related to truth are gone, seared, and burnt.

EPH 2:2 says, In which sphere [real spiritual death] you formerly walked according to the lifestyle of the cosmic system [world].

In the sphere of real spiritual death from birth, all unbelievers reside in Satan's cosmic system and are influenced by it to some degree, depending upon their adherence to the laws of divine establishment. The degree of influence from Satan's cosmic system can only be negated for the unbeliever by knowing and adhering to the laws of divine establishment. But this only frees the unbeliever from some of Satan's policies; it does not give him salvation.

Living in Satan's cosmic system includes three categories of living:

- A. Demon possession.
- B. Deception.
- C. A combination of these two, or cosmic living.

The believer cannot be demon possessed because his body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who indwells him. No demon can be in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

# CURES FOR ANXIETY, FEAR AND WORRY.

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1. Fix our eyes on Jesus.
2. Your heart is where your treasure is. So don't lay up treasures on earth, instead lay up treasures in heaven.
3. God knows all about us
4. Seek first the kingdom of God.
5. Don't worry about tomorrow

## Introduction

To be anxious and to worry is to be drawn in different directions by an uncertain and troubled mind. Worry pulls us apart and puts us off balance. Man worries and becomes anxious because he tries to live life on his own without the guidance of God. That is the sin of independence. Worrying is destructive. Worry only tears us down. Worry can't add anything positive to our lives. Worry is also deceptive. It convinces us that this world is more important than eternity. Our enemies want us so concerned about today's world, that we totally forget about eternity and our goal - to glorify God.

Worrying is debilitating. It stops us in our tracks and keeps us from growing. In the process it makes our Christian walk ineffectual. It renders us ineffective as ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ. How can we witness to a lost world and encourage them to put faith in Jesus Christ if we ourselves are doubting God and worrying? One mark of a Christian is that he makes it easier for others to believe in God. What a tragedy it is when so many of us fail to practice it.

What does worry, anxiety and fear do to us?

Worrying makes us miserable and destroys capacity for life and happiness. Fear, worry and anxiety interferes with your personal sense of destiny, because it is the opposite of what Jesus wants for us.

JOH 16:33, "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

Worrying reveals a lack of faith in God's ability to guide us. When we worry, we are taking on God's responsibility. If worry gains control over us, it can stop our spiritual walk in its tracks, and we go backwards

How do we conquer worry?

1. Fix our eyes on Jesus.
2. Your heart is where your treasure is. So don't lay up treasures on earth, instead lay up treasures in heaven.
3. God knows all about us
4. Seek first the kingdom of God.
5. Don't worry about tomorrow

Fixing our eyes on Jesus.

HEB 12:2, fixing our eyes 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.

The phrase fixing our eyes is the pres/act/imp participle of the Greek word *aforao*. The word means to look away from other things and steadfastly and intently look toward another object. The present tense denotes an habitual attitude, a way of life. The participle is imperative - it is a command. We are to look away From: The world and its lusts. Other people. Difficulties. Fellow Christians. Self.

And look toward Jesus Christ thru the source of doctrine. There must be no divided attention. The minute the Christian takes his eyes off of the Lord Jesus his momentum in the Christian life is hindered. Satan's work is to constantly try to make us take our eyes off Jesus and on ourselves. Our Lord once walked where we walk. He knows thru firsthand experience our difficulties and sorrows. God never takes us thru a trial that He doesn't understand thru experience. And then, on the other side, He gives us something better.

We are to look to his holy life; to his patience and perseverance in trials; to what he endured in order to obtain the crown, and to his final success and triumph. Keep your eye simply on him; let his death, his sufferings, his merits, his glories, his intercession, be fresh upon your mind. Jesus is the one sure thing. He is the rock, the foundation. Get Him in view when everything else in your life is swirling and you will land safely. Your heart is where your treasure is. Don't lay up treasures on earth, lay up treasures in heaven.

MAT 6:19-21, "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."

This is a passage to determine what your scale of values are. It is saying in effect, do not make first on your scale of values materialistic things. Job understood these truths and upon loosing unspeakable wealth including his children, he declared...

JOB 1:21, "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 of the LORD."

Job understood doctrinal principles:

1. We take no riches of this world into the next.
2. God is the source of all blessing.
3. God deserves our thanks and praise in all things.

If you make your fortune on the earth, you have made a fortune, and stored it, in a place where you cannot hold it. Material things will not make you happy without the Lord Jesus Christ. Man was made to fellowship with God. No amount of money will bring genuine security and contentment, God alone gives that. When you set your life to store up the wealth of this world, you are setting your life after

that which cannot last. Eventually the money you worked so hard for will slip from your hands and into the hands of others. The only thing a person can take with them is their soul. Everything else stays behind. Everything!!! But death cannot touch the soul - it lives forever. The content of your soul is part of your eternal treasure.

Our consumer society is constantly telling us that life at its best consists of having more and more possessions and pleasures. This tug is strong. Worldly ambition has a strong fascination for us. The lure of materialism is very hard to break, many men have an insatiable desire of gain. Wealth can't be trusted. Money cannot take us to heaven. Money cannot rescue us from death. Money cannot conquer death. We should make it the habit of our lives, day in and day out, to store up eternal treasure in heaven. This is a strong cure for worry, anxiety and fear.

To lay up treasure in heaven is to store it with God; to have our possessions in him; to entrust our all to him; to know that when we go to God we shall find our wealth. Nothing can enter and destroy in the pure atmosphere of heaven. This heavenly treasury is safe and secure in Christ Jesus, Our Lord. Jesus is teaching us not to be selfish and self-centered. He is teaching us the accumulation of goods should not be the major goal in life. In the long-run it is so unimportant. Laying up treasure in heaven is whatever you do when you are filled with the Holy Spirit. The filling of the Spirit is the key. Time logged in the filling of the Spirit has permanent results. Nothing that is material will last forever. Everything will vanish.

1JO 2:17, And the world is passing away, and also its lusts.

Only two things last forever. The word will live on forever. The soul will live on forever. If you enjoy doctrine you enjoy everything in life and if you don't enjoy doctrine you don't enjoy anything in life. This is true freedom. This is freeing yourself from the chains of earth.

God knows all about us

MAT 6:31-32, "Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?' "For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things."

Our Father knows. His knowledge comes from His state of being and not something that He acquires. God cannot learn anything. God the Father always knew everything in eternity past and this will continue into eternity future. It is not bound by any limitation. There is no limitation to his knowledge. Every minute detail is in God's mind at all times and has always been there. He is in complete control at all times.

This is Our Father. This is Our Savior. What is there to worry about when He knows all. Every plan of God is the best that could be and all that is achieved by Him is perfect. He has always known what will happen to each of His creatures, and what could have happened to them. He does not deal with all his children in the same way. He deals with each child individually. He is acquainted with each of His children's separate and special needs. God has already provided a perfect provision and a perfect solution for every problem we will ever face. It should be a great comfort to know that God has always known about you and all of your trials, troubles and tribulations and has provided answers for

everything. He will not deny us anything we need because He doesn't know what we need. We are safer in his hands than anywhere else in the world. Our Heavenly Father's concern never fails.

Seek first the kingdom of God.

MAT 6:33, But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.

Seeking demands perseverance and zeal that will not be denied until the desired objective is attained. Drive - desire - determination. When we seek with all we have, we are surrendering our independence and trusting Him to care for us. Seeking is a volitional issue. Seek and you shall find.

JER 29:13, God has promised in his word, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

Everything you do in life has some type of motivation behind it. Mental attitude is the key to motivation, not feelings or emotion. Attitude toward doc. and spiritual growth determines proper motivation. The believer is either motivated by doctrine in the soul and the filling of the Holy Spirit or by the lust patterns of the OSN and Satan's cosmic system.

Don't worry about tomorrow

MAT 6:34, Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

The Christian life is meant to be lived one day at a time. Every day is a grace gift given to him as part of his allotted time. The fact that the believer lives another day on the earth is a sign that God has a job for him to do. Every day is a special day. To restrict care to to-day is to begin to master the Christian way of life.

- Life is fragile.
- Life is short.
- Death is certain.

The children of God need not succumb to the perils of anxiety. We should not have anxiety over material necessities. Our Lord wants us to learn these lessons: Trust in God - faith is so important. "He will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you," Be at peace and rest.



# THE CONCLUSION OF THE DOCTRINE OF FEAR.

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This past month we noted that the greatest battles in history takes place in our soul. This is why the Lord Jesus Christ, the apostles Paul and Peter, said be on the alert! Our Lord made this crystal clear in MAT 7:24-27, when He said, "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and {yet} it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall."

You can strive to build all the dreams in the world that you desire. But without God at the very center of every area of your life, you will live a life of defeat.

PSA 127:1-2, (A Song of Ascents, of Solomon.) Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman keeps awake in vain. 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.

Satan and the kingdom of darkness with their many philosophies and lies will keep on throwing them in your direction until they finally see one hit. You will be faced with projections from the kingdom of darkness designed to distract you and keep you down here living the spiritual abundant life. Our Lord said to the religious Jews in JOH 8:23, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world."

If you live the life that the Lord Jesus Christ has called you to live, you will live of life that is from above and free from fears. If not, you will end up being attacked by Satan and the kingdom of darkness surrounding your soul and trying to construct large strongholds against you. Satan and the kingdom of darkness uses fears and thoughts and projections to do so. That's why we are told in EPH 6:16, in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one.

Those flaming missiles are the philosophies of life! Those flaming missiles are the weapons of the king surrounding the small city of your soul. Satan has invisible missiles that attack the soul and cause fears and human viewpoint on the part of believers which neutralizes them and draws them away from the PPOG. From the day in which you believed in Jesus Christ, from that very day you were placed under the fear panic ploy. You are going to have times when you are faced with fears stress and other problems as well. And due to the fact that these are Satanic strategies, as a part of spiritual growth, you are to have testing along the way. In fact, we are tested at every stage. Just as you are tested in school and before you advance to the next grade, you have to past certain tests, so you have to pass certain divine tests along the way.

Everyday you are going to have the charge of the mosquito, things that disturb you, things that bother you, things that make you jealous, bitter or vindictive. Things that cause you to judge and gossip and be bitter and malign and to judge others. All of these things have to be dealt with by the word of God. Peter said in 1PE 5:9 But resist him, [Satan] by being firm in your doctrine,

The kingdom of darkness throws thoughts and ideas at us through the media, friends, family members, believers, unbelievers, enemies, and sometimes even from our own presumptuous ideas. And then if that doesn't work, there is a direct attack made upon you which is much closer. One of the ultimate goals of Satan and the kingdom of darkness is to attack your soul with fears and do whatever they can to take you away from the PPOG and the teaching of Bible doctrine.

MAR 4:15, "And these are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them."

Satan and the kingdom of darkness says, I'll give you a plan that works! Listen to me... Give up all that other stuff that you hear in doctrine class. You know that biblical stuff won't work in this day and age. And your friends and sometimes family members are nearby saying, It's about time you started thinking normally.

JER 49:23-24, Concerning Damascus, Hamath and Arpad are put to shame, For they have heard bad news; They are disheartened. There is anxiety by the sea, It cannot be calmed. Damascus has become helpless; She has turned away to flee, And panic has gripped her; Distress and pangs have taken hold of her Like a woman in childbirth.

One of the biggest areas of the deception of fears is Fear of Failure. It is hard to fail, but it is worse never to have tried to succeed. In fact, there are times that you can fail your way to success. Our doubts are traitors, and cause us to lose the good we might have won, by fearing to attempt. Then if that doesn't work, there is a direct attack made upon you which is much closer! The ultimate goal of Satan and the kingdom of darkness who attacks your soul is to do whatever he can to take you away from the PPOG and the teaching of Bible doctrine. Satan knows that if he can influence the believer with his flaming missiles and large siegeworks and get his garbage in the believer's soul that he can cause tremendous problems and stress for born again believers.

What kind of problems?

Problems that relate all the way from personality dysfunction to mental disorders of one kind or another. This is why the major target for Satan's missiles is the soul and the thought pattern of the believer.

Three principles:

1. Some of his missiles are targeted to distract the believer from the perception of doctrine. Too busy for doctrine. Too tired! Something always comes up, etc.

2. Some of his missiles are targeted to distract the believer from the metabolization of doctrine. They hear the doctrine but they are not filled with the Spirit or they listen but do not concentrate. Concentration on doctrine is the highest form of worship in the universe!

3. Some of his missiles are targeted to distract the believer from the application of doctrine, once that doctrine it is located in the soul.

The most successful attack that Satan makes with his flaming missiles at this point is to get the believer involved with the arrogant complex of sins or the emotional complex of sins. Remember that the ultimate goal is to take the believer out of the historical phase of the angelic conflict. Get the believer off the playing field and on the permanent disabled list or the injured list. So Satan's flaming missiles are designed to destroy the spiritual life of the believer.

2CO 10:3-6 is a very important passage to note concerning this principle. 2CO 10:3-6, For though we walk in the flesh [we live in the world] we do not war according to the flesh. For the equipment and weapons of our warfare or conflict are not of the flesh [human attributes] but divine power [Bible doctrine] for the destruction of fortresses [Satan's flaming missiles and siegeworks from the cosmic system etc.] Destroying or assaulting speculations [these are Satan's flaming missiles] And we are ready [the Christian soldier] or on the alert to punish all disobedience [deviation from obedience], whenever your obedience is complete [spiritual maturity].

The Greek word for speculations here is very interesting, it is the accusative masculine plural from the noun logismos which means thoughts and reasons. Such as thoughts and reasons on why you don't have to continue with doctrine and the PPOG.

2CO 10:5, Destroying or assaulting speculations [Satan's flaming missiles] and every obstacle of pride, which raises up or attacks the knowledge or doctrine of God,

I told you before that ultimately the attacks of Satan's flaming missiles are against Bible doctrine. And taking every thought [human viewpoint system of thought] captive to the authority of Christ,

I would like to give you some principles concerning fears and warfare that will give you some idea as to what we will face in the devil's world. These are the strategist's keys to victory.

1. All warfare is based on deception.
2. Therefore when capable, fake incapacity.
3. When possible make it appear that you are far away, when far away, that you are near.
4. Offer the enemy bait to lure him; fake weakness and disorder then strike him.
5. When he concentrates, prepare against him; when he is strong, avoid him.
6. Anger his general and confuse him
7. Pretend inferiority and encourage his arrogance (90% to 10%)
8. Keep him under pressures and fears and wear him down.
9. When he is united divide him.
10. Attack where he is unprepared and he does not expect you.

We are told in the Bible that we have an enemy. And that enemy is said to have a tremendous power to deceive us.

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

While they were all at the Last Supper in John 13, Peter could have been very fearful because Jesus had just told him how badly he was going to fail and betray him. Fear of failure is one of the most powerful fears the kingdom of darkness uses to try to get believers to lose sight of their faith in Jesus Christ.

JOH 13:36-38, Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you shall follow later." Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You." Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a cock shall not crow, until you deny Me three times."

So what was one of the very first things the Lord Jesus Christ said to Peter after telling Peter how totally Peter was going to fail?

JOH 14:1, "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me."

There is no chapter break in the original language - sometimes people quote "Don't let your heart be troubled," but they don't realize Jesus is saying this right after telling Peter how badly Peter is going to betray Him 3 times! No matter how bad you're going to fail - you don't need to fear the future, the unknown, or your own inevitable failures. So Jesus always wanted Peter to remember - no matter how badly you fail, or how hopeless the situation appears - don't let your heart be troubled or fearful! No matter how hard you fall or what the future holds, JOH 14:1, "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me."

Cowards are constantly fearing the worst. Worry is a form of fear, and all forms of fear produce fatigue. Where fear is present, wisdom cannot be. The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown.

GEN 3:8-14, And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" And the man said, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." And the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly shall you go, And dust shall you eat All the days of your life;"

2CO 10:3, this battle is described, For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh,

Our warfare in the spiritual life is neither physical nor fleshly; it is spiritual and therefore in the mentality of our soul! And the Lord has provided information whereby we can use our mental attitude of divine viewpoint as a basis of advancing in the spiritual life and handling any of the outside pressures that would come our way.

2CO 10:4, For the weapons of our warfare [spiritual warfare] are not of the flesh [human attributes], but divinely powerful or attributes of power, for the destruction of fortresses.

The phrase the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh it refers to the fact that our weapons are not based upon a system of human viewpoint like defense mechanisms. In fact, the word fortresses is the Greek noun *ochuromaton* which is a hapax legomena and it means arguments and reasonings one

uses to defend themselves, that's why it's translated fortresses and therefore a perfect description of self-justification and defense mechanisms.

Defense mechanisms can resist all attacks of human viewpoint, human ability, human power; but God has provided in grace divine equipment and weapons to demolish these defense mechanisms in the soul. And what are these weapons that allow us to launch an attack against defense mechanisms in the soul?

The greatest weapon we have in both spiritual warfare and life is what we think! No matter how you slice it, the factor that motivates, empowers and strengthens a believer is his mental attitude or thought pattern. If the believer is thinking human viewpoint, he is open to satanic infiltration. Furthermore, he is useless, miserable, and indistinguishable from the unbeliever. On the other hand, the believer with doctrine in the right lobe has divine viewpoint on the launching pad ready for application in order to assault any defense system in this intensified stage of the angelic conflict. Such a believer has moved into the adult spiritual life and therefore has the capacity to understand that all things work together for good.

1PE 5:6-10, 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. 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, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

He knows and applies the doctrine of divine essence and the principles of Christology. This believer cannot be defeated. Like a truly courageous person in the human realm, he cannot be conquered. You can beat him up; You can tear him to shreds; But as long as he has divine viewpoint in his mental attitude, he will fight to the end and you cannot overcome him.

2CO 10:4-6, For the weapons of our spiritual warfare are not of the flesh [human attributes], but divinely powerful or attributes of power, for the destruction of fortresses. destroying or assaulting and demolishing with Bible doctrine speculations [cosmic thinking or human viewpoint thinking] and every obstacle of arrogance against the knowledge of God;

Every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, or every obstacle of arrogance against the knowledge of God is the Greek word *epairo* which means to elevate, to assault, and to attack. Satan always has one goal in the life of the believer, attack the knowledge of God in the believer's mental attitude. As I told you before, ultimately the attacks of Satan's flaming missiles are against Bible doctrine. Any thoughts that you have which are not the thoughts of our Lord Jesus Christ must be taken prisoner or captive and pushed aside. And the reason why you are to take the thoughts captive or as a prisoner is simply because you are not to share these thoughts with others or allow these thoughts the freedom to go elsewhere. Even if the thoughts are sick thoughts...that's not a problem when you understand that the Bible says that without God's thoughts,

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,

So we are to take every thought or making a prisoner of every thought [contrary to the will of God] to the obedience of Christ;

The Greek word for speculations here is very interesting, it is the accusative masculine plural from the noun logismos which means thoughts and reasons, it can also mean excuses. People use thoughts to justify their wrong doings, and speech to conceal their thoughts. Such as thoughts and reasons on why you don't have to continue with doctrine and the PPOG. You can only capture erroneous thinking and supersede it with correct thinking by metabolizing Bible doctrine. We have a warfare going on and a battle in our soul and only the mental attitude of Christ can deliver us from our deceitful enemy.

# THE GATES OF NEHEMIAH.

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We have begun to note one of the books in the Old Testament which reveal one of the stories that God the Holy Spirit has chosen to have in writing for our instruction.

1CO 10:6, Now these things happened as examples for us,

ROM 15:4, For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

There are a lot of lessons that we can learn from studying how God worked in the life of this man, how God worked in the lives of those that were scattered in Jerusalem, to rebuild the wall. But really, in the story of Nehemiah, there are two very vital types of walls that are being built. There is a physical wall which is very important for the sake of Jerusalem, and you are going to be absolutely astounded at the spiritual significance of that physical wall. As they built the wall, the wall was built around the gates, and those gates are named in order.

NEH 3:1 Then Eliashib the high priest arose with his brothers the priests and built the Sheep Gate; they consecrated it and hung its doors. They consecrated the wall to the Tower of the Hundred and the Tower of Hananel.

NEH 3:2-8, And next to him the men of Jericho built, and next to them Zaccur the son of Imri built. Now the sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate; they laid its beams and hung its doors with its bolts and bars. And next to them Meremoth the son of Uriah the son of Hakkoz made repairs. And next to him Meshullam the son of Berechiah the son of Meshezabel made repairs. And next to him Zadok the son of Baana also made repairs. Moreover, next to him the Tekoites made repairs, but their nobles did not support the work of their masters. And Joiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah repaired the Old Gate; they laid its beams and hung its doors, with its bolts and its bars. Next to them Melatiah the Gibeonite and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah, also made repairs for the official seat of the governor of the province beyond the River. Next to him Uzziel the son of Harhaiah of the goldsmiths made repairs. And next to him Hananiah, one of the perfumers, made repairs, and they restored Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall.

Chapter three concerns itself with the rebuilding of the walls and specifically the ten gates that separated each section. What also stands out is the people that God has recorded as doing the work. One of the first gates that is mentioned is found in Nehemiah Chapter 3, the gates of spiritual progression. What also stands out is the people that God has recorded as doing the work. So what can we learn from this chapter? Well, quite a lot actually.

Their order and position is very specific and give us insight into the journey that God takes each of His children on. We will see those who are cheats, thieves, liars, and hypocrites. Each of the gates speak of different experiences in our Christian life that we need to come into. Their order and position is very specific and give us insight into the types of theories God takes each of His children on.

First of all, there is the sheep gate, in NEH 3:1,32. It was called the sheep gate because this was the gate which the sheep and lambs used in the sacrifices which were bought through. This speaks of the

very first experience we come into in our Christian life - that is, a realization that Jesus was the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world. The sheep gate therefore speaks to us of the Cross and the sacrifice that was made for our sins. Everything starts and ends with our Lord's death on the Cross.

The 2nd gate is the Fish Gate - NEH 3:3 Now the sons of Hassenah built the Fish Gate; they laid its beams and hung its doors with its bolts and bars.

It was called the fish gate because the fisherman of Galilee would bring their catch in through this gate to be sold. For us, it speaks of evangelism as we have been called to be "fishers of men". It is a natural progression in our Christian life that after seeing that Jesus dies for our sins, that we would want to tell others about it. Even surveys have shown that believers who have been saved less than two years win the most people to the Lord. Their simple testimony of what Jesus has done in their lives qualifies them to be great "fishers of men".

Then there was the Old Gate. The Old gate was next and this speaks to us of the old ways of truth.

NEH 3:6, Joiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah repaired the Old Gate; they laid its beams and hung its doors with its bolts and its bars.

A young Christian having experienced the sheep gate, then the fish gate soon sees the need for experiencing the old gate. This means learning the old ways of truth that never change.

JER 6:16, Thus says the Lord, "Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you shall find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk {in it}.'"

Then the Valley Gate. Examining the picture you will notice that there is a long distance before you come to the next gate, which is the valley gate.

NEH 3:13, Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate. They built it and hung its doors with its bolts and its bars, and a thousand cubits of the wall to the Refuse Gate.

For a new Christian the Lord allows a 'honeymoon' type period where He teaches you and His presence is strong in your life.

This can go on for some time as indicated by the positioning of the old and valley gates. But sooner or later the valley gate must come. The valley gate speaks to us of humbling and trials - valley type experiences used by the Lord for our personal growth. The Christian needs to remember that in the natural nothing really grows on the mountain tops, but it certainly does down in the valleys. So it is in the spiritual. Never a nice experience but it always produces fruit.

Then comes the refuse gate.

NEH 3:14, Malchijah the son of Rechab, the official of the district of Beth-haccherem repaired the Refuse Gate. He built it and hung its doors with its bolts and its bars.

The Dung or Refuse gate. Again there is quite a distance to the next gate indicating that, unfortunately, the valley experience can carry on for some time. But the result of that experience is



clearly seen in the dung gate. This is the gate that they would take all the refuse and rubbish out of Jerusalem, down to the valley of Hinnom to be burned. This is what happens in our own life. Valley experiences are used by the Lord to clear away the rubbish so that true faith, refined by the fire, can come forth and produce fruit. Clearing away the rubbish in our lives is never easy but the benefits of this experience can be seen in the next gate. You will notice also that at this point of your Christian life there is a dramatic turning of the corner that takes place.

Up until this point we have been moving downward and the experiences have been hard, but having come to this point there is a sharp turn in the road and we begin to move upward again.

Then there is the Fountain Gate (verse 15)

NEH 3:15, Shallum the son of Col-hozeh, the official of the district of Mizpah, repaired the Fountain Gate. He built it, covered it and hung its doors with its bolts and its bars, and the wall of the Pool of Shelah at the king's garden as far as the steps that descend from the city of David.

The fountain gate is located extremely close to the dung gate. In other words, after a valley type experience where rubbish in our lives is cleared out and true faith comes forth, then the fountains begin to flow and it doesn't take long! This speaks to us of the living waters of the Holy Spirit that cleanse our lives and empower us for our Christian life.

Then there is the Water Gate.

NEH 3:26, And the temple servants living in Ophel made repairs as far as the front of the Water Gate toward the east and the projecting tower.

The water gate is a picture of the word of God and it's effect in our life.

EPH 5:26 that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

It is no coincidence that this gate was located next to the fountain gate as the two often go together. The Holy Spirit is the one who makes the word of God alive to us personally, allowing cleansing, encouragement and direction to take place in our life.

Then there is the Horse Gate - NEH 3:28, Above the Horse Gate the priests carried out repairs, each in front of his house.

The horse gate speaks to us of warfare as horses were used in battle and became a symbol of war.

REV 19:11, And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war.

Spiritual warfare, as we will see in this entire study on Nehemiah, is a requirement of every Christian because we are all in a battle whether we know it or not. The last three gates are also prophetic I believe of the end times return of Jesus Christ. You will notice that all three gates are very close together and so are the events which they symbolize. Prophetically, the horse gate speaks of the day of the Lord and the end time judgment as recorded in the book of Revelation chapters 6-19.

NEH 3:29, After them Zadok the son of Immer carried out repairs in front of his house. And after him Shemaiah the son of Shecaniah, the keeper of the East Gate, carried out repairs.

There is also the East Gate (verse 29) - The east gate has been set-aside especially by God and was known by Jews for one particular event - the coming of the Messiah!

EZE 44:1-3, Then He brought me back by the way of the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces the east; and it was shut. And the Lord said to me, "This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it, for the Lord God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut. As for the prince, he shall sit in it as prince to eat bread before the Lord; he shall enter by way of the porch of the gate, and shall go out by the same way."

This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it, for the Lord God of Israel has entered by it. The east gate opens and looks toward the Mount of Olives and we know that when Jesus returns He will return to this mount. (ZEC 14:4).

He will then enter Jerusalem by the east gate. The east gate then speaks of the return of Jesus Christ. For our Christian life is shows us of our need to live with this hope and to long for His return. A specific crown is even given to those who do this (2TI 4:8). Prophetically this gate is very close to the horse gate because the day of God's wrath ends with the coming of the Lord Jesus as described in Revelation 19.

Then there is the Inspection Gate (verse 31) - The final gate is the inspection gate. This gate speaks to us of the bema seat of Christ where our lives are inspected and rewarded appropriately.

NEH 3:31, After him Malchijah one of the goldsmiths, carried out repairs as far as the house of the temple servants and of the merchants, in front of the Inspection Gate and as far as the upper room of the corner.

In our Christian experience we should be living with this in mind.

We are called to live our lives with eternity in view, caring more for the things of eternity than the temporal that we see around us. Prophetically this gate also speaks of the judgment of the nations that takes place when Jesus returns. This is recorded in the sheep and the goats judgment in MAT 25:31-46.

# THE GATES OF NEHEMIAH, PART 2.

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We have begun to note one of the books in the Old Testament which reveal one of the stories that God the Holy Spirit has chosen to have in writing for our instruction. We noted a brief outline of the spiritual principles behind the 10 gates recorded for us in the book of Nehemiah. Each of the gates speak of different experiences in our Christian life that we need to go through. Their order and position is very specific and gives us insight into the types of doctrinal principles God takes each of His children on.

The Sheep Gate. NEH 3:1,32 which speaks of the gate which the sheep and lambs which were used in the sacrifices were brought through.

The Fish gate which speaks of evangelism or the new believer sharing the good news or the Gospel with others, NEH 3:3.

You will recall what our Lord said to Peter and his brother Andrew who were fishermen in MAT 4:19, He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.

The Old Gate. NEH 3:6, which speaks to us of the old ways of truth meaning that TLJC as the living word in JOH 1:1 never changes in HEB 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever.

This gate refers to the old ways of truth that never change.

The Valley Gate. Referring to being humbled through trials and tribulations. The Christian needs to remember that in the natural nothing really grows on the mountain tops, but it certainly does down in the valleys.

PSA 119:64-67, The earth is full of Thy lovingkindness, O Lord; Teach me Thy statutes. Thou hast dealt well with Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word. Teach me good discernment and knowledge, For I believe in Thy commandments. Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Thy word. It is good for me that I was afflicted, That I may learn Thy statutes.

The Dung Gate. NEH 3:14 speaking all the garbage and rubbish God removes from our soul.

HEB 10:22, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

The Fountain Gate. NEH 3:15, which speaks to us of the living waters of the Holy Spirit that cleans our lives and empowers us for our Christian life.

Water Gate. NEH 3:26, which is a picture of the word of God and its effect in our life. Then there is the Horse Gate; NEH 3:28 which speaks to us of warfare.

The East Gate. NEH 3:29; known by the Jews for one particular event - the coming of the Messiah. The east gate opens and looks toward the Mount of Olives and we know that when Jesus returns He will return to this mount. (ZEC 14:4).

The Inspection Gate. NEH 3:31- the final gate which speaks to us of the judgment seat of Christ where our lives are inspected and rewarded. We are called to live our lives with eternity in view, caring more for the things of eternity than the temporal that we see around us.

2CO 4:16-18, Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

There are a few more important points in this chapter which needs to be noted. We have looked at the gates and their spiritual meaning, but there are other points from the lives of the workers that we can learn from. First of all, we need to note that there was a team effort.

Reading through the chapter, one of the first things that we see is that the whole process was a team effort. If the walls and gates were going to be rebuilt then everyone would have to play their part. This is a picture of how the church is meant to function. The pastor is not meant to be a one man band that does everything while the others rest and sit in their padded seats.

EXO 18:17-18, And Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you are doing is not good. You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone."

We all have different gifts but it is for the edification of all.

EPH 4:11-13, And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.

Notice that the gifts that people have are for the equipping of the saints in their works of service. This is what we learn from Nehemiah. Some may have been gifted in particular areas and they were to work in those areas, but all helped in whatever way they could.

The point is that everyone had something to offer. For example, look at NEH 3:8, Next to him Uzziel the son of Harhaiah of the goldsmiths made repairs. And next to him Hananiah, one of the perfumers, made repairs, and they restored Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall.

Maybe you are uncertain of your gift and what God is calling you to do with your life. Or maybe you have bought the lie that you don't have anything to offer. If that is you then remember Hananiah! He was a perfumer by trade and yet he was still willing to get in there, get his hands dirty and help do his part by repairing part of the wall. If a perfumer can build a wall then you also can help in some way in the building of the church.

NEH 3:10, Next to them Jedaiah the son of Harumaph made repairs opposite his house. And next to him Hattush the son of Hashabneiah made repairs.

NEH 3:23, After them Benjamin and Hasshub carried out repairs in front of their house. After them Azariah the son of Maaseiah, son of Ananiah carried out repairs beside his house.

NEH 3:30, After him Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, repaired another section. After him Meshullam the son of Berechiah carried out repairs in front of his own quarters.

So, each one of those gates signifies something about your spiritual life. Now, there's one of those gates that didn't need to be rebuilt and there's a reason why it didn't need to be rebuilt. We see the enemy attacking from without, the opposition of the "enemies of the Cross" as Paul calls them in PHI 3:18. We also see the enemy trying to attack from within, trying to eat away and tear and wear down the faith of God's people.

DAN 7:25, And he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One,

However, in ISA 40:29-30, He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power. Yet those who wait for the Lord Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

Remember MAT 11:28-30, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light."

ISA 40:31, Yet those who wait for the Lord Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

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.

HEB 12:3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.

The point is that the enemy within and without are going to try to lead the Jews into acts of disobedience and evil so that the work can't be accomplished. There is always opposition of some kind when the people of God are trying to go forward. However, remember EXO 1:12, But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out, so that they were in dread of the sons of Israel.

Before Nehemiah came on the scene, Ezra was faithfully laboring. And before Ezra came on the scene, Zerubbabel was faithfully laboring. The Temple has been built, beginning with the altar; you always have to begin with the Altar which pictures the Cross. That also relates to the gate that they began with in rebuilding the wall a fascinating story,

The point is that when Nehemiah was called by God and led by God to go to Jerusalem to do the work, he was beginning some things but he was continuing others. Ezra and others had been faithfully laying a foundation in the teaching of the Word.

The marvelous thing about this story is that these people pull together and devote themselves to a common goal which God has brought them together to accomplish. And it's not easy, and there's so few of them, and Nehemiah just looks at them, and he wonders, how can we possibly accomplish so great a work with such a small group of people? They devote themselves to the work and they form a team. And the marvelous thing is that by forming a team and focusing on that common goal, God begins to do something within the hearts and souls of those people that results in something only God can bring about, and that is revival within a nation. And that is our desire for this nation - a revival in our families, in our marriages, in our churches, etc.

This brings us to the Doctrine of Unity in the Royal Family of God.

Point 1. What is Unity?

First of all, let me tell you what it is not. It is not emphasis on people. Emphasis on people rather than on Bible doctrine, especially the mystery doctrine of the Church Age, has destroyed unity among members of the royal family of God, the body of Christ.

For our study, unity is defined in six different ways.

a. The status of being combined with others to form a greater whole, 1CO 12:13, GAL 3:27. We have been combined with other believers through the baptism of the Spirit at the moment of salvation.

b. The status of being harmonious with other members of the royal family of God, PHI 2:2, Bring to completion my inner happiness [in your life] by thinking the same things, this is something that does not exist today, generally speaking.

c. The state of being complete, which means a maximum number of believers executing the PPOG and becoming invisible heroes. A maximum amount of invisible heroes in the pivot not only changes the nation, but it also provides a tremendous amount of toleration among believers. Toleration is a word that somehow has slipped away from Christianity.

d. Complete accord among believers regarding divine viewpoint mental attitude especially in the mystery doctrine of the Church- age. This doesn't mean we agree with each other about everything; far from it. But it does mean there is a general consensus about divine viewpoint in these areas among mature believers.

e. Complete harmony among believers regarding mental attitudes, motivations, decisions, and actions related to the PPOG of God.

f. The absence of fragmentation which means the absence of judging, bickering, slandering, gossiping, jealousy, bitterness, hatred, anger, revenge motivation and function, vindictiveness, violence, hypersensitivity, self-pity, guilt, and implacability. The two great enemies of unity among the members of the body of Christ which always bring fragmentation are ignorance of doctrine and life in the arrogance complex. Another enemy of unity among believers is wrong emphasis. The present trend of Christianity is to emphasize relationship with people over relationship with God, or to assume that a good relationship with people means a good relationship with God. Both are false.

Point 2. The Solution to Enemies of Unity.

The answer to the problem of people emphasis taking precedence over God emphasis is found in two major functions of the Christian life. The first is consistent perception, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine so that mystery doctrine is understood and metabolized. That dispels

ignorance. Secondly, the mastery of the utilization of the ten problem solving devices of the PPOG dispels arrogance. And these two functions are tantamount to the life beyond gnosis, EPH 3:19, and the life beyond dreams, EPH 3:20.

EPH 3:19, And to come to know the love for Christ which is beyond gnosis, so that you may filled up with all the fullness of God.

“Being filled up with all the fullness of God” means you use those ten problem solving devices: the rebound technique, the filling of the Spirit, the faith-rest drill, grace orientation, doctrinal orientation, personal love for God the Father, impersonal love for all mankind, +H or sharing the happiness of God, a personal sense of destiny, and occupation with the person of Christ. So being filled with all the fullness of God means execution of the PPOG. It means ignorance is replaced by cognizance, and that arrogance is replaced by tolerance, the function of virtue-love as a problem solving device.

ROM 12:2, Stop being conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renovation of your thought, that you may prove what the will of God is, namely, the good of intrinsic value achievement [advance to spiritual maturity], the well-pleasing to God [function of ten problem solving devices], the mature status quo [execution of the PPOG].

People have goofy ideas about worldliness. Dressing in a flashy manner. Having too many things in life. Listening to rock music and all of this is nonsense. Worldliness is a system of human viewpoint thinking. That’s why ROM 12:2 says, Stop being conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renovation of your thought, Worldliness is a system of human viewpoint thinking. When your thought pattern is renovated it means ignorance is replaced by cognizance, and that arrogance is replaced by tolerance, the function of virtue-love as a problem solving device.

In the next verse, this passage goes on to teach what worldliness is. The most worldly people in Christianity are those involved in self-righteous arrogance and resultant legalism. Legalism is worldliness.

ROM 12:3, For I say through the grace which has been given to me to everyone who is among you: stop thinking of self in terms of arrogance beyond what you ought to think, but think in terms of sanity for the purpose of being rational without illusion as God has assigned to each one of us a standard of thinking from doctrine.

Arrogance is the major cause of fragmentation and problems among people. A standard of thinking from doctrine takes the place of worldliness. A standard of thinking from doctrine includes motivation, thought, decision, and action related to the mystery doctrine of the Church-age and the unique factors of this dispensation. This verse mentions the word thinking three times. Unity is based upon thinking, not upon action as most people assume.

### Point 3. The Role of Christian Fellowship Related to Unity.

People emphasis taking precedence over God emphasis results in destroying the benefits which develop from Christian fellowship. Christian fellowship is never a substitute for fellowship with God. The believer cannot grow spiritually or execute the PPOG through Christian fellowship and its attendant evils called sharing. Sharing is merely a case of the blind leading the blind, and both reside in the ditch of reversionism. Sharing ignores the gift of pastor-teacher and the importance of the function of that gift in the communication of the mystery doctrine of the Church-age. Fellowship with

God is the result of perception, metabolization, and application of the mystery doctrine of the Church-age.

Fellowship with God is a part of the PPOG, while fellowship with other Christians is merely a result at best; at worst, it is a distraction from doctrine. It is an option, not a mandate. Christian fellowship is never a substitute for perception, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine or learning Bible doctrine from whomever is your right pastor-teacher. God always provides a right pastor for positive volition. Remember that your right pastor must be a prepared person.

Point 4. What is the key to unity among believers?

The key to unity among believers is accurate teaching of Bible doctrine by qualified pastor-teachers and positive response to it.

EPH 4:11-12, And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service [the work of the ministry], to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ,

A qualified teacher of Bible doctrine possesses the following.

He is a male believer, 1TI 3:1. As such, he has the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher, EPH 4:11. He has the proper preparation for the function of his spiritual gift, 1TI 5:17. The proper preparation demands exact and functional knowledge of the original languages of Scripture, and a thorough exposure to all phases of Biblical systematic theology. Unprepared pastors must depend on someone else for isagogics and exegesis. So, if a pastor is not prepared in the original languages, he must also have a pastor who feeds him exegesis constantly. Both unprepared pastors and evangelists must have their own pastor-teacher. The gift of evangelism demands that the man has a pastor-teacher.

The evangelist must get most of his information from his pastor-teacher through non-face-to-face teaching if he's on the road a great deal. So every evangelist must have a pastor. If he does not have a pastor, he will suffer in his ministry. The gift of evangelism does not imply the man has any more knowledge of Scripture than does the layman in the pew. However, accuracy in the presentation of the Gospel demands perception of especially Christology and soteriology. Because of the nature of the evangelistic lifestyle, the man with the gift of evangelism cannot always sit in his own congregation. But he must be fed like all other believers. While he has a spiritual gift of communication, it is not a spiritual gift designed to function in the church. It is one that causes unbelievers outside the church to listen to the Gospel message as he communicates it. All spiritual gifts must be fed by the pastor-teacher, including evangelism.

God always provides the right pastor for positive volition. God never denies doctrinal teaching to positive believers who cannot or do not assemble with other believers. Everyone's right pastor is not found in the same geographical periphery. In most areas of this country today, no accurate Bible teaching exists; no doctrine is taught from the pulpits.

Point 5. The Message of the Pastor Is the Key to Unity among Believers.



It is the message of the pastor that is the key to unity among believers.

EPH 4:14-16, As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom [Christ] the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies [joints represent the pastor-teacher], according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

The pastor as a workman doesn't run around and call on people. He's not a glad hander. He's not the leader of a lonely hearts club or the MC for the dating game. His job is to study and teach.

# THE GATES OF NEHEMIAH, PART 3.

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We have begun to note one of the books in the Old Testament which reveal one of the stories that God the Holy Spirit has chosen to have in writing for our instruction.

1CO 10:6, Now these things happened as examples for us,

ROM 15:4, For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

There are a lot of lessons that we can learn from studying how God worked in the life of this man, how God worked in the lives of those that were scattered in Jerusalem, to rebuild the wall. But really, in the story of Nehemiah, there are two very vital types of walls that are being built. There is a physical wall which is very important for the sake of Jerusalem, and you are going to be absolutely astounded at the spiritual significance of that physical wall. As they built the wall, the wall was built around the gates, and those gates are named in order.

NEH 3:1-8, Then Eliashib the high priest arose with his brothers the priests and built the Sheep Gate; they consecrated it and hung its doors. They consecrated the wall to the Tower of the Hundred and the Tower of Hananel. And next to him the men of Jericho built, and next to them Zaccur the son of Imri built. Now the sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate; they laid its beams and hung its doors with its bolts and bars. And next to them Meremoth the son of Uriah the son of Hakkoz made repairs. And next to him Meshullam the son of Berechiah the son of Meshezabel made repairs. And next to him Zadok the son of Baana also made repairs. Moreover, next to him the Tekoites made repairs, but their nobles did not support the work of their masters. And Joiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah repaired the Old Gate; they laid its beams and hung its doors, with its bolts and its bars. Next to them Melatiah the Gibeonite and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah, also made repairs for the official seat of the governor of the province beyond the River. Next to him Uzziel the son of Harhaiah of the goldsmiths made repairs. And next to him Hananiah, one of the perfumers, made repairs, and they restored Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall.

Chapter three concerns itself with the rebuilding of the walls and specifically the ten gates that separated each section. What also stands out is the people that God has recorded as doing the work. Their order and position is very specific and give us insight into the journey that God takes each of His children on. We will see those who are cheats, thieves, liars, and hypocrites. Each of the gates speak of different experiences in our Christian life that we need to come into. Their order and position is very specific and give us insight into the types of theories God takes each of His children on.

The Sheep gate, in NEH 3:1,32. It was called the sheep gate because this was the gate which the sheep and lambs used in the sacrifices which were bought through. This speaks of the very first experience

we come into in our Christian life - that is, a realization that Jesus was the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world. The sheep gate therefore speaks to us of the Cross and the sacrifice that was made for our sins. Everything starts and ends with our Lord's death on the Cross.

The Fish Gate - NEH 3:3 Now the sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate; they laid its beams and hung its doors with its bolts and bars.

It was called the fish gate because the fisherman of Galilee would bring their catch in through this gate to be sold. For us, it speaks of evangelism as we have been called to be "fishers of men". It is a natural progression in our Christian life that after seeing that Jesus dies for our sins, that we would want to tell others about it. Even surveys have shown that believers who have been saved less than two years win the most people to the Lord. Their simple testimony of what Jesus has done in their lives qualifies them to be great "fishers of men".

The Old Gate. The Old gate was next and this speaks to us of the old ways of truth.

NEH 3:6, Joiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah repaired the Old Gate; they laid its beams and hung its doors with its bolts and its bars.

A young Christian having experienced the sheep gate, then the fish gate soon sees the need for experiencing the old gate. This means learning the old ways of truth that never change.

JER 6:16, Thus says the Lord, "Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you shall find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk {in it}.'"

Then the Valley Gate. There is a long distance before you come to the next gate, which is the valley gate.

NEH 3:13, Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate. They built it and hung its doors with its bolts and its bars, and a thousand cubits of the wall to the Refuse Gate.

For a new Christian the Lord allows a honeymoon period where He teaches you and His presence is strong in your life.

This can go on for some time as indicated by the positioning of the old and valley gates. But sooner or later the valley gate must come. The valley gate speaks to us of humbling and trials - valley type experiences used by the Lord for our personal growth. The Christian needs to remember that in the natural nothing really grows on the mountain tops, but it certainly does down in the valleys. So it is in the spiritual. Never a nice experience but it always produces fruit.

Then comes the refuse gate.

NEH 3:14, Malchijah the son of Rechab, the official of the district of Beth-haccherem repaired the Refuse Gate. He built it and hung its doors with its bolts and its bars.

The Dung or Refuse gate. Again there is quite a distance to this gate indicating that the valley experience can carry on for some time. But the result of that experience is clearly seen in the dung gate. This is the gate that they would take all the refuse and rubbish out of Jerusalem, down to the valley of Hinnom to be burned. This is what happens in our own life. Valley experiences are used by the Lord to clear away the rubbish so that true faith, refined by the fire, can come forth and produce fruit. Clearing away the rubbish in our lives is never easy but the benefits of this experience can be seen in the next gate. You will notice also that at this point of your Christian life there is a dramatic turning of the corner that takes place. Up until this point we have been moving downward and the experiences have been hard, but having come to this point there is a sharp turn in the road and we begin to move upward again.

Then there is the Fountain Gate (verse 15)

NEH 3:15, Shallum the son of Col-hozeh, the official of the district of Mizpah, repaired the Fountain Gate. He built it, covered it and hung its doors with its bolts and its bars, and the wall of the Pool of Shelah at the king's garden as far as the steps that descend from the city of David.

The fountain gate is located extremely close to the dung gate. In other words, after a valley type experience where rubbish in our lives is cleared out and true faith comes forth, then the fountains begin to flow and it doesn't take long! This speaks to us of the living waters of the Holy Spirit that cleanse our lives and empower us for our Christian life.

The Water Gate.

NEH 3:26, And the temple servants living in Ophel made repairs as far as the front of the Water Gate toward the east and the projecting tower.

The water gate is a picture of the word of God and it's effect in our life.

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It is no coincidence that this gate was located next to the fountain gate as the two often go together. The Holy Spirit is the one who makes the word of God alive to us personally, allowing cleansing, encouragement and direction to take place in our life.

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Spiritual warfare, as we will see in this entire study on Nehemiah, is a requirement of every Christian because we are all in a battle whether we know it or not. The last three gates are also prophetic I believe of the end times return of Jesus Christ. You will notice that all three gates are very close together and so are the events which they symbolize. Prophetically, the horse gate speaks of the day of the Lord and the end time judgment as recorded in the book of Revelation chapters 6-19.

NEH 3:29, After them Zadok the son of Immer carried out repairs in front of his house. And after him Shemaiah the son of Shecaniah, the keeper of the East Gate, carried out repairs.

The East Gate (verse 29) - The east gate has been set-aside especially by God and was known by Jews for one particular event - the coming of the Messiah!

EZE 44:1-3, Then He brought me back by the way of the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces the east; and it was shut. And the Lord said to me, "This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it, for the Lord God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut. As for the prince, he shall sit in it as prince to eat bread before the Lord; he shall enter by way of the porch of the gate, and shall go out by the same way."

This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it, for the Lord God of Israel has entered by it. The east gate opens and looks toward the Mount of Olives and we know that when Jesus returns He will return to this mount. (ZEC 14:4).

He will then enter Jerusalem by the east gate. The east gate then speaks of the return of Jesus Christ. For our Christian life is shows us of our need to live with this hope and to long for His return. A specific crown is even given to those who do this (2TI 4:8). Prophetically this gate is very close to the horse gate because the day of God's wrath ends with the coming of the Lord Jesus as described in Revelation 19.

The Inspection Gate (verse 31) - The final gate is the inspection gate. This gate speaks to us of the bema seat of Christ where our lives are inspected and rewarded appropriately.

NEH 3:31, After him Malchijah one of the goldsmiths, carried out repairs as far as the house of the temple servants and of the merchants, in front of the Inspection Gate and as far as the upper room of the corner.

In our Christian experience we should be living with this in mind. We are called to live our lives with eternity in view, caring more for the things of eternity than the temporal that we see around us. Prophetically this gate also speaks of the judgment of the nations that takes place when Jesus returns. This is recorded in the sheep and the goats judgment in MAT 25:31-46.

# CHRISTMAS GIVING

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GAL 6:10, So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

Every time we get the chance, we should work for the benefit of all, starting with the people closest to us in the Royal family of God or the church and then reaching out to others. Not only being useful or profitable to them, but also doing what is good for their spiritual advance.

MAT 25:40, "And the King will answer and say to them, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, {even} the least {of them,} you did it to Me."

EPH 2:19, So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

You now share a citizenship with the saints, God's own people, blessed and set apart for Him; and you belong to God's own household. That's plain enough, isn't it? You're no longer wandering. This kingdom of faith is now your home country. You're no longer strangers or outsiders. You belong here, with as much right to the name Christian as anyone. He is using us all--regardless of how we got here.

COL 1:13, For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

The Father has delivered us and drawn us to Himself, out of the control and the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

3JO 1:5, Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers;

When you give any service or help to other believers, especially when they are strangers to you, and extend hospitality to other Christians, you make the faith or the Christian way of life visible.

On the other hand, in JAM 2:15-16, If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?

3JO 1:6, and they bear witness to your love before the church; and you will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God.

They reported back to the church the message about God's love as it was revealed through their good works or deeds.

3JO 1:7-8, For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles [in context the unbelievers]. Therefore we ought to support such men, that we may be fellow workers with the truth.

Now I say all of this to reveal the importance of such passages as:

COL 3:17, And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

MAT 5:16, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

ECC 9:10, Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do {it} with all your might;

The reason why I introduced this message with these verses and principles is because this is the time of the year when spiritual blood suckers come out and take advantage of the morons behind the pulpits, and the dumb sheep in the pews. We should be taking care of the members of our family, and by that I mean those who are of the household of the faith, the Royal family of God.

For He is the Last Adam, we are the new creation. He is the head, we are His body. He is the Great Shepherd and we are His sheep. He is the vine and we are the branches. He is the chief cornerstone, we are the stones of the building. He is the high priest we are the royal priesthood. He is the groom and we are His bride. He is the King and we are His royal family.

We have begun to note a man called Nehemiah, who some believe was a governor of Judah, others believe that he was priest, and some believe he was both. However, we do know for sure he was a man of compassion, character, and integrity. Nehemiah teaches us how some of the greatest demonstrations of divine good often originate from one individual.

He was like Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who in HEB 11:33-39, by means of faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, 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, yes, 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 (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

Where a good work is there will be opposition; 2TI 3:12 And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Nehemiah will teach us from the natural viewpoint that in the spiritual building we must each begin with our own home and neighborhood and circle.

GAL 6:10, So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

Our graciousness must begin at home first.

PSA 127:1-2, Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman keeps awake in vain. 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.

NEH 4:6, So we built the wall and the whole wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work.

Let's begin this morning by reading the first ten verses of the book of Nehemiah as an introduction to the book.

NEH 1:1-10, The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah. Now it happened in the month Chislev, in the twentieth year, while I [Nehemiah] was in Susa the capitol, that Hanani, one of my brothers, and some men from Judah came; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped and had survived the captivity, and about Jerusalem. And they said to me, "The remnant there in the province who survived the captivity [the captivity of 586 BC] are in great distress and reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is



broken down and its gates are burned with fire.” Now it came about when I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven. And I said, “I beseech Thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who preserves the covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, let Thine ear now be attentive and Thine eyes open to hear the prayer of Thy servant which I am praying before Thee now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Thy servants, confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have sinned against Thee; I and my father’s house have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against Thee and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances which Thou didst command Thy servant Moses. Remember the word which Thou didst command Thy servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful I will scatter you among the peoples; but if you return to Me and keep My commandments and do them, though those of you who have been scattered were in the most remote part of the heavens, I will gather them from there and will bring them to the place where I have chosen to cause My name to dwell. And they are Thy servants and Thy people whom Thou didst redeem by Thy great power and by Thy strong hand.’”

A little bit of information is needed to understand this man called Nehemiah. Nehemiah was a very wealthy and prosperous individual living in a place of prosperity and blessing from God. He held a very powerful and influential position. Nehemiah had the mind of Christ, just as we can have the mind of Christ. Nehemiah lived by the principle of ACT 20:35b, You must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

Nehemiah lived by the principle of PSA 41:1-3, How blessed is he who considers the helpless; The Lord will deliver him in a day of trouble. The Lord will protect him, and keep him alive, And he shall be called blessed upon the earth; And do not give him over to the desire of his enemies. The Lord will sustain him upon his sickbed; In his illness, Thou dost restore him to health.

PRO 19:17, He who is gracious to a poor man lends to the Lord, And He will repay him for his good deed.

Nehemiah lived by the principle of PRO 19:17, He who is gracious to a poor man lends to the Lord, And He will repay him for his good deed.

Nehemiah was the kind of person who cared about others. Nehemiah cared about the traditions of the past, the needs of the present and about the hopes for the future. He cared about his heritage and history, the city of Jerusalem, and the glory of God.

He revealed this caring attitude in about four different ways.

1. He cared enough to ask what was going on in Jerusalem; (NEH 1:1-3).

Nehemiah was a cupbearer who an individual who had a position of great responsibility and privilege. At each meal, he tested the king’s wine to make sure it wasn’t poisoned. For nearly a century, the Jewish remnant had been back in their own land, and Nehemiah could have joined them; but he chose to remain in the palace. It turned out that God had a work for him to do there that he could not have accomplished anywhere else. Just like we have studied concerning Joseph in GEN 50:17-21, “Thus you shall say to Joseph, ‘Please forgive, I beg you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, for they did you wrong. And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.’ And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.” Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and said, “Behold, we are your servants.” But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in God’s place? 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. So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.” So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

God put Nehemiah in Susa just as He had put Esther there a generation before, and just as He had put Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon. When God wants to accomplish a work, He always prepares His workers and puts them in the right places at the right time. God is not limited to working with believers only - He can work in the life and the mind of a non-believer, just as easily as He can work in the life of a believer. No doubt it was just another routine day when Nehemiah met his brother Hanani, who had just returned from a visit to Jerusalem, but it turned out to be a turning point in Nehemiah's life.

The principle - Like large doors, great life-changing events can swing on very small hinges.

This why Zechariah 4:10 says, "Do not despise the day of small things."

It was just another normal day when Moses went out to care for his sheep, but on that day he heard the Lord's call and became a prophet; (Exo 3). It was an ordinary day when David was called home from shepherding his flock; but on that day, he was anointed king (1Sa 16). It was an ordinary day when Peter, Andrew, James, and John were mending their nets after a night of failure; but that was the day Jesus called them to become fishers of men (Luke 5:1-11). You never know what God has in store, even in the common and inconsequential places so you need to always keep your heart open to God's leading and guidance. The statement which is really a question that describes the character of Nehemiah is: Why would Nehemiah inquire about a struggling remnant of people who lived hundreds of miles away? After all, he was the king's cupbearer and he was successfully secure in his own life. Certainly it wasn't his fault that his ancestors had sinned against the Lord and brought judgment to the city of Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah. A century and a half before, the Prophet Jeremiah had given this word from the Lord:

JER 15:5, "Indeed, who will have pity on you, O Jerusalem, Or who will mourn for you, Or who will turn aside to ask about your welfare?"

Nehemiah was the man God had chosen to do those very things! Some people prefer not to know what's going on, because information might bring a challenge or obligation. This is when we commit the sin of omission. A sin of omission is failing to do something good when you know you should. The parable of the Good Samaritan in the Bible is a classic example of this (Luke 10:30-37). Both the priest and the Levite passed by the injured man without helping him, leaving him half-dead.

JAM 4:17, "Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin"

Concerning Nehemiah, he asked about Jerusalem and the Jews living there because he had a caring heart. What did Nehemiah learn about Jerusalem and the Jews? Three words summarize the bad news: remnant, ruin, and reproach. Instead of a land inhabited by a great nation, only a remnant of people lived there; and they were in great affliction and struggling to survive. Instead of a magnificent city, Jerusalem was in shambles; and where there had once been great glory, there was now nothing but great reproach. The magnificent place where God's glory once dwelt was gone. The wall laid in ruins. Of course, Nehemiah had known all his life that the city of his fathers was in ruins, because the Babylonians had destroyed Jerusalem's walls, gates, and temple in 586 B.C. (2KI 25:1-21).

Fifty years later, a group of 50,000 Jews had returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple and the city. Since the Gentiles had hindered their work, however, the temple was not completed for twenty years (Ezra 1-6), and the gates and walls never were repaired. Perhaps Nehemiah had hoped that the work on the walls had begun again and that the city was now restored. Without walls and gates, the city was open to ridicule and attack; Psa 48; 79; 84, and 87 to see how much loyal Jews loved their city.

2. He also cared enough to be compassionate and weep. (NEH 1:4).

NEH 1:4, Now it came about when I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

What makes people laugh or weep is often an indication of character. People who laugh at others' mistakes or misfortunes, or who weep over trivial personal disappointments, are lacking either in character or integrity and possibly both.

PRO 24:17-18, Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; Lest the Lord see {it} and be displeased, And He turn away His anger from him.

Sometimes weeping is a sign of weakness; but with Nehemiah, it was a sign of strength, as it was with Jeremiah (JER 9:1), Paul (Acts 20:19), and the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 19:41).

JER 9:1, Oh, that my head were waters, And my eyes a fountain of tears, That I might weep day and night For the slain of the daughter of my people!

ACT 20:19, Serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews;

LUK 19:41, And when He approached, He saw the city and wept over it,

In fact, Nehemiah was like the Lord Jesus in that he willingly shared the burden that was crushing others. As PSA 69:9 and ROM 15:3 says "The reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon Me."

When God puts a burden on your heart, don't try to escape it; for if you do, you may miss the blessing He has planned for you. The Book of Nehemiah begins with "great affliction" (NEH 1:3), but before it closes, there is great joy (8:12,17).

NEH 1:3, And they said to me, "The remnant there in the province who survived the captivity are in great distress and reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are burned with fire."

3. Nehemiah also cared enough to pray. (NEH 1:5-10)

The Book of Nehemiah opens and closes with prayer. It is obvious that Nehemiah was a man of faith who depended wholly on the Lord to help him accomplish the work He had called him to do.

NEH 1:3, "The remnant there in the province who survived the captivity are in great distress and reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are burned with fire."

And are about to undertake a great work (4:19)

NEH 4:19, And I said to the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the people, "The work is great and extensive, and we are separated on the wall far from one another.

Is the God you worship big enough to handle the challenges that you face? The greater part of Nehemiah's prayer was devoted to confession of sin (1:6-9). The God who promised blessing and chastening also promised forgiveness if His people would repent and turn back to Him (Deu 30; 1KI 8:31-53).

Note that in NEH 1:6, Nehemiah used the pronoun "we" and not "they," identifying himself with the sins of a generation he didn't even know.

NEH 1:6, let Thine ear now be attentive and Thine eyes open to hear the prayer of Thy servant which I am praying before Thee now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Thy servants, confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have sinned against Thee; I and my father's house have sinned.

It would have been easy to look back and blame his ancestors for the reproach of Jerusalem, but Nehemiah looked within and blamed himself! Nehemiah knew that he was too weak to rebuild Jerusalem, but he had faith that God would work on his behalf.

He also had confidence in God's faithfulness, verse 10. He was sure that many other Jews were also praying and that they would rally to the cause once they heard that God was at work. Great leaders are not only believing people who obey the Lord and courageously move ahead, but they also challenge others to go with them. You can't be a true leader unless you have followers, and Nehemiah was able to enlist others to help him do the work.

#### 4. He cared enough to volunteer. (NEH 1:11)

While Nehemiah was praying, his burden for Jerusalem became greater and his vision of what needed to be done became clearer.

Nehemiah planned to volunteer to go to Jerusalem to supervise the rebuilding of the walls. He didn't pray for God to send somebody else, He simply said, "Here am I - send me!" No matter how you look at it, Nehemiah was facing a test of faith; but he knew that his God was a great God and would see him through. Nehemiah would personally pay for the upkeep of scores of people who would eat at his table. He would leave behind the ease of the palace and take up the toils of encouraging a beaten people and finishing an almost impossible task. With the help of God, he did it!

In fifty-two days, the walls were rebuilt, the gates were restored, and the people were rejoicing! And it all started with a man who cared. Abraham cared and rescued Lot from Sodom (Gen 18-19). Moses cared and delivered the Israelites from Egypt.

David cared and brought the nation and the kingdom back to the Lord. Esther cared and risked her life to save her nation from genocide. Paul cared and took the Gospel throughout the Roman Empire. Jesus cared and died on the cross for a lost world.

God is still looking for people who care, people like Nehemiah, who cared enough to ask for the facts, weep over the needs, pray for God's help, and then volunteer to get the job done.

To rescue Jerusalem, and he was willing to go.

# CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2011.

## THE FORGOTTEN MAN OF CHRISTMAS.

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For those of us who know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, Christmas is a time to focus on His birth called theologically the incarnation. The great reality of the incarnation is the doctrine that the Son of God was conceived in the womb of Mary and that Jesus is true God and true man - undiminished deity and true humanity in one person forever.

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.

God became a man, which is that tremendous incomprehensible miracle of divine energy that brought God into human history. But because of the complexity of all that is happening around us and because Satan has cluttered up Christmas with so much needless paraphernalia, most people have missed Christmas. All you have to do is look around you. People are busy doing all kinds of things, but they missed the reality of Christmas. It's not just happening today, it happened back on that very first

Joseph's actions and decisions in the months leading up to the birth of Jesus define for us what true faith and Christian Character looks like. I have often said that the unsung hero in the Nativity scene is Joseph. Being a husband I can only imagine the pain he went through. The questions and doubts. Yet, out of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, Joseph emerges victoriously. As such, he can teach us a lot about Character.

Joseph had a faith and righteousness is that rises above circumstances. The circumstance that Joseph found himself in was probably among the worst a Hebrew young man could find himself in. He was humiliated, devastated, disgraced, and every other negative emotion one can muster. His trust in his fiancée had been questioned and perhaps even destroyed. Adultery is one in which people respond solely based on the rage of emotions that overwhelm them.

LEV 20:10 tells us that the punishment for adultery was death. Joseph had every right to leave Mary, according to the law, yet in the end he chose to quietly send her away. Saving her humiliation and making the right choice. It's Important to note that the angel doesn't come until after Joseph had made the decision.

MAT 1:18-25, Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly. 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." Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "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." And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took {her} as his wife, and kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

Truly, this whole plan hinged on Joseph for a moment in time. We learn that Joseph was a man of character. A man of righteousness despite the circumstance he was in. As Christians we are called to be righteous despite what circumstances we find ourselves in. Luke writes in Luke 6:32, If you love those who love you what good is that? The same principle applies, if you are righteous only when your circumstance is favorable, what good is that? It's when the chips are down and you still choose to be faithful and operate in the righteousness of God that really matters.

Here is something amazing about Joseph. He is the first to receive the gospel message of Jesus Christ. Mary had been visited by the angel and told to name the boy Jesus, and that what was conceived in her was the Son of God. You cannot assume that a 15-year-old girl would understand the complexities of Jewish tradition. The Messiah probably was confusing to her. She then goes to visit Elizabeth, and Elizabeth realized that something is different about this child. But it is not until we get to the message from the angel to Joseph do we read, "You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Joseph is not just shown the power of the baby, he is shown the whole mission of the baby. Joseph would have been more familiar with God's plan and provision for the people. No doubt Joseph wondered how on earth the Messiah could come to a humble couple such as him and Mary, rather than from nobility, born into a palace. He never questions: He gets up and immediately acts upon what he hears.

MAT 1:24-25, And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took {her} as his wife, and kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

What an illustration we have of obedience to God. Do we hesitate? Do we disobey? What is God asking us to do? What is He asking you to do that you question? A very prominent part of a Hebrew marriage was the consummation. It didn't matter what the priests said. It didn't matter what price the father of the bride asked for. It was not until the consummation of the marriage that they considered the marriage final - sexual intercourse. That happened on the marriage night. But the night that Mary and Joseph were married there was no consummation. Look at what Joseph does. He puts up a hedge of protection around Mary, physically to the world he had proclaimed he would marry her despite the shame.

MAT 1:19, And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly.

He put up a hedge of protection for her emotional state. He was righteous and always put her first. Now he is hedging her with protection from even their own consummation. He put his desires and needs on hold so that God could fulfill what He would fulfill through Mary and the baby Jesus. Joseph showed amazing integrity beyond himself. How are we showing integrity in our relationship with God? Are we allowing the world to dictate what we say and do, and how we act? Are we allowing our own wants and desires to control us? When you are a Christian of integrity, this cannot be part of your life.

## Conclusion

The forgotten man of Christmas is Joseph. He never speaks in the Bible. He is usually relegated to the role of an extra in the Christmas story. That should not be. Even though Joseph was remarkably simple, he was simply remarkable. Joseph demonstrates to us all the consequences and influence of obedience to the word of God. The Forgotten Man of Christmas Demonstrates Obedience to God, Regardless of what sight says.

JOH 7:24, "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

ISA 11:3, And He will delight in the fear of the Lord, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear;

PRO 14:12, There is a way {which seems} right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

The point is, things are not always what they seem. Zacharias denied the command of God. Mary doubted the command of God. Joseph simply obeyed. He woke up from his dream and married Mary. Nothing pleases God like obedience. We can obey God in painful circumstances. The rabbis demanded that such a woman be put away. Yet Joseph obeyed when it hurt. We can obey God in spite of fear. Joseph felt terror at the holy thing God was doing. God told him "Do not be afraid".

MAT 1:20, 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."

We can obey God even while going forward in fear. We can obey God by staking everything on His word alone. Even though Joseph had no New Testament, he staked his future on the word of God. The Forgotten Man of Christmas Demonstrates the Consequences of Obedience. Obedience to God always has immediate personal consequences.

Joseph took Mary home as his wife. But he had no sex with her until she gave birth to a son.

MAT 1:25, and kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

Joseph was probably a young man. The immediate consequence of his obedience was to live with Mary in chastity until she gave birth. He watched her, protected her, but did not touch her. Obedience to God sets the course for a lifetime of consequences.

The trip to Bethlehem, the flight to Egypt, the running from Herod's family, looking for Jesus at the temple, and many other consequences came from the initial decision of obedience. There is no obedience to the word and will of God without consequences.

The Forgotten Man of Christmas Demonstrates the Influence of Obedience.

Your obedience always influences how others think about God. Who Cares about Joseph? Grooms are always background to the bride. Fathers are always faint memories in light of mothers and babies. And Joseph...well who cares about Joseph?

God does.

What Would You Have Done If You Were Joseph? It often gets lost, but Joseph was the hero of the Christmas narrative. He was loyal, faithful, humble, and courageous.

If you had been in Joseph's sandals, what would you have done? Where are you in Joseph's story? What do you do when facing a tough, life-altering decision. When bearing the brunt of wagging tongues for doing what is right. When standing alone and forgotten. When being called upon to shield someone, or even when following the Lord through a radical plan? Would you be like Joseph and go there?