

NOT
TAUGHT!
Doctrines Typically
Not Taught

Not Taught! by Darwin Fish
Published by Darwin Fish

P. O. Box 130
Moodys, OK 74444, USA
1-800-HOW-TRUE
www.800howtrue.com
www.atruechurch.info

This book or parts thereof may be reproduced in any form so long as it is faithful to the text, and author and his contact information *are* included in accordance with United States of America copyright law.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version of the Bible. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. publishers. Used by permission.

Copyright © 2023 by Darwin Fish

Contents

Preface	7
---------------	---

God

The Lord Is A Man	9
The Three Men of Genesis 18 Are God	27
The Seven Spirits of God Are God	33
Jerusalem is God	41
The Throne, Heaven, and the Kingdom Are God	45
He Is Holy Gods	53
The Horses of Zechariah 1 Are God	77
The Lord Kills	81
God Is Love	85
God Hates Everyone	101
Yehvah [יהוה] Is The Cause of Deception	109
Does God Have Faith?	115
Hard Truth on God	129
The True Fear of God	135
Man's Breath is God's Breath is God	149
Two Virgin Births	157

Hell

Hell	163
How Can A God of Love Send People To Hell?	173
Wolves Who Teach God Does Not Send People To Hell	179
Suicide	183

Salvation

They Think They're Saved, But They're Not!	191
What Must I Do To Be Saved?	201
Not By Works	213
Eternal Security	221
Judging is Believing	247

Sex

Sex During Menstruation	259
Polygamy	265
Masturbation	279

Family

Divorce & Remarriage	291
Women	305
Men	313

Drinking, Smoking, & Gambling

Drinking Alcohol	323
Drug & Alcohol Recovery Programs Are Satanic	339

Drugs	345
Smoking	363
Gambling	367

Money Matters

Debt	369
------------	-----

Prayer

Should We Pray For The False Teacher?	379
---	-----

Slavery

Slavery	387
---------------	-----

Doctrinal Unity

Unity of the Saints	395
Marks of a Cult	403
Hermeneutics	415

Holidays

Christmas	431
-----------------	-----

On Neither Side

Calvinism & Arminianism, Neither Are In The Truth	451
---	-----

Not KJV Only

The KJV Controversy	485
---------------------------	-----

Dragons

Leviathan	505
-----------------	-----

Dreams

Dreams	511
--------------	-----

Believers of the Past

Believers of the Past	519
-----------------------------	-----

Appendix

Words For The Fear of God	543
Alphabetical Index	551
About The Author	561
Contact Information	562

Preface

Not all of the doctrines herein are necessarily never ever taught. It would depend on the church. But, no doubt, depending on the preacher, many, most, or perhaps even all of these teachings are rarely, if ever, heard. Moreover, these doctrines do not acquiesce to most people's way of thinking (Matthew 7:13-14). Yet, they are soundly Biblical nonetheless.

The reason for these things is because God's thoughts and God's ways are not like man's, as God Himself has said,

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts higher than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9)

The doctrines in this book are not new. They have been around as long as the Bible (Psalm 119:152). But, if you were to scour the archives of Church history, you would probably not find many of them within their pages of theology. The reason for this is not because there have not been people on the earth who have believed these things. The reason is this; a predominate force within the world is Satan (1 John 5:19). He has done well in creating and orchestrating many many forms of false Christianity worldwide. As it is written of him,

... Satan, who deceives the whole world ... (Revelation 12:9)

"Christianity" has not been ignored by the Devil.

One of the many things the adversary has deceived the whole world in is a multifaceted counterfeit Christianity that does *not* teach the truth. It is a

Not Taught!

"Christianity" of many shapes, forms, and sizes, with varying doctrines, degrees, and creeds, making it look like much of the truth of the Bible is impossible to know and understand with any real certainty. But that is a lie.

For those who are truly afraid of God (Luke 12:4-5), Scripture can and will be properly understood (Proverbs 8:8-9; 9:10). We hope God grants you this knowledge, which is His wisdom, because it is only by the truth of God's word anyone ever escapes the fire of hell and enters His kingdom (John 14:6). May God give you His truth, and may you escape the snare of the devil (Acts 26:18; 2 Timothy 2:24-26).

God

The Lord Is A Man

The Lord is a man of war;

The Lord is His name.

(Exodus 15:3)

יְהוָה אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ

Contrary to popular opinion within the [false Christian world](#) (2 Timothy 3:1-5 & 4:3), God *is* a man, as Exodus 15:3 plainly declares (NKJV). Not corruptible (Romans 1:23; 1 Corinthians 15:50), not created (Psalm 90:2), not a man who progressed and "achieved his exalted rank" as Mormons teach (see our report on [Mormonism](#)), but nonetheless, the Lord is a Man. He is a Man of war.

I. God Appears As A Man

Unbelievers often describe it as "anthropomorphism" (attribution of human qualities to nonhumans). Nonetheless, despite the unbelief of the world, several times over God appears in literal human form, as Himself, a man, in the Old Testament (e.g. Genesis 3:8; 18:1-19:1; 32:22-30/Hosea 12:3-5; Judges 13:2-23). He explicitly calls Himself a Man (אִישׁ ['iysh], e.g. Genesis 32:24; Joshua 5:13; Zechariah 6:12/Jeremiah 23:5-6), is called by others a man (e.g. Judges 13:6, 8, 10-11), and in Judges 13:11 the Lord specifically confirms He is the Man (אִישׁ־יְהוָה).

So Manoah arose and followed his wife. When he came to the

Not Taught!

Man, he said to Him, "Are You the Man who spoke to this woman?" And He said, "I am." (see also Judges 13:22-23)

In Joshua 5:13-15 the Lord appears to Joshua exactly as Exodus 15:3 says, as a *literal* Man of war.

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a *Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand.* And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?" So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" Then the Commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, "*Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.*" And Joshua did so. (Joshua 5:13-15)

In this passage, Joshua is found worshipping a Man (Joshua 5:14). As the Scripture says, "**a Man stood opposite him . . . And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshipped.**" Matthew 4:10 says, "**You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.**" Joshua in no way breached this command, because the Man he worshiped was the Lord God. This is clear by what is said in verse 15; "**Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy**" (compare verse 15 with Exodus 3:5). Also, the verses following are the words of the Lord, Yahweh, speaking to Joshua (Joshua 6:2).

II. Two Men?

Scripture teaches that the Son of God is a Man, both before the incarnation (Zechariah 6:12; John 6:62; 1 Corinthians 15:47; Hebrews 13:8; Revelation 13:8), and after (Acts 7:56; 13:38; Romans 5:15; Hebrews 2:17; 10:12; 1 Timothy 2:5). He is also God (Micah 5:2; John 1:1; 8:58; 1 John 5:20). So, in Jesus Christ we see the truth of Exodus 15:3. The Lord Jesus Christ is a Man (1 Timothy 2:5). He is a Man of war (Revelation 19:11-21).

What about the Father? Is He a Man? Is He a Man of war? Yes indeed (Exodus 15:3). Jesus said, "**I and My Father are one**" (John 10:30).

The Hebrew word for "Lord" in Exodus 15:3 is יהוה (yehvâh, according to modern Hebrew pronunciation), usually referred to as Yahweh according to what is thought to be ancient Hebrew pronunciation. The KJV transliterates יהוה (yehvâh) in a few texts as "Jehovah" (Exodus 6:3; Psalm 83:18; Isaiah 12:2; 26:4). It is usually translated, "the LORD" (e.g. KJV, NKJV, NAS, NIV).

יהוה (yehvâh) is God's name. Exodus 15:3 plainly declares this: "**The Lord [יהוה] is His name**" (see also Isaiah 42:8). God's name, יהוה (yehvâh), is used of God the Father. This is manifested in Psalm 2:7.

I will declare the decree: The Lord [יְהוָה] (yehvâh) has said to Me, "You are My Son, today I have begotten You." (see also Psalm 110:1, 4; Hebrews 1:1-2,13; 5:5-6)

When Exodus 15:3 says, "**The Lord [יְהוָה] (yehvâh) is a Man of war**" this refers to the Father being a Man, a Man of war. In fact, throughout the Old Testament, the Lord God is called "**the Lord of hosts**" (e.g. Isaiah 47:4; 48:2; 51:15; 54:5; Jeremiah 10:16; 31:35; 32:18; 33:2; 46:18; 48:15; 50:34; 51:19, 57; Hosea 12:5; Amos 4:13; 5:8,27; 9:6). The term here "hosts" is the Hebrew word תְּצָוֹת (tsevâ'ot) for "armies" (e.g. 1 Kings 2:5; Psalm 68:12). Therefore, the Lord is the Lord of armies. Thus, the Father, who is God (Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2; Philippians 1:2; Colossians 1:2), who is "**the Lord [Yahweh] of hosts**," is a Man, a Man of war!

Furthermore, the Son is also referred to as יְהוָה (yehvâh). See Isaiah 66:15-16; John 5:22; Isaiah 44:6; Revelation 1:17-18. Exodus 15:3, speaking of God, speaks of the very nature of both the Father *and* the Son (Colossians 2:2).

Therefore, if Christ is a Man (1 Timothy 2:5; Exodus 15:3), and the Father is a Man (Exodus 15:3), are there two Men in the Godhead? Yes, note Jesus' statement in John 8:17-18.

It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.

Jesus gives the Jews the testimony of "**two men**" (δύο ανθρωπων). Who are these two men? They are the Son and His Father.

Are these "**two men**" in the Godhead seen elsewhere in Scripture? Yes they are.

I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire; (Daniel 7:9)

I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13-14; For a similar scene, see also Revelation 4 & 5; and Matthew 22:44; Luke 22:69; Acts 7:55-56; and Hebrews 1:13 for Christ sitting, or standing, at the "right hand" of God.)

Not Taught!

Daniel 7:7-14 describes God the Father as the "**Ancient of Days**," seated on a throne. Here the Father gives the Son of Man (Christ) dominion and glory and a kingdom, as John the Baptist said the Father had done.

The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.
(John 3:35)

Here in Daniel 7, the Father and the Son are seen as two *immortal* men. They are not created men (Psalm 90:2; John 1:3). They are, and have always been (Psalm 102:25-27; Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8), unlike our corruptible flesh, infinitely exalted immortal men; and *they* are God, as Abraham said,

when God caused [הִטְאוּ, hit'u, literally, "they caused"] **me to wander** (Genesis 20:13).

In Genesis 1:26-27 we read:

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

From these words it is manifest that there are more than one in the Godhead ("**Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness**"). What "image" and "likeness" was created? The image and likeness of a man, that is, the "image" and "likeness" of two men ("**Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness**"). Note also the context in which Genesis 1:26-27 is written. It is *very* physical.

Some may readily accept that the Son of God is a man (1 Timothy 2:5), but when it comes to the Father being a man, people may not be so willing to believe this. But, when one accepts the manhood of Christ, one is Biblically forced to accept the manhood of the Father; because Christ is the "**express image of His person**" (Hebrews 1:3). Jesus said, "**He who has seen Me has seen the Father**" (John 14:9; see also John 12:45). When people looked at Christ, what did they see? They saw a man. God the Father, a man (Exodus 15:3), begot God the Son (John 1:18; 3:16), a man (1 Timothy 2:5).

In addition, the Son of God is "**the Son of Man**." Every time this term, "**the Son of Man**," is used in Scripture in reference to Christ it is literally "the Son of *the* Man," (e.g. Matthew 8:20, ο υιος του ανθρωπου [ho huios tou anthrōpou]). The only exception to this is found in John 5:27 in which there are no definite articles. It simply reads, υιος ανθρωπου (huios anthrōpou), "**son of man**." It makes sense Christ does not use the definite articles in John 5:27, because His point is that he is a son of man. In other words, He is human, a son of mankind. This is why the Father "**has given Him authority to execute**

judgment, because He is son of man" (John 5:27, my translation).

Therefore, this term, "**the Son of the Man**," is quite significant. It clearly refers to the Father, *the* Man who begot the Son (Psalm 2:7), and thus unmistakably refers to the Father as a Man, *the* Man. This Greek construction of "the Son of the Man" parallels the Greek construction found in 2 John 3 where it refers to Christ as "the Son of the Father," του υιου του πατρος (tou huiou tou patros). The gospels call Him, "**the Son of the Man**." 2 John 3 calls Him, "**the Son of the Father**." They all speak of the same Man, the Father.

Furthermore, Christ is also the Son of a created man, David (Matthew 1:1, υιου δαβιδ), but the Greek construction in the New Testament is not the same as it is for "**the Son of the Man**" when referring to Christ being David's Son. It is always "**Son of David**" or "*the* **Son of David**" without the second article before David. For example, Matthew 9:27 has υιος δαβιδ (huios dabid) "**Son of David**," and Matthew 12:23 has ο υιος δαβιδ (ho huios dabid) "*the* **Son of David**." See also Matthew 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15; Mark 10:47-48; 12:35; Luke 18:38-39; 20:41.

The only exceptions to this are found in Matthew 22:42 and Revelation 22:16. In Matthew 22:42 the article is before "David," but it is only the article and David, του δαβιδ (tou dabid) "*the* **David**." The term "Son" is not there in the Greek (see likewise Luke 3:23-38). In Revelation 22:16 the Received Text has the article before David in the term, "**the Offspring of the David**" (το γενος του δαβιδ [to genos tou dabid]). The Critical Text and Majority Text read, το γενος δαβιδ (to genos dabid) "**the Offspring of David**."

Also found in the Received Text regarding Christ and David is Revelation 3:7 in which Christ says that He has "**the key of the David**," την κλειδα του δαβιδ (tên kleida tou dabid). Majority Text reads, την κλειν του δαβιδ (tên klein tou dabid) "**the key of the David**." Critical Text reads, την κλειν δαβιδ (tên klein dabid) "**the key of David**."

In case someone might wonder, it is not improper to place the definite article in front of a proper noun in the Greek New Testament. This is seen quite a bit throughout the NT. For example, in Matthew chapter one the names in the genealogy of Christ have the definite article before them. It more literally reads,

Abraham begot the Isaac, and Isaac begot the Jacob, and Jacob begot the Judah . . . etc. (Matthew 1:2)

In Matthew 1:18 it more literally reads,

Now the birth of the Jesus Christ was as follows: After his mother Mary was engaged to the Joseph, . . .

Verse twenty four reads more literally,

So the Joseph was aroused from sleep . . .

Not Taught!

Chapter 2:5 more literally reads,

So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of the Judea."

It is actually quite common to have a definite article before a proper name in the NT.

Now, even though Christ is indeed of David's seed (Romans 1:3; 2 Timothy 2:8, σπέρματος δαβιδ), being David's offspring, Christ is also David's Root (Revelation 5:5 η ριζα δαβιδ [hê hriza dabid]; 22:16) and Lord (Matthew 22:42-45).

III. Distinctions Between The Father and The Son

Some may argue against the above by seeing little to no distinction between the Father and the Son. Although Scripture teaches that they are one (Deuteronomy 6:4; John 10:30; 17:11, 22), and there is only one God (Isaiah 43:10; 44:6, 8; 45:5, 18, 22; 46:9), Scripture also teaches that there are differences between the Father and the Son.

For example, in John 14:28 Jesus said, "**My Father is greater than I.**" This greatness is a character of the Father, in comparison to the Son. It has never changed and never will change (Psalm 102:25-27; Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8). In John 10:29 Jesus said His Father "**is greater than all**" and in Ephesians 4:6 it says of the Father that He is "**above all.**" This "all" includes Christ. Long after Christ ascended to heaven, Paul wrote, "**the head of Christ is God**" (1 Corinthians 11:3). This submission of Christ to the Father, and God being the head of Christ, is for all eternity.

For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is exalted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. (1 Corinthians 15:27-28)

Furthermore, in John 6:57 Christ said, "**I live because of the Father**". In John 5:26 Christ said the Father "**has granted the Son to have life in Himself.**" In John 5:19 Jesus said, "**the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do**" (see also John 5:30). In John 7:16 Jesus said, "**My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.**" It is evident that the Father is greater than the Son, just as Christ said.

Another distinction between the Father and the Son can be found in Jesus' statement, "**For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son,**" (John 5:22). Also, note Mark 13:32. Jesus did not know the day or hour when He would return, but the Father did; and it is *the Father* who sets the times and seasons "**in His own authority**" (Acts 1:7).

IV. But, "God Is Not A Man"!

What about the verses that say, "**God is not a man**" (Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; Job 9:32; Hosea 11:9)? In every single case, Scripture is speaking of *corruptible* man. God is not a *mortal* man.

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? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? (Numbers 23:19)

And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He is not a man, that He should relent. (1 Samuel 15:29)

Mortal men both lie and repent (Psalm 116:11; Job 42:6). They say things and do not hold to their word. Note the wording here, "**God is not a man that He should lie.**" (Numbers 23:19), and "**For He is not a man, that He should relent.**" (1 Samuel 15:29). God is being compared to mortal sinful men who act in ways that He does not.

Similarly, Hosea 11:9 declares,

I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim. For I am God, and not man, the Holy One in your midst; and I will not come with terror.

Here, again, the Lord is comparing himself to mortal men. He is God, and not man. In fact, note the verse just prior to verse 9.

How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zebouim? My heart churns within Me; My sympathy is stirred. (Hosea 11:8)

God promised long ago to bless the descendants of Abraham (Genesis 12:2-3), and He will not turn back, as man might (Isaiah 49:15-16; Jeremiah 31:35-37).

Likewise, Job 9:32 says,

For He is not a man, as I am, that I may answer Him, and that we should go to court together.

Job says, "**He is not a man, as I am . . .**" This is what is being said. God is not a man, like mortal men. "**For God is greater than man.**" (Job 33:12)

V. Does God Have A Body?

If God didn't have a body, how would wine cheer Him (Judges 9:13)? Or, how would He "**drink it new in the kingdom of God**" (Mark 14:25)?

Not Taught!

Because John 4:24 says, "**God is Spirit**," some think (see below) this must mean God does not also have a body. The problem with this is, John 4:24 does not say God does not have a body. Moreover, the fact that "**God is Spirit**" does not dictate, as some may assume (Proverbs 3:5-6; 30:5-6), that God may not also have a body. Jesus is God (Titus 2:13), and He has a body.

Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.
(Luke 24:39)

Here is Christ after His resurrection and He has flesh and bones, hands and feet. Yet, He is still God. As God, He is still also Spirit (John 14:16-18; 1 Corinthians 15:45; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Romans 8:9; 1 Peter 1:11), and is not in any way *limited* or *confined* because He also has a physical body (Psalm 139:7-16; John 1:3). His statement about "**a spirit does not have flesh and bones**" simply reveals what is true about any spirit, including the human spirit that does not have flesh and bones. His point was that they were not seeing with their eyes a spirit, but rather the very flesh (physical body) of Himself.

Some may argue that Luke 24:39 was before He ascended to heaven, but now Christ is no longer in a physical body. Scripture speaks against this.

For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;
(Colossians 2:9)

Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. (Revelation 1:12-18)

For many deceivers came into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ coming in flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. (2 John 7, my translation; see also 1 John 4:2-3)

The above verses reveal that, not only did Christ come in the flesh, but He is in the flesh *now* (e.g. Luke 24:39; Ephesians 5:30; Colossians 2:9; 1 Timothy 2:5). Confessing "**Jesus Christ as *coming* in the flesh**" (2 John 7 NKJV)

depicts His continued, present tense, existence in the flesh. Deceivers and antichrists deny this.

As an example of an early deceiver, one from the third century, note the words of Origen (an “early church father”).

To see, then, and to be seen, is a property of bodies, which certainly will not be appropriately applied either to the Father, or to the Son, or to the Holy Spirit, in their mutual relations with one another. (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. IV, p. 277, "Origen De Principiis")

Origen here denies Colossians 2:9.

For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

He also denies the truth of Luke 3:22, which manifests "mutual relations" with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is found to have "**descended in bodily form.**"

And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased." (Luke 3:22)

In this same context, Origen makes God invisible to Himself, and denies the words of Christ (John 6:46).

But they will say, God is invisible. And what will you do? If you say that He is invisible by nature, then neither ought He to be visible to the Savior. Whereas, on the contrary, God, the Father of Christ, is said to be seen, because "he who sees the Son," he says, "sees also the Father." [John 14:9 footnoted] This certainly would press us very hard, were the expression not understood by us more correctly of understanding, and not of seeing. (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. IV, p. 277)

A little later,

Let no one indeed suppose that we have indulged any feeling of impiety in saying that even to the Savior the Father is not visible. (ibid.)

And a little later,

It is clear, then, that He has not said, "No one has seen the Father, save the Son;" but, "No one knoweth the Father, save the Son." (ibid.)

Contrary to Origen's folly, Christ said,

Not Taught!

Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. (John 6:46)

Obviously, despite the deceit of Origen, it is evident from the teaching of Christ (John 6:46) that the Father can be seen, at least by the Son. When Colossians 1:15 speaks of "**the image of the invisible God**," the wording itself reveals that the invisible God has yet an image. Christ is that image (Colossians 1:15).

Therefore, when you see Christ, you see, in a sense, the invisible God, that is, the image of the invisible God (John 12:44; 14:9). By the way, "image" has to do with both appearance *and* behavior (e.g. Genesis 5:1-3; Colossians 3:10).

So, if the invisible God has an image, what is that image? It is the same image and likeness found in Adam in Genesis 1:26-27. It is the same image found in the man, Jesus Christ, who is "**the express image of His person**" (Hebrews 1:3). It is the same image found in Daniel 7:9. It is the same image mentioned in John 8:17-18 (i.e. that of a man). It is the image and likeness of a man, like Ezekiel beheld.

And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with *the appearance of a man* high above it. Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. (Ezekiel 1:26-28a, see also 1:28b-2:4. This is God!)

This image of the invisible God is seen to be in human form ("**the appearance of a man**", Ezekiel 1:26). This is a concept John Calvin explicitly rejected. In his commentary on Acts 20:28 Calvin wrote,

But because the speech which Paul useth seemeth to be somewhat hard, we must see in what sense he saith that God purchased the Church with his blood. For nothing is more absurd than to feign or imagine God to be mortal or to have a body.

Calvin considered the doctrine of Christ "absurd." For Jesus spoke of the "**form**" of the Father in John 5:37.

And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. (John 5:37)

What "**form**" is this? It is the "**form**" of a man (Exodus 15:3; John 8:17-18; Genesis 1:26-27; Daniel 7:9; Hebrews 1:3). Does this indicate that the Father also has a body? Yes it does. In fact, we see in Daniel 7:9 that He has a garment, hair, a head, and is seated on a throne. Likewise, in Revelation 5:1 and 5:7 God is seated on a throne, and He has a scroll in his right *hand*.

In Numbers 12:8 it is said that Moses spoke with the Lord, Yahweh, "**face to face**" and that "**he sees the form of the Lord**" (Yahweh). Yahweh is the Father or the Son or both (Hebrews 1:3; John 12:45; 14:9). God's face is also mentioned in Exodus 33:11, 20-23; Leviticus 17:10; 20:3-6; 26:17; Numbers 6:25; Psalm 34:16; 89:14; Jeremiah 21:10; 1 Peter 3:12; Revelation 22:4, and in Matthew 18:10 Christ says there are angels who "**always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.**"

In Genesis 6:6; 8:21; 1 Samuel 2:35; 13:14; Jeremiah 8:18-19 and Hosea 11:8 the Lord speaks of His heart. He also speaks of His heart in Isaiah 16:11; 63:15; and Jeremiah 31:20, but in these passages "heart" (NKJV) comes from the plural form of the Hebrew word, **לֵבָבִים** (mê'eh). They could be more literally rendered "inward parts," "internal organs," or "bowels" (e.g. see the KJV for these verses, and also note Jeremiah 4:19). In Jeremiah 9:1 He speaks of His head and eyes.

Oh that My head were waters, and My eyes a fountain of tears.
(see verse 3 that it is the Lord who is speaking).

In Jeremiah 23:9 He speaks of His heart and bones (see verses 7 & 11 that it is God speaking, "**says the Lord**"). In Exodus 24:10; 2 Samuel 22:10 and Nahum 1:3 His feet are mentioned. 2 Kings 19:28; Psalm 18:6; 34:15; 130:2; Isaiah 37:29; Ezekiel 8:18; and 1 Peter 3:12 mention His ears. His nostrils are mentioned in Exodus 15:8; Psalm 18:8, 15; and Isaiah 65:5. Ezekiel 1:27 and 8:2 speak of His waist. His mouth is mentioned in Psalm 18:8; 33:6; 119:13, 72, 88; 138:4; Proverbs 2:6; Isaiah 1:20; 45:23; 48:3; 55:11; 58:14; 62:2; Jeremiah 9:20; 23:16; and Micah 4:4. His arm and voice are mentioned in Job 40:9. 1 Samuel 2:35 and Jeremiah 15:1 speaks of the mind of the Lord. His fingers are mentioned in Exodus 31:18; Deuteronomy 9:10; and Psalm 8:3. His hands are mentioned in Job 34:19; Psalm 95:5; 102:25; 111:7; 119:73; 138:8; Isaiah 45:11-12; 49:16; 65:2, and in Jeremiah 1:9 the Lord touches Jeremiah's mouth with His hand. In Amos 7:7,

the Lord stood on a wall made with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand.

Obviously, there are many references to the body parts of God, and each one of these references may refer to the Father or the Son, or both (Colossians 2:2 KJV or NKJV).

In consideration of God having a body, Micah 1:8 is quite shocking.

Not Taught!

Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked; I will make a wailing like the jackals and a mourning like the ostriches, for her wounds are incurable. For it has come to Judah; it has come to the gate of My people - to Jerusalem. (Micah 1:8-9)

In mourning for His people the Lord says that he "**will go stripped and naked.**" If He didn't have a body, He couldn't do such a thing.

Stephen Charnock, a puritan of old, argues against God having a body.

Question. It may be said, If God be a Spirit, and it is impossible he can be otherwise than a Spirit, how comes (sic) God so often to have such members as we have in our bodies ascribed to him, not only a soul, but particular bodily parts, as heart, arms, hands, eyes, ears, face, and back parts?

Answer. It is true, many parts of the body, and natural affections of the human nature, are reported of God in Scripture. Head, eyes, and eyelids, apple of the eye, mouth, &c.; our affections also, grief, joy, anger, &c. But it is to be considered,

1. That this is in condescension to our weakness. (*The Existence & Attributes of God*, Vol. 1, p. 188, Baker Book House Co., seventh printing, February, 1987)

Scripture never teaches this ("That this is in condescension to our weakness.").

On the contrary, Isaiah 45:9 says,

Woe to him who strives with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth! Shall the clay say to him who forms it, "What are you making?" Or shall your handiwork say, "He has no hands"?

This is what Stephen Charnock says, that He has no hands.

In continuation of a lengthy answer to his question above, Charnock writes,

5. Therefore, we must not conceive of the visible Deity according to the letter of such expressions [i.e. don't take it for what it says], but the true intent of them [i.e. what he deceives you into *thinking* is the true intent]. Though the Scripture speaks of his eyes and arm, yet it denies them to be "arms of flesh." (*The Existence & Attributes of God*, Vol. 1, p. 190)

Charnock footnotes this statement with Job 10:4 and 2 Chronicles 32:8.

Do You have eyes of flesh? Or do You see as man sees? (Job 10:4)

"With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God, to help us and to fight our battles." And the people were

strengthened by the words of Hezekiah king of Judah. (2 Chronicles 32:8)

Here again, in both of these verses, God is being compared to corruptible mortal flesh (This is also the case for Isaiah 31:3). The Almighty is not corruptible, even in the flesh of Christ (e.g. 1 Peter 1:18-19).

Charnock continues,

We must not conceive of God according to the letter, but the design of the metaphor. When we hear things described by metaphorical expressions, for the clearing them up to our fancy, we conceive not of them under that garb, but remove the veil by an act of our reason [Herein spells deceit, Proverbs 3:5-6; 30:5-6.]. When Christ is called a sun, a vine, bread, is any so stupid as to conceive him to be a vine with material branches, and clusters, or be of the same nature with a loaf? (*The Existence & Attributes of God*, Vol. 1, p. 190)

Indeed, Jesus used parabolic language (John 15:1-6), but the text is what should dictate this understanding. "Our reason" can lead us to trouble (Proverbs 3:5-6; 30:5-6).

In John 15:6 Jesus said, "**If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch.**" In other words, "**like a branch,**" not a literal branch. It should be obvious Christ is using a simile, since He is speaking to humans, not literal branches; and the text dictates this (John 14:23). In regards to the bread, Jesus Himself said,

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. (John 6:63)

In regards to Christ being "a sun," He *is* the Sun of righteousness (Malachi 4:2; Psalm 84:11), who is both a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29, see below) and radiates like the Sun (Isaiah 60:19-20; 1 Timothy 6:16; 1 John 1:5; Revelation 1:16; 21:23; 22:5).

Charnock's deceit continues with,

If we would conceive God to have a body like a man, because he describes himself so [If He describes Himself so, then He is!], we may conceit him to be like a bird, because he is mentioned with wings; or like a lion, or like a leopard, because he likens himself to them in the acts of his strength and fury. He is called a rock, a horn, fire, to note his strength and wrath; if any be so stupid as to think God be really such, they would make him not only a man but worse than a monster. (*The Existence & Attributes of God*, Vol. 1, p. 190)

Charnock declares folly upon those who would believe the Word of God (2 Peter 2:2).

Not Taught!

In regards to Scriptures depicting God with feathers or wings (Psalm 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 91:4), the Word itself shows that this indeed can be a figure of speech. See Ruth 3:9 where the same kind of language is used of Boaz, who is a man, as it is of God in Ruth 2:12. Moreover, Proverbs 23:5 states that riches have wings and fly away. This may literally be true of paper money in the wind, yet Proverbs obviously speaks figuratively of how riches do not last.

Therefore, figurative language is indeed found in Scripture. But, if we were to follow Charnock's deceit, we would reject, as He did, the true God. Because, God has indeed appeared as a literal rock (1 Corinthians 10:4), and He is truly a literal fire.

For our God is a consuming fire. (Hebrews 12:29; see also Genesis 19:24; Exodus 3:2; 19:18; 24:17; Leviticus 10:2; Numbers 9:15-16; 11:1-3; 16:35; Deuteronomy 4:11-15, 24, 33-36; 5:4-5, 22-29; 9:3; Psalm 18:8, 12-13; 50:3; 68:1-2; 83:13-18; 97:3; Isaiah 30:27-33; 31:9; 33:14-16; Ezekiel 1:27-28; 8:1-3; Daniel 7:9-10; Micah 1:3-4)

After a look at the above verses, it should be blazingly obvious that "**our God is a consuming fire!**"

VI. Modern Theology

A modern example of a rejection of God being a man (Exodus 15:3) can be found in Robert Morey's book, *The Trinity, Evidence & Issues* (copyright 1996). On page 265 Morey writes,

To say that the Father is a Person as opposed to being an impersonal force or object does not mean that He is a human person, i.e. a man. Just as the angels are persons, but not men, the Father is a Person and not a man. Just as angels are spiritual in nature and do not have a physical body (Heb. 1:14; Lk. 24:39), the Father is spiritual in nature and does not have a physical body.

That this is true is seen from two arguments. First, the Bible explicitly denies that the Father is a man. And, second, the Bible explicitly teaches that the Father is spirit in nature.

Morey further argues, speaking of the Father, that,

. . . He cannot be a mortal man. Since the Father cannot be "flesh and blood" according to Matthew 16:17, then He cannot be a mortal man.

To support his statements, besides giving Matthew 16:17, Morey gives Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; Job 9:32 Hosea 11:9 and Isaiah 31:3. All of these verses have been dealt with above. Indeed, the Father is not a mortal man, but he is nonetheless a man (Exodus 15:3). Morey fails to recognize this. He also fails to acknowledge that, contrary to what he says ("angels . . . are not

22

men"), angels *are* identified as men in Scripture (Genesis 18:1-2; 19:1; Daniel 8:15-16; 9:20-21; 10:5-6; Luke 1:19, 26). Moreover, Morey fails to recognize that physical bodies can be of a spiritual nature (1 Corinthians 15:39-53; Luke 24:39; Genesis 6:1-4; Jude 6-7; Genesis 18:1, 4-5, 8; 19:1).

Another example of modern theology that is against what we have seen thus far can be found in the *New Bible Dictionary, Second Edition* (Editors, J. D. Douglas, N. Hillyer, F. F. Bruce, D. Guthrie, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer, and D. J. Wisemen, copyright 1982, published by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois). On page 427 they write,

When we say that God is pure spirit, it is to emphasize that he is not part spirit and part body as man is. He is simple spirit without form or parts, and for that reason he has no physical presence. When the Bible speaks of God as having eyes, ears, hands and feet, it is an attempt to convey to us the senses that these physical parts convey, for if we do not speak of God in physical terms we could not speak of him at all.

By stating that He is without form, they write against John 5:37. By saying that he has no physical presence, they write against the times in which God is manifest in a physical presence as a man (Genesis 3:8; 18:1-19:1; 32:22-30/Hosea 12:3-5; Numbers 22:22-35; Judges 13:2-23). By discarding the "parts" of God mentioned in Scripture, they encourage distrust in the Words of God, and they, and all who follow in their ways, strive with their Maker bringing upon themselves the woe of Isaiah 45:9.

VII. God's Soul, God's Blood

In addition, God is not only a man (Exodus 15:3), but He is a man with a soul (נֶפֶשׁ, nephesh).

The Lord tests the righteous, but the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul [נֶפֶשׁוֹ (naphsho)] hates. (Psalm 11:5)

But He is unique, and who can make Him change? And whatever His soul [נֶפֶשׁוֹ (naphsho)] desires, that He does. (Job 23:13)

Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul [נַפְשִׁי (naphshiy)] delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. (Isaiah 42:1; see also Jeremiah 4:19-22; 6:8; 12:7; 14:19; 32:41)

What's the significance, at least in part, of God having a soul, a nephesh (נֶפֶשׁ)? This means His body has blood in it, as it is written,

Only be strong [חָזַק, chazaq] to not eat the blood, for the blood is the soul [נֶפֶשׁוֹ, hanâphesh], and you shall not eat the soul [נֶפֶשׁוֹ,

Not Taught!

hanephesh] **with the flesh.** (Deuteronomy 12:23, my translation)

For the soul [נֶפֶשׁ, nephesh] of all flesh is its blood. It is in its soul [בְּנֶפֶשׁוֹ, venaphsho]. So I said to the sons of Israel, "Blood of all flesh you shall not eat, for the soul [נֶפֶשׁ, nephesh] of all flesh is its blood." (Leviticus 17:14, my translation)

In these verses the Hebrew word for soul, נֶפֶשׁ (nephesh), is typically translated "life" (e.g. KJV, NKJV, NAS), but it is actually the Hebrew word for soul (nephesh). Therefore, these verses let us know that "the blood is the soul" (Deuteronomy 12:23). Thus, we know if God has a soul, נֶפֶשׁ (nephesh), He has blood.

Some may argue against this via Matthew 16:17:

Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

Here, God the Father, is put in contrast to "flesh and blood." But, it should be evident Jesus is talking about mortal flesh and blood, just as Paul is talking about mortal flesh and blood in 1 Corinthians 15:50 which says,

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

When Paul says, "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" he is not excluding Christ out of the kingdom. For Christ, who is the same yesterday, today, and forevermore (Hebrews 13:8), is explicitly stated as having flesh (Luke 24:39) and incorruptible blood (1 Peter 1:18-19) and noted as being a Man (1 Timothy 2:5), all after the resurrection. No, neither Matthew 16:17 nor 1 Corinthians 15:50 exclude either Christ or His Father from having incorruptible blood. In fact, Acts 20:28 uses terminology that lets us know further that God indeed has blood.

. . . the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.
(Acts 20:28)

This verse undeniably declares that God has blood, and if God has it, it is eternal, incorruptible (1 Peter 1:18-19). Also, with the term God, this includes God the Father as well (John 14:7-9).

Finally, the very first mention of the soul being the blood is in Genesis 9:4.

Yet, you shall not eat flesh in its soul [בְּנֶפֶשׁוֹ, benaphsho], its blood.
(Genesis 9:4, my translation)

Two verses later God reveals the blood, the soul, is very much a part of man
24

being made in the image of God.

Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man. (Genesis 9:6)

With the focus being on the blood, it is quite significant, in that context, that God says man was made in His image, His "likeness" (Genesis 1:26). God, who is a Man with incorruptible flesh and blood, created a man who was like Him.

VIII. The Word *became* flesh (John 1:14)?

Does John 1:14 imply that Christ (the Word, John 1:1) was not in flesh until the incarnation when He *became* flesh?

John 1:14 means exactly what it says. He did indeed become flesh. He partook of the same flesh and blood as man (Hebrews 2:14, 17). In time and space He was conceived in a womb (Luke 1:31). This was the first event in becoming flesh. He was subsequently developed in the womb, born, grew, learned (Hebrews 5:8), and was even tempted (Hebrews 4:15). These are all indicative of being in the flesh.

Nonetheless, none of this means He wasn't in the flesh prior to this. Scripture simply does not teach that. Likewise, none of this means he was not in the flesh in heaven at the same time He was on earth (John 3:13 "**son of man who is in heaven**"). Moreover, Scripture teaches He was slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). He would have had to be in the flesh from the foundation of the world in order to be slain. Finally, since Hebrews 13:8 is true, and His flesh is very much a part of who He is, being in the flesh is not new to the nature of Christ. Nevertheless, this is nonetheless a great mystery.

Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh . . . (1 Timothy 3:16).

One important factor to note in the Word becoming flesh is this: Sinful man's flesh is corruptible and mortal (1 Corinthians 15:53) because of sin. "**The wages of sin is death**" (Romans 6:23). Jesus had no such sin factor in Him (Hebrews 4:15). Thus, His flesh was the same (Hebrews 2:14) minus the sin factor that we all inherit through Adam (Romans 5:19), which means His flesh was neither corruptible or mortal (i.e. subject to death, in itself, as ours is because of sin).

Jesus was virgin born (Luke 1:35), the Seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15). Although He is indeed the son of David (Matthew 1:1), of the seed of David (Romans 1:3; 2 Timothy 2:8), this seed came via the woman Mary. Thus, He had no fallen father.

Therefore, when Christ became flesh (John 1:14), He partook of the same kind of flesh man has (Hebrews 2:14), but it was without the fallen nature inherited from Adam (Romans 5:12-19). Thus, Jesus' flesh and blood was not

Not Taught!

corrupted (i.e. was incorruptible), being virgin born. Thus we have, "**And the Word became flesh**" (John 1:14).

Usually, when we think of "flesh," we equate it with mortality, since in our flesh that is all we know. But, this mortality factor is a mystery. Since Christ had no sin in His flesh (like we do), He did not have a body of death (mortality) as we do (Romans 7:24). He had a body of life (John 14:6). He was not mortal, in this sense. The wages of sin, death, had no bearing on His life, on His flesh, as Jesus notes in John 10:17-18:

Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life [literally, My soul, ψυχήν] that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.

Jesus had the power to decide to die ("**lay it down**") and/or live ("**to take it**"). Being mortal, we don't have that power. In fact, this well defines mortality, subject to death beyond our control.

Jesus' mortality only came because of His obedience to His Father (Matthew 26:37-44). He choose to become mortal, to die. He was not mortal, like we are mortal, subject to death beyond our control. Romans 8:3 says He came "in the likeness of sinful flesh." He did not come *in* sinful flesh.

Thus, the cross is a great mystery. Not only did Life (John 14:6) die, but Righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6) became sin (2 Corinthians 5:21). Truly, His ways are past finding out (Romans 11:33)!

The Three Men of Genesis 18 Are God.

Then the Lord appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, . . . as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him. (Genesis 18:1-2a)

I. Genesis 18

Verse one says, "**the Lord appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre.**" Verse two says, "**he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him.**" These three Men are the Lord.

In verse three when Abraham first greets these three Men, he addresses them as Adonai, אֲדֹנָי 'adonây ("**my lord**" NKJV). This is one of the most common words used for God in the Old Testament, and it literally means, "**my Lords.**"¹ It is translated as "**my lords**" in the next chapter in Genesis 19:18 in the NKJV; NAS; NIV; NLT. Abraham uses this term earlier to address God in Genesis 15:2 & 8.

So, in verse three Abraham says,

My Lord [אֲדֹנָי], if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. (Genesis 18:3)

Here in verse three Abraham speaks to them in the plural Adonai (אֲדֹנָי, literally, "**my Lords**"), then in the singular three times. Twice he uses the

Not Taught!

singular pronouns "**Your**," and once he uses the singular verb "**pass on**."² In the next verse he goes back to speaking to them in the plural.

Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. (Genesis 18:4)

Here "**wash**" is plural, רַחֲצוּ (rachatsu); "**your**" is plural, רַגְלֵיכֶם (raglêykhem) "**your feet**." And "**rest yourselves**" is plural, הִשְׁעֲנוּ (hishshâ`anu). So, Abraham speaks to the Lord, these three Men, in the plural (רַבְּרֵיךָ), then in the singular, then in the plural again. Moreover, the Lord talks both in the singular and in the plural. In verse nine it says, "**they said**" and in verse ten it says, "**He said**."

Furthermore, the Lord says in verse 21,

I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know.

Immediately, the next verse says,

Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord.

The Lord says, "**I will go down now**"³ and two of the three Men go. God did not lie. He went. Yet, it says, "**Abraham still stood before the Lord**." Even though the Lord went (the two Men), the Lord was yet still there (one Man of the Three).

II. Genesis 19

The next chapter speaks similarly. At the beginning of the chapter the two Men are called "**angels**," which is not problematic. The Lord Himself is called an angel several times over (e.g. Genesis 16:7-13; 22:11-18; Exodus 3:2-6; etc.).⁴

In Genesis 19:13 the two Angels say,

For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it.

Here God sends God to destroy the cities, just as God sent God in Isaiah 48:16; John 3:16-17; etc..

In verse 16 it says,

And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his

wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city.

When Genesis 18 is understood, then it becomes clear that "**the Lord**" in this verse is the "**men**" being merciful to him as they take hold of their hands. In verse 19 Lot notes the "**mercy**" which they had on him.

Moreover, in verse 18 Lot addresses "**them**" as Adonai (אֲדֹנָי 'adonây, "**my lords**" NKJV), which is the same exact word Abraham used when addressing the Three Men in Genesis 18:3. And again, Adonai (אֲדֹנָי 'adonây) is a *very* common word in the Old Testament for God. Some translations (e.g. NKJV; NAS; NIV; NLT) translate Adonai (אֲדֹנָי 'adonây) as "**my lords**" (better, "**my Lords**") in Genesis 19:18. This fits the context well, since it explicitly says, "**Lot said to them**" (plural). Yet, in the following verse (19) Lot addresses *them* in the singular "**your**." So, once again we have both the plural and the singular being used for the two Men who are God Himself.

Furthermore, in responding to Lot's plea to flee to Zoar it says,

And he said to them, "See, I have favored you concerning this thing also, in that I will not overthrow this city for which you have spoken. Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there." (Genesis 19:21-22a)

Then verse 24-25 declares,

Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens. So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.

So we see here the Men in verse 13 say they will destroy "**this place**" and who is noted as destroying the place? The "**Lord rained brimstone and fire . . . , from the Lord.**"

Finally, verse 29 notes,

And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt.

God (the two Men) destroyed the cities of the plain, and God (the two Men) sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow.

Endnotes:

Not Taught!

1. Adonai, אֲדֹנָי ('adonây), is a plural noun with the singular pronominal suffix "my" at the end of it. It is usually transliterated and pronounced as "Adonai," and typically translated as "Lord" (e.g. Genesis 15:2, 8; Exodus 5:22), "the Lord" (e.g. Genesis 18:27, 30-32; 1 Kings 3:10, 15), "O Lord" (e.g. Exodus 34:9; Daniel 9:7, 15-16, 19 [3x]), or "my Lord" (e.g. Genesis 18:3; Exodus 34:9; Numbers 14:17; Psalm 16:2; 35:23; Isaiah 49:14). It is only once translated in the NKJV as "my lords" (Genesis 19:18).

Adonai (אֲדֹנָי 'adonây) is commonly used in the singular context (i.e. singular verbs, singular adjectives). Yet, it is found specifically in a plural context in Genesis 18:3; 19:18 (NKJV; NAS, "my lords") and Isaiah 6:8 ("Us"). Adonai (אֲדֹנָי 'adonây) is a *very* common word in the OT and is always used of God, except some may argue in Ezra 10:3. Yet, this could be translated, "advice of Adonai" or "advice of my Lords" (NKJV "advice of my master").

There is another form of this word for "my lords" which is spelled a little different. It is אֲדֹנָי ('adonay), and it is only found in Genesis 19:2.

In the singular, "my lord" in the Hebrew is אֲדֹנָי ('adoniy), and is found addressing men in e.g. Genesis 23:6, 11, 15; 24:12 ("my master"); Numbers 12:11; 1 Kings 3:17, 26; etc.. This same word, אֲדֹנָי ('adoniy), is used for addressing God as "my Lord" in Joshua 5:14; Judges 6:13; Psalm 110:1; Zechariah 1:9; 4:4-5, 13; 6:4.

In addressing God, there is also "Lord," אֲדֹנָי ('adon), in Joshua 3:11, 13; Psalm 97:5; Zechariah 4:14; 6:5; Micah 4:13. In all of these passages אֲדֹנָי ('adon) is with the phrase כֹּל הָאָרֶץ (kol hâ'ârets). The NKJV translates these as "the Lord of all the earth," or "the Lord of the whole earth," but the definite article ("the") before "Lord" is not there in the Hebrew. For אֲדֹנָי ('adon) with the definite article, "the Lord" אֲדֹנָי (hâ'âdon), this is found in Exodus 23:17; 34:23; Psalm 114:7; Isaiah 1:24; 3:1; 10:16, 33; 19:4; Malachi 3:1.

2. In the Hebrew it reads, בְּעֵינַיְכֶם (be'êyneykhâ) "Your sight"; תַּעֲבֹר (ta'avor) "pass on"; אַדְּכֶם ('avdekhâ) "Your servant."

3. The Hebrew word translated "now," עַתָּה (nâ'), can mean "now" (as here) or "please." For example, in 2 Kings 5:15 it is used for both "now" and "please."

4. Zechariah 12:8 definitively calls the Angel of the Lord God by the phrase, "like God, like the Angel of the Lord." Besides the Scriptures already given, elsewhere, it can be seen the Angel of the Lord is indeed the Lord Himself. See Numbers 22:22-35; Judges 2:1-5; 5:23; 6:11-22; 13:3-23; 2 Samuel 24:16-18 (1 Chronicles 21:12-30); 1 Kings 19:4-8; 2 Kings 1:2-4, 15; 19:35 (Isaiah 37:36); Psalm 34:7; 35:5-6; Hosea 12:4; Zechariah 1:7-20; 3:1-10.

Moreover, not all angels are God. There are wicked angels (e.g. Matthew 25:41; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Revelation 12:7-9), and angels who are clearly not

The Three Men of Genesis 18 Are God

God (e.g. Hebrews 2:16; Revelation 22:8-9 [22:16]).

Not Taught!

Another clear, but sorely ignored, neglected, or rejected doctrine is,

The Seven Spirits of God Are God

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ. (Revelation 1:4-5)

I. The Truth

Right smack in the middle of God ("**Him who is and who was and who is to come**") and God ("**Jesus Christ**") is God, who is declared to be "**the seven Spirits who are before His throne.**"

In Revelation 1:4-5 John proclaims grace and peace from the Godhead (Romans 1:20) in a very detailed way. He declares grace and peace from "**Him who is and who was and who is to come.**" This is clearly the Almighty (Revelation 1:8; 11:17; 16:5). He pronounces grace and peace from Jesus Christ, who is God in the flesh (Luke 24:39; Colossians 2:9). Then, sandwiched between these, John declares grace and peace from "**the seven Spirits who are before His throne.**"

Throughout the New Testament similar greetings are given as in Revelation 1:4-5, and they are always from God (e.g. Romans 1:7; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2). Why is this significant? Because this greeting is no different, except in this, in declaring grace and peace from these seven Spirits, John reveals "**the seven Spirits who are before His throne**" are God Himself.

Not Taught!

How could they be before God's throne and be God at the same time? Just as the Son of Man is before His throne in Daniel 7:13 and He is God (John 8:28, 58). Just as the Word is with God, yet also God Himself (John 1:1). Just as the Lord God and His Spirit sent the Lord ("**Me**" Isaiah 48:16).

Isaiah declares there is only one God (Isaiah 43:10; 44:6-8; 45:6, 21-22; 46:9). Deuteronomy 6:4 (and Zechariah 14:9 and Mark 12:29) announces about this one God, "**The Lord is one.**" Yet, Genesis 1:26-27 reveals this oneness is in the plural form. There is more to God than just one being.

Likewise, Ephesians 4:4 declares there is one Spirit. Yet, there is the Spirit of the Father (Matthew 10:20) and the Spirit of His Son (Galatians 4:6), and there are the Seven Spirits of God (Revelation 1:4). All of these describe the one Holy Spirit of God.

We may well see the Spirit of the Father as the Holy Spirit (Matthew 10:20/Mark 13:11), and the Spirit of His Son as the Holy Spirit (John 7:39; 14:16-18; Romans 8:9), but the seven Spirits of God are the Holy Spirit? Yes indeed, and this is no new news.

In the Old Testament in the tabernacle of God, the Lord told Moses to make things that were a "**copy and shadow of the heavenly things**" (Hebrews 8:5; 9:23). One of those things Moses was instructed to make was a lampstand with seven lamps (Exodus 25:31-37; 37:17-23). This lampstand represented the Holy Spirit (see below).

In the tabernacle, there was one lampstand, and this one lampstand had seven lamps (Exodus 25:37; 37:23). This was a copy, a shadow, of the one Holy Spirit (lampstand), who has seven Spirits (seven lamps). Moses made the divinely instructed man-made copy (shadow). John saw the heavenly reality.

And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. (Revelation 4:5)

John saw the "**everlasting burnings**" (i.e. God, Isaiah 33:14), seven lamps of fire, and tells us they are the seven Spirits of God.

Zechariah also writes of the lampstand, seven lamps, and seven Spirits of God.

And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left." So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, "What are these, my lord?" Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." So he answered and said to me:

"This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor

by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts." (Zechariah 4:2-6)

Later in the chapter, in verses 11-14 the two olive trees are described as representing **"the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth"** (see also Revelation 11:4). So verses 11-14 explain who the two olive trees are. Verse 10 describes the lampstand with the seven lamps:

For these seven rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the Lord, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth. (Zechariah 4:10)

"**These seven**" in the context are the seven lamps of the lampstand of verse 2, and they are here described as the **"eyes of the Lord"** (i.e. part of God). Jesus Christ, who is God, is seen in Revelation as having these same eyes:

And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. (Revelation 5:6; see also Zechariah 3:9; Revelation 3:1)

The seven **"sent out into all the earth"** (Revelation 5:6) and the seven **"which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth"** (Zechariah 4:10) are the same seven eyes of the Lord which are the seven Spirits of God. Thus, when Zechariah is compared with Revelation, it is evident that the lampstand with the seven lamps represent the Holy Spirit with the seven Spirits of God.

Moreover, if someone were to argue that the Seven Spirits of God were seven "qualities," as opposed to seven literal spirits, that is, seven spiritual beings, then Zechariah 4:10 removes that argument. Because, in Zechariah 4:10 **"these seven rejoice."** They **"rejoice to see."** In other words, they respond to what is happening. These seven also **"scan to and fro throughout the whole earth."** These are all things that spiritual beings are capable of doing and qualities are not. Qualities cannot rejoice. Qualities cannot see. Qualities cannot respond to things. Qualities cannot **"scan to and fro."** The Seven Spirits of God are Seven literal Spirits (i.e. seven spiritual beings). They are not seven qualities.

Zechariah also reveals that the lampstand with the seven lamps, that is, the Holy Spirit with the seven Spirits, is the Lord Himself. Zechariah 4:14 declares the two anointed ones "stand beside the Lord of the whole earth." In the context, what are they standing beside? They are standing by the lamp with the seven lamps (Zechariah 4:2-3). In other words, the lamp with the seven lamps is the Lord. Therefore, the Holy Spirit with the seven Spirits is God.

II. The Lies

Sadly, these seven Spirits of God that describe the Holy Spirit are typically

Not Taught!

rejected by the [false Christian world](#) and reasoned away to be something Scripture never describes them to be. For example, [The Master's Seminary](#) professor (as of 2005), Robert L. Thomas, in his commentary on *Revelation 1-7, An Exegetical Commentary*, writes on page 393 that these seven Spirits are a "symbolic representation of the Holy Spirit." Thomas admits they refer to the Holy Spirit, but making them symbolic is folly and the doctrine of men (Matthew 15:8-9).

There is no Biblical reason to believe these seven Spirits are anything other than God, that is God, who is Spirit (John 4:24), and is clearly declared to be *seven* Spirits (Revelation 1:4). There is no reason to believe these seven Spirits are anything other than just that, seven literal Spirits, who are all the one God, the one Holy Spirit.

Throughout the book of Revelation the number seven always means seven, that is, a plural number with a cumulative total of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, - 7. Moreover, there is no reason to believe the seven Spirits are symbolic, since;

1) In Revelation 1:4 "**Him who is and who was and who is to come**" is not symbolic. "**Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth**" is not symbolic (Revelation 1:5). And so, neither is "**the seven Spirits who are before His throne**" symbolic (Revelation 1:4). Nothing in the text dictates they are symbolic.

2) In Revelation 4:5 the seven lamps of fire John sees are *explained* to be "**the seven Spirits of God.**" They are not obfuscated to be symbolic of something. The text clarifies them to be "**the seven Spirits of God.**"

3) Likewise, in Revelation 5:6 the seven eyes are *explained* to be "**the seven Spirits of God,**" and there is no hint to these seven Spirits being symbolic of anything.

4) In Revelation 3:1 Christ says He "**has the seven Spirits of God,**" which is consistent with what is seen in Revelation 5:6. There in Revelation 5:6, Christ, the Lamb, has seven eyes and the text makes known what these seven eyes are - they are the seven Spirits of God.

Therefore, the seven Spirits in Revelation 3:1 are the same identical seven Spirits of Revelation 5:6. In both passages the seven Spirits are not symbolic of anything. They are simply declared ("**who has the seven Spirits of God,**" Revelation 3:1) and explained ("**which are the seven Spirits of God,**" Revelation 5:6).

Furthermore, the typical false interpretation of these seven Spirits reasons away the plain meaning of the text into a mush of deceit that is nothing more than great swelling words of emptiness (2 Peter 2:18). For a few examples, note the following:

So the "seven spirits" of Revelation 1:4 are a symbol of the Holy

Spirit in His sevenfold completion, perfection, and fullness. (*God's Final Word, Understanding Revelation*, by Ray C. Stedman, p. 7, copyright 1991)

The seven Spirits do not mean seven different Spirits, but the seven characteristics of the one Holy Spirit. (*Revelation - Illustrated and Made Plain*, by Tim LaHaye, tenth printing, July 1978)

These are not seven different spirits, but rather the sevenfold fullness and completeness of the Holy Spirit's omniscience and omnipotence." (*Revelation*, by Lehman Strauss, p. 134, copyright 1965)

Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, and these are stated to be the seven Spirits of God. We have already seen in earlier passages that there is but one Holy Spirit, but that He is in a sevenfold perfection of activity in carrying out the purposes of God. (*Revelation An Exposition Commentary*, by Donald Grey Barnhouse, p. 92-93, copyright 1971)

Following out the symbolism of the tabernacle, seven lamps of fire are seen burning before the throne, as the seven-branched lampstand burned just outside the veil, before God's throne on earth - the ark of old. These lamps are said to be "the seven Spirits of God," a figure which we have already seen (in chapter 1:4) sets forth, not seven distinct Spirits, but the one Holy Spirit in the sevenfold plenitude of His power. (*Revelation*, by Henry Allan Ironside, p. 84, 1930 edition)

All of these men reject the true God, who has declared Himself to be "seven Spirits" (Revelation 1:4). Even though they all readily admit the seven Spirits are a reference to the Holy Spirit, they all attempt to thwart the reader away from taking the text of Scripture for what it says. Not a single one of the passages in Revelation support what these men purport. There is no word or implication regarding a "sevenfold"ness, but rather seven *Spirits*, which these men speak against. By saying these are not seven "different" or "distinct" Spirits, they divert people away from the plain declaration of the text, that is, that it is speaking of *seven Spirits*; and they attempt to make seven, not mean seven, as it is used in every instance in Revelation.

Every time the book of Revelation uses the term "seven," it clearly means seven distinct or different (i.e. not the same) things, and the seven Spirits are no exception (see Revelation 1:11-13, 16, 20; 2:1; 3:1; 4:5; 5:1, 5-6; 8:2, 6; 10:3-4; 11:13; 12:3; 13:1; 15:1, 6-8; 16:1; 17:1, 3, 7, 9-11; 21:9). This does not mean that the seven Spirits are not one, as God is one (Mark 12:29), as the Father and the Son are one (John 17:22). Calling them distinct or different simply points to the fact that they are literally seven Spirits; a fact the false teachers above deny.

Another common lie regarding the seven Spirits and consistent with the

Not Taught!

above lies is the claim that Isaiah 11:2 somehow supports the *symbolic* interpretation of the seven Spirits. Charles Caldwell Ryrie writes in his commentary on Revelation,

The "seven Spirits" likely represent the sevenfold ministry of the Spirit as depicted in Isaiah 11:2. (*Revelation - Everyman's Bible Commentary*, p. 14)

Isaiah 11:2 reads,

The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

The typical break down of this passage goes like this:

1. The Spirit of the Lord
2. The Spirit of Wisdom.
3. The Spirit of Understanding.
4. The Spirit of Counsel.
5. The Spirit of Might.
6. The Spirit of Knowledge.
7. The Spirit of Fear of the Lord.

There you have the one Spirit in the seven-fold plenitude of His power. (*Revelation*, by H. A. Ironside, p. 15-16)

This is simply dishonest! What is written above is not what is written in the text of Scripture (Proverbs 30:5-6). First of all, there are not even seven "Spirit"s mentioned in Isaiah 11:2 as Ironside lays out. The passage begins with "The Spirit of the Lord." Then, *describing* this Spirit He declares, "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding," and so forth. It does not say, as Ironside explains above, "the Spirit of wisdom and the Spirit of understanding." Ironside perverts the entire passage putting in "Spirit"s where there are none. That is how he can come up with seven Spirits, by adding them, but even in this he is perverted; because the latter 6 describe the first.

Therefore, even if we were to follow his scheme there would only be six (unless the Septuagint was followed, which adds an extra "Spirit" ["the spirit of the fear of God"]) and adds an extra "and godliness"). But, in reality, the passage only has 3 (or 4 with the LXX).

**The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him,
1. the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
2. the Spirit of counsel and might,
3. the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.**

Secondly, even if there were "Spirit"s in the text where Ironside explains,

this would not prove any "seven-fold plenitude" in opposition to a literal seven Spirits of God as Ironside claimed in his commentary on page 84 above. His scheme is simply ungodly and adds to the text of Scripture (Proverbs 30:5-6). And again, even if it were true, it would not prove his point, that is, that the seven Spirits are "not seven distinct Spirits." Isaiah 11:2 says no such thing.

All of this is an attempt to get away from the awesome truth of Scripture, that there is indeed, as Scripture reveals, seven literal Spirits in the Godhead.

III. The Math

Now, if there are seven literal Spirits in the Godhead, what is the total number in the Godhead? Scripture never explicitly says. The **Catholic church**, along with the "**protestant**" **church** (for want of a better term), typically hold fast to the term "Trinity" (three in one) which is a term that is found nowhere in holy writ. Although, the concept of three in one is certainly found (e.g. Isaiah 48:16; Matthew 28:19). Yet, if this extra-biblical term is held so fast as to exclude the seven Spirits of God, then those who do so have fallen prey to the traditions of men (Colossians 2:8-10), and in so doing, as the above illustrates, have rejected the true God.

If the seven Spirits are accepted, then it becomes apparent that there is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (who is seven Spirits). Adding this up equals 9, and that is the number of "Holy"s found in the Majority of Greek manuscripts in Revelation 4:8.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Holy, Holy, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come! (Majority Text; see also Isaiah 6:3 for a similar statement with three "Holy"s)

This statement is made in the context of the One who sat on the Throne (Revelation 4:2-3), the seven Spirits of God (Revelation 4:5), and the Lamb (Revelation 5:6). Indeed, there is no explanation given, but it is an interesting statement in the light of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (who is seven Spirits), all being the one Lord God Almighty.

Finally, if you also "count" Jerusalem, that is, that Jerusalem is God (Psalm 48:12-14), that number equals 10. Yet, it is beyond that even, for His Throne, Heaven, and the Kingdom Are God as well. For more on that and on Jerusalem being God, see the following chapters.

Not Taught!

Not found in any theological books we are aware of, is the truth that,

Jerusalem Is God

Glorious things are spoken of the city of God (Psalm 87:1-3).

Walk about Zion, and go all around her. Count her towers; mark well her bulwarks; consider her palaces; that you may tell it to the generation following. For this is God, our God forever and ever; He will be our guide even to death. (Psalm 48:12-14)

When the sons of Korah wrote about Zion in Psalm 48, they were speaking of the city of Jerusalem, for that is what Zion is, the city of Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:6-7/1 Chronicles 11:4-5; 1 Kings 8:1), as Psalm 48:2 declares, "**Mount Zion on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.**" The city is Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is a term used for the location of the city on the earth formerly known as Jebus (e.g. Joshua 18:28; Judges 19:10), and there is a heavenly Jerusalem as well (Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 12:22). It is also a term used for its inhabitants, those who sinned against the Lord (e.g. Jeremiah 4:14; 8:5; Lamentations 1:8), and is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt (Revelation 11:8). It is also a term used in reference to the old covenant (Galatians 4:24-25).

Jerusalem is also the city of the great King (Matthew 5:35). The city the Lord has chosen (Psalm 132:13; Zechariah 3:2), where the Lord dwells (e.g. Psalm 9:11; 76:2; 135:21), where the Lord is great (Psalm 99:2), where His fire and furnace are (Isaiah 31:9; see also Isaiah 33:14; Hebrews 12:29), where He utters His voice (Amos 1:2; Joel 3:16; Micah 4:2), and where He will shine

Not Taught!

forth (Psalm 50:2).

God has declared,

In Jerusalem shall My name be forever. (2 Chronicles 33:4; see also verse 7 and Isaiah 18:7)

Jerusalem is the "**perfection of beauty**" (Psalm 50:2; Lamentations 2:15), the "**joy of the whole earth**" (Psalm 48:2; Lamentations 2:15), and she will be called in the future "**the city of Truth**" (Zechariah 8:3). And, Jerusalem is called God. "**This is God, our God forever and ever**" (Psalm 48:12-14).

The context to this statement ("**this is God**") is clearly speaking of Jerusalem (Zion), as it is written,

Walk about Zion, and go all around her. Count her towers; mark well her bulwarks; consider her palaces.

The Psalmist points to the physical structures of Zion, the towers, the bulwarks, the palaces; to look at them, note (mark) them, to consider them, and then tells us why: "**Because this is God** [כי זה אלהים, kiy zeh 'elohiyim], **our God forever and ever.**"

In Psalm 48 the sons of Korah speak in the present, pointing to Zion as being God Himself. For the future, Scripture says of Jerusalem that her walls will be called "**Salvation**" and her gates "**Praise**" (Isaiah 60:18; for context see verse 14). Jerusalem will be called the "**Throne of the Lord.**"

At that time, Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem. (Jeremiah 3:17; see also Psalm 93:2; Daniel 7:9; Matthew 5:34; 23:22; Revelation 4:5)

Here in Jeremiah 3:17 Jerusalem and "**the name of the Lord**" are synonyms. In other words, the name of the Lord will be Jerusalem, as the city is later called, "**The Lord our righteousness.**"

“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah:

In those days and at that time

I will cause to grow up to David

A Branch of righteousness;

He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

In those days Judah will be saved,

And Jerusalem will dwell safely.

And this is the name by which she will be called:

THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” (Jeremiah 33:14-16)

The future Jerusalem is here called "**The Lord our righteousness.**"

Some may argue against this stating that "The Lord our righteousness" refers to the Branch not Jerusalem, because of similar words found in Jeremiah 23:5-6.

**“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord,
“That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness;
A King shall reign and prosper,
And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.
In His days Judah will be saved,
And Israel will dwell safely;
Now this is His name by which He will be called:
THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”**

Indeed, Jeremiah 23:5 calls the Branch "**The Lord our righteousness,**" but this should not blind the reader to what is further revealed in Jeremiah 33. Note the differences of the two passages: Jeremiah 23 continues with the main subject of the Branch all the way through verse 6 with "**In His days**" and "**His name.**" Jeremiah 33 does not do this.

In Jeremiah 33:16 instead of saying "In His days" it says "**In those days**" and uses the opposite gender "**she**" instead of "**His**" when referencing the name. Also, the nearest feminine antecedent for "**she**" in Jeremiah 33:16 is Jerusalem (see e.g. Isaiah 65:18 for a feminine reference to Jerusalem). The "**Branch**" in Jeremiah 33:15 is "**He**" not "**she**," and therefore the name "The Lord our righteousness" is a reference to Jerusalem.

But, of course, if Jerusalem is God and the Branch is God, both being "The Lord our righteousness," then it is all one and the same, but yet different (as John 1:1; 14:8-9, 28). [Note also regarding the female gender for God, that Christ is the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24), and yet wisdom is found in the female gender in Proverbs e.g. 1:20-21; 8:1-2; 9:1-3]

Also found in Jeremiah is this statement:

**You who have escaped the sword, get away! Do not stand still!
Remember the Lord afar off, and let Jerusalem come to your
mind.** (Jeremiah 51:50; see also Jeremiah 31:6)

Why (in parallel thought with "remember the Lord") let Jerusalem come to mind? Because letting Jerusalem come to mind is remembering the Lord, as Psalm 137 illustrates.

**If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill! If I
do not remember you, let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth
- if I do not exalt Jerusalem above my chief joy.** (Psalm 137:5-6)

Here the Psalmist exalts Jerusalem above his chief joy and pronounces a curse upon himself if he does not remember Jerusalem and exalt her. Exalting

Not Taught!

Jerusalem above his chief joy is idolatry if Jerusalem is not God, because God is to be our chief joy (Mark 12:30). As it is written,

Then I will go to the altar of God, to *God my exceeding joy*; and on the harp I will praise You, O God, my God. (Psalm 43:4; see also Psalm 5:11; Jeremiah 15:16)

In light of the above, Daniel's practice of praying toward Jerusalem is quite interesting. Psalm 137 is the very context in which Daniel lived.

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days. (Daniel 6:10)

Moreover, there is a blessing for those who love Jerusalem.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you." (Psalm 122:6)

And there is a curse upon those who hate her.

Let all those who hate Zion be put to shame and turned back. Let them be as the grass on the housetops, which withers before it grows up, with which the reaper does not fill his hand, nor he who binds sheaves, his arms. Neither let those who pass by them say, "The blessing of the Lord be upon you; we bless you in the name of the Lord!" (Psalm 129:5-8)

Finally, Psalm 102 says,

You will arise and have mercy on Zion; For the time to favor her, Yes, the set time, has come. For Your servants take pleasure in her stones, and show favor to her dust. (Psalm 102:13-14)

The Throne, Heaven, and the Kingdom Are God.

I. The Throne

At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem. (Jeremiah 3:17)

Here in Jeremiah 3:17 the city of Jerusalem, The Throne of the Lord, and the name of the Lord are all synonymous. Jerusalem is synonymous with The Throne of the Lord, as it says, "**Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the Lord.**" The name of the Lord is here called Jerusalem, as it says, "**to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem.**" And, The Throne of the Lord is the name of the Lord, as it says, "**The Throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the Lord.**" In Jeremiah 3:17 alone it can be seen that God's throne is God Himself and Jerusalem is God as well.

Moreover, Jeremiah 14:21 speaks similarly.

Do not abhor us, for Your name's sake; do not disgrace the throne of Your glory.

Here in parallel thought, God's name and God's throne, being actually one and the same, is Jeremiah's concern. God's name is to be praised (Psalm 113:1), and

Not Taught!

His throne is exalted (Isaiah 6:1). Jeremiah does not want to see either one, which are one and the same, dishonored.

If God's throne is God Himself, then God's throne must be eternal. In other words, it must have always existed. And indeed, it has, as it is written,

Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting. (Psalm 93:2; see also Psalm 90:2)

In Hebrews 12:29 it says,

Our God is a consuming fire.

As He is seen as a literal fire in Isaiah 33:14; Ezekiel 1:27-28; 8:2; etc., His throne, being our God (Hebrews 12:29), is a literal fire.

His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire.
(Daniel 7:9)

God is a consuming fire. His throne is a fire. His throne is Him, and He, that is, His throne also speaks.

Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" (Revelation 16:17)

Lest someone think this is not talking about the throne literally speaking, note Revelation 19:5.

Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!"

The voice is from the throne. It does not say the voice is from the One sitting on the throne. It describes the voice coming from the throne itself. In Revelation 21:5 **"He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.'"** But here, **"a voice came from the throne, saying, 'Praise our God.'"**

If the throne is God, how could it be calling God its God ("our God")? This is nothing new. Jesus is God, and He calls God His God (John 20:17; Hebrews 1:8-9).

In Revelation 16:17 and 19:5 only one voice is mentioned. In Revelation 4:5 more than one voice proceeds from the throne itself.

And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices.

In Exodus 19:16 (20:18) there were thunderings and lightning at the presence of God. In Job Elihu calls thunder "His voice" (Job 37:2, 4-5; see also Job 40:9; John 12:29). Yet in Revelation 4:5 there are **voices!** Indeed,

God is great, and we do not know Him. (Job 36:26)

Revelation 22:1 reveals the river of the water of life will proceed from the throne, and Revelation 22:3 reveals that God's servants will serve the throne Himself.

And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.

The subject here is the throne. The "His" and "Him" refer back to the subject of the sentence, the throne. If that wasn't clear in the English, it is most certainly clear in the Greek. The throne, ο θρονος (ho thronos), is in the nominative case making it the subject. The words, "of God" and "of the lamb," του θεου και του αρνιου (tou theou kai tou arniou), being in the genitive case, describe the throne (ο θρονος). Thus, the throne is the subject.

When this is understood, the next verse is quite profound, because the subjects do not change. Speaking of His servants serving Him (the throne) it says,

They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.

Whose face shall they see? They shall see the throne's face. Evidently, the throne has a face. No doubt, the throne of God is alive. It is a fiery flame with wheels that are a burning fire (Daniel 7:9).

Who among us shall dwell with ever lasting burnings? (Isaiah 33:14)

His servants, those who serve the throne of God, will reign forever with Him (Revelation 22:5), serving Him and sitting upon Him (Revelation 3:21).

II. Heaven

Thus says the Lord: Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. (Isaiah 66:1; see also Acts 7:49)

But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; (Matthew 5:34)

If heaven is God's throne, and the throne is God, then does that mean heaven is also God? Yes indeed, note what Jesus said in Matthew 23:22.

And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.

Not Taught!

In other words, if you swear by heaven, you swear by God. Heaven is God.¹

Jesus used "heaven" for a synonym for "God" in Matthew 21:25. He asked the chief priests and the elders,

The baptism of John - where was it from? From heaven or from men.

That is the same as saying, "The baptism of John - where was it from? From God or from men." Heaven is God.

Likewise, in Luke 15 the son who returned to his father said,

Father, I have sinned against heaven (Luke 15:18, 21)

Sinning against heaven is sinning against God.

Throughout the gospels, "the kingdom of heaven" and "the kingdom of God" are used synonymously (e.g. Matthew 19:23-24; Matthew 4:17/Mark 1:14-15; Matthew 13:31-32/Mark 4:30-31). In this as well it is evident that "heaven" and "God" are one and the same.

If these things were not enough, Daniel 4:26 should close the case. Daniel, in interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's vision, says,

And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump and roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules.

Immediately before this Daniel says, "till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men," (Daniel 4:25), and a little later it says,

until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses. (Daniel 4:32)

Clearly, the Heaven in verse 26 that rules is the Most High of verses 25 and 32 that rules. Heaven is the Most High (literally in the Aramaic, the Highest One, ܐܝܠܗܝܐ [‘illây’â]). In other words, Heaven is God.

The Aramaic is interesting in verse 26 (verse 23 in the Aramaic text). Both the noun for "Heaven," ܫܡܝܝܐ (shemayyâ), and the verb for "rules," ܫܠܝܬܝܢ (shallitin), are in the plural. It literally reads, "the Heavens rule." This plurality of the Godhead is further seen earlier in this same chapter where it says,

This decision is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones, (Daniel 4:17)

1 Though the Heavens are God, the sun, moon, and stars in the heavens (Genesis 1:14-18) are not to be worshipped (Deuteronomy 4:19; 17:3; 2 Kings 21:3, 5-6). Nonetheless, God is a Sun (Psalm 84:11; Malachi 4:2; Revelation 1:16; 21:23-24).

Who are "the watchers" and "the holy ones"? They are God. As it later says,

this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: (Daniel 4:24)

The "decree of the watchers" and "the sentence by the word of the holy ones" is "the decree of the Most High", the Highest One, the Heavens, the Lord Almighty.

This plurality in the Godhead is even further seen in this same chapter where it says,

They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses. (Daniel 4:25; see also verse 32)

Who are the "they"s in this verse? They are God. They (God) shall drive him from men. They (God) shall make him eat grass like an oxen. They (God) shall wet him with the dew of heaven. It is the Heavens, God Himself, the Highest One, cranking on Nebuchadnezzar for him to learn that "the Heavens rule" (Daniel 4:26). The Heavens humble a proud man.

Moreover, the Lord is repeatedly called the "Most High" (e.g. Genesis 14:18-20, 22; Numbers 24:16; etc.). This term is always in the singular in the OT.² He

2 עֲלִיּוֹן (‘elyon) “Most High” - when in reference to God, this word is always singular in the Hebrew text. When referring to God, it is also only found in Genesis 14:19-20, 22; Numbers 24:16; Deuteronomy 32:8; 2 Samuel 22:14; Psalm 7:17 (H18); 9:2 (H3); 18:13 (H14); 21:7 (H8); 46:4 (H5); 47:2 (H3); 50:14; 57:2 (H3); 73:11; 77:10 (H11); 78:35, 56; 82:6; 83:18 (H19); 87:5; 91:1, 9; 92:1 (H2); 97:9; 107:11; Isaiah 14:14; Lamentations 3:35, 38. Elsewhere it is used for: David in Psalm 89:27 (H28, “highest”); an “uppermost” basket in Genesis 40:17; Israel to be set “high” above all nations in Deuteronomy 26:19 & 29:1; “Upper” Beth Horon in Joshua 16:5; 1 Chronicles 7:24; 2 Chronicles 8:5; “exalted” regarding His house in 1 Kings 9:8 & 2 Chronicles 7:21; the “upper” gate in 2 Kings 15:35; 2 Chronicles 23:20; 27:3; Ezekiel 9:2; the “upper” pool in 2 Kings 18:17 (הַיְצִיטָּה feminine form) & Isaiah 7:3; 36:2; “upper” Gihon in 2 Chronicles 32:30; “upper” house in Nehemiah 3:25; “high” gate in Jeremiah 20:2; “upper” court in Jeremiah 36:10; the “highest” story in Ezekiel 41:7 (feminine form הַיְצִיטָּה); and “upper” chambers in Ezekiel 42:5.

In Aramaic the equivalent of this word, עֲלִיּוֹן (‘elyon) "Most High," is the singular Aramaic noun with the definite article אֵלְיָא (‘illāyā). It is used only for God in the Bible. In the singular it is found only in Daniel 3:26; 4:2, 17,

Not Taught!

is called the "Most High" or "the Highest" (e.g. Luke 1:32, 35, 76) in the NT for both Him and His Holy Habitation (e.g. Luke 2:14; 19:38; note also Psalm 113:5; Isaiah 33:5). When speaking of His Holy Habitation it is found in the plural. When speaking of Him, it is found in the singular.³

III. The Kingdom

The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all. (Psalm 103:19; see also Psalm 11:4)

"**Heaven rules**" (Daniel 4:26). "**His Kingdom rules**" (Psalm 103:19). The Kingdom and Heaven are One and the same God that rules over all.

Jesus said,

But seek first the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33)

When someone seeks God's kingdom, what or who are they seeking? God. In fact, it is interesting that one Greek manuscript for Matthew 6:33 reads,

But seek first the kingdom and His righteousness, (8, *A Reader's Greek New Testament*, 2nd edition, Goodrich & Lukaszewski, ζητετε δε πρωτον την βασιλειαν και την δικαιοσυνην αυτου)

Consistent with seeking the kingdom (thus seeking God) is what Hebrews 11:14 says of people of faith. It says,

For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. (see also Hebrews 11:16)

That homeland that they seek is God Himself.

Furthermore, if the kingdom is indeed God, then the kingdom has always existed, for God has always existed (Psalm 90:2). Jesus said,

My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here. (John 19:36)

24-25, 32, 34; 5:18, 21; 7:25. It is found in the plural, ἑλυονιῶν ('elyoniyn), for God in Daniel 7:18, 22, 25 & 27. God is certainly the highest. See Psalm 113:4-6; John 3:31; Ephesians 4:6, 10.

3 In the NT "**Highest**" (or "**Most High**") is ὑψιστος (hupsistos, e.g. Acts 7:48) and is used exclusively for God and His Abode. In the singular it is used for God (Mark 5:7; Luke 1:32, 35, 76; 6:35; 8:28; Acts 7:48; 16:17; Hebrews 7:1). In the plural it is used for His Abode (Matthew 21:9; Mark 11:10 ἐν τοῖς ὑψίστοις "**in the Highest**"; Luke 2:14; 19:38 ἐν ὑψίστοις "**in Highest**").

Hebrews 12:27-28 says,

Now this, *Yet once more*, indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, . . . (Hebrews 12:27-28)

The kingdom of God is not of this world, and it is something, as Hebrews says, that cannot be shaken. That means it wasn't made. Therefore, it is eternal. It has always been, as Christ has always been (Micah 5:2).

Note what Jesus said to the Pharisees in Matthew 12:28.

But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

What did Jesus mean by saying, "**surely the kingdom of God has come upon you**"? He meant that God Himself has come upon them, for Jesus, being God, is the kingdom of God.

Twice in the gospels it is recorded that Christ prophesied there were some who would "**not taste death till they see the kingdom of God**" (Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27). In both cases, immediately afterwards, Peter, John, and James see Jesus glorified (Mark 9:2-3; Luke 9:28-29). The focus is on Christ's very person, as the Father, in both cases, speaks from a cloud and says,

This is My beloved Son. Hear Him! (Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35)

The vision is primarily about Christ (although Moses and Elijah are present as well). Yet, Jesus said they would see the kingdom of God. Christ *is* the kingdom of God.

Jesus said in Mark 10:15,

Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.

What, or who, needs to be received to enter the kingdom of God? Jesus needs to be received (John 1:12-13). Receiving the kingdom of God is receiving Jesus.

Luke 4:43-5:1 reads,

"I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent." And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee. So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret.

Notice here that preaching the kingdom of God and preaching the word of God

Not Taught!

are one and the same. If this is so, and it is, then if Christ is the Word (John 1:1), then Christ is the kingdom of God, and therefore, the kingdom is God. Luke 9:2 and 6 say,

He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

Here the kingdom of God (verse 2) and the gospel (verse 6) are one and the same. Ephesians 1:13 calls the gospel, "**the word of truth**" and Paul used "**the kingdom of God**" and "**the whole counsel of God**" synonymously in Acts 20:25-27. Clearly, the Word of God and the kingdom of God are One. They are both God.

No wonder Jesus said in John 3:3,

Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Without the new birth (being born again) one cannot perceive, understand, see the kingdom. In other words, without being born again, you cannot see Jesus (as in Hebrews 2:9; 12:2). You cannot see, you cannot perceive, you cannot understand the Word. You cannot see, you cannot understand, God, the kingdom, unless you are born again.

He Is Holy Gods.

אֱלֹהִים קְדוֹשִׁים הוּא

You are not able to serve Yehvah, because He is Holy Gods,¹ a Jealous God. He will not forgive your transgressions and your sins. (a more literal translation of Joshua 24:19, where both "Holy" and "Gods" are both in the plural)²

Knowledge of Holy Ones is Understanding.

(a more literal translation of Proverbs 9:10)³

דַּעַת קְדוֹשִׁים בִּינָה

Thou shalt not revile the Gods,

(Exodus 22:28, 1611 KJV, see endnote 27 & 5)

I. Various Testimonies

There is indeed only one God and one Lord (Ephesians 4:4-5), and He certainly is one (Deuteronomy 6:4; see endnote 28). Yet, contrary to classical Catholic and Protestant Trinitarian theology (Athanasian, see point V. below), this one and only true Lord God (John 17:3) is "**Holy Gods**," as Joshua 24:19 literally and explicitly says. In other words, the Bible teaches monopolytheism, Gods in the One and only God.

There is indeed only one God (Isaiah 44:6-8), "**who alone has immortality**" (1 Timothy 6:16), who *alone* is Holy (Revelation 15:4), who *alone* is wise (1 Timothy 1:17; Jude 25), "**whose name alone is Jehovah**" (Psalm 83:18 KJV,

Not Taught!

יהוה), whose "**name alone is exalted**" (Psalm 148:13). There is no other God besides Him (Deuteronomy 4:35; see endnote 28). Yet, this one God is Gods, as John 1:1 reveals.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.⁴

The Word is God, and He is with God as well. So, God is with God, as the very first chapter in Genesis declares,

Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; . . . So God created man in His own image. (Genesis 1:26-27; see also "Us" in Genesis 3:22;⁵ 11:5-9; Isaiah 6:8; 16:6 ["We"]; Jeremiah 30:5 ["We"]; 48:29 ["We"]; Ezekiel 44:6; Obadiah 1:1 ["We"]; Luke 12:48 ["they"]; John 3:11 ["We"])

After Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the Lord said,

Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. (Genesis 3:22)

It is no wonder then that Ecclesiastes says,

Remember your Creators in the days of your youth, . . . (Ecclesiastes 12:1, a more literal translation, see also Young's Literal Translation "Creators"; here we have the plural noun בּוֹרְאֵיךְ [bor'eychâ] "your Creators")

"Your Creators"? Indeed, the Father created everything through the Son (Ephesians 3:9; Hebrews 1:2). The "two men" of John 8:17-18, the "Us" of Genesis 1:26 & 3:22, created *us* (male and female) in "**His image**" (Genesis 1:26-27).

Abraham⁶ illustrates *He is Holy Gods* when he said to Abimelech,

And it came to pass, when Gods caused me to wander from my father's house, . . . (הִתְעַן אֱלֹהִים) [hit'u 'otiy 'elohiym], plural verb, plural noun, more literally "Gods caused," Genesis 20:13)⁷

Prior to this, these Gods appeared to Abraham in Genesis 18. As it is written,

Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; . . . (Genesis 18:1-2a)

For more on this encounter, see [The Three Men In Genesis 18 Are God](#).

Genesis further reveals *He is Holy Gods* in Genesis 35:7:

And he built there an altar and called the place, "God, the house of God," because there *the Gods were revealed to him in his fleeing from the face of his brother.*⁸ (a more literal translation, where the Niphal plural verb is used with the plural noun, נִגְלוּ אֱלֹהֵיָוּ [niglu 'êlâyv hâ'elohiyim], "the Gods were revealed to him")⁹

Here "**the Gods**" who "**were revealed to him**" is the "**God**" אֵל ('êl, singular noun) of "**the house of God**" בַּיַּת אֵל (bêyt 'êl, singular noun), called earlier in Genesis 28:17 & 22, בַּיַּת אֱלֹהִים (bêyt 'elohiyim), "house of God," or more literally, "house of Gods."

Moses wrote about the *Holy Gods* when he wrote,

For what great nation is there that has Gods near to it as Yehvah our Gods [or God] in all we call to Him? (a more literal translation of Deuteronomy 4:7, where the plural participle קְרוֹבִים [qeroviyim] "**near**" is used with the plural noun אֱלֹהִים ['elohiyim] "**Gods**")¹⁰

Moses, David, and Jeremiah all wrote of the "**living Gods**," אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים ('elohiyim chayiyim), in Deuteronomy 5:26; 1 Samuel 17:26, 36; Jeremiah 10:10; and 23:36. In each case they use both the plural adjective and the plural noun, unlike 2 Kings 19:4, 16; Isaiah 37:4, 17 where the singular adjective חַי (chay) "**living**" is used with the plural noun אֱלֹהִים ('elohiyim, "God" or "Gods" depending on context), or unlike Joshua 3:10; Psalm 42:2 (H3); 84:2 (H3); and Hosea 2:1 where both the singular adjective and singular noun are used, אֵל חַי ('êl chay) "**living God**."

David said in 2 Samuel 7:23,

And who is like your people, like Israel, one nation on the earth whom *Gods went* to redeem for Himself for a people, to put for Himself a name and to do for *Yourselves* the great and awesome things for Your land before Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, nations, and his gods.

(plural verb is used with the plural noun, חָלְכוּ-אֱלֹהִים [châlkhu-'elohiyim] "Gods went" along with the second person plural pronoun "Yourselves," לָכֶם [lâkhem])

Not Taught!

The Lord who redeemed Israel for Himself said to Israel,

For your Husbands, your Makers, Yehvah of armies is His name. (Isaiah 54:5, אֱלֹהֵיכֶם [vo`alayikh] your husbands, אֱלֹהֵיכֶם [`osayikh] "your Makers")

Psalm 149:2 declares,

Let Israel rejoice in his Makers. Let the sons of Zion be joyful in their King. (a more literal translation of יְשׁוּעַ [`osâyv] "his Makers")

Psalm 58:11,

And a man will say, "Indeed, fruit for the righteous, indeed, there are Gods judging in the earth." (a more literal translation, with plural noun and plural participle, "Gods judging")¹¹

There are indeed Gods. The Father is God (1 Corinthians 8:6). The Son is God (2 Peter 1:1; [John 8:17-18](#)). [Jerusalem Is God. The Seven Spirits Are God. The Horses of Zechariah 1 Are God. The Throne, the Heavens, and the Kingdom Are God.](#) This is the real Biblical God, who is Gods. He is neither preached nor acknowledged in Jewish synagogues or the false churches of today, but rather, "They" (Daniel 4:25) are rejected and denied (2 Peter 2:1) both in precept (doctrine) and in practice (Titus 1:16).

II. Pagan Testimony

Even the pagan Philistines express the God of Israel as Gods in one God. After hearing about the ark of the Lord being brought into the camp of Israel, in fear the Philistines say,

God is come into the camp. (1 Samuel 4:7 KJV)

Here the Philistines use the plural noun for "God" אֱלֹהִים ('elohiym) with the singular verb בָּא (bâ) "is come," and so it is translated "God is come." But in the very next verse it says,

who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. (1 Samuel 4:8 KJV)

In this verse we have the singular "hand" יָד (yad). There is also the plural demonstrative pronoun "these" הֵלֵלֵךְ (hâ'ellesh), the plural adjective "mighty"

הַאֲדִיירִיטִים (hâ'addiyritym), and the plural noun "**Gods**" הַאֱלֹהִים (hâ'elohiym) for "**these mighty Gods.**" There is also the plural demonstrative pronoun "**these**" הָאֵלֵּה ('âlleh), with the plural pronoun translated "**are**" הֵם (hêm), the plural noun "**Gods**" הַאֱלֹהִים (hâ'elohiym), with the plural participle "**that smote**" הַמַּכִּימִם (hamakkiym), for "**these are the Gods who smote . . .**".

1 Samuel 4:7-8 well illustrates how these other verses that have plural adjectives and plural verbs with a plural noun ought to be translated in the plural as they are in 1 Samuel 4:8.¹² The Philistines spoke rightly. They refer to God in the singular in verse 7 and in the plural in verse 8, as did Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Jeremiah, and Daniel all speak of God in both the singular and plural.

III. Daniel's Testimony

Daniel well illustrates "**He is Holy Gods**" as well. In Daniel 4:8-9, and 18 the KJV reads,

But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the *spirit of the holy gods*: and before him I told the dream, saying, O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the *spirit of the holy gods* is in thee, . . . (Aramaic text is Daniel 4:5-6)

O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou art able; for the *spirit of the holy gods* is in thee. (Aramaic text is Daniel 4:15; see also NAS, NIV)

Nebuchadnezzar, the holy man of God moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21), the one who gave us Daniel chapter 4, expressed the truth when he spoke of the "**spirit of the holy gods**" in Daniel. This chapter, chapter 4 of Daniel, reveals at the end of the chapter how Nebuchadnezzar turned to the Lord and praised "**Him who lives forever and ever**" (verse 34). Yet, before this, Nebuchadnezzar spoke of Daniel's God in a similar fashion. In chapter two the king said to Daniel,

From truth that your Gods, He is God of gods, and Lord of kings, and Revealer of secrets, . . . (Daniel 2:47, a more literal translation)

Here in chapter two Nebuchadnezzar speaks in the plural, "**your Gods**" אֱלֹהֵיכֶם ('elâhakhon), but then in the singular, "**He is God of gods**" הוּא אֱלֹהִים (hû'â'elohiym)

Not Taught!

אֱלֹהֵינִי (hu' 'elâh 'elâhiyn), and in the singular, "and Lord of kings" מְרַא וּמְלַכֵּינִי (umârê' malkhiyn), and in the singular, "and Revealer of secrets" נְגַלְהֵנִי (vegâlêh râziyn). Later, in chapter four, three times over Nebuchadnezzar uses the phrase רוּחַ אֱלֹהֵינִי קַדְדִישִׁין (ruach 'elâhiyn qaddiyshiyn) "**spirit of the holy gods**" (Daniel 4:8-9, 18). Nebuchadnezzar was correct in what he said in all of these phrases. Daniel indeed had the Spirit of the Holy Gods.

This Aramaic phrase is *very* similar to the Hebrew phrase "**He is Holy Gods**" of Joshua 24:19. Daniel 4:8-9 and 18 have the singular noun רוּחַ (ruach) "**spirit**" with the plural adjective and plural noun אֱלֹהֵינִי קַדְדִישִׁין ('elâhiyn qaddiyshiyn) "**holy gods**" (KJV). Joshua 24:19 likewise has the singular pronoun הוּא (hu') "**He**" and the plural adjective and plural noun אֱלֹהֵימִים קַדְדִישִׁים ('elohiym qedoshiym) "**Holy Gods**."

Furthermore, notice Daniel 4:8-9 and 18 do not have "spirits of the holy gods," but rather "**spirit of the holy gods**" (KJV). This singular "**spirit**" of the "**holy gods**" (plural) is also mentioned later in Daniel 5:11 (see KJV)¹³ by the queen.

There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the *spirit of the holy gods* (Daniel 5:11 KJV)

The king likewise says,

I have even heard of thee, that the *spirit of the gods* is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee. (Daniel 5:14 KJV)

In every case, there is no record of Daniel giving any correction of this statement regarding him and the "**Spirit of the Holy Gods**" in him. There is no need for correction. It was literally true. Daniel indeed had "the Spirit of the Holy Gods," and Daniel 4 bears witness to it, as it very much speaks of God in the plural.

Daniel 4:17 says,

This decision is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones,

Who are "**the watchers**" and "**the holy ones**"? A little later it says,

this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: (Daniel 4:24)

The "**decree of the watchers**" and "**the sentence by the word of the holy**

ones" (Daniel 4:17) is "the decree of the Most High" (Daniel 4:24). So, who are "the watchers" and "the holy ones" of Daniel 4:17? According to the context (Daniel 4:8-9, 17-18, 24), they are "holy gods" (KJV, or "Holy Gods") of the one "spirit" (KJV, or "Spirit").

These Holy Gods are further seen in this same chapter where it says,

That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule. (Daniel 4:25-26 KJV)

And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. (Daniel 4:32 KJV)¹⁴

Who are the "They"s in Daniel 4:25-26, and in verse 32? They are the Holy Gods of Daniel 4:8-9, 18; 5:11, and 14. They (Gods) shall drive him from men. They (Gods) shall make him eat grass like an oxen. They (Gods) shall wet him with the dew of heaven. They (Gods) "**commanded**" (Daniel 4:26). So,

after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.
(Daniel 4:26 KJV, "**the Heavens rule,**" plural noun, plural verb
שְׁלִיטִין שְׁמַיָּא [shallitin shemayyâ'])

Later in Daniel the Lord is called (more literally), "**Highest Ones,**" or "**Most High Ones,**" with the Aramaic plural noun, עֲלִיּוֹנִין ('elyonin) in Daniel 7:18, 22, 25, & 27. This word is typically translated "**Highest One**" or "**Most High,**" but it is actually a plural term. The singular form of this word, עֲלִיָּא ('illâyâ'), is always found with the definite article (the plural always without) and is in Daniel 3:26; 4:2 (A3:32), 17 (A14), 24-25 (A21-22), 32 (A29), 34 (A31); 5:18, 21; and 7:25. In Daniel 7:25 we have both the singular and the plural, and so it reads more literally,

And he will speak a word against the Most High and wear out saints of Most High Ones and intend to change times and law, and they shall be given into his hand until a time, and times, and half a time.

Not Taught!

IV. Testimony of Deceit

The record of the golden calf in Exodus 32 further reveals this truth. As in some of the above passages, Exodus 32:1 has the plural noun and the plural verb. The Israelis¹⁵ asked Aaron to make for them "**gods that shall go before us**,"¹⁶ and so Aaron fashioned for them a molded calf.

Since they asked for "**gods**" (plural), why did he only give them a single golden calf? Shouldn't he at least have given them two to fulfill their request for "**gods**"?¹⁷ No, he actually gave them just what they asked for. Note their response to the single golden calf.

And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. (Exodus 32:4 KJV)¹⁸

Aaron fashions for them a single golden calf in their request for "**gods**." Acts 7:40-41 records this same thing, a single golden calf in a request for "**gods**." In Exodus 32:4 they call the single golden calf "**gods**" that "**brought**" (plural verb) them up from the land of Egypt. Why? How is a single golden calf regarded as plural "**gods**"? This single golden calf was supposed to be the true God, who is Holy Gods (Joshua 24:19), as it says in the very next verse,

So when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord." (Exodus 32:5)

To the Lord? Yes, "**to the Lord**" יהוה (layhvâh), to Yehvah (or Yahweh [WEB], or Jehovah [YLT]). The single golden calf was proclaimed as the true God, the Lord, who is Gods, as Moses said to the Israelis in Deuteronomy 5:26,

For who of all flesh has heard a voice of *living Gods* speak from the midst of the fire as we and lived? (more literally, "**living Gods**" - plural noun, plural adjective)

But the Lord had explicitly told them not to do this very thing.

You shall not make anything to be with Me - gods of silver or gods of gold you shall not make for yourselves. (Exodus 20:23)¹⁹

Nevertheless, they rejected this command, and made for themselves "**gods of gold**," a single golden calf that they hailed as, "**These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.**"

V. An Unholy Creed

The [Athanasian Creed](#),²⁰ historically accepted by Catholics and Protestants alike,²¹ makes a claim the Word of God never does (Proverbs 30:5-6). Speaking in the context of the "Trinity" (line 3), the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it states,

And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. (line 16)²²

This is true, for the false God of Catholicism and Protestantism, because they can define their "Trinity" (a term not found in the Bible) any way they choose. But, Scripture never declares or teaches this concept about the true God, the God of the Bible, that "they are not three Gods." As the above illustrates, it teaches He *is* Gods, and Hebrews chapter one reveals this even further.

But to the Son He says:

"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions." (Hebrews 1:8-9, see also Psalm 45:6-7)

Here God has a God, "**Your throne, O God, . . . therefore God, Your God, . . .**" Jesus, who is God (John 8:58; John 20:27-29), has a God Himself. He spoke of His God in John 20:17 and Revelation 3:12. Revelation 1:6 also mentions "**His God.**" In fact, God forsook God on the cross, as Jesus said,

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46)

Here we have God, who shed His blood (Acts 20:28), forsaken by God, as the Lord Jesus said, "**My God, My God . . .**" Joshua was correct, "**He is Holy Gods.**"

Furthermore, the Athanasian Creed also declares their "Trinity" as,

And yet not three Lords, but one Lord. (line 18)

Again, this is true for the Catholic and Protestant god. But, Scripture nowhere teaches of the true God that they are "not three Lords" (Proverbs 30:5-6). In fact, the most common and *often* used word in the OT for "Lord" in reference to God is literally in the Hebrew, "**my Lords,**" אֲדֹנָי ('adonây). It is a plural noun with the singular pronominal suffix "**my**" at the end of it. It is usually transliterated and pronounced as "Adonai," and typically translated as "**Lord**"

Not Taught!

(e.g. Genesis 15:2, 8; 20:4; Exodus 5:22), "**the Lord**" (e.g. Genesis 18:27, 30-32; 1 Kings 3:10, 15; Job 28:28; Ezekiel 18:25, 29; 33:17, 20), "**O Lord**"²³ (e.g. Exodus **34:9**; Psalm 86:12, 15; Daniel 9:7, 15-16, 19 [3x]), or "**my Lord**" (e.g. Genesis 18:3; Exodus **34:9**; Numbers 14:17; Psalm 16:2; 35:23; Isaiah 49:14). It is once translated in the NKJV (NAS, ESV, NIV, etc.) as "**my lords**" in Genesis 19:18.²⁴

Nevertheless, Jesus quoting Psalm 110 said to the Pharisees,

The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool." (Matthew 22:44; see the same in Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42-43)

Here we have one "**Lord**" speaking to another "**Lord**" and they are both God.²⁵

See also 1 Kings 22:19 & 2 Chronicles 18:18 in which the Lord (Yehvah) says, "**I saw the Lord . . .**". In 1 Kings 22:14 (see also 2 Chronicles 18:13) Micaiah says, "**whatever the Lord [Yehvah] says to me, that I will speak.**" Then, in 1 Kings 22:19 Micaiah gives what the Lord says to him.

Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, . . .

The Lord (Yehvah) saw the Lord (Yehvah) sitting on His throne.

Likewise, Obadiah 1:1 says,

The vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning Edom; We have heard a rumour from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent among the heathen, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle. (KJV)

Here Adonai Yehvih, (אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה) "**the Lord GOD**," says, "**We** have heard a rumour from the LORD" (Yehvah). Adonai (more literally, my Lords) is noted as "**We**," and They (Adonai) heard "**from the LORD**." Thus, my Lords ("**We**") heard from the Lord. Gods ("**We**") heard from God.

In Malachi 1:6 the Lord calls Himself, "**Lords**" אֲדֹנָיִם ('adoniym), when He says, "**If I am Lords, where is My fear**" (a more literal translation). Psalm 136:2 commands to give thanks (more literally) "**to the Gods of gods**."²⁶ Here both nouns are plural, אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים (lê'lohêy hâ'elohiym). Joshua 22:22 says twice over, "**God of gods**" אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים (êl 'elohiym), and Daniel 11:36 says "**God of gods**" אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהִים (êl 'êliym); but Psalm 136:2 literally say, "**Gods of gods**" (or "**Gods of Gods**").²⁷

Moreover, speaking again of their Father, Son, and Holy Spirit this Creed says,

And yet they are not three almighties, but one almighty. (line 14)

So it is for the Catholic and Protestant god. But, the God of Scripture is more Almighty than that. For the Bible clearly reveals more than one Almighty.

In Revelation 5:7 "**the Almighty**" (Revelation 1:8-18) Lamb "**came and took the scroll out of the right hand**" of the "**Lord God Almighty**" (Revelation 4:2-8) "**who sat on the throne.**" There are clearly shown here two Almighties, two Holy Gods (Joshua 24:19), that are indeed One (Deuteronomy 6:4).

In addition, speaking again about their "Trinity" this unholy Catholic Athanasian Creed also claims,

11. And yet they are not three eternal but one eternal.

12. As also there are not three uncreated nor incomprehensible, but one uncreated and one incomprehensible.

Again, this is fine for the Catholic and Protestant god, but for the God of Scripture there is nowhere to be found in holy writ the concept of "not three eternal" nor "not three uncreated nor three incomprehensible." The Catholics and Protestants add to and deny His Word, and they will be proven liars (Proverbs 30:5-6; Revelation 21:8).

Finally, the spirit of this Creed is well and alive today within false Christianity. Speaking of this Creed, Philip Schaff wrote,

It furnishes one of the most remarkable examples of the extraordinary influence which works of unknown or doubtful authorship have exerted. ([*Creeds of Christendom, by Philip Schaff, Vol. 1, p. 50.*](#))

The masses (Catholics and Protestants) give reverence to this "Trinity" with its antichrist (anti-scripture) definition as described above. It is no wonder such a term is typically so pivotal in theological debate. Often one is dismissed at once if the "Trinity" is not affirmed, even though the term and concept (as defined above) is unfounded in Scripture and is against Scripture. Nonetheless, this Creed pronounces a curse and damnation upon anyone who does not adhere to this classical view of this Catholic God, the "Trinity." As the Creed declares,

He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.
(line 28)

This is the catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved. (line 44; see also lines 1-3 in footnote 21)

This is indeed the Catholic faith and the faith of reformed whitewashed

Not Taught!

Catholics, Protestants. Since Scripture reveals that a false God is actually a demon (1 Corinthians 10:20), it is evident both Catholics and Protestants, since they serve a false "Trinity," serve a demon and follow fables ([2 Timothy 4:3-4](#)). This "Trinity," as described in this Creed, is both a demon and a fable (a myth).

VI. All The Fullness

Finally, "**He is Holy Gods**" (Joshua 24:19) comes together in the Lord Jesus Christ. Deuteronomy 6:4 says,

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!²⁸

This is manifest in Christ Jesus.

For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead²⁹ **bodily.**
(Colossians 2:9)

He (Christ) is Holy Gods (Joshua 24:19). Christ is not just a part of God. He is "**all the fullness**" of God Himself in the flesh, in a physical human body (Luke 24:36-43; Revelation 1:17-18; 19:11-16). For more on that, see "[The Lord is a Man.](#)"

Finally, how many Gods are in the one and only true God? The Bible never gives a complete number. The Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit ([Seven Spirits](#)) are indeed explicitly mentioned (Matthew 28:18-20; 1 John 5:7), but so are [Jerusalem](#), [The Three Men of Genesis 18](#), [The Horses](#), [the Throne](#), [the Heavens](#), and [the Kingdom](#).

Endnotes:

1. אֱלֹהִים קְדוֹשִׁים הוּא (elohiym qedoshiym hu') "**He is Holy Gods**" - "Scholars" (false teachers of the past) typically acknowledge this Hebrew phrase (and other plural passages) indeed says, "**He is Holy Gods**," but believing it is another matter.

Martin Luther,

And Joshua also said unto the people, chap. xxiv. 19, "Ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is *holy Gods*." Here, we not only have "*Gods*," (ELOIM) but "holy" also: signifying, that there are more than One: and yet he says, that the Lord is One God. (quote is from "The Three Creeds or Confessions of the Christian Faith, Used By Full Consent in the Church." by Martin Luther, found e.g. on p. 363 of Vol II, *Select Works of Martin Luther: An Offering of the Church of God in "The Last Days"* translated from the works of Luther by the Rev. Henry Cole, of Clare Hall, Cambridge, 1826)

Jonathan Edwards,

Joshua xxiv. 19, "And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve Jehovah; for he is Holy God, Elohim Kedhoshim." *He is the Holy Gods*. Not only is the word *Elohim* properly plural, the very same that is used, verse 15, the gods which your fathers served, &c. - but the adjective *Holy* is plural. A plural substantive and adjective are used here concerning the True God, just in the same manner as in 1 Sam. iv. 8, "Who shall deliver us out of the hands of these mighty Gods." And in Dan. iv. 8, "In whom is the Spirit of the Holy Gods." So vs. 9, 18, chap. v. 11. (found in "Reasons Against Dr. Watt's Notion of the Pre-existence of Christ's Human Soul" e.g. on p. 536, Vol. III in *The Works of President Edwards, in Four Volumes*, 1851, published by Leavitt & Allen, 27 Day Street, New York)

John Wesley,

In the Hebrew, He is the holy Gods, (Joshua 24:19, [Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible](#), by John Wesley)

Matthew Henry,

Ye cannot serve the Lord, for He is a holy God, or as it is in the Hebrew, *He is the holy Gods*, intimating the mystery of the Trinity, three in one; ([Commentary on the Whole Bible Volume II \(Joshua to Esther\)](#)), by Matthew Henry, commentary on Joshua 24:19)

Midrash Tanhuma - For an example of Jewish teaching, in **Midrash Tanhuma**, *Translated Into English With Introduction, Indices and Brief Notes* by John T. Townsend, in the context of "How many deities created the world?" it says,

Hence < the plurals > (Josh. 24:19): FOR HE IS HOLY GODS, in < the sense > that he is holy in all types of holiness.

This same page footnotes regarding Joshua 24:19,

19. While "God" in the Bible is commonly plural, here the adjective "holy" is plural as well.
20. Thus the text reads literally: FOR HE IS HOLY GODS. (p. 5, copyright 1989)

Jews For Jesus, in their article [Jewishness and the Trinity](#), acknowledges this. They write,

Joshua 24:19: "...holy God..." [Literally: holy Gods.]

Not Taught!

For an example of a more extensive article which acknowledges the Hebrew plural forms, but argues against them and reasons them away, see the article, [Elohim: Plurality and "Attraction" Part 3](#). Nehemia Gordon's main argument in his article is that God is mostly referred to in the singular, and thus these couldn't mean what they say. He also makes a grammatical claim ("attraction") that is simply unsubstantiated (e.g. there is no consistency proving the claim) other than this is just how he explains it away. Along these lines (how to "interpret" the Bible), see the article on hermeneutics (www.atruechurch.info/hermeneutics.html).

2. The plural noun **אֱלֹהִים** ('elohiym, "Gods," "God," "gods," or "god" depending on context) is also found with the singular adjective **קָדוֹשׁ** (qâdosh) in 1 Samuel 6:20, "**holy God**."

Also, this plural noun **אֱלֹהִים** ('elohiym) is not only used in both a singular and plural context for the true God, but it is also used for false gods in both a plural (e.g. Exodus 23:13; Jeremiah 2:11; 16:20) and singular context. For example, what is translated, "**goddess**" in 1 Kings 11:5 is **אֱלֹהֵי** ('elohêy) which is the plural construct form of **אֱלֹהִים** ('elohiym, "gods," "god," "Gods," or "God" depending on context). This plural usage for a singular pagan god can also be found in Judges 9:27 (LXX "θεου"); 11:24 (LXX "θεος"); 1 Samuel 5:7 (LXX "θεου"); 1 Kings 11:33 (3x; LXX none); 2 Kings 1:16 (LXX "θεου"); 2 Chronicles 32:21 (LXX "θεου"); Ezra 1:7 (LXX "θεου," could also be translated "gods," e.g. KJV); Daniel 1:2 (2nd, LXX "θεου," could also be translated "gods," e.g. NRS); Jonah 1:5 (LXX "θεου," could also be translated, "gods" e.g. NLT).

אֱלֹהִים ('elohiym) is also used in 1 Samuel 28:13 along with the plural participle **עֹלִי** ('oliym) "**ascending**." Thus it reads more literally, "**I saw gods ascending from the earth**" (KJV; LXX "θεους εωρακα αναβαινοντας εκ της γης"). But, Saul's response is singular, "**What is his form?**" (1 Samuel 28:14; LXX "τι εγνωσ").

Also, in Exodus 7:1 God uses Elohiym for Moses when He says, "**I have made thee a god to Pharaoh**" (KJV).

Moreover, Scripture calls men gods in Exodus 18:11 (compare with Nehemiah 9:9-10) and in Psalm 82 (see also John 10:34-36). It also calls angels gods in Psalm 8:5 ("angels" Hebrew is **אֱלֹהִים** ['elohiym], "gods," compare w/Hebrews 2:7 ἀγγέλους/angels). Note also Deuteronomy 10:17,

He is Gods of Gods and Lords of Lords, the great God (הוא אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וְאֲדֹנָי הָאֲדֹנָיִם הָאֵל הַגָּדֹל הַגִּבּוֹר).

The LXX reads for Deuteronomy 10:17,

He is God of Gods and Lord of Lords, the great God (οὗτος θεὸς τῶν θεῶν καὶ κύριος τῶν κυρίων ὁ θεὸς ὁ μέγας).

Psalms 97:7 says,

Let all be put to shame who serve carved images, Who boast of idols. Worship Him, all you gods ("Worship Him all Gods" מְשַׁבְּחֵי הַלֹּהִים לֹא יִשְׁתַּבְּחוּ וְלֹא יִשְׁתַּבְּחוּ in the LXX is προσκυνήσατε αὐτῷ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ "Worship Him all His angels).

Likewise, Psalm 138:1,

I will praise You with my whole heart; Before the gods I will sing praises to You. (מִלִּפְנֵי הַלֹּהִים "before the Gods" in the LXX is "before the angels" ἐναντίον ἀγγέλων)

See also Exodus 21:6; 22:8-9 (H7-8) in which עֲלֹהִים ('elohiyim) is typically translated "judges" (likewise KJV 1 Samuel 2:25). See also Psalm 29:1 and 89:6 where "mighty ones" and "sons of the mighty" are more literally, "**sons of Gods**," בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים (benê 'ēliym). LXX reads "sons of God" (υἱοὶ θεοῦ [Psa 28:1 LXX]; υἱοὶ θεοῦ [Psa 88:7 LXX]).

Also, Job 41:25 more literally reads,

From his raising, gods fear. From crashings, they purify themselves. (H41:17 מִשִּׁתּוֹ יִגְרוּ אֱלֹהִים מִשִּׁבְרֵים יִתְחַטְּטוּ)

3. Proverbs 9:10b reads in the LXX, βουλή ἁγιῶν συνεσις (boulê hagiôn sunesis) "**counsel of Holy Ones is understanding.**"

See also Proverbs 30:3 where it more literally reads, "**knowledge of Holy Ones**," דַּעַת קְדוֹשִׁים (da'at qedosiyim, see also Young's Literal Translation [YLT] "**knowledge of Holy Ones**"). In this context two "**Holy Ones**" are mentioned. They are "**His name**" and "**His Son's name**" (Proverbs 30:4). See also Hosea 11:12 (H 12:1), קְדוֹשִׁים נְאֻמָּן (qedoshiym ne'emân) "**Holy Ones Who is faithful**" (a more literal translation; YLT "**Holy Ones**"). Here the plural adjective, קְדוֹשִׁים (qedoshiym) is with a singular participle, נְאֻמָּן (ne'emân).

Besides this plural form in its use for God (Joshua 24:19; Proverbs 9:10; 30:3; Hosea 11:12), every other time this word for "holy" is found in the plural form, it is always used as a plural (meaning "holy ones"). See Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, 26; 21:6; Numbers 5:17; 15:40; 16:3; Deuteronomy 33:3; 2 Chronicles 35:3; Job 15:15 (Q); Psalm 16:3; 34:9 (H10); 89:5 (H6), 7 (H8); Daniel 8:24; Zechariah 14:5.

Not Taught!

It is likewise in the Aramaic (ܩܕܝܫܝܢ) [qaddiyshiyñ]. It is used in the plural for God in Daniel 4:8-9 (A5-6), 17-18 (A14-15), & 5:11. For every other time in the plural, see Daniel 7:18, 21, 22 (2x), 25, & 27.

Finally, Eliphaz the Temanite mysteriously says to Job,

Call out now; Is there anyone who will answer you? And to which of the holy ones will you turn? (Job 5:1, ׀ל־מִי מִקְדֹּשִׁים [el-mi miqqdoshiym] "to which of the holy ones")

4. Note also John 1:18 in the Critical Text reads, μονογενης θεος (monogenês theos) **"only begotten God"** (NAS). Received and Majority Texts read, μονογενης υιος (monogenês uios) **"only begotten Son."**

5. Genesis 3:22 well justifies a plural **"Gods"** translation of Genesis 3:5. In Genesis 3:5 the 1611 KJV reads,

For God doeth know, that in the day ye eate thereof, then your eyes shal-bee opened: and yee shall bee as Gods, knowing good and evil. (Elsewhere the 1611 translates lower case **"gods,"** e.g. in Genesis 31:30, 32; 35:2, 4; Exodus 12:12; etc., but here they translate **"Gods"** with a capital **"G,"** as they do also in Exodus 22:28; 1 Samuel 4:8 [current KJV also]; Daniel 4:8-9, 18; which all refer to the true Gods. 1611 also has **"God"** [capital **"G"**] for a god other than the true God. This can be found in Deuteronomy 3:24 [current]; 32:12; Psalm 81:9 [2x]; Isaiah 44:10, 15, 17 [2x]; Daniel 4:8 [compare to Daniel 1:2]; 11:38 [**"a God whom his fathers knew not"**]; Habakkuk 1:11; Malachi 2:11; Acts 7:43; 2 Corinthians 4:4 [**"God of this world"**]; Philippians 3:19 [current].)

The Hebrew word here translated **"Gods"** (1611 KJV) is the same word at the beginning of the verse translated **"God."** They are both ׀ל־הֵיָ (elohiym), and they both refer to the same Elohiym as Genesis 3:22 reveals.

Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil." (Genesis 3:22a)

This is what the serpent was saying. They would become like Elohiym, **"one of Us."** **"Us"** in this context is **"Gods"** ׀ל־הֵיָ (elohiym).

6. Abraham met the Lord on several occasions (e.g. Acts 7:2; Genesis 12; 15; 17). When he met Melchizedek in Genesis 14:18-20, he encountered the Lord, for Melchizedek is God (see Hebrews 7). He also met the Lord in Genesis 18 as three Men. For more on that see, ["The Three Men of Genesis 18 Are God."](#)

7. For other examples of the plural noun ׀ל־הֵיָ (elohiym, "Gods," "gods," or "God" depending on context) with a plural verb see 1 Kings 19:2; 20:10 (

יְעֲשׂוּן pl. w/paragoge); 2 Kings 18:33 (הַצִּילוּ); Jeremiah 11:12 (יִשְׁעוּ). These are all typically translated "gods" (see NKJV; KJV).

8. For "when he fled from the face of his brother" see Genesis 28:10-22.

9. Laban, who evidently was an idolater (Genesis 31:30) said in Genesis 31:53,

The Gods of Abraham and the Gods of Nahor, the Gods of their father, they will judge between us. (a more literal translation)

As in Genesis 35:7, Laban here uses a plural verb יִשְׁפֹּטוּ (yishpetu) "**they will judge**" in reference to the "Gods" that he speaks of. Moreover, each of the "Gods" mentioned here is in the plural construct, אֱלֹהֵי ('elohêy) and אֱלֹהֵי (vê'lohêy).

10. אֱלֹהִים קְרוּבִים אֵלָיו כִּי הִנֵּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ ('elohiym qeroviym 'elâyv kayhvâh 'elohêynu) "**Gods near to it as Yehvah our Gods**" (Deuteronomy 4:7)

11. Psalm 58:11 - וַיֹּאמֶר אָדָם דָּבָרִי לְצַדִּיק - (veyo'mar 'âdâm 'akh-periy latsaddiyq) "**And a man will say, "Indeed, fruit for the righteous," אֲכַיֵּשׁ אֱלֹהִים שׁוֹפְיִים בְּאָרֶץ (akh yêsh-'elohiym shophiyim bâ'ârets) "indeed, there are Gods judging in the earth."** Here in Psalm 58:11 we have the verb שׁוֹפְיִים (judging) with the plural noun אֱלֹהִים (Gods) and the plural participle שׁוֹפְיִים (judging). שׁוֹפְיִים (there are) is translated in the plural (as opposed to the singular, "there is"), because the rest of the sentence construction is in the plural, "**Gods judging.**" The context from verse 9 is indeed "**His living and burning wrath.**" So, we have the one and only God being spoken of, once again, as Gods, plural and singular.

12. 2 Chronicles 32:15 is another pagan example where the plural verb is used with the plural noun, but the speaker spoke in the singular as well; yet it is not typically translated in the plural as in 1 Samuel 4:8. The last sentence in 2 Chronicles 32:15 more literally reads,

Indeed for your Gods will not deliver you from my hand.

Here in the Hebrew is the plural noun "your Gods" אֱלֹהֵיכֶם ('elohêychem) used with the plural verb "deliver" יַצִּילוּ (yatstilu) for "**Gods will . . . deliver.**" The verse just prior to this the speaker referred to the same God using the plural noun but with a singular verb saying,

Who was there among all the gods of those nations that my fathers utterly destroyed that could deliver his people from my hand, that your God should be able to deliver you from

Not Taught!

my hand? (2 Chronicles 32:14)

Here "**your God**" is a plural noun, אֱלֹהֵיכֶם ('elohêychem), and "**should be able**" is a singular verb, יוּכַל (yuchal).

13. Daniel 5:11 also mentions Daniel as having, "**light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods.**"

14. Technically, there is only one "**they**" in the Aramaic in Daniel 4:25 (A22) and 4:32 (A29). It is the Aramaic 3rd masculine plural verb, יֵטְעֻמְוּן (yeta'amun), "**they shall make . . . eat**" (NKJV). The other two "**they**"s in Daniel 4:25 (and one other "**they**" in 4:32) are masculine plural participles (טְרַדְיִן [târdiyn], "**shall drive**", & מְצַבְעֵיִן [metsab'eyn] "**shall wet**"). So, the subject is plural, and thus translated with "**they**."

Moreover, Daniel 4:31 (A28) has the masculine plural participle, אֲמַרְיִן ('âmriyn), for "it is spoken" (NKJV) "from the heavens" מִן־שְׁמַיָּא (min-shemayâ'). This same exact word is also found in Ezra 5:3; Daniel 2:7, 10; 3:16, 24; 6:6-7, 13-14, and 16 in a plural context. It is also found in Daniel 3:4 for the command of King Nebuchadnezzar (see Daniel 3:10). The singular form of this word is used in that same chapter for the king in verses 13-14, 19-20, 24-26, and 28.

Finally, the plural form is also found in Daniel 7:5 for a command by "they." Daniel 7:18, 22, 25, 27 all use the plural noun, עֲלִיּוֹנִין ('elyoniyn), which is more literally, "High Ones" in reference to God. And then, in Daniel 7:26 "they shall take away" is a masculine plural verb, יֵהָדוּן (yeha'don).

15. Israeli is a Biblical term. It is found in the masculine form, יִשְׂרָאֵלִי (yisre'êli), only in Leviticus 24:10 & 2 Samuel 17:25. In the feminine form, יִשְׂרָאֵלִיָּת (yesre'êliyt), it is found only in Leviticus 24:10-11.

16. Acts 7:40 likewise has "**gods to go before us**" θεους οι προπορευσονται ημων (theous hoi proporeusontai hêmôn). The LXX likewise reads for Exodus 32:1, ποιησον ημιν θεους, οι προπορευσονται ημων (poiêson hêmîn theous, oi propoousontai hêmôn) "**make us gods, who go before us.**"

17. Jeroboam made two calves and said,

It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!
(1 Kings 12:28b)

Jeroboam's deception was very much as in Exodus 32. Note the next verse.

And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. (1 Kings 12:29)

There is only one calf in each location for worship.

18. "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up" (Exodus 32:4 KJV) in the Hebrew reads,

אֱלֹהֵי אֲשֶׁר הָעֵלְוֶנְךָ
'elleh 'eloheykhâ yisrâêl ('asher he`elukhâ mée'rets mitsrâyim).

The LXX reads, οὗτοι οἱ θεοὶ σου Ἰσραὴλ, οἵτινες ανεβίβασαν σε ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου (houtoi oi theoi sou Israêl, hoitines anebibasan se ek gês Aiguptou) **"these are your Gods Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt."** See likewise in LXX in Exodus 32:8. Also, Exodus 32:31 reads in the LXX, ἐποίησαν ἑαυτοῖς θεοὺς χρυσοῦς (epoiêsan eautois theous chrusous) **"made for themselves gods of gold."**

In Nehemiah 9:18 this statement is made with the plural noun אֱלֹהֵיכֶם ('eloheykhâ) but singular demonstrative pronoun זֶה (zeh) **"this"** and the singular verb הֵעִלְךָ (he`elchâ) **"brought you up."**

19. Israel was also commanded,

He who sacrifices to the gods shall be destroyed, unless it is to the LORD only. (Exodus 22:20, my translation of, תִּבְדֹּךָ לְאֱלֹהִים יִקְרַם בְּלִי לַיהוָה לְבַדּוֹ [zovêach lâ'elohiym yâchârâm biltiy layhvâh levado])

Exodus 22:20 in the LXX reads, Ο θυσιαζων θεοις θανατω εξολοθρευθησεται, πλην κυριω μονω (ho thusiazôn theois thanatô exolothreuthêsetai, plên kuriô monô) **"He who sacrifices to gods shall be destroyed by death, unless it is to the Lord only."**

20. The Athanasian Creed linked here was copied from www.ccel.org/creeds/athanasian.creed.html.

21. Although, "Its origin is involved in obscurity, like that of the Apostle's Creed," (Schaff, p. 50) the Athanasian Creed historically is and was a Roman Catholic Creed. The first three lines of the Creed read,

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith.

Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

And the catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;

Not Taught!

Liars play word games with this word "catholic" (as 1 Timothy 6:4 says they will do), but it nonetheless means and fits Catholic theology. The Creed itself uses the term "catholic faith" three times (lines 1, 3, & 44) and "catholic religion" once (line 20). Also, historically, Protestant faiths have used this Catholic Athanasian Creed as well. For example, see [*Creeds of Christendom*, by Philip Schaff, Vol. 1, p. 49-54.](#)

Furthermore, according to Schaff, even though the name of the Creed comes from the supposed author, Athanasius, it actually was not written by him.

Since the middle of the seventeenth century the Athanasian authorship has been abandoned by learned Catholics as well as Protestants. The evidence against it is conclusive. (*Creeds of Christendom*, by Philip Schaff, Vol. 1, p. 50)

22. The false teacher, [Hank Hanegraaff](#), likewise writes,

Thus, the plural ending of *Elohim* points to a plurality of persons, not to a plurality of gods. (p. 91, *The Complete Bible Answer Book*, by Hank Hanegraaff, Collector's Edition, copyright 2008, Thomas Nelson, ellipsis in original, underlining added)

Psalm 14:1 more literally says,

A fool says in his heart, "There are no Gods." (see same in Psalm 53:1)

In the Hebrew this is,

אָמַר נָבֵל בְּלִבּוֹ אֵין אֱלֹהִים ('âmar nâvâl belibo 'êyn 'elohiyim)

The particle אֵין ('êyn) "**There are not**" (or "there is not") is determined by the noun אֱלֹהִים ('elohiyim) which is plural (e.g. Exodus 14:11 אֵין־קְבָרִים ['êyn-qevâriym] "there are no graves"). Psalm 10:4 likewise, speaking of the wicked, more literally says,

"There are no Gods" are all of his thoughts. (אֵין אֱלֹהִים)
כָּל־מְזִמּוֹתָיו ['êyn 'elohiyim kol-mezimmotâyv], note also in the Hebrew 2 Kings 1:16; Isaiah 44:6, 8; 45:5; Ezekiel 28:2)

23. אֲדֹנָי ('adonây) is also found with בִּי (biy) thus in the Hebrew it reads בִּי אֲדֹנָי (biy 'adonây). The NKJV translates this, "**O my Lord**" (e.g. Exodus 4:10, 13; Joshua 7:8; Judges 6:15; 13:8).

24. Like Elohim (אֱלֹהִים 'elohiym), Adonai (אֲדֹנָי 'adonây) is commonly used in the singular context (i.e. singular verbs, singular adjectives). Yet, it is found specifically in a plural context in Genesis 18:3; 19:18 (NKJV; NAS, "**my lords**"), Isaiah 6:8 ("**Us**"), and Obadiah 1:1 ("**We**"). Adonai (אֲדֹנָי 'adonây) is a *very* common word in the OT and is always used of God, except some may argue in Ezra 10:3. Yet, this could be translated, "**advice of Adonai**" or "**advice of my Lords**" (NKJV "**advice of my master**").

There is another form of this word for "**my lords**" which is spelled a little different. It is אֲדֹנָי (adonay), and it is only found in Genesis 19:2 (NKJV "my lords").

The plural for "lord" with the third masculine singular suffix ("his") for literally "his lords," אֲדֹנָיו (adonâyv), is always found in a singular context when used for men. Thus, it has the meaning of "his lord." For its use for men, see Genesis 24:9-10 [2x]; 39:2-3, 7-8, 16, 19; 40:7; Exodus 21:4, 6 [2x], 32; Deuteronomy 23:16 [2x]; Judges 19:11-12; 1 Samuel 20:38; 25:10; 29:4; 2 Samuel 11:9, 13; 1 Kings 11:23; 2 Kings 5:1, 4, 25; 6:32; 8:14; 9:11, 31; 19:4; 1 Chronicles 12:20; 2 Chronicles 13:6; Job 3:19; Proverbs 25:13; 27:18; 30:10; Isaiah 37:4; Malachi 1:6. For its use for God, see Hosea 12:14 [H15].

In the singular, "**my lord**" in the Hebrew is אֲדֹנָי ('adoni), and is found addressing men in e.g. Genesis 23:6, 11, 15; 24:12 ("**my master**"); Numbers 12:11; 1 Kings 3:17, 26; etc.. This same word, אֲדֹנָי ('adoni), is used for addressing God as "**my Lord**" in Joshua 5:14; Judges 6:13; Psalm 110:1; Zechariah 1:9; 4:4-5, 13; 6:4 ("**the angel who talked with me**" in Zechariah is identified as the Angel of the Lord in Zechariah 1:12-13, who is God, Zechariah 3:1-2; 12:8). Note, in Psalm 110:1 Christ is called Adoni, and in Psalm 110:5 He is called Adonai. He is at the right hand of Yehvah (110:1), and it is Christ who will "**execute kings in the day of His wrath**" (Revelation 19:11-21).

In addressing God, there is also "**Lord**," אֲדֹנָי ('adon), in Joshua 3:11, 13; Psalm 97:5; Zechariah 4:14; 6:5; Micah 4:13. In all of these passages אֲדֹנָי ('adon) is with the phrase כָּל-הָאָרֶץ (kol hâ'âret). The NKJV translates these as "**the Lord of all the earth**," or "**the Lord of the whole earth**," but the definite article ("the") before "**Lord**" is not there in the Hebrew. For אֲדֹנָי ('adon) with the definite article, "**the Lord**" אֲדֹנָיִךְ (hâ'âdon), in addressing God this is found in Exodus 23:17; 34:23; Psalm 114:7; Isaiah 1:24; 3:1; 10:16, 33; 19:4; Malachi 3:1.

Moreover, in the plural absolute, אֲדֹנָיִם ('adoniym) "Lords," it is found in a singular context (i.e. with a singular adjective) in Isaiah 19:4. In Isaiah 26:13 it is used with a plural verb. In 1 Kings 22:17 & 2 Chronicles 18:16 it stands alone (no singular or plural compliment). In Malachi 1:6 it is used for God.

Not Taught!

This plural noun with the third masculine plural suffix ("their") for literally "their lords," אֲדֹנָיָהֶם ('adonêyhem), is used in both a plural and singular context. For a plural context, see Nehemiah 3:5 (?); Psalm 123:2; Jeremiah 27:4; Zephaniah 1:9; Amos 4:1. For a singular context, see Judges 3:25; 2 Samuel 10:3; 1 Kings 12:27; 2 Kings 6:22-23.

This plural noun with the second masculine plural suffix ("your") for literally "your lords," אֲדֹנָיְכֶם ('adonêykhem), is only used for men and is found in both a plural and singular context. For a plural context, see Jeremiah 27:4. For a singular context, see 1 Samuel 26:16; 2 Samuel 2:5, 7; 1 Kings 1:33; 2 Kings 10:2-3 (2x), 6; 19:6; Isaiah 37:6.

Likewise, this word is used in the plural with the second singular suffix ("your") for literally "your lords" אֲדֹנֶיכָהּ ('adoneykha). Yet, when used of men, it is always found in the singular context. See Genesis 44:8; 1 Samuel 26:15 (2x); 29:1; 2 Samuel 9:9-10 (2x); 12:8; 16:3; 20:6; 1 Kings 18:8, 11, 14; 2 Kings 2:3, 5, 16; 9:7; 18:27 (2x); Isaiah 22:18; 36:12. It is used for God in Psalm 45:12 & Isaiah 51:22.

Likewise, this word is used in the plural with the first plural suffix ("our") for literally "our lords" (e.g. אֲדֹנָיֵנוּ adonâynu). Yet, when used for men it is always used in a singular context. For its use for men, see 1 Samuel 25:14, 17; 1 Kings 1:11, 43, 47. For its use for God, see Psalm 8:1, 9; 135:5; 147:5; Nehemiah 8:10; 10:29 (H30).

Finally, this plural noun is found with the singular feminine suffix ("her") for literally "her lords," אֲדֹנֶיהָ ('adoneyha). Yet, it is always in a singular context referring to a man. See Exodus 21:8; Judges 19:26-27.

25. The Hebrew for Psalm 110 reads, נְאֻם יְהוָה לְאֲדֹנָי (ne'um yehvâh la'doniy), more literally, "**Yehvah said to my Lord.**" The LXX and NT Greek read, εἶπεν ὁ κυριος τῷ κυριῶ μου (eipen ho kurios tō kuriō mou), "**The Lord said to my Lord.**"

26. Psalm 136:3 commands to give thanks to (more literally) "**the Lords of Lords.**" Both nouns here in the Hebrew are plural, אֲדֹנָיִם אֲדֹנָיִם ('adonêy hâ'adoniym). Likewise, Deuteronomy 10:17 more literally reads,

For Yehvah your God He is Gods of Gods and Lords of Lords, the great God, the Mighty One and the Awesome One,
... (a more literal translation of Deuteronomy 10:17)

Yet, the plural construct form for literally "**Lords of,**" אֲדֹנָי ('adonêy), elsewhere is used for a singular subject. See Genesis 39:20; 42:30, 33; and 1 Kings 16:24.

27. In the Hebrew there is no distinction between "**Gods of gods**" or "**Gods of Gods.**"

Also, the Athanasian Creed also declares,

For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord.

So are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say; There are three Gods or three Lords. (lines 19-20)

This forbiddance is the doctrine of men (Matthew 15:8-9) and is not found in holy writ (Proverbs 30:5-6). Actually, what is found is this:

Thou shalt not revile the Gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people. (1611 KJV Exodus 22:28; KJV "gods;" NKJV "God")

In the Hebrew text this is found in Exodus 22:27, and for "**Thou shalt not revile the Gods**" it reads, לֹא תִקְלָל אֱלֹהִים ('elohiym lo' teqallâl). LXX reads, Θεους ου κακολογησεις (theous ou kakologêseis), "**You shall not revile Gods**" (Exodus 22:28a). Even the Catholic translation, the [Douay-Rheims Bible](#), says, "**Thou shalt not speak ill of the gods**" (Exodus 22:28a).

28. שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד (shema` yisrâ'êl yehvâh 'elohêynu yehvâh 'echâd, Deuteronomy 6:4). More literally, "Hear Israel. Yehvah our God, Yehvah is One."

There is no other God but Yehvah, the Lord (1 Kings 8:60; Isaiah 44:8; 45:5-6, 14, 18, 21-22; 46:9; Joel 2:27; Mark 12:32; 1 Corinthians 8:4). In other words, there is only one God, Yehvah, the Lord, and He is One, as Deuteronomy 6:4 declares.

What does this mean, that He is One? Besides other Scriptures given in this article, John 10:30; 17:11, 21-23 all reveal the Oneness of God. In these passages Christ describes Himself and His Father as One, yet they are Two (John 8:17-18). In these verses Christ also prays that His disciples would be one as He and His Father are one. In John 17 Jesus clearly speaks of a *oneness* ("one") that is a *unity of persons*.

Likewise, for those who may engage in "**arguments over words**" (1 Timothy 6:4), Genesis 2:24 uses the same Hebrew word for "one," אֶחָד ('echâd), as Deuteronomy 6:4, and there it is used for two becoming one.

Likewise, Genesis 11:6 uses the same Hebrew word for "one," אֶחָד ('echâd), as Deuteronomy 6:4, and there it is used for a multitude of people.

And the Lord said, "Indeed the people are one, . . ."

Here in Genesis 11:6 the Hebrew wording is identical to what is found in Deuteronomy 6:4. Genesis 11:6 has, עַם אֶחָד ('echâd `am) more literally, "people one." Deuteronomy 6:4 has, יְהוָה אֶחָד ('echâd Yehvah), more literally, "Yehvah

Not Taught!

one." Genesis 11:6 illustrates a "**one**" of unity similar to the "**one**" of unity Christ speaks of in John 17.

Furthermore, this same Hebrew word for "**one**" is used also in Numbers 14:15; Judges 6:16; 20:1, 8, 11; 2 Samuel 19:14(H15); Ezra 3:1; Nehemiah 8:1 where people are together "as **one** man," אֶחָד (ke'iysh 'echâd). This same Hebrew word is also used in 2 Chronicles 5:13 and Ezra 3:9 where people are "**as one**," אֶחָד (khe'echâd), אֶחָד (ke'echâd, respectively). See also Ezra 2:64 where 42,360 are אֶחָד (ke'echâd) "as one" (KJV; NKJV "together").

29. The Greek word for "**Godhead**" in Colossians 2:9 is θεοτης (theotêtos). Romans 1:20 also has "**Godhead**" which is a translation of the Greek word θειότης (theiotês). The KJV has "**Godhead**" in Acts 17:29 (NKJV "Divine Nature") for its translation of θειον (theion). θειον (theion) is also found in 2 Peter 1:3-4. There the KJV & NKJV translate both times as "divine."

The Horses of Zechariah 1 Are God!¹

I saw by night, and behold, a Man riding upon a red Horse and He stood between the myrtle trees which were in the hollow. And behind Him were Horses: Reds, Sorrels, and Whites. (Zechariah 1:8, a more literal translation)²

So they answered the Angel of the LORD, who stood among the myrtle trees, and said, "We have walked to and fro throughout the earth, and behold, all the earth is resting quietly." Then the Angel of the LORD answered and said, "O LORD of hosts, how long will You not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah . . . (Zechariah 1:11-12).

Do not add (Proverbs 30:55-6) anything to the text, and by God's grace you will see.

In Zechariah 1:9 Zechariah asks, "**What are these?**" The only "**these**" in the context are the Horses of verse 8. He is told They are God.

The Man who stood among the myrtle trees (verse 10) declares,

These are the ones whom the Lord has sent to walk to and fro throughout the earth. (Zechariah 1:10)

The only "**these**" in the context here is the Horses and they respond.

So they answered the Angel of the Lord,³ who stood among the myrtle trees, and said, "We have walked to and fro throughout the earth, and behold, all the earth is resting

Not Taught!

quietly." (Zechariah 1:11)

The "they" here are the Horses of verse 8. Thus, we have here talking Horses!

Next, the Angel of the Lord answers the Horses.

Then the Angel of the Lord answered and said, "O LORD of hosts, how long will You not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which You were angry these seventy years?" (Zechariah 1:12)

Here the Angel of the Lord calls the Horses the "LORD of hosts."

Moreover, the Horses "are the ones whom the Lord has sent to walk to and fro throughout the earth." This "to and fro throughout the earth" which is also found in the next verse (11) is similar language to Zechariah 4:10 of the "eyes of the Lord, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth" (see also 2 Chronicles 16:9).⁴ The "eyes of the Lord" are God.

So, the Angel of the Lord calls the Horses, "LORD of hosts," (יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת), Yehvâh tsevâ'ot). Then the Horses, that is, the LORD of hosts, answers,

And the LORD answered the angel who talked to me, with good and comforting words. (Zechariah 1:13)

So, the discourse goes like this: It begins in verse 8 as Zechariah sees "a Man riding on a red Horse" standing among the myrtle trees (Zechariah 1:8). After seeing the man and his horse, Zechariah sees behind the man, "Horses: Reds, Sorrels, and Whites," and asks the man in verse 9, "My Lord, what are these?" In other words, what are these Horses? Verses 10-11 tell *what* They do, and verses 12-13 reveals *Who* They are. They are called, "the LORD of hosts" (יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת), Yehvâh tsevâ'ot) in verse 12 and "the LORD" (יְהוָה), Yehvâh) in verse 13.

Endnotes:

1. These Horses in Zechariah 1 are indeed the Lord, but earthly horses are not. See e.g. Psalm 20:7; 33:17; Isaiah 31:1-3a; Hosea 1:7.

Horses of the Lord are also found e.g. in Jeremiah 8:16 (12:5?); Habakkuk 3:8, 15. Chariots of fire are found in 2 Kings 2:11-12 [13:14]; 6:17, and chariots in 1 Chronicles 28:18 [note verses 12, 19]; Psalm 68:17; Isaiah 66:15; Zechariah 6:1-8.

2. Zechariah 1:8 in the Hebrew is, רָאִיתִי הַלְיָלָה וְהִנֵּה-אִישׁ רֹכֵב עַל-סוּס אָדָם וְחֹוֹא עִמָּד בֵּין הַהַדְּסִים אֲשֶׁר בְּמִצְלָה וְאַחֲרָיו סוּסִים אֲדָמִים וְשָׁרְקִים וְלִבְנִים (râ'iyty halaylâh vehinnêh-'iysh rokhêv `al-sus 'âdom vehu')

`omêd bêyn hahadasiym 'asher bamtsulâh ve'acharâyv susiym 'adummiym seruqqiym ulevâniym).

3. For more on God being called an angel, see Zechariah 3:1-2; 12:8 and also “The Three Men of Genesis 18 Are God” and endnote therein.

4. In Zechariah 1:10 what is translated "**to walk to and fro**" is לְהִתְהַלֵּךְ (lehithallêkh). In Zechariah 1:11 what is translated "**We have walked to and fro**" is הִתְהַלַּכְנוּ (hithallakhnu). In Zechariah 4:10 what is translated "**scan to and fro**" is מְשׁוֹטְטִים (meshottiym) which is the same word translated "**run to and fro**" in 2 Chronicles 16:9.

In Zechariah 6:7 what is translated "**that they might walk to and fro**" is לְלַכֵּת לְהִתְהַלֵּךְ (lâlêkhet lehithallêkh). What is translated "**Go, walk to and fro**" is לִכּוּ הִתְהַלְכוּ (lekhu hithallekhu). What is translated "**So they walked to and fro**" is וַתִּתְהַלְּכֵנָה (vattithallakhnâh).

In Job 1:7 & 2:2 Satan uses both terms. In Job 1:7 & 2:2 what is translated "**from going to and fro**" is מִשׁוֹט (mishut; 2:2 מִשְׁטָט), and what is translated "**and from walking**" is וּמִהִתְהַלְּכָהּ (umêhithallêkh). Daniel 12:4 uses similar language with "**shall run to and fro**" יִשְׁטְטוּ (yeshottu), and Amos 8:12 with "**they shall run to and fro**" יִשְׁטְטוּ (yeshottu).

Not Taught!

A much despised truth, but ever present reality is,

THE LORD KILLS

It is phenomenal how many "Christians" we have met who do not believe God kills people. This issue is typically a common point of contention between us and those who oppose us. Yet, the fact that God does indeed kill people is so "in-our-face" obvious both in daily life as God takes people out, and in the Biblical record, that it is truly safe to say, only a fool would believe otherwise. This "God doesn't kill people" mentality is akin to what is found in an out of print [Seventh-day Adventists'](#) booklet entitled *Till the Morning*. This booklet states,

God is often blamed for death. I have seen people come bitter and hate God because they thought He took an innocent child's life. On the contrary, there is much evidence that God is the Life-giver -- the Source of life -- not the life-taker. (*Till the Morning*, by Oral E. Fisher, copyright 1971 by the Review and Herald Publishing Association, p. 21)

This is so stupid. God is indeed "the life-taker." For just a few examples, Scripture records for us that He killed (i.e. took the life of) every single human being on the entire face of the earth, all except 8 people, in the flood (Genesis 6:7, 13, 17; 7:21-23). He killed the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them (Genesis 19:24-25). He killed Judah's sons, Er and Onan (Genesis 38:7-10; 1 Chronicles 2:3). He sought to kill Moses, but Zipporah spared him this fate (Exodus 4:24-26). The Lord killed all the firstborn of Egypt (Exodus 12:29). And, even though it is recorded that Saul committed suicide, Scripture still notes that "**He killed him.**" (1 Chronicles 10:4-6, 13-

Not Taught!

14).

Moreover, in only one incident, the Lord killed thousands of the Israelites for complaining (Numbers 16:41-49). Yet, He killed them for complaining more than once (Numbers 11:1; 21:5-6). In Exodus 22:22-24 He warned that He would kill them if they afflicted any widow or fatherless child. And as it turned out, Scripture records that the Lord was not well-pleased with the Israelites, so **"their bodies were scattered in the wilderness"** (1 Corinthians 10:5). In other words, He killed them.

The Lord killed Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, for worshipping Him in the wrong way (Leviticus 10:1). The Lord opened up the earth and swallowed alive Korah and his company (Numbers 16:30-33). The Lord killed Nabal (1 Samuel 25:38). The Lord struck Uzzah dead when he touched the ark (2 Samuel 6:1-7). The Lord killed Jeroboam (2 Chronicles 13:20). The Lord killed Jehoram (2 Chronicles 21:18-19). And, when He so pleases (Psalm 115:3), the Lord not only desires to kill, but prevents a circumstance that would stand in the way of His killing. For this was the case with Eli's sons, as it is written, Eli said to his sons,

**"If one man sins against another, God will judge him. But if a man sins against the Lord, who will intercede for him?"
Nevertheless they did not heed the voice of their father, because the Lord desired to kill them.** (1 Samuel 2:25)

Furthermore, God killed Ananias and Sapphira for lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-11), and He killed Herod for not giving glory to Him (Acts 12:20-23). Isaiah prophesied the Lord would slay the wicked in Isaiah 65:15. Jesus promised the church in Thyatira that He would kill the children of Jezebel (Revelation 2:23), and in the future Jesus will kill the Antichrist army with the sword that proceeds out of His mouth (Revelation 19:20).

God not only slays the wicked, but the righteous as well, as Job said.

Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. (Job 13:15)

Jesus warned,

And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him! (Luke 12:4-5)

It is downright stupidity to say that God "is not the life-taker," or to intimate in any way that God does not kill. He indeed takes life, as He Himself says,

Now see that I, even I, am He, and there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; nor is there any who

can deliver from My hand. (Deuteronomy 32:39)

Romans 11:36 says, "**all things**" are "**of Him and through Him and to Him.**" Any and all who die, die by the hand of God. For it is all His doing (Psalm 65:7-9; 66:1-12; 107; 118:22-24). It is all His work (Job 36:24-37:24; Psalm 104). And, yes,

The Lord kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up. (1 Samuel 2:6)

This killing includes even babies, as God says in Hosea 9:16

Ephraim is stricken, their root is dried up; they shall bear no fruit. Yes, were they to bear children, I would kill the darlings of their womb. (see also Numbers 31:17; Deuteronomy 2:34; 20:10-18; Psalm 137:9; Isaiah 13:11-16; Hosea 9:12-16; 13:16; Nahum 3:10).

The Lord does indeed kill!

Not Taught!

“God is love,” is certainly taught. But what that truly means is typically not preached. Therefore, we have the chapter on,

God Is Love

He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:8)

God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. (1 John 4:16)

Most people do not know love, because they do not know God (Psalm 10:4; 14:1-3; Matthew 7:13-14), and are therefore incapable of loving in any kind of godly way (Jeremiah 13:23; Romans 3:10-18; 14:23; Titus 3:3). God is the defining factor in a proper understanding of what is love, because God is love. If you do not know God (Galatians 4:8; 2 Thessalonians 1:8), you will not understand love, for the Lord *is* love. Therefore, if you do not understand (Ephesians 4:17-18), or you reject what is revealed in this report about God and love, it is indicative of [your lost state](#) (John 8:47; John 17:3; 1 John 4:6). May the Lord have mercy, and may you come to know the God of love.

I. God Is Patient (1 Corinthians 13:4).

In its first definition of love, 1 Corinthians 13:4 defines God (Love) as One who "**suffers long**" (NKJV). The Lord suffers? Yes, in His love, He suffers *long*. Jesus said,

Not Taught!

I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! (Luke 12:49)

The Almighty Holy God loves justice (Psalm 37:28; 99:4) and hates those who do evil (Leviticus 20:23; Psalm 5:5-6; 11:5; 78:59; 106:40; Proverbs 6:16-19). "God is angry with the wicked every day" (Psalm 7:11), and if they do not repent,

He will sharpen His sword; He bends His bow and makes it ready. He also prepares for Himself instruments of death; He makes His arrows into fiery shafts. (Psalm 7:12-13)

He prepares to destroy them. But, in the meantime, He suffers long with them and continues to make,

His sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (Matthew 5:45).

He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the service of man, that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine that makes glad the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread which strengthens man's heart. (Psalm 104:14-15)

These all wait for You, that You may give them their food in due season. What You give them they gather in; You open Your hand, they are filled with good. (Psalm 104:27-28)

God loves His enemies (Romans 5:8-10). He loves those whom He hates (Psalm 5:5-6; John 3:16; Romans 3:10-18). He is extremely patient towards evil men (e.g. Nehemiah 9:30). He has even been crushed by wicked men (Ezekiel 6:9). He suffers long with them (Romans 2:4), but not indefinitely.

You hide Your face, they are troubled; You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. (Psalm 104:29; see also Luke 16:19-31)

For man also does not know his time: Like fish taken in a cruel net, like birds caught in a snare, so the sons of men are snared in an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them. (Ecclesiastes 9:12)

God is patient, but His patience has an end; and He chooses when that end will be.

Our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases. (Psalm 115:3)

Finally, the Lord is particularly patient with *believers*, as 2 Peter 3:9 says.

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9, NKJV; NAS "patient toward you")

II. God Is Kind (1 Corinthians 13:4).

Along with His longsuffering, is His kindness toward mankind and all of His creation. Day after day He gives life and breath and sustenance to man, animals, and all life (Psalm 104; Acts 17:25).

The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. (Psalm 145:9)

The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. (Psalm 145:15-16)

He is "**gracious in all His works**" (Psalm 145:17), and He gives gladness of heart (e.g. Psalm 97:11; Acts 14:17) and enjoyment (Ecclesiastes 3:12-13; 1 Timothy 6:17).

The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. (Psalm 33:5; see also Psalm 119:64)

In His awesome love, the Lord is even "**kind to the unthankful and evil**" (Luke 6:35). Israel's history well illustrates this. Nehemiah records,

You gave them bread from heaven for their hunger, and brought them water out of the rock for their thirst, and told them to go in to possess the land which You had sworn to give them. But they and our fathers acted proudly, hardened their necks, and did not heed Your commandments. They refused to obey, and they were not mindful of Your wonders that You did among them. But they hardened their necks, and in their rebellion they appointed a leader to return to their bondage. But You are God, ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, *abundant in kindness*, and did not forsake them. (Nehemiah 9:15)

Although, "**with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness**" (1 Corinthians 10:5), God did not utterly forsake them (Nehemiah 9:31), but was abundant in His kindness toward Israel (Nehemiah 9:18-31).

Jonah knew well the lovingkindness of the Lord, so well, he fled to Tarshish. He did not want the Lord to save the Ninevites. After the entire city

Not Taught!

of Ninevah repented in response to Jonah's preaching (Luke 11:32), Jonah lamented,

Ah, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish.; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. (Jonah 4:2)

Jonah wanted harm, not mercy, for the Ninevites, but the Lord had other plans; because He is *abundant in lovingkindness*. Yet, God's kindness is not without bounds.

Ninevah did not remain in His goodness (Romans 11:22). Therefore, the Lord later testified against Ninevah and declared,

God is jealous, and the Lord avenges; the Lord avenges and is furious. The Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies; the Lord is *slow to anger* and great in power, and *will not at all acquit the wicked*. (Nahum 1:2-3)

Ninevah, eventually, was destroyed (Nahum 3:5-7).

Furthermore, in His kindness, God afflicts people and then saves them, as Psalm 107 testifies.

Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, were afflicted. Their soul abhorred all manner of food, and they drew near to the gates of death. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses. He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! (Psalm 107:17-21; see also verses 10-15 & 23-31)

This is the kindness of God towards men. As rebuke is a kindness (Psalm 141:5; Proverbs 27:6; Revelation 3:19), so God's affliction is a kindness to bring people to repentance (Romans 2:4). Although, men often do not take heed (e.g. Amos 4:6-11; Revelation 9:20-21; 16:8-11). But, those who do repent speak like this:

It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes. (Psalm 119:71)

I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are right, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me. (Psalm 119:75)

III. God Does Not Envy (1 Corinthians 13:4).

The possessor of heaven and earth (Genesis 14:19, 22; Deuteronomy 10:14) would never envy (Job 34:12). Who or what would there be to envy? He is the One Who created everything (Isaiah 42:5). He is the One Who **"gives to all life, breath, and all things"** (Acts 17:25). He is the One Who upholds **"all things by the word of His power"** (Hebrews 1:3). **"The Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses"** (Daniel 4:32). What is left for God to envy?

The godly may be tempted to envy the wicked (e.g. Psalm 37:1; 73:1-3; Proverbs 23:17; 24:1), but when they enter **"the sanctuary of God,"** the sanctuary of love, they understand their end (Psalm 73:17-20); and the envy dissipates (Psalm 73:21-28). When they enter the sanctuary of Love (God), they see, in reality, all things considered, the wicked, and *their* lot, is undesirable (Psalm 37:2, 9; 73:18-20; Proverbs 24:19-20).

IV. The Lord Does Not Parade Himself (1 Corinthians 13:4).

"Love does not parade itself" (1 Corinthians 13:4, NKJV). Thus, we know God, who is love, does not parade Himself. As Job said,

If He goes by me, I do not see Him; if He moves past, I do not perceive Him. (Job 9:11)

Look, I go forward, but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; when He works on the left hand, I cannot behold Him; when He turns to the right hand, I cannot see Him. (Job 23:9)

Why? Because,

Truly You are God, who hide Yourself, O God of Israel. (Isaiah 45:15)

The Lord hides Himself. He does not parade Himself, nor does He brag (1 Corinthians 13:4, NAS) or boast (1 Corinthians 13:4, NIV). Jesus said, **"I do not receive honor from men"** (John 5:41; note also Isaiah 53:2).

V. God Is Not Proud (1 Corinthians 13:4).

Love is not puffed up (1 Corinthians 13:4), therefore God is not puffed up. Jesus said,

Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:29)

The Lord is indeed lowly in heart. Although He is the King of Kings (1

Not Taught!

Timothy 6:15), when He came to Jerusalem, He came in a humble way. As it is written,

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zechariah 9:9; see also Matthew 21:1-9)

Furthermore, the Lord dwells "**with him who has a contrite and humble spirit**" (Isaiah 57:15). He dwells with the lowly. As it is written,

God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5)

Moreover, it takes humility on His part to have anything to do with His creation. As Psalm 113 says,

The Lord is high above all nations, His glory above the heavens. Who is like the Lord our God, Who dwells on high, Who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in the heavens and in the earth? (Psalm 113:3-6)

He humbles Himself just to look into the universe (the heavens), let alone to gaze upon the earth (Psalm 113:3-6).

Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite. (Psalm 147:5)

"**And His greatness is unsearchable**" (Psalm 145:3). There is no pride in Him. "**The Lord is righteous in all His ways**" (Psalm 145:17).

VI. The Lord Is Not Rude (1 Corinthians 13:5).

Love does not behave rudely (1 Corinthians 13:5), therefore God does not behave rudely. But what is rude? The Greek word used in 1 Corinthians 13:5 for "rudely" is *ασχημονει* (*aschēmonei*), and it is only used one other place in the New Testament and that's in 1 Corinthians 7:36 translated "improperly" (*ασχημονειν*). The Lord does not behave improperly, or rudely.

Even though Christ is the Rock of Offense (Isaiah 8:14; Romans 9:33) and men were offended (Matthew 13:57; 15:12; Mark 6:3) and are offended because of Him (1 Peter 2:8), He nonetheless behaves properly, and not rudely. "**For the Lord is righteous,**" and He loves righteousness (Psalm 11:7).

Even though God has spread dung upon people's faces (Malachi 2:3, KJV), describes males as those who "pisseth against the wall" (1 Kings 14:10; 16:11; 21:21, KJV), and has caused people to eat their own children (Leviticus 26:27-29; Deuteronomy 28:53-63), He is never rude. He behaves properly, for God is

love (1 John 4:8). He speaks truth (Psalm 33:4; 119:160; Proverbs 12:17) and judges at the proper time (Psalm 75:2).

VII. The Lord Does Not Seek His Own (1 Corinthians 13:5).

Love does not seek its own, and this is beautifully illustrated in Christ,

who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.
(Philippians 2:6-8)

Jesus did not do this for Himself, as He Himself said.

For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. (John 6:38)

Jesus was so engrossed in love His food was to do the Father's will (John 4:34). The Lord did not seek his own (John 5:30).

But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities. (Isaiah 53:5)

He poured out His soul unto death. (Isaiah 53:12)

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:6-8)

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

When you understand how God hates sinners (Psalm 5:5-6) and how repulsive they are in His eyes (Deuteronomy 25:16; Proverbs 3:32; 6:16-19; 11:20; 15:8-9, 26; 16:5; 17:15; 21:27; 28:9), then, and only then, can you truly understand the immensity of God's love towards mankind. For He sacrificed His own Son, and His Son sacrificed His own life, for those who are or were loathsome to Him (Proverbs 13:5).

By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. (1 John

Not Taught!

3:16)

VIII. God Is Not Provoked (1 Corinthians 13:5).

God has been provoked time and again in the past (e.g. Deuteronomy 9:7-8, 22; 32:16, 21; Judges 2:12; Psalm 78:40, 56-58; Mark 3:5) and is daily provoked by ungodly men (Psalm 7:11; Romans 1:18). When Christ was on the earth, at least twice He cleared the temple in His zeal for His house (John 2:13-17; Matthew 21:12-13), but *His* anger is right. "**The wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God**" (James 1:20), but the wrath of God is good (Psalm 34:8; 90:11; 100:5; 145:17).

Now, if God is so provoked, how or in what way is the Lord *not* provoked? Just as there is a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to love and a time to hate (Ecclesiastes 3:3, 5, 8), so there is a time to be angry (Psalm 4:4; Ephesians 4:26) and a time not to be (Ephesians 4:31); and the Lord knows this perfectly.

He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He.
(Deuteronomy 32:4)

As for God, His way is perfect. (Psalm 18:30)

In His perfect way, the Lord is not provoked in any way He should not be. For example, when Jesus came,

God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (John 3:17)

Therefore, when Jesus was on the earth He was not provoked into condemning anyone (e.g. John 8:11), even though He hates wickedness (Psalm 45:7).

For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them. (Luke 9:56)

Although God's wrath continued to abide on those who do not obey Him (John 3:36, NAS), and continued to be revealed from heaven as Christ walked the earth (e.g. Luke 13:1-5; Romans 1:18), and He continued to be angry with the wicked (Psalm 7:11), Christ's mission in the flesh was not to be provoked, but to save. As He Himself said,

I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. (John 12:47)

IX. God Thinks No Evil (1 Corinthians 13:5).

Jesus said, "**For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil**

thoughts" (Mark 7:21), and Jeremiah writes, "**The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked**" (Jeremiah 17:9). But God has no such evil heart (Psalm 18:26; 1 John 3:3). He has no evil thoughts. He thinks no evil. For His thoughts are above our thoughts and His ways above our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9).

1 Corinthians 13:5 "thinks no evil" (NKJV) may also be translated a little more literally, "does not consider the bad" (ου λογιζεται το κακον [ou logizetai to kakon]). This is consistent with love.

Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins. (Proverbs 12:10)

He who covers a transgression seeks love. (Proverbs 17:9)

Love is merciful and forgiving, and in this, the Lord is the Champion (Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1-2). He says,

"Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword;" for the mouth of the Lord has spoken. (Isaiah 1:18-20)

For those who are willing and obedient (verse 19), the Lord is extremely merciful and will not consider the bad (1 Corinthians 13:5). As He says in Isaiah 55,

Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah 55:6-7; see also Psalm 86:5)

In His love, God's forgiveness is massive.

For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him. (Psalm 103:11)

This mercy is toward those who fear Him. Although the Lord may be temporarily merciful to wicked men and then He torments them (e.g. Matthew 18:21-35), His mercy toward those who fear Him has no end. As Psalm 103 declares,

The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them. (Psalm 103:17; see also Psalm 25:10)

Not Taught!

God's eternal love does have a condition (Isaiah 48:22; 57:15-21). It is for those who keep His covenant, who remember to do His commandments (Revelation 22:14), who are pure in heart (Psalm 24:3-5; 73:1), and who devise good, as it is written.

Do they not go astray who devise evil? But mercy and truth belong to those who devise good. (Proverbs 14:22)

X. The Lord Does Not Rejoice In Iniquity (1 Corinthians 13:6).

Love does not rejoice in iniquity (1 Corinthians 13:6). Instead, love (God) hates wickedness (Psalm 45:7). It is wicked not to hate evil (Psalm 36:1-4), thus the Lord hates sin and in no way rejoices in it. Evil men rejoice in iniquity (Proverbs 2:14), but the Lord is not like wicked men.

For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness; His countenance beholds the upright. (Psalm 11:7)

An example of the Lord not rejoicing in iniquity can be found in Mark 3.

And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward." Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent. And when **He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts**, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. (Mark 3:1-5)

Jesus did not rejoice in their iniquity, but instead it made Him angry and grieved Him. The Scriptures are filled with example after example of the Lord not rejoicing in iniquity, but rather, being angry and grieved over the wickedness of mankind (e.g. Genesis 6:5-7; Psalm 78:40; 95:10-11; Isaiah 63:10).

XI. The Lord Rejoices In The Truth (1 Corinthians 13:6).

Although He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3), the one time Scripture records Christ rejoicing is when He rejoiced in the truth.

In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these

things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight." (Luke 10:21)

Rejoicing in the Spirit is rejoicing in the truth, because He is the Spirit of truth (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13). Christ here rejoiced in the work and truth of God, that is, how God hid the truth from some people and revealed it to others. This is how God works.

God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. (1 Corinthians 1:27-29)

Jesus rejoiced in this truth, because He is love; and love rejoices in the truth.

XII. God Bears All Things (1 Corinthians 13:7).

Throughout the ages, the Lord has patiently borne with lawless and insubordinate men, murderers, adulterers, fornicators, sodomites, kidnappers, liars, perjurers, blasphemers, boasters, backbiters, lovers of money, lovers of themselves, traitors, rebels, slanderers, hypocrites, fools, despisers of good, haters of God, the covetous, the violent, the unthankful, the unforgiving, the unmerciful, and unholy men (e.g. Romans 3:25). Truly God has borne and does bear all things, and His forbearance should lead men to repentance (Romans 2:4).

But for most (Matthew 7:13-14), their hard impenitent hearts treasure up for themselves wrath for the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God (Romans 2:5). Even though God, being love, bears all things, He does not bear all things indefinitely. As He said to Moses,

How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? (Numbers 14:27)

The answer to the Lord's question is given in the next verse.

"As I live," says the Lord, "just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun." (Numbers 14:28-30)

His forbearance for these Israelites was all used up within the course of the next forty years. The Lord killed them in the wilderness (Numbers 14:32-35).

Likewise, the Lord bore long and hard with the Israelites before the

Not Taught!

Babylonian captivity.

The Lord God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy. (2 Chronicles 36:15-16)

The Lord could no longer bear it, because of the evil of their doings and because of the abominations which they committed (Jeremiah 44:22). So His fury and anger were poured out and kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they were wasted and desolate (Jeremiah 44:6).

Jesus, being holy and perfect in love, bore long and hard all things while He walked on the earth, but His forbearance was not without comment.

And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him." Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me." (Matthew 17:14-17; see also Mark 9:14-19 & Luke 9:37-41)

It takes endurance to bear all things, and Christ had it; although the people around Him obviously greatly taxed His love.

XIII. God Believes All Things (1 Corinthians 13:7).

The Greek word used in 1 Corinthians 13:7 (πιστευει, pisteuei) has inherent in it the ideas of faith, trust, & belief which indicates love is always faithful, believing, and trusting. God is indeed always faithful (Psalm 119:90; Hosea 11:12). Yet, God is not naive or simple minded as in Proverbs 14:15. His understanding is infinite (Psalm 147:5). But, He nonetheless does believe all things, all things that are true that is (John 14:6; Titus 1:2). And though He would not entrust Himself to evil men (e.g. John 2:24-25), He is nonetheless very trusting; as the NIV says, love "always trusts" (1 Corinthians 13:7).

Eliphaz the Temanite accused God of not being trusting, but this was a lie. On two occasions Eliphaz made this claim:

If He puts no trust in His servants, if He charges His angels with error, how much more those who dwell in houses of clay. (Job 4:18-19)

If God puts no trust in His saints, and the heavens are not pure in His sight, how much less man, who is abominable and filthy, who

drinks iniquity like water! (Job 15:15-16)

Eliphaz did not correctly characterize the Lord (Job 42:7). For God does put trust in His angels. He entrusts them with very important tasks (e.g. Daniel 9:21-23; Matthew 28:2-7; Luke 1:26; 2:9-14; 22:43; Acts 10:3-6; Hebrews 1:14; Revelation 7:1-3; 8:2; 12:7-9; 14:6-9; 16:1; 20:1-3). Moreover, He even puts trust in man, even though men fail Him time and again.

For example, David was entrusted with the great task of ruling God's people, but even David failed the Lord in this, in part, in the matter of Uria the Hititite. Because of David's unfaithfulness, he had "**given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme**" (2 Samuel 11:14). Solomon was likewise entrusted by God with the kingdom, but even Solomon, "**who was beloved of his God**" (Nehemiah 13:26), "**did evil in the sight of the Lord**" (1 Kings 11:6).

The Lord does a great deal of trusting men and women with responsibilities and lives, from the care of the earth and the life upon it (Psalm 8:5-8; Revelation 11:18), to governing over people (Romans 13:1-2), to caring for children (Ephesians 6:4; Titus 2:4-5). Men are entrusted by God with great and important tasks, and they will all give an account for their deeds (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Hebrews 4:12-13). Despite the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of men, the Lord remains steadfast in love and is faithful in all things (Psalm 36:5; 89:8). As it is written,

If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.
(2 Timothy 2:13)

XIV. The Lord Hopes All Things (1 Corinthians 13:7).

This is an amazing phenomena (Romans 11:33). Although God has already predestined the eternal destiny of all mankind (e.g. Psalm 92:5-7; 139:16; Proverbs 16:4; Romans 9:11-23; Ephesians 1:4-5; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2; Revelation 17:8) with the majority being destined to hell (Matthew 7:13-14; 22:14), being love and hoping all things He hopes that all might repent, seek Him, and be saved nevertheless. As it is written,

God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. (Acts 17:24-27)

Not Taught!

The Lord is indeed love (1 John 4:8) and therefore *extremely* loving and,

desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:4)

He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11). He has wept profusely over the lost (Jeremiah 8:18-9:3) and has even been found to strip Himself naked in wailing and howling for His people (Micah 1:8). Time and again He is seen in love hoping for their obedience, but they refuse (e.g. Deuteronomy 5:29; 32:29; Psalm 81:13; Isaiah 48:18; Luke 19:41-44). And why do they refuse? Because He makes them refuse (Deuteronomy 29:2-4; Proverbs 16:9; 20:24; Isaiah 63:17; Jeremiah 10:23; Hebrews 2:10). Truly His ways are past finding out (Romans 11:33)!

XV. God Endures All Things (1 Corinthians 13:7).

God wants to show His wrath and to make His power known, but He endures "**with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction**" (Romans 9:22). He does this because He is love. He endures all things, even the wicked who were made to be destroyed (Proverbs 16:4; 2 Peter 2:12). This love, this endurance, is practiced because He also wants to "**make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy**" (Romans 9:23). Therefore, love (endurance) is shown toward the wicked, so that love may be shown toward the elect.

Yet, the most graphic example of this can be found in Christ. Jesus, the King of Glory (Psalm 24:7-10), in a radical show of love for God and man, endured the cross, despising the shame (Hebrews 12:2). He endured blasphemous hostility from sinners (Matthew 27:39; Luke 23:39; Hebrews 12:3). He endured being forsaken by God (Psalm 22:1; Matthew 27:46) and stricken (Isaiah 53:4, 8). He endured being spat upon and beaten (Matthew 26:67), mocked, insulted and bruised (Isaiah 53:10; Matthew 27:29-31; Luke 18:32) scourged, nailed (Psalm 22:16; Colossians 2:14) and finally killed (Luke 18:33). He endured all these things because He is love. Love endures all things (1 Corinthians 13:7).

XVI. God Never Fails (1 Corinthians 13:8).

**The Lord is righteous in her midst, He will do no unrighteousness.
Every morning He brings His justice to light; He never fails.**
(Zephaniah 3:5)

God never fails and this is especially manifest toward His elect. As it is written,

**The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights
in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for**

the Lord upholds him with His hand. I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread. (Psalm 37:23-25)

God's love never fails toward those whom He has chosen. Nothing can separate them from the love of Christ (Romans 8:29-39).

The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him. (Lamentations 3:25)

Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. (Lamentations 3:22)

He will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5), because He is love and love never fails (1 Corinthians 13:8).

Not Taught!

God Hates Everyone

The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not one. (Psalm 14:2-3; 53:2-3)

I. Hate For Sin

Psalm 14:2-3 & Psalm 53:2-3 applies to every human on the planet. There are no exceptions, "**not one.**"

For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin. (Ecclesiastes 7:20)

"**No one living is righteous**" in the sight of God (Psalm 143:2). Thus, everyone is a worker of iniquity. And the God, who is Love (1 John 4:8), hates them all. He hates "**all workers of iniquity**" (Psalm 5:5). As it is written,

The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; You hate all workers of iniquity. You shall destroy those who speak falsehood; the Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man. (Psalm 5:5-6)

In Romans 3:10-18 Paul describes all men as unrighteous and particularly bloodthirsty and deceitful (see verses 13-15).

As it is written:

There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; (Romans 3:10-15)

Not Taught!

Jeremiah 17:9 confirms the heart of man is "**deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.**" In other words, all men are wicked, "**bloodthirsty and deceitful.**" Thus, "**the Lord abhors**" (Psalm 5:6) all of mankind.

The fear of the Lord is to hate evil (Proverbs 8:13), and we are evil (Matthew 7:11). Therefore, God hates us. Mankind is desperately wicked (Psalm 14:1; 58:3) and violent (Romans 3:15), and "**the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates**" (Psalm 11:5). God hates people, because of the evil of their deeds. As it is written,

All their wickedness is in Gilgal, for there I hated them. Because of the evil of their deeds I will drive them from My house; I will love them no more. (Hosea 9:15; see also Hosea 9:16-17; Leviticus 20:23; 26:30; Psalm 78:59)

David writes,

God is a righteous judge, and God is indignant in every day. (Psalm 7:11, my translation).¹

The reason for this indignation is because people are wicked in every day. Isaiah writes,

You are indeed angry, for we have sinned - in these ways we continue; and we need to be saved. (Isaiah 64:5)

We need to be saved from God's hate and anger, as it is written,

If he does not turn back, He will sharpen His sword; He bends His bow and makes it ready. He also prepares for Himself instruments of death; He makes His arrows into fiery shafts. (Psalm 7:12-13)

Mankind has experienced God's hate and anger for about 6000² years now. God has been killing people every day (Job 38:12-13; 1 Samuel 2:6). "**The wages of sin is death**" (Romans 6:23), and Jesus has been killing with death (like in Revelation 2:23) for a long time.

What man can live and not see death? (Psalm 89:48)

This is because,

all who behave unrighteously are an abomination to the Lord (Deuteronomy 25:16).

And so, in His righteous hate and anger, He kills people (e.g. 1 Samuel 2:25). For "**it is appointed for men to die**" (Hebrews 9:27), and God is the Appointer (Romans 11:36).

All mankind has been cursed with the curse of being born a sinner (Psalm 58:3; Romans 5:19). That is, God has created a bunch of wicked fools. As Psalm 14:1 declares of all mankind,

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good. (see also Psalm 53:1)

Besides the flattery (Psalm 36:2), the boasting (Psalm 94:4), and the general deception (Romans 3:13), one main part of the discussion in the wicked human heart (Jeremiah 17:9) is "There are no Gods" (Psalm 14:1).³ This, of course, is false, and so men testify in their hearts falsely and are therefore false witnesses at heart. As it is written,

A false witness will utter lies. (Proverbs 14:5)

The Lord hates a false witness (Proverbs 6:16-19). "**A false witness will not go unpunished**" (Proverbs 19:5, 9). And so, in His hate and wrath, the Lord sees to it that men die.

But His hate and wrath do not end there. There is the second death that awaits the ungodly. As it is written,

But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. (Revelation 21:8)

Psalm 11:6 says,

Upon the wicked He will rain coals; fire and brimstone and a burning wind shall be the portion of their cup.

Why? Because He hates the wicked (Psalm 11:5). So again,

You are indeed angry, for we have sinned - in these ways we continue; and we need to be saved. (Isaiah 64:5)

II. Saved From Hate

The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. (Psalm 145:9)

Unlike wicked men,

God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners [i.e. while He hated us], Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

Not Taught!

In other words, while He hated us, He loved us. For it is in this manner God loved us.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

Men perish, because God hates them and burns them forever in hell. That's perishing (Isaiah 66:24). If they don't repent (Luke 13:1-5), this is their fate. But, the Lord also loves those He hates (all men), and has made only one way for them to be saved from His hate and wrath. That one way (John 14:6) is [faith in what He says \(Matthew 4:4; James 1:21\)](#). In other words, God will not tolerate anyone calling Him a liar. That's the bottom line to not believing what the Bible says. Anyone who does not believe God makes Him a liar (1 John 5:10).

Yet, for those who believe what He says, as Abraham believed what the Lord said (Genesis 15:1-6), these God *continually* saves from His own hate and wrath. For believers are still sinners (Romans 5:19). They are still wicked (Romans 3:10-18; Psalm 14:1-3). God still hates them (Proverbs 8:13; Matthew 7:11). But, "**the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin**" (1 John 1:7). Notice the present tense, "**cleanses.**"

We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:1b-2a).

Jesus "**always lives to make intercession**" for us (Hebrews 7:25), and this is needed, because believers are still in this sinful flesh (Romans 7:14-25). Their spirit has been redeemed (Ephesians 2:1-5; Proverbs 11:23; 1 John 3:5-9), but the flesh is dead because of sin (Romans 8:10). Thus, we continually need to be saved from His hate and wrath, even on into the future. Romans 5:9-10 makes this clear. It says,

Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. (Romans 5:9-10)

Notice the future tenses. "**We shall be saved from wrath through Him,**" and "**we shall be saved by His life.**" Both of these dictate the wrath (and thus hate) will be there, and we will need to be saved from it, just as we need to be saved from it today.

But for most of mankind He has chosen not to save them, but rather to harden their heart (Romans 9:18), so that they won't repent and believe Him. He has chosen to hate most of them from eternity to eternal doom.

III. Hate Not For Sin

Not only does the Lord hate men because of their evil deeds, but He also hates men apart from any wickedness they might commit. This is Paul's point in Romans 9:11-13. Using Jacob and Esau as examples, Paul writes,

(for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated." (Romans 9:11-13)

Before they could do "**any good or evil**," before "**being born**," He loved Jacob and hated Esau (and all his descendants as well, Malachi 1:3-4; Obadiah). Why? "**That the purpose of God . . . might stand**" (Romans 9:11). In other words, that God might fulfill His purpose.

Moreover, Paul continues in Romans 9 and reveals the Lord's eternal purpose. It is to have people (vessels) for honor and people for dishonor, people (vessels) of mercy and people of wrath (Romans 9:21-23). In other words, God wants to glorify Himself through people He has made. For the minority of mankind He has chosen to display His love, mercy, and kindness through them. For the majority He has chosen to display His hate, wrath, and terror (Psalm 90:11) through them. As it is written,

The Lord has made all for Himself, yes, even the wicked for the day of doom. (Proverbs 16:4)

We know the minority have been loved and the majority have been hated, because of what Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14 and Luke 13:24. Both passages reveal few people are vessels of mercy.

Furthermore, since God speaks the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10), and His Word has always been (John 1:1), this love and hate is from eternity past. As Paul wrote to the vessels of mercy, speaking 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 given to us in Christ Jesus before time began⁴ (2 Timothy 1:9).

IV. Hate For The Saved

Finally, even though believers are indeed saved from His hate and wrath on a continual basis (Hebrews 7:25), this does not mean they are immune to it entirely in this life. The Lord still kills believers (1 Samuel 2:6; Job 13:15;

Not Taught!

Psalm 116:15), and according to His good pleasure and time (Psalm 115:3), He still brings His hate and wrath.

Job said,

He tears me in His wrath, and hates me; He gnashes at me with His teeth; my adversary sharpens His gaze on me. They gape at me with their mouth, they strike me reproachfully on the cheek, they gather together against me. God has delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over to the hands of the wicked. I was at ease, but He has shattered me; He also has taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces; He has set me up for His target, His archers surround me. He pierces my heart and does not pity; He pours out my gall on the ground. He breaks me with wound upon wound; He runs at me like a warrior. (Job 16:9-14)

A little later Job said,

But He is unique, and who can make Him change? And whatever His soul desires, that He does. For He performs what is appointed for me, and many such things are with Him. Therefore I am terrified at His presence; when I consider this, I am afraid of Him. For God made my heart weak, and the [Almighty terrifies me](#); because I was not cut off from the presence of darkness, and He did not hide deep darkness from my face. (Job 23:13-17)⁵

The holy man of God (2 Peter 1:21), Heman, also knew well His wrath.

O LORD, God of my salvation, I have cried out day and night before You. Let my prayer come before You; incline Your ear to my cry. For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near to the grave. I am counted with those who go down to the pit; I am like a man who has no strength, adrift among the dead, like the slain who lie in the grave, whom You remember no more, and who are cut off from Your hand. You have laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the depths. Your wrath lies heavy upon me, and You have afflicted me with all Your waves. You have put away my acquaintances far from me; You have made me an abomination to them; I am shut up, and I cannot get out; my eye wastes away because of affliction. Lord, I have called daily upon You; I have stretched out my hands to You. Will You work wonders for the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise You? Shall Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave? Or Your faithfulness in the place of destruction? Shall Your wonders

be known in the dark? And Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? But to You I have cried out, O Lord, and in the morning my prayer comes before You. Lord, why do You cast off my soul? Why do You hide Your face from me? I have been afflicted and ready to die from my youth; I suffer Your terrors; I am distraught. Your fierce wrath has gone over me; Your terrors have cut me off. They came around me all day long like water; they engulfed me altogether. Loved one and friend You have put far from me, and my acquaintances into darkness. (Psalm 88:1-18)

Furthermore, at His own choosing (Psalm 115:3), God will bring His wrath on the righteous *at the same time* He brings it upon the wicked. See, for example, Genesis 18:23-32 and Ezekiel 21:1-5. Moreover, even though forgiven, God will, at His choosing, bring His wrath upon a believer *because* of their particular sin(s). See, for example, 2 Samuel 12:10-14; Psalm 38:1-8, 17-18.

Finally, Moses also wrote of His wrath, saying,

For we have been consumed by Your anger, and by Your wrath we are terrified. You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your countenance. For all our days have passed away in Your wrath; we finish our years like a sigh. The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knows the power of Your anger? For as the fear of You, so is Your wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. (Psalm 90:7-12)

Endnotes:

1. Psalm 7:11 in the Hebrew is, אֱלֹהִים שׁוֹפֵט צְדִיק וְאֵל זֶעַם בְּכָל־יּוֹם (‘elohiyim shophêṭ tsadiyq ve’êl zo`êm bekhâl-yom).
2. When one calculates the 1656 years of genealogies up to the flood (Genesis 5:3-32; 7:11), the 582 years of the Hebrew genealogies from the flood to the time Jacob came into Egypt (Genesis 9:28-29: 11:10-26; 21:5; 25:26; 47:9), the 430 years Israel spent in Egypt (Exodus 12:40), the 480 years from the Exodus to Solomon (1 Kings 6:1), the 427 years of the kings (1 Kings 6:1; 2 Chronicles 9:30-36:11), the 70 years of the Babylonian captivity (2 Chronicles 36:20-23; Jeremiah 25), and the prophesied 483 years of Daniel to the time of Christ (Daniel 9:25), it becomes evident that the heavens and the earth had only been in existence for approximately 4128 lunar years by the time Christ came. And, if history has any accuracy to it, adding an additional 2000 solar years reveals the present creation has only existed for approximately 6100 years.

Not Taught!

3. Psalm 14:1 more literally says,

A fool says in his heart, "There are no Gods." (see same in Psalm 53:1)

In the Hebrew this is,

אָמַר נָבֵל בְּלִבּוֹ אֵין אֱלֹהִים ('āmar nāvāl belibo 'êyn 'elohiym)

The verb אֵין ('êyn) "**There are not**" (or "there is not") is determined by the noun אֱלֹהִים ('elohiym) which is plural. Psalm 10:4 likewise, speaking of the wicked, more literally says,

"There are no Gods" are all of his thoughts. (אֵין אֱלֹהִים)
כָּל־מְזִמּוֹתָיו ['êyn 'elohiym kol-mezimotâyv]

For more see [He Is Holy Gods](#).

4. In 2 Timothy 1:9 the phrase "**before time began**" is more literally, "**before times of eternity**" or "**before times of ages**" (προ χρόνων αιωνων [pro chrovôn aiônion]).

5. Except for Job's accusation of injustice (Job 9:19; 27:2; 34:10-17), Job spoke what was right (Job 42:8). In Job 16:16-17 Job said,

My face is flushed from weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death; although no violence is in my hands, and my prayer is pure. (Job 16:16-17)

He was right (Job 1:1). His prayer was pure, but the Lord brought His wrath on him nonetheless (Job 1-2).

Yehvah [יְהוָה] Is The Cause of Deception

And the prophet who is deceived and speaks a word, I the Lord [Yehvâh] deceived that prophet and will stretch out my hand against him and will cause him to be destroyed from the midst of my people Israel. (Ezekiel 14:9)¹

Since all things are "**of Him and through Him and to Him**" (Romans 11:36), and "**in Him all things consist**" (Colossians 1:17), and He upholds "**all things by the word of His power**" (Hebrews 1:3), it should be no surprise He is the reason for this season of deceit. The Psalmist notes this (Psalm 118:22-24), and Jesus quotes it, when He says,

The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, (Matthew 21:42)

It was indeed the Lord's doing. The builders are the religious leaders and the stone is Christ (Acts 4:8-12), the Truth (John 14:6). Their rejection of the truth "was the Lord's doing." And,

This is the day the Lord has made. (Psalm 118:24).

This age of deception God has indeed made, just as predicted (2 Timothy 3:1-5).²

So, in Ezekiel 14:9 the Almighty God, the Lord, "**Yehvah is His name**" (Jeremiah 33:2), reveals further He is the cause of deception, as He Himself says, "**the prophet who is deceived and speaks a word, I the Lord [יְהוָה] deceived that prophet.**"

I. Via Satan

Not Taught!

How can the God **"who cannot lie"** (Titus 1:2) deceive anyone? By sending delusion. Satan indeed **"deceives the whole world"** (Revelation 12:9), but who causes him to do so? Yehvah (Lamentations 3:37-38; Romans 11:36). This is well illustrated in the prophecy of the soon coming **"strong delusion."**

For this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, . . . (2 Thessalonians 2:11).

In the future, consistent with His righteous and holy ways, the Lord will send **"the man of sin"** (2 Thessalonians 2:3) whose coming **"is according to the working of Satan"** (2 Thessalonians 2:9) so that people will **"believe the lie."**

As God sent a messenger of Satan upon Paul's flesh (2 Corinthians 12:7), so Yehvah will send the Antichrist (1 John 2:18) and his false prophet **"who deceives those who dwell on the earth"** (Revelation 13:14). And why? **"Because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved"** (2 Thessalonians 2:10). So will be the soon coming Day of the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:15-5:3; Revelation 6f).

Another example of God sending delusion via an evil spirit is found in 1 Kings 22 and 2 Chronicles 18. The prophet Micaiah declares,

I saw the Lord [Yehvah] sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by, on His right hand and on His left. And the Lord said, "Who will persuade Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?" So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, and said, "I will persuade him." The Lord said to him, "In what way?" So he said, "I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets." And the Lord said, "You shall persuade him, and also prevail. Go out and do so." Therefore look! The Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and the Lord has declared disaster against you." (1 Kings 22:19-23; see also 2 Chronicles 18:18-22)

As the Lord sent an evil spirit upon Saul (1 Samuel 16:14 KJV), **"mingled a perverse spirit"** in Egypt which **"caused Egypt to err"** (Isaiah 19:14), and poured out **"the spirit of deep sleep"** on the prophets (Isaiah 29:10), so here in 1 Kings we see God put a lying spirit in the mouth of these prophets to deceive Ahab. The purpose? Ahab would be deceived into thinking he would prevail in war, but the truth was, he would die. As when Eli rebuked his sons, but they did not heed, **"because the Lord desired to kill them"** (1 Samuel 2:25), so it was here. God wanted Ahab to believe this lie, so that he would perish.

This is not unlike God's dealing with the world in the future. Yehvah wants the world to believe the lie that the beast of Revelation 13 is God (2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 13:8), **"that they all may be condemned who**

did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:12). The deception is sent that the people might be condemned and perish forever in hell.

Although it is true that the Lord has **"no pleasure in the death"** of the wicked (Ezekiel 18:23, 32), He nonetheless brings disaster upon them **"in His living and burning wrath"** (Psalm 58:9). He also **"will laugh"** and **"will mock"** (Proverbs 1:26) and **"will rejoice"** (Deuteronomy 28:63). Truly, **"God is not mocked"** (Galatians 6:7), but those who heed not His word are disgraced forever (Daniel 12:2; Proverbs 13:13).

II. Via The Mind

Scripture declares the gospel is "veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded" (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).³ Yehvah uses the devil to blind minds, "lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ . . . should shine on them" (2 Corinthians 4:4). This is why Jesus spoke in parables. As He said to His disciples,

To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, so that seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand; lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them.
(Mark 4:11-12)

Jesus spoke in parables so that Satan would continue to prevail in the veiling of the minds of the masses. Via parables, Christ kept them deceived and from understanding what He was talking about. And why? **"Lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ . . . should shine on them."** Or in other words, **"lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them."**

It is Yehvah who gives understanding (Job 38:36; Proverbs 2:6), and it is Yehvah who takes it away; and He chooses to give understanding to a few (Matthew 7:13-14) and He deceives the rest (Romans 9:18). As it is written,

He takes away the understanding of the chiefs of the earth. (Job 12:24)⁴

The leaders of the people are deceived and without understanding (2 Timothy 3:13), so He writes,

If you see the oppression of the poor, and the violent perversion of justice and righteousness in a province, do not marvel at the matter; for high official watches over high official, and higher officials are over them. (Ecclesiastes 5:8)

And God has deceived them all (Romans 11:36). So, it is no wonder they act without discretion.

Not Taught!

In 1 Corinthians 1:19 the Lord declares He brings "**to nothing the understanding of the prudent.**" When the understanding is brought to nothing and the mind debased by God (Romans 1:28), deception reigns within the heart (Jeremiah 17:9), and it is all His doing (Isaiah 46:9-10).

Speaking of Israel in Deuteronomy the Lord said,

For they are a nation void of counsel, nor is there any understanding in them. Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end! (Deuteronomy 32:28-29)

Why were they "**void of counsel**" and without understanding? Because, Moses declared,

The Lord has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this very day. (Deuteronomy 29:4)

God kept them deceived, lost in their sin. He kept them in the lies of the most deceptive thing He ever created, the human heart (Jeremiah 17:9), which is "**full of evil; madness is in their hearts**" (Ecclesiastes 9:3).

I am the Lord [Yehvah], who makes all things, who stretches out the heavens all alone, who spreads abroad the earth by Myself; who frustrates the signs of the babblers, and drives diviners mad; who turns wise men backward, and makes their knowledge foolishness (Isaiah 44:24-25).

Scripture declares that "God has committed them all to disobedience" (Romans 11:32). He "has confined all under sin" (Galatians 3:22)⁵ which means this "raving madness" (Ecclesiastes 10:13) escapes no one. "There is none who understands" (Romans 3:11). Deception runs rampant within the human heart and mind, and it is all because God is doing it (Hebrews 1:3).

When the Lord warned the Israelites not to forsake His covenant but to keep His Word, He warned them that He would deceive them if they did not take heed. Among His promised curses were:

the sound of a shaken leaf shall cause them to flee; they shall flee as though fleeing from a sword, and they shall fall when no one pursues. They shall stumble over one another, as it were before a sword, when no one pursues (Leviticus 26:36-37; see also Deuteronomy 28:28).

Why? Because Yehvah is making them think someone is pursuing, but the truth is, no one is. It is all simply in the God sent deception of their own mind!

God dealt with Israel's enemies in this same way, using deceit, more than once. See, for example, Judges 7:20-22; 2 Kings 3:16-24 & 7:3-7. It is not wise to be against God. Truly, "**The deceived and the deceiver are His**" (Job 12:16).

Footnotes:

1. This is Darwin's translation of the Hebrew text of Ezekiel 14:9. For similar translations of Ezekiel 14:9 see the King James Version, American King James Version, New Living Translation, English Standard Version, American Standard Version, Bible in Basic English, Douay-Rheims Bible, English Revised Version, Webster's Bible Translation, and World English Bible.

The Hebrew words translated "**deceived**" in Ezekiel 14:9 come from the Hebrew word פָּתָהּ (pâtâh) which is found also only in Exodus 22:16 (in Hebrew vs. 15, "entices" NKJV); Deuteronomy 11:16 ("deceived"); Judges 14:15 ("entice"); 16:5 ("entice"); 2 Samuel 3:25 ("deceive"); 1 Kings 22:20-22 ("persuade" note context); 2 Chronicles 18:19-21 ("persuade" note context); Job 5:2 ("simple one"); 31:9, 27 ("enticed"); Psalm 78:36 ("flattered" paralleled with "lied"); Proverbs 1:10 ("entice"); 16:29 ("entices"); 20:19 ("flatters"); 24:28 ("deceive"); 25:15 ("persuaded"); Jeremiah 20:7 (2x, "induced," "persuaded"), 10 ("induced"); Hosea 2:14 (in Hebrew vs. 16, "allure"); 7:11 ("silly").

2. In another place He admits to being the Creator of evil (Isaiah 45:7 KJV), and lies and deception are certainly evil.

3. 1611 KJV has, "**the God of this world**" giving a capital "G" for "God." Should it be "God" or "god"? The Greek for this phrase reads, ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου (ho theos tou aiōnos toutou), more literally, "the god of this age" (NKJV). When Scripture speaks of "**this age**" (τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου [tou aiōnos toutou]) it is speaking of this present time (e.g. Matthew 12:32; 13:40; Luke 20:34; Ephesians 1:21) in which "**the days are evil**" (Ephesians 5:16). Ephesians 6:12 speaks of "**the darkness of this age**," and Paul speaks of "**the disputer of this age**" (1 Corinthians 1:20), "**the wisdom of this age**" (1 Corinthians 2:6), "**the rulers of this age**" (1 Corinthians 2:6, 8), and the "**wise in this age**" (1 Corinthians 3:18) which are all evil.

Moreover, Satan is called "**the ruler of this world**" (ὁ ἀρχὼν τοῦ κόσμου τούτου [ho archōn tou kosmou toutou], John 16:11; see also John 12:31; 14:30), and "**the whole world lies in the evil one**" (a more literal translation of 1 John 5:19, ὁ κόσμος ὅλος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται [ho kosmos holos en tō ponērō keitai]). All of this indicates "**the god of this age**" (2 Corinthians 4:4) is the Devil.

4. Job 12:24 more literally reads, "**He causes to turn aside the heart of the heads of the people of the earth.**"

5. The Greek word translated "**confined**" in Galatians 3:22 and "**committed**" in

Not Taught!

Romans 11:32 are both from the Greek word συνκλειω (sunkleio) which is found also only in Luke 5:6 ("caught") & Galatians 3:23 ("kept" w/ft "Lit. confined" NKJV).

Does God Have Faith?

I. Hanegraaff's Lie

Hank Hanegraaff¹ claims,

The whole idea that God has faith is completely foreign to the Bible. (www.equip.org/perspectives/the-faith-of-god-does-god-have-faith, fourth paragraph)

Hanegraaff is foreign to the Bible. Hanegraaff "**does not know God, for God is love**" (1 John 4:8). Love (God) "**believes all things**" (1 Corinthians 13:7, πάντα πιστεύει). God (love) *certainly* has faith. Moreover, "**God is Spirit**" (John 4:24), and "**the fruit of the Spirit is . . . faith**" (Galatians 5:22 KJV, πίστις, see also endnote 10, #4). As certain as God is love, so certainly does God have faith.

On much more than just this statement, *Hank's theology* is completely foreign to Scripture. Even though he touts himself to be the "Bible Answer Man," Hanegraaff doesn't know God, Jesus, nor the Bible; and on this issue he well illustrates it.

In Hanegraaff's article, "The Faith of God: Does God have Faith?", Hank attempts to debunk the "Word-Faith" false teachers like Hagin, Copeland, etc., who certainly do twist the Scriptures to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:16). But, Hanegraaff himself twists likewise to his eternal doom.

Not Taught!

First of all, Jesus is God (2 Peter 1:1), and He, as God, most profoundly had and has faith (e.g. Hebrews 12:2).² God (Christ) having faith is in no way foreign to Scripture. It's basic to Who He is. He doesn't change (Hebrews 13:8).

Hebrews 11:6 says,

without faith it is impossible to please Him.

Hanegraaff argues,

. . . God doesn't need to have faith. (ibid.)

Hebrews 11:6 says He does. If God in the flesh (Colossians 2:9) had no faith, it would be "impossible to please Him." He would not ever have pleased God. But, to the contrary, the Father testified,

This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.
(Matthew 3:17; see also Matthew 12:18; 17:5; Mark 1:11;
Luke 3:22; 2 Peter 1:17)

This is no new perspective due to Christ's incarnational presence on earth. Christ said,

The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him. (John 8:29)

This "always" is literally always, past, present, and future. Jesus does not change (Hebrew 13:8). He has always done "**those things that please Him.**" He has always been His Son (e.g. Psalm 2:7-12). He has always been His Son in the flesh (e.g. Genesis 1:26; John 6:62; Revelation 13:8). He has always had faith. If not, He could not please God (Hebrews 11:6a).

Moreover, Jesus said,

the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. (John 5:19)

From this we see that Jesus "can do nothing of Himself." Thus, His faith is not of Himself. It is God's. Jesus said, "but what He sees the Father do." If Jesus exercises faith, from this (John 5:19) we can see that the

Father exercises faith, for “the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do.” Obviously, Jesus saw and sees the Father exercise faith.

Jesus speaks of this reality in the present tense in John 5:19. Again, this is how it has always been.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
(Hebrews 13:8)

Therefore, if the Son exercises faith, the Father exercises faith. They are one (John 10:30; 14:7-11). God indeed has faith.

II. Mark 11:22

In Hank's article in which he claims God does not have faith, Hankegraaff also argues against Mark 11:22 which explicitly mentions “**God's faith**” (BBE).³ The Bible in Basic English (BBE) does well in translating Mark 11:22. It reads,

And Jesus, answering, said to them, “Have God's faith.”⁴

But Hank argues against this by writing in his second paragraph,

in Greek the grammatical form here means not “faith that God has” but “faith, that has God as its object.” (ibid)

This claim about the grammatical form is simply based on his bias opinion. It is not based on any grammatical fact.⁵ In the Greek the grammatical form is πίστιν Θεοῦ (pistiv theou), more literally, “faith of God.” Here, “God” (Θεοῦ [theou]) modifies the noun “faith” (πίστιν [pistiv]). The grammatical *form* (spelling) here for “of God” (Θεοῦ [theou]) is in the *genitive* form, and anything beyond that is interpretive, not mandated by grammatical form or spelling of the word.

For example, this same exact grammatical form (Θεοῦ [theou]) is found in the New Testament approximately 706 times. Of those 706, 17 times it is translated by the NKJV in a possessive way (“God's”).⁶ About 544 times it is translated by the NKJV as “of God.”⁷ Other places it is found with pronouns, adjectives, participles, adverbs, and prepositions.⁸ Mark 11:22 is the only place the NKJV translates this grammatical form

Not Taught!

(Θεοῦ [theou]) as “in God.” Nowhere else in the entire New Testament does the NKJV translate Θεοῦ (theou) as “in God” except here in Mark 11:22.

In this same article and paragraph, Hanegraaff appeals to the context of Mark 11:22. He writes,

In context Jesus is exhorting His disciples to have faith when they pray — in other words, when they ask God for things, they are to have faith in Him [Mark 11:23-24]. It’s always object oriented.

Indeed, true faith is faith in God (Hebrews 11:6), and in Mark 11:24 Jesus indeed instructs the disciples to “believe” “when you pray.” But this context does not dismiss the fact that the *faith in God* is nonetheless *faith of God*. That is, it is *God’s faith*.

Contrary to Hank’s claim, note the context of Mark 11:22. Note what Jesus says in Mark 11:22-23.

Have faith in God [or Have God’s faith]. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, “Be removed and be cast into the sea,” and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. (Mark 11:22-23)

The example of faith Jesus uses here is *exactly* the same nature and character of God’s faith. It is *exactly* how God works. God speaks and it happens.

He commands the sun, and it does not rise (Job 9:7).

He says to the snow, “Fall on the earth” (Job 37:6).

He scatters His bright clouds. And they swirl about, being turned by His guidance, that they may do whatever He commands them on the face of the whole earth. (Job 37:11b-12)

They see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep. For He commands and raises the stormy wind, which lifts up the waves of the sea. (Psalm 107:24-25)

Jesus told His disciples to be like God. **“Have God's faith”** (Mark 11:22, *Ἐχετε πίστιν Θεοῦ* [Echete pistin theou]). And, He illustrates this command with a performance of faith that is truly uniquely God's. It is how **He** operates, and Jesus tells them to act like God does, to have His faith.

This is how Jesus Himself lived, as it is written:

And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm. But He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, "Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!" (Luke 8:24-25; see also Mark 4:35-41)

This is Jesus' faith at work, and Jesus expected His disciples to have the same kind of faith. As noted, He questioned them when they displayed they did not have it, as He says, “Where is your faith?” (Mark 11:23).

In Luke 17,

the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."
(Luke 17:5)

Look at Jesus' response:

So the Lord said, “If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.” (Luke 17:6)

Here again, Jesus shows what faith looks like and reveals the kind of faith He expects from His disciples (Luke 17:7-10). It looks exactly like God's faith. As Jesus illustrated elsewhere,

Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so soon?" So Jesus answered and

Not Taught!

said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. (Matthew 21:18-21)

That is God like faith! Cursing a tree and it withering away, telling a mountain to be removed and cast into the sea, is *God like* speech, *God like* action, *God like* power, and *God like* faith. Why? Because, it is *God's faith*. In word, in action, in power, and in truth, it is solely and only, in and of itself, wholly, holy, entirely God's faith and no other's. There is no faith here but God's.

III. Only God Has Faith

In Psalm 16:2 David wrote,

My goodness is *nothing* apart from You.

Here David acknowledges what is true for all mankind. As he wrote in another Psalm,

There is none who does good, no, not one. (Psalm 14:3b; Romans 3:12)

Man, on his own, is *incapable* of doing *anything* good. Left to themselves, men are evil (Jeremiah 13:23; Matthew 7:11) and seek *only* rebellion (Proverbs 17:11).

There is no fear of God before their eyes. (Romans 3:18)

They are "haters of God" (Romans 1:30). Men, left to themselves, have *no* faith *whatsoever*. The *only* way *any* man can have *any* faith is if God gives him *His* faith.

In Ephesians 2:8 it says,

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.⁹

Faith is "the gift of God."¹⁰ No man is capable of having or expressing

any faith in God of himself. No man is capable of doing anything good of himself. Yet, faith is good. It is the good “work of God” (John 6:29). It is *not* the work of man. It is the “work of God” (John 6:29). Faith does not come from man. He can only produce evil (Jeremiah 13:23). Faith is “the gift of God,” wherein God gives man *His* faith, as it is written,

Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. (Revelation 14:12)¹¹

Just as “the commandments of God” are God's commandments, not man's, so “the faith of Jesus” is Jesus' faith, not man's.

Those who are saved (saints) “keep . . . the faith of Jesus.” It is not inherently their own faith that they keep. Such a thing does not exist (Psalm 16:2). It is “the faith of Jesus” that they hold, as Jesus Himself declared,

I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to *My name*, and did not deny *My faith*. . . . (Revelation 2:13a)

Just as *His name* is truly *His*, so *His faith* is truly *His*.

James 2:1 clearly testifies,

My brethren, do not hold *the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ*, the Lord of glory, with partiality.

Believers “hold the faith of our Lord Jesus.” It is not their own faith. It is “the faith of the Lord Jesus.”

If it was their own faith, it would be their own righteousness, for it is righteous to have faith. It is righteous to “repent and believe the gospel” as God commands (Mark 1:15; Acts 17:30; Revelation 14:7).

So, if it was their own faith, it would be their own righteousness, but it is not; for Paul writes,

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me (Galatians 2:20).

Not Taught!

If it is Christ who lives, and not Paul, then it is Christ's faith that lives in Paul, not Paul's faith. Conceptually identical to this, Paul writes,

And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: (Philippians 3:9 KJV).¹²

The “righteousness of God” (Philippians 3:9) comes “through the faith of Christ.” It does not come through the faith of ourselves, for it is *not* “I who live” (Galatians 2:20). It is Christ who “lives in me” (Galatians 2:20). It is Christ who believes. It is Christ's faith living in me which brings “the righteousness which is of God.” As Galatians 2 likewise bears witness:

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (Galatians 2:16 KJV; see also Galatians 3:22 & Romans 3:22 in the KJV)¹³

Here it clearly declares it is “by the faith of Jesus Christ.” It is His good work of faith. It is the “the work of God” (John 6:29).

Finally, Ephesians 3:12 declares,

In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. (Ephesians 3:12 KJV)¹⁴

This phrase, “the faith of him,” τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ (tê pisteôs autou), equals “His faith.”¹⁵

IV. How Could God Have Faith In Himself?

Welcome to the mystery of God.

Behold, God is great, and we do not know Him (Job 36:26).

He prays to Himself (John 14:7-11; 17:1). He swears by Himself (Hebrews 6:13).¹⁶ He talks about Himself (Jeremiah 23:16-20). He talks to Himself (Psalm 110:1).¹⁷ He saves Himself (Hebrews 5:7). He stands among Himself (Revelation 5:6-7). He acts for Himself (1 Samuel 28:17). He has made all for Himself (Proverbs 16:4). He glorifies Himself (Isaiah 44:23).¹⁸ He avenges Himself (Jeremiah 46:10). He dwells with Himself (John 1:1). There is no other to have faith in but Himself (Deuteronomy 4:39).¹⁹

V. Faulty Conclusion

Near the end of his article, Hanegraaff writes,

Faith in God not faith of God. And if we mix that up, we have a faulty understanding of what true biblical faith really is. (ibid.)

Hank has mixed that up. He does not know “what true biblical faith really is.” If he did, he would know *faith in God is faith of God*.

Endnotes:

1. Hank Hanegraaff is president of the Christian Research Institute (CRI) located in North Carolina.
2. Hebrews 12:2 - Jesus is the ἀρχηγὸν (archêgon) “author” and τελειωτὴν (teleiôtên) “finisher” “of the faith” (τῆς πίστεως [tês pisteôs]). It was by faith He endured the cross, as it says, “who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross.”
3. “And Jesus, answering, said to them, 'Have God's faith.’” Mark 11:22, Bible in Basic English (BBE)
4. Mark 11:22 reads in the Greek, καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς Ἰησοῦς λέγει αὐτοῖς, Ἔχετε πίστιν Θεοῦ (kai apokritheis iêsous legei autois, echete pistin theou). This is more literally, “And answering, Jesus says to them, 'Have faith of God.’” or “Have God's faith” (BBE). Young's Literal translates, “Have faith of God.” Douay-Rheims Bible has, “Have the faith of God.” See also Romans 3:3 KJV, “the faith of God,” τὴν πίστιν τοῦ Θεοῦ (tên pistin tou theou).
5. Hanegraaff bascially argues for the objective genitive claiming the

Not Taught!

noun, Θεοῦ (theou), must be the object of the verbal idea contained in the noun modified, πίστιν (pistiv), faith. But, context dictates it is a possessive genitive, as the immediately following words speak of the same kind of faith God displays as He commands in His creation (Mark 11:23; e.g. Job 9:7; 36:32; 37:6, 12; Psalm 107:25; Luke 8:25).

6. Θεοῦ (theou) “of God” - Matthew 5:34; 22:21; Mark 12:17; Luke 20:25; John 8:47; Acts 23:4; Romans 8:33; 10:3; 13:4 (2x), 6; 1 Corinthians 3:9 (3x), 23; 6:20; Titus 1:1.

7. e.g. Matthew 3:16; 4:3-4, 6; 5:9; 6:33; 8:29; 12:4, 28 (x); 14:33; etc..

8. e.g. Matthew 16:16; 22:31; 26:63; Mark 5:7; Luke 1:6, 8, 26; 8:28; etc.. Luke 6:12; Acts 10:2; 1 Corinthians 2:11 (1st) have “to God.” Luke 21:4; Acts 22:3; Romans 10:2 have “for God.” John 6:45 has “by God.” Acts 8:22; 18:21; 2 Corinthians 5:20; Hebrews 2:4; 11:40 have “God.” Romans 10:3; Colossians 1:25 (1st); 2:19 have “from God.” 2 Corinthians 11:2; 1 Timothy 1:4 have “godly.” 1 Timothy 2:5 has “between God.” James 4:4 has “with God.” 1 Peter 3:20 has “Divine.”

9. Ephesians 2:8 reads in the Greek, τῇ γὰρ χάριτι ἐστε σεσωσμένοι διὰ τῆς πίστεως, καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν· Θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον (tê gar chariti este sesôsmenoi dia tês pisteôs, kai touto ouk ex humôn. Theou to dôron). This is more literally, “For by grace you **are** saved through **the** faith, and this not from yourselves. It is the gift of God.”

ἐστε (este) “**are**” is present indicative with σεσωσμένοι (sesôsmenoi) “saved” which is a perfect passive participle. Thus, we have “are saved.” Πίστεως (pisteôs) “faith” has the definite article with it, τῆς (tês), making it, “the faith.” What particular or definitive “faith” is it? God's.

10. There are some who argue that faith is *not* “the gift of God.” For example, speaking in the context of Ephesians 2:8, Gary L. Nebeker, professor of Theology at Grace University in Omaha, Nebraska, claims,

Not only are there exegetical problems with saving faith as a gift of God, there are theological problems as well.
(www.faithalone.org/news/y1989/89july1.html, [click here for PDF copy](#))

Speaking of Ephesians 2:8, his “exegetical problems” are as follows:

in its Greek construction *that* is a demonstrative pronoun

with adverbial force used in an explanatory phrase. This particular construction uses a fixed neuter singular pronoun (*that*) which refers neither to faith, which is feminine in Greek, nor to any immediate word which follows. (See Blass, Debrunner, Funk, 132, 2.) What all this means is that the little phrase *and that* (*kai touto* in Greek) explains that salvation is of God's grace and not of human effort. Understood accordingly, Ephesians 2:8 could well be translated: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, that is to say, not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."

It is true that τούτο (touto) "this" is neuter. δῶρον (dōron) "gift" is likewise neuter. And, both χάριτί (chariti) "grace" and πίστεως (pisteōs) "faith" are feminine. But, Nebeker misses the whole point of the passage.

Salvation is indeed "the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). But how does Ephesians 2:8 reveal how this gift comes? It is "by grace" "through faith." It is *all* "the gift of God." The salvation is a gift. The grace by which it comes is a gift. If it wasn't, the salvation would no longer be a gift. Moreover, the faith through which the grace comes is a gift. If it wasn't, the salvation would no longer be a gift. There is nothing in this equation that is anything but a gift! Otherwise, the very next verse becomes moot and a lie, for the whole point is that it is,

not of works, lest anyone should boast. (Ephesians 2:9)

If the grace or the faith were somehow anything other than "the gift of God," then man has a boast before God and has some form of work or works (action) inherent in his salvation. ***That*** is entirely against the whole point of Ephesians 2:1-9.

Yet, Nebeker unwittingly argues for man's boast. He writes,

It should instead be suggested that faith is a human response, i.e., a Spirit-prompted conviction of the truth of the redemptive merits of Christ. (ibid.)

Nebeker writes, "It should instead . . ." In other words, instead of faith being the gift of God, "faith is a human response . . ." It is true that faith is a human response (John 14:1), but not in the way Gary here suggests. Nebeker writes *in the context of rejecting the concept of faith being "the gift of God."* Thus, he puts the credit and power of the

Not Taught!

faith upon the “human,” “prompted,” but *not* given (“gift”) of God. Therefore, Nebeker deceitfully (2 Peter 2:1) credits the sinner for his faith, rather than God **entirely** and **wholly** for the faith.

Finally, Nebeker writes,

To conclude, it is inaccurate to suggest that God gives men a special gift of faith so that they may be saved and subsequently sanctified.

If it was not "a special gift of faith so that they may be saved and subsequently sanctified," then the salvation and sanctification depends on man, not God. This has inherent in it “theological problems” (note Gary’s first quote).

1. It denies the utter depravity of man, as described above and as found also, for example, in Psalm 51:5; 58:3; Romans 3:9-18; 5:19; 11:32; Galatians 3:22; etc.. If man can believe on his own, without that faith being a gift of God, then man can do good. But, that is a lie (Jeremiah 13:23).
2. It denies the utter sovereignty of God. **“For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things”** (Romans 11:36). There is nothing outside of this (Hebrews 1:3).
3. It credits man for his salvation, because salvation comes *only* through faith. If it is not an unmerited gift from God, then man has a boast before God. That is, he saved himself via conjuring up his own faith and belief in God.
4. It makes faith the fruit of man rather than the fruit of the Spirit. The KJV does well at translating the Greek word for faith, πίστις (pistis), as "faith" (NKJV "faithfulness") in Galatians 5:22. This passage declares *faith* to be the *fruit of the Spirit*. Just as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, and temperance, does not come from man, but instead, from the Spirit of God, so it is with faith. Jesus said, **"the branch cannot bear fruit of itself"** (John 15:4). Man is incapable of producing faith of himself. Faith is the fruit of the Spirit. It is not the fruit of man.

Nebeker calls the faith “a human response.” In his context, that equals, “a human work.” A “human response” is not a “human non-work.” It is a human work, a human action, a human activity, a human response.

And so, Nebeker's gospel is a gospel of works, and thus he is accursed (Galatians 1:8-9).

11. Revelation 14:12 in the Greek reads, ὧδε ὑπομονὴ τῶν ἁγίων ἐστίν· ὧδε οἱ τηροῦντες τὰς ἐντολάς τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ (hōde hupomonē tōn hayiōn estin. Hōde hoi tēroutēs tas entolās tou theou kai tēn pistin iēsou). τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ (tēn pistin iēsou) “the faith of Jesus” is exactly that.

12. Philippians 3:9 in the Greek reads, καὶ εὐρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ, μὴ ἔχων ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου, ἀλλὰ τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, τὴν ἐκ Θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει (kai heurethō en autō mē echōn emēn dikaiosunēn tēn ek nomou, alla tēn dia pisteōs christou, tēn ek theou dikaiosunēn epi tē pistei). πίστεως Χριστοῦ (pisteōs christou) = “faith of Christ.”

13. Galatians 2:16 in the Greek reads, εἰδότες ὅτι οὐ δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεῦσαμεν, ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου· διότι οὐ δικαιωθήσεται ἐξ ἔργων νόμου πᾶσα σὰρξ.

Galatians 3:22 reads in the Greek, ἀλλὰ συνέκλεισεν ἡ γραφὴ τὰ πάντα ὑπὸ ἁμαρτίαν, ἵνα ἡ ἐπαγγελία ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοθῇ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν. This more literally reads, “but the Scripture confined all under sin, so that the promise, out of [or by] faith of Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.” (KJV reads, “But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.”)

Romans 3:22 in the Greek reads, δικαιοσύνη δὲ Θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς πάντας καὶ ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας· οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶ διαστολή· KJV reads, “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:”

14. Ephesians 3:12 reads in the Greek, ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν παρρησίαν καὶ τὴν προσαγωγὴν ἐν πεποιθήσει, διὰ τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ. τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ. = His faith.

15. This is normal grammatical construction for the possessive genitive.

16. See also Jeremiah 51:14; Amos 6:8.

Not Taught!

17. See also Zechariah 1:8-13.

18. See also Romans 9:18.

19. See also Isaiah 44:5-6, 18, 21-22; 46:9.

Hard Truth on God

Here is a summation of some “hard” truth from the Bible that often is never heard within the walls of a church. Yet, these things are clearly found in holy writ.

I. GOD HATES

Scripture clearly teaches God hates evil people. Psalm 5:5-6 well illustrates this.

The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; You *hate* all workers of iniquity. You shall destroy those who speak falsehood; the Lord *abhors* the bloodthirsty and deceitful man. (see also Leviticus 20:23; 26:30; Psalm 78:59; 106:40, Proverbs 6:16-19; 22:14)

A few Psalms later it is written:

The Lord tests the righteous, but the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates. (Psalm 11:5)

In Hosea the Lord speaks of His perspective of the Israelites and says,

All their wickedness is in Gilgal, for there I hated them. Because of the evil of their deeds I will drive them from My house; I will

Not Taught!

love them no more. (Hosea 9:15)

Here God clearly hates them because of the evil of their deeds, but Romans 9 reveals, He also hates people regardless of their deeds!

(for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated." (Romans 9:11-13)

God hated Esau before he was born! And the reason He hated him was not because of works, i.e. anything Esau did or would do, but rather so that the purpose of God might stand. In other words, God hated Esau so that His purpose would be fulfilled in both Esau and Jacob.

But this is not given as any isolated case. This is given as an example of how God chooses to hate some and love others unto eternal torment (hell), and unto eternal life (heaven). See Romans 9:14-23.

II. GOD CREATES PEOPLE FOR HELL

Speaking of salvation, Romans 9 declares,

. . . it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. (Romans 9:16)

Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. (Romans 9:18)

God has chosen to harden the hearts of the majority of mankind (Matthew 7:13-14) long before they were ever born (Isaiah 46:9-10). In doing so He has destined them to eternal doom, as it is written,

The Lord has made all for Himself, yes even the wicked for the day of doom. (Proverbs 16:4)

The Bible actually says you are a senseless fool if you don't know this, as it is written,

O Lord, how great are your works! Your thoughts are very deep. A senseless man does not know, nor does a fool understand this. When the wicked spring up like grass, and when all the workers of iniquity flourish, it is that they may be destroyed forever. (Psalm 92:5-7)

They are destroyed forever in the never ending torture of hell (Revelation 21:8).

Jude 4 speaks of certain men that have been “marked out for this condemnation,” and 2 Peter 2:12 speaks of false teachers how they are “like brute beasts *made to be caught and destroyed.*” God has made false teachers expressly to be caught in their wickedness and destroyed forever in hell. This is so set in cement that God says they have already “perished” (Jude 11).

III. GOD IS ANGRY

God is angry every day. (Psalm 7:11, following the Hebrew text)

This is ever so manifest everyday as,

the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men (see Romans 1:18-32).

Car accidents, heart attacks, deadly earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, people dying from all kinds of diseases, etc., etc., all is a result of an angry God.

IV. GOD BRINGS DISASTERS

Lamentations asks,

Who is he who speaks and it comes to pass, when the Lord has not commanded it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that woe and well-being proceed? (Lamentations 3:37-38)

Amos asks,

If a trumpet is blown in a city, will not the people be afraid? If there is calamity in a city, will not the Lord have done it? (Amos 3:6)

The answer? Yes, the Lord says in Isaiah,

I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the Lord, do all these things. (Isaiah 45:7)

V. GOD SENDS LIES

This is well illustrated in both the past and in the future. 2 Chronicles gives a past example. The prophet Micaiah prophesied,

Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing on His right hand and His left. And the Lord said, "Who will persuade Ahab king of Israel to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?" So one spoke

Not Taught!

in this manner, and another spoke in that manner. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, and said, "I will persuade him." The Lord said to him, "In what way?" So he said, "I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets." And the Lord said, "You shall persuade him and also prevail; go out and do so."

Therefore, look! The Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and the Lord has declared disaster against you. (2 Chronicles 18:18-22)

It is clearly stated that *the Lord* put a lying spirit in the mouth of the prophets. He clearly sent deception with the express purpose to deceive.

2 Thessalonians gives another graphic example of this kind of thing, but this is yet future.

And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth . . . (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12)

The context here is the coming of the "man of sin" (verse 4) who comes with all the power of Satan (verse 9), and the text explicitly declares that God is the one sending him.

VI. GOD CAUSES ALL (Romans 11:36; Hebrews 2:10), EVEN SIN

Isaiah asks,

O Lord, why have you made us stray from Your ways, and hardened our heart from your fear? (Isaiah 63:17)

Isaiah does not ask *if* God made them stray from Him and hardened their hearts. Isaiah asks Him *why* He did so. There is no question to whether He does such things, as the Lord clearly declared to Isaiah,

I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things. (KJV)

David knew this truth and so he prayed,

Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men who work iniquity. (Psalm 141:4)

David knew God does such things, so he prayed for mercy asking God not to do it to him! Yet, the Lord did so nevertheless (2 Samuel 24:1).

Read 2 Samuel 12:11-12 and you'll see another illustration of God causing someone to do evil, serious evil!

Proverbs 16:9 declares,

A man's heart plans his way but the Lord directs his steps.

This does *not* specify a good man or an evil man, it just speaks of a man, i.e. any man. As Proverbs 20:24 likewise says,

A man's steps are of the Lord; how then can a man understand his own way?

A man's steps are of the Lord. So, if a man does good, his steps in doing so are of the Lord. If a man does evil, his steps in doing so are of the Lord. As Jeremiah wrote,

O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps. (Jeremiah 10:23)

Man's heart is desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9). Who has made it that way? God (Romans 11:36).

For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all. (Romans 11:32)

VII. GOD MOCKS PEOPLE

The Lord not only hates the wicked, but also mocks them as well. As He Himself says,

Because you disdained all my counsel; and would have none of my rebuke, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes, when your terror comes like a storm . . . (Proverbs 1:25-27)

The timing of His mocking is interesting. He mocks when disaster hits them. He mocks when terror strikes! As the Psalmist likewise wrote,

Indeed, they belch with their mouth; swords are in their lips; For they say, 'Who hears?' But you, O Lord, shall laugh at them; You shall have all the nations in derision. (Psalm 59:7-8; see also Psalm 2:4)

The Lord also mocks in anticipation of the coming disaster.

The wicked plots against the just, and gnashes at him with his teeth. The Lord laughs at him, for He sees that his day is coming.

Not Taught!

(Psalm 37:12-13)

VIII. GOD WILL NOT BE MOCKED

Even though He mocks others, He Himself will not be mocked.

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. Galatians 6:7

Many do not realize the Bible actually teaches that people should literally be terrified of God. So we have here,

The True Fear of God

[See also in Appendix “Words Used For The Fear of God”]

Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. (Psalm 33:8)

You, Yourself, are to be feared; and who may stand in Your presence when once You are angry? (Psalm 76:7)

I know that whatever God does, it shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it. God does it, that men should fear before Him. (Ecclesiastes 3:14)

I. Fools Abound

Without the true fear of God, one is left knowing nothing (as in 1 Timothy 6:4), because the fear of the Lord is the *beginning* of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7). A person does not even begin to have knowledge if they do not fear God, as it is written, "**fools hate knowledge**" (Proverbs 1:22). Without the true fear of God, a person is a fool, because the true fear of God is also the *beginning* of wisdom (Psalm 111:10). A person does not even begin to have wisdom if they do not fear God, as it is written, "**fools despise wisdom and instruction**" (Proverbs 1:7). The sad reality of all of this is, such is the miserable state of mankind. They are fools (Psalm 14:1-3).

Not Taught!

There is no fear of God before their eyes. (Romans 3:18)

This is why, "**The hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; madness is in their hearts while they live**" (Ecclesiastes 9:3), because they do not fear God (Psalm 36:1).

II. False Fear

To make matters worse, "Christian" [false teachers](#) divert people away from the true fear of God, with the result that people continue to be fools, and this is horrible; because the legacy of fools will be eternal shame (i.e. hell, Proverbs 3:35; Jeremiah 23:40; Daniel 12:2). As there is nothing new under the Sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9), it is like the Israelites of old. As it is written,

Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men, therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work among this people, a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish. (Isaiah 29:13-14)

The wisdom of the "wise" men has perished in our day.

A graphic example of this is a book written by Randy Peterson and David New. The title reads, "*How To Fear God Without Being Afraid Of Him*" (Victor Books, copyright 1994). This title is downright stupid! It is like saying, "How To Love God Without Loving Him."

In this book, these authors write,

It's this message - "God will get you" - that runs repeatedly in the minds of many people in this world. They fear an abusive God, one who will punish them without warning for unspecified sins. A personal relationship with such a God would be dangerous, if it were possible at all. (p. 100)

Randy and David write as if God is not like this, but the truth is, He is! He will most certainly punish without warning for unspecified sins! Jesus warned of this in Luke 13.

There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, no;

but unless you repent you will all likewise perish." (Luke 13:1-5)

Jesus points out in the two incidents mentioned that the people **God killed** were not worse than others. In other words, there were no terrible specific sins these people were guilty of. God just came along, without warning, and killed them (Deuteronomy 32:39), and Jesus warns the same is going to happen to you, if you don't repent.

Randy and David call this abusive. God calls it justice (Deuteronomy 32:4), as Paul wrote,

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. (Galatians 6:7; see also Numbers 32:23)

People have sown sin (Romans 3:23), and they will reap death (Romans 6:23; Revelation 21:8). God will make sure of it (Revelation 20:11-15).

If people did fear this "abusive God," as Randy and David claim, they *would* have a personal relationship with Him (Psalm 103:11-18; John 17:3). The problem is, they don't fear Him (Romans 3:18), and so they will forever know His wrath (as in Revelation 14:9-11).

Mr. Peterson's and Mr. New's deceit is a bit more obvious. But some are much more subtle than this.

Like **John MacArthur**, who says the right thing (Matthew 12:34), but then says the wrong thing, and by it brings destruction (2 Peter 2:1-3). MacArthur purports to teach a "holy terror" (*The Love of God*, p. 11; *Successful Christian Parenting*, p. 78), but *his* "holy terror" is not true holy terror, because in hypocrisy he also teaches "It is not referring to being afraid" (*The MacArthur Study Bible*, p. 1771). In his commentary regarding Matthew 10:28 he writes,

. . . this fear is not that of terror or fright, but of reverential awe and honor. (*The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Matthew 8-15*, copyright 1987; for more on MacArthur, see the book, *False Teachers*)

This statement is insane (Ecclesiastes 9:3). Note Matthew 10:28, the verse MacArthur is commenting on:

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matthew 10:28)

MacArthur says "not that of terror or fright" when considering "Him" who can "**destroy both soul and body in hell**"! That is *much more terrifying and frightful* than someone who can "**kill the body but cannot kill the soul**," and that could be a terrifying and frightful event! Yet, having "both soul and body" destroyed in hell, which means eternal torment (e.g. Revelation 14:11; 20:10), is eternally more terrifying and frightful! Simple faith in what Jesus said

Not Taught!

dictates that. Thus MacArthur reveals his unbelief in the word of God. MacArthur claims "this fear is not that of terror . . ." His words are words of madness (Ecclesiastes 9:3) and empty (2 Peter 2:18).

III. Why Fear God?

Because our God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29; see also Isaiah 33:14)!

Anyone who knows God, knows fear means fear (i.e. to be afraid), especially when it comes to the Almighty. Because, both in His severity (Psalm 90:11) and in His goodness (Jeremiah 33:9; Luke 5:26; 7:16), He is terrifying.

For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen. (Romans 11:36)

Be it good or evil (Isaiah 45:7 KJV), blessings or calamity (Lamentations 3:37-38 KJV), God is the creator of it all; and this is terrifying. As Job said,

He is unique, and who can make Him change? And whatever His soul desires, that He does. For He performs what is appointed for me, and many such things are with Him. Therefore I am terrified at His presence; when I consider this, I am afraid of Him. For God made my heart weak, and the Almighty terrifies me. (Job 23:13-16)

God has the power, right, and will (according to what He sees fit, Psalm 115:3) to destroy your life (as in Job 1 & 2) or bless it (as in Job 42:10; James 5:11), to save you from eternal torment (Hebrews 7:25), or to burn you in hell forever (e.g. Jude 7).

Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the Lord your God, also the earth with all that is in it. (Deuteronomy 10:14)

And,

Whatever the Lord pleases He does, in heaven and in earth. (Psalm 135:6)

Bildad the Shuhite rightly said, "**Dominion and fear belong to Him**" (Job 25:1-2). It *all* belongs to Him (Psalm 24:1), every single soul belongs to Him (Ezekiel 18:4), and

He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. (Romans 9:18)

He creates vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath (Romans 9:21-23) and destines people to either eternal life or eternal torment completely apart from

anything they may or may not do (Romans 9:11), but solely based upon His will (Romans 9:16, 18), His pleasure (Psalm 115:3; Ephesians 1:5).

There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. (James 4:12)

And this is the terrifying truth. So Psalm 130 says,

**If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?
But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.** (Psalm 130:3-4)

Mercy is only found within the power and will of the Almighty.

Our God is the God of salvation, and to God the Lord belong escapes from death. (Psalm 68:20)

To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness. (Daniel 9:9)

Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! (Revelation 19:1)

"**Therefore men fear Him**" (Job 37:24), because they know therein lies their only hope (Acts 4:12). For,

The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy. (Psalm 147:11; see also Luke 1:50; Acts 10:35)

But,

The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth, (Psalm 34:16)

and to destroy them forever in hell (Isaiah 66:24; Revelation 20:10-15; 21:8). Thus, David wrote,

In fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple. (Psalm 5:7)

The song of the Lamb asks,

Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? (Revelation 15:4)

Only the fool (Proverbs 1:7; 13:16; 14:16).

IV. True Fear Trembles

Not Taught!

In Hosea 13:1 the Lord describes Ephraim as doing well when he "spoke, trembling," and so are we, if we are literally trembling before God. True Biblical fear demands trembling, because, in truth, God is so fearful it actually causes literal trembling before Him.

Daniel writes of King Nebuchadnezzar,

And because of the majesty that [God] gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whomever he wished, he executed; whomever he wished, he kept alive; whomever he wished, he set up; and whomever he wished, he put down. (Daniel 5:19)

The people in the days of King Nebuchadnezzar had the sense to rightly tremble and fear before a mighty king (Proverbs 24:21; Romans 13:7). As God does, Nebuchadnezzar did whatever he pleased, as a true king can (Ecclesiastes 8:1-2).

Therefore, if the people of Daniel's day rightly and literally trembled and feared before an earthly king, a man in whose breath was in his nostrils (Isaiah 2:22), how much more should we tremble and fear before,

He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15; see also Psalm 103:19)?

God is the eternal King (Psalm 10:16; 29:10), who will execute whomever He wishes (Deuteronomy 32:39), keep alive whomever He wishes (1 Samuel 2:6), set up whomever He wishes (e.g. Job 12:23), and put down whomever He wishes (e.g. Luke 1:52).

Not only that, but as the King of all the earth works in His creation (Psalm 47:7), His work provokes fearful trembling before Him. Elihu, who knew the fear of God and trembled before Him, said,

Behold, God is great, and we do not know Him; nor can the number of His years be discovered. For He draws up drops of water, which distill as rain from the mist, which the clouds drop down and pour abundantly on man. Indeed, can anyone understand the spreading of clouds, the thunder from His canopy? Look, He scatters his light upon it, and covers the depths of the sea. For by these He judges the peoples; He gives food in abundance. He covers His hands with lightning, and commands it to strike. His thunder declares it, the cattle also, concerning the rising storm. At this also my heart trembles, and leaps from its place. (Job 36:26-37:1)

God is indeed great, and His works in creation are awesome.

He does great things which we cannot comprehend. (Job 37:5)

And this should cause fearful trembling before Him, as the King of glory (Psalm 24:7-10) Himself says,

"Do you not fear Me?" says the Lord. "Will you not tremble at My presence, who have placed the sand as the bound of the sea, by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass beyond it? And though its waves toss to and fro, yet they cannot prevail; though they roar, yet they cannot pass over it. But this people has a defiant and rebellious heart; they have revolted and departed. They do not say in their heart, 'Let us now fear the Lord our God, who gives rain, both the former and the latter, in its season. He reserves for us the appointed weeks of the harvest.' Your iniquities have turned these things away, and your sins have withheld good from you." (Jeremiah 5:22-25)

The King of Israel (Isaiah 44:6) Himself appeals to His work in creation and calls the Israelites to note it and fear, but their **"iniquities have turned these things away."**

Jeremiah wrote,

Inasmuch as there is none like You, O Lord (You are great, and Your name is great in might), who would not fear You, O King of the nations? For this is Your rightful due. For among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like You. (Jeremiah 10:6-7)

There is none like the King of the Jews (Mark 15:2).

For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. (Psalm 96:4-5; see also 1 Chronicles 16:25; Psalm 48:1)

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable. (Psalm 145:3)

King Darius, after seeing God's awesome mercy towards Daniel (a Jew, Romans 2:28-29), made this decree:

I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, and steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall endure to the end. He delivers and rescues, and He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, who has delivered Daniel from the power of the

Not Taught!

lions. (Daniel 6:26-27)

Darius rightly decreed that men should tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, because this is the same decree the King of the saints (Revelation 15:3) has made.

The Lord of hosts, Him you shall hallow; let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. (Isaiah 8:13)

Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob. (Psalm 114:7; see also 1 Chronicles 16:30; Psalm 96:9; 99:1; Joel 2:1; Ephesians 6:5; Philippians 2:12)

The Psalmist wrote this of the everlasting King (Jeremiah 10:10):

My flesh trembles for fear of You, and I am afraid of Your judgements. (Psalm 119:120)

This statement is made in the context of overwhelming love for God's word (e.g. Psalm 119:47-48, 97, 113, 119, 127, 159, 163-165, 167). Thus, it is made in the context of overwhelming love for God (Mark 12:30), since God and His word are one (John 1:1). Therefore, loving God and being afraid of Him are congruous.

Likewise, the fear of the Lord and the joy of the Lord, tremble together. As it is written,

Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. (Psalm 2:11)

In the true fear of God, fear and trembling and rejoicing in the Lord (Philippians 4:4) are harmonious as well.

Finally, it is the godly who find it in their hearts (Psalm 65:4) to tremble before His word (e.g. Ezra 9:4; 10:3), as the Lord says,

But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word. (Isaiah 66:2, see also verse 5)

V. True Fear Turns

It is an abomination to fools to depart from evil. (Proverbs 13:19)

Therefore, those who claim to fear God, yet continue in their sin, are fools and liars (1 John 2:4), as it is written,

He who walks in his uprightness fears the Lord, but he who is perverse in his ways despises Him. (Proverbs 14:2)

There is no way someone who fears God can continue in sin unrepentantly, because,

By the fear of the Lord one *departs* from evil. (Proverbs 16:6)

Those who fear God repent, and they love correction (Proverbs 12:1; 15:5); because they know it is the way of life (Proverbs 6:23).

The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to turn one away from the snares of death. (Proverbs 14:27)

The wicked, those who don't fear God (Romans 3:18), love death (Proverbs 8:36), hate correction (Proverbs 1:22; 12:1; 13:18; 15:10), and don't turn from their evil ways (e.g. Proverbs 1:30; Isaiah 9:13; Jeremiah 15:7; 36). The godly, those who tremble at His word, do (Psalm 141:5), because,

Though a sinner does evil a hundred times, and his days are prolonged, yet I surely know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him. But it will not be well with the wicked; nor will he prolong his days, which are as a shadow, because he does not fear before God. (Ecclesiastes 8:12-13)

There may indeed be wicked people who "fear the Lord" (e.g. 2 Kings 17:24-41), but the truth is, if they turn not from their evil deeds (Proverbs 16:6), it is evident they really don't fear Him (as in 2 Kings 17:34); but instead, they renounce Him. For God is in none of their thoughts (Psalm 10:3-4).

Moreover, there is indeed an ungodly fear seen in Scripture (e.g. Genesis 3:10; 18:15; Mark 11:18; Revelation 6:15-17). Any fear in this context, that is, in disobedience to God, is simply ungodly, and it is not true godly fear of God.

Demons are noted as those who tremble (James 2:19), and they rightly do so, for God is fearful; but of course, they have no hope of salvation (Matthew 8:29; Hebrews 2:16).

VI. True Fear Hates

A Biblical definition of the fear of the Lord is found in Proverbs 8:13.

The fear of the Lord is to hate evil. (Proverbs 8:13)

Wisdom continues in Proverbs 8:13 stating that she hates pride, arrogance, the evil way, and the perverse mouth. She hates the actual *mouth*, which, of course, is connected to a body, a person.

The Lord declares,

These six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent

Not Taught!

blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren. (Proverbs 6:16-19)

A proud look, a lying tongue, hands, a heart, and feet, are all parts of a human being, and God says here He hates them.

Evil people are evil. As God does not separate the parts of the body from these people, so God does not separate the sin from the sinner until He saves them. And so, Proverbs 6 continues and clearly declares that the Lord hates a false witness and one who sows discord. These are particular kinds of people the Lord hates. Actually, God hates "**all who do evil**" (Psalm 5:5, NLT; see also Psalm 5:6; 11:5), and so do those who fear Him.

David, who feared God (2 Samuel 23:3/1 Kings 15:5), expressed this godly hate very clearly in Psalm 139.

Do I not hate them, O Lord, who hate You? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies. (Psalm 139:21-22; see also Psalm 26:5; 31:6; 119:113)

They are enemies indeed. Those who do not fear God hate those who do, but *their* hatred is ungodly and evil. They hate God (Romans 1:28, 30), and they hate His people. As it is written,

An unjust man is an abomination to the righteous, and he who is upright in the way is an abomination to the wicked. (Proverbs 29:27)

The hatred is mutual, but one is justified. The other is not.

VII. True Fear Is Confident

In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, and His children will have a place of refuge. (Proverbs 14:26; see also Psalm 112:7-8)

The true fear of God does not produce cowardice, but rather boldness, as Proverbs 28:1 says,

The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion.

Cowards go to hell (Revelation 21:8), but the righteous, i.e. those who fear God, are in no way cowards, but are rather bold as a lion. God fearing people are able to live out serious confidence even in the face of horrifying

circumstances. As the fear of the Lord instructs,

My son, let them not depart from your eyes - keep sound wisdom and discretion; so they will be life to your soul and grace to your neck. Then you will walk safely in your way, and your foot will not stumble. When you lie down, you will not be afraid; yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet. Do not be afraid of sudden terror, nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes; for the Lord will be your confidence, and will keep your foot from being caught. (Proverbs 3:21-26)

Sleeping is a very vulnerable time. Someone could sneak upon you and kill you (as in Judges 4:21 or 2 Samuel 4:5-12). But those who fear God fear not. They have sweet sleep. They have peace (Isaiah 26:3; Philippians 4:6-7), and have confidence even in the face of sudden terror or trouble from the wicked. And, even if they fail in this, they turn back to it. As David wrote,

Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), in God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me? (Psalm 56:3-4)

The answer? Nothing. Nothing that God Himself has not already decreed (Isaiah 46:10). For,

The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them. (Psalm 34:7)

So those who fear the Lord have great confidence (Proverbs 14:26), even in the face of the most important and most potentially horrifying time, that is, the eternal judgment of God. Those who fear God have great boldness (Ephesians 3:12; Hebrews 4:14-16; 10:19). As 1 John 4:17-18 declares,

Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

Those who fear God believe in His mercy (Psalm 103:11-18). They believe in His forgiveness (John 3:16), and they know they have eternal life (1 John 5:13). They have boldness concerning "the day of judgment," because they do not fear condemnation (Romans 8:1). They do not fear torment. They look forward to their reward (Revelation 22:12-14), because they know God is; and He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6; 9:27-28).

The fear cast out in 1 John 4:17-18 is the fear that involves torment (verse 18). It is the fear of condemnation. It is not the fear of God that is cast out. If it

Not Taught!

was, wisdom and knowledge would be cast out (Job 28:28)! No, it is actually the fear of God that casts out other fears, like the fear of man (Isaiah 8:11-13; Psalm 27:1; Proverbs 29:25), cowardice (2 Timothy 1:7), and the fear of death (Romans 8:15; Hebrews 2:14-15), which includes the fear of condemnation (the second death, Revelation 21:8).

Those who are afraid of God fear the one who "**after He has killed, has the power to cast into hell**" (Luke 12:4-5). Therefore, they conduct their time on this earth in fear (Romans 11:20-22; 1 Peter 1:17) being greatly motivated by this terror (2 Corinthians 5:11) to set their hope completely on the grace of God (1 Peter 1:13). They are diligent to enter **His rest** (Hebrews 4:11), because they know there is no other way to escape the wrath of the Almighty (John 3:36), except to fear Him and trust in His salvation (Psalm 119:166). For this is man's all, as it is written:

Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

Job, a man who was terrified of God (Job 23:13-16), had this confidence that comes with the fear of God. He spoke of it in Job 19:25-27.

For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

Job longed for the day he would see God. He had no shame concerning that day, but rather great confidence, like David who wrote in Psalm 61,

I will abide in Your tabernacle forever. (Psalm 61:4)

This is the confidence of all who fear Him (Psalm 65:5). Since they fear Him (Luke 12:4-5), they need not fear (Luke 12:4-7; see also Exodus 20:18-20; 1 Samuel 12:20-25; Matthew 17:5-7), as Proverbs 1:33 says,

Whoever listens to me will dwell safely, and will be secure, without fear of evil.

VIII. True Fear Is Content

In this confidence that comes with the true fear of God, there is great satisfaction as well.

The fear of the Lord leads to life, and he who has it will abide in satisfaction; he will not be visited with evil. (Proverbs 19:23)

Years ago Mick Jagger sang, "I can't get no satisfaction." It was because he did

not fear God (Romans 3:18). Many years ago King David feared God and he sang,

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. (Psalm 23:1)

David knew he would not lack. He knew he would abide in satisfaction, because he knew the Lord would never forsake Him (Hebrews 13:5).

Even though "**the eyes of man are never satisfied**" (Proverbs 27:20), those who fear the Lord find contentment in what little or much they have (Ephesians 5:5; Hebrews 13:5). They are satisfied with His goodness (Psalm 36:7-8; 37:19; 63:5; Proverbs 14:14), because they love the Lord and hate their possessions (Luke 14:33; 16:13).

IX. True Fear Is Wise

Since the fear of God is wisdom (Job 28:28), it is no wonder that those who fear God are taught by God, and therefore have the wisdom of God. Psalm 25 says,

Who is the man that fears the Lord? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses. (Psalm 25:12)

Those who fear God have an anointing from the Lord (1 John 2:27) and receive special instruction from Him. As it is written:

The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant. (Psalm 25:12-14)

X. True Fear Is The Word of God

In the context of the law of the Lord, the testimony of the Lord, the statutes of the Lord, the commandment of the Lord, and the judgments of the Lord, Psalm 19:9 has, the fear of the Lord. All of these are synonyms for the word of God (e.g. see Psalm 119), including "the fear of the Lord" (Psalm 19:9).

The fear of the Lord is not only the beginning of wisdom and knowledge (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10), it *is* wisdom (Job 28:28). Christ is wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:24, 30), and Christ is the word of God (John 1:1, 14; Revelation 19:13). Therefore, if Christ is wisdom and the word of God, so the fear of the Lord is wisdom and the word of God. Proverbs 15:33 says, "**The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom.**" That well describes the word of God as well, as Paul wrote,

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16)

Also, Proverbs 13:13 says,

Not Taught!

He who despises the word will be destroyed, but he who fears the commandment will be rewarded.

Fearing the commandment and fearing God are one and the same.

XI. True Fear Is God Himself

If the fear of the Lord is indeed Scripture, the Word of God, the wisdom of God, and Christ, then the fear of the Lord is God Himself (John 1:1). Proverbs 2:5 well illustrates this.

Then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

Understanding the fear of the Lord is finding the knowledge of God. In other words, the fear of the Lord is God.

XII. True Fear Lasts Forever

Some might argue that once someone comes to know the Lord, they no longer fear Him, but this would be a lie. Proverbs 23:17 says,

Do not let your heart envy sinners, but be zealous for the fear of the Lord *all the day*.

"All the day" dictates continually. As Proverbs 28:14 says, "**How blessed is the man who fears always**" (NAS). Also, the Psalmist in Psalm 119 writes,

Establish Your word to Your servant, who is devoted to fearing You. (Psalm 119:38)

Fearing God is a way of life. It is not something that is initially done and then cast off (a perversion of 1 John 4:17-18), as Psalm 72 illustrates:

They shall fear You as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. (Psalm 72:5)

In the future, people will fear God (e.g. Psalm 67:7; 102:15; Isaiah 29:23; Hosea 11:10-11; Micah 7:17), and for all eternity people will fear the Lord, because,

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. (Psalm 19:9)

Man's Breath is God's Breath is God

The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the LORD, was caught in their pits, of whom we said, "Under his shadow we shall live among the nations." (Lamentations 4:20, "the breath of our nostrils" = "the anointed of the LORD")

God is intimately closer and exceedingly more involved in our lives than evil men want to admit (Romans 1:28). For “**in Him we live and move and have our being**” (Acts 17:28).¹ Job 12:9-10 says,

Who among all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this, in whose hand is the life² of every living thing, and the breath³ of all mankind?

Our life and our very breath are continually day in and day out moment by moment in His hand.

Daniel said to Belshazzar the same night Belshazzar was killed:

. . . the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified. (Daniel 5:23, "your breath" in the Aramaic is ܢܝܫܡܐ)

Not Taught!

God owns *all* our ways (Psalm 24:1; Isaiah 26:12⁴), not just some of them, and each breath we take He holds. Woe to us, if we, like Belshazzar, do not glorify Him (Isaiah 3:11).⁵ For just as He has given, so He can and does take. As Psalm 104 declares,

You hide Your face, they are troubled; You take away their breath,⁶ they die and return to their dust. (Psalm 104:29)

Elihu said,

Surely God will never do wickedly, nor will the Almighty pervert justice. Who gave Him charge over the earth? Or who appointed Him over the whole world? If He should set His heart on it, if He should gather to Himself His Spirit⁷ and His breath,⁸ all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust. (Job 34:12-15)

Quite evidently the Spirit of God and the breath of God keep men alive, for Elihu says, “**if He should gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath, all flesh would perish.**” His Spirit is evident, in that, “**God is Spirit**” (John 4:24) and “**in Him we live and move and have our being**” (Acts 17:28). How is His Breath apparent?

Isaiah 42:5 says,

Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath⁹ to the people on it, and spirit¹⁰ to those who walk on it:

Acts 17:25 says,

... **He gives to all life, breath,¹¹ and all things.**

How does He give breath? Note the very first man to whom He gave breath.

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed¹² into his nostrils¹³ the breath of life;¹⁴ and man became a living soul. (Genesis 2:7 KJV)

God “**breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.**” Man's first breath was from God's breath and that breath was “the breath of life.” The “breath of life” equals the “breath of Christ.” Christ is life (John 14:6). Thus, God breathed into the man's nostrils His own breath.

This breath, God's breath, being the breath that man breathes, is not limited to mankind. It is the breath of all breathing life, as Genesis 7:22 later records.

And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle

and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life,¹⁵all that was on the dry land, died. (Genesis 7:22)

The “**all life**” here has a common breath. It is “**the breath of the spirit of life.**” That equals “**the breath of the spirit of God.**”¹⁶ In other words, it is God's breath.

Psalms 150:6 more literally reads, “**Let all the breath praise Yah.**”¹⁷ Although this is normal Hebrew construction for the meaning of, “**Let every breath praise Yah,**” when it is understood that every living thing that breathes God's breath, then a call for literally “all the breath” equals “everything that has breath” (NKJV), as Ecclesiastes 3:19 says, “**they all have one breath.**”¹⁸ That one breath is God's breath. Thus Elihu said, “**all flesh would perish together**” (Job 34:15). If God withdrew *His* breath, no one would have *any* breath.

Job knew he breathed God's breath. Job said,

As long as my breath¹⁹ is in me, and the breath²⁰ of God in my nostrils,²¹ my lips will not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit. (Job 27:3-4)

Elihu says,

The Spirit of God²² has made me, and the breath of the Almighty²³ gives me life. (Job 33:4)

God's breath is the constant source of life. We have no breath without it.

It is also the source of understanding. Job 32:8 tells us,

But there is a spirit²⁴ in man, and the breath²⁵ of the Almighty gives him understanding.²⁶

Understanding is God Himself (Proverbs 8:14).²⁷ So, not only is the very breath man breathes God's breath, but that very breath is what causes men to understand (Proverbs 2:6).²⁸ God Himself, His very breath, is all over man's existence.

By the breath²⁹ of God ice is given, and the broad waters are frozen. (Job 37:10)³⁰

The grass withers, the flower fades, because the breath³¹ of the LORD blows³² upon it (Isaiah 40:7).

... with the breath³³ of His lips He shall slay the wicked

Not Taught!

(Isaiah 11:4).

His breath³⁴ is like an overflowing stream, which reaches up to the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of futility (Isaiah 30:28, see verses 25-33, particularly verse 33 for “the breath³⁵ of the Lord”; see also 2 Thessalonians 2:8³⁶).

It is by the breath of God the sun, moon, planets, and stars were all made (Psalm 33:6).³⁷ But wait. Wasn't that all made by Christ? Indeed, it was (John 1:3). Christ, the Word (John 1:1), is the breath of God (Colossians 2:9).³⁸ Psalm 33:6 illustrates this. The Word of God (Christ) and the breath of God are laid out in parallel thought.

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath³⁹ of His mouth. (Psalm 33:6, "and the breath of His mouth" in the Hebrew is וּבְרִיחַ פִּי)

In other words, the word of the Lord, the breath of His mouth, made it all.

Therefore, since the breath of God is God Himself and we have the breath of God in our nostrils, we thus have God in our nostrils. That is quite an intimacy with the Almighty, and this intimacy is clearly stated in Lamentations 4:20.

The breath of our nostrils, the anointed⁴⁰ of the LORD, was caught in their pits, of whom we said, "Under his shadow we shall live among the nations." (Lamentations 4:20, "the breath of our nostrils" in the Hebrew is רִיחַ אֶפְיָנוּ)

The “breath of our nostrils” is “the anointed of the Lord” is “of whom we said, 'Under his shadow we shall live.'” Here the breath of our nostrils is explicitly called Christ⁴¹ (the anointed of the Lord), and He is intimately associated with His people as He “was caught in their pits” in the context of His judgment upon them (the book of Lamentations).

Finally, since the breath of God is God Himself, then it is no wonder Jesus (God) *breathed* on the disciples and thereby gave them the Holy Spirit.

So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."⁴² (John 20:21-22)

What did they literally receive from Him as He breathed on them? Jesus' breath. Jesus' breath is the Holy Spirit. God's breath is God Himself.

Endnotes:

1“have our being” (NKJV Acts 17:28) is in the Greek simply ἐσμεν (esmen), more literally, “we are.” In other words, we are Ἐν αὐτῷ (en autō) “in Him.” We exist *in Him*. We are in God. We exist *in God*.

2“life” in Job 12:10 is more literally “soul” נֶפֶשׁ (nephesh).

3“breath” in Job 12:10 in the Hebrew is רוּחַ (ruach) which can be translated “breath,” or “wind,” or “spirit,” depending on context. Also, the phrase “of all mankind” is more literally, “of all flesh of man” כָּל-בֶּשֶׂר-אִישׁ (Col-besar-'iysh). Thus, the entire phrase is more literally, “**which in his hand is the soul of every life, and the breath of all flesh of man.**”

4Isaiah 26:12 more literally reads, “all our works you do to us” כָּל-מַעֲשֵׂינוּ פַעֲלָתָּךְ לָנוּ (Col-ma`asêynu pâ`altâ lânu).

5Isaiah 3:11 in the Hebrew is אֹי לְרָשָׁע רַע כִּי-גִמּוּל יִדּוּ יַעֲשֶׂה לוֹ (‘oy lerâshâ` râ` kiy-gimul yâdâyv yê`âseh lo) more literally, “Woe to the wicked, bad, for the dealing of his hands shall be done to him.” Hell is very much a place of justice. “**God is not mocked**” (Galatians 6:10).

6“their breath” in Psalm 104:29 is in the Hebrew רוּחָם (ruchâm) which can be translated either “their breath” (NKJV; KJV) or “their spirit” (NAS).

7“His Spirit” in Job 34:14 in the Hebrew is רוּחוֹ (rucho).

8The Hebrew word for “His breath” in Job 34:15 is נִשְׁמָתוֹ (nishmâto). The “breath” is from the root word נִשְׁמָה (neshâmâh). This noun for “breath” is also found in Genesis 2:7 (“breath”); 7:22 (“breath”); Deuteronomy 20:16 (“breathes” כְּלִי-נִשְׁמָה more literally, “do not let live every breath”); Joshua 10:40 (“breathed” כָּל-יְהוָה נִשְׁמָה הִחָרִים more literally, “destroyed every breath”); 11:11 (“breathed” לֹא נִשְׁמָה כָּל-נִשְׁמָה more literally, “there was not left any breath”); 11:14 (“breathing” לֹא הִשְׁאִירוּ כְּלִי-נִשְׁמָה more literally, “they did not leave any breath”); 2 Samuel 22:16 (“blast” מִנְּשַׁמַּת רִיחַ אֶפְסוּ more literally, “from the breath of the spirit of his nostril”); 1 Kings 15:29 (“breathed” לֹא-הִשְׁאִיר כָּל-אֶחָד מִנְּשַׁמַּת אֶלֶיָּהּ more literally, “He did not leave any breath to Jeroboam”); 17:17 (“breath”); Job 4:9 (“blast” וְיָבִיאוּ וּמְרוּחַ אֶפְסוּ יָבִיאוּ more literally, “From the breath of God they perish, and from the breath of his nostril they are finished”); 26:4 (“spirit”); 27:3 (1st “breath” - בְּיָדֵי-כִלְיֹתַי עוֹד נִשְׁמָתִי בְּיָרוּחַ אֶלֶיָּהּ - בְּאֶפְסוּ; Job 32:8 (“breath”); 33:4 (“breath”); 37:10 (“breath”); Psalm 18:15 (H16 “blast” מִנְּשַׁמַּת רִיחַ אֶפְסוּ more literally, “from the breath of the spirit of your nostril”); 150:6 (“breath”); Proverbs 20:27 (“spirit”); Isaiah 2:22 (“breath”); 30:33 (“breath”); 45:2 (“breath”); 57:16 (“souls”; NAS “breath”; נִשְׁמָתוֹ more literally, “breaths”); Daniel 10:17 (“breath”). The Aramaic equivalent is found only in Daniel 5:23 נִשְׁמֵתְךָ (nishmetâch) “your breath.”

9“breath” נִשְׁמָה (neshâmâh)

10“spirit” רוּחַ (ruach)

Not Taught!

11The Greek word for “breath” in Acts 17:25 is πνοήν (pnoên) and is only found also in Acts 2:2 (“wind” πνοῆς). In the LXX it is found e.g. in Genesis 2:7 (breath of life πνοήν ζωῆς); 7:22 (καὶ πάντα ὅσα ἔχει πνοήν ζωῆς καὶ πᾶς ὃς ἦν ἐπὶ τῆς ξηρᾶς ἀπέθανεν “and all who have the breath of life and all who were upon the dry ground died.”); Psalm 150:6 (πᾶσα πνοὴ αἰνεσάτω τὸν κύριον “Let every breath praise the Lord”).

12Although the context of Genesis 2:7 is very physical, in case someone might argue God did not literally *breath* into the man, a look at the verb in Genesis 2:7 might help. The verb in Genesis 2:7 for “breathed” is נָפַח (yipach). It is also found in Job 20:26 (“unfanned” נִפְּחָהּ); Job 31:39 (“caused . . . to lose” נִפְּחָהּ more literally, “caused its owners to breath a soul”); 41:20 (H12 “boiling” נִפְּחָהּ more literally, “breathing pot”); Isaiah 54:16 (“blows”); Jeremiah 1:13 (“boiling” נִפְּחָהּ more literally, “breathing pot”); 15:9 (“breathed” נִפְּחָהּ more literally, “she breathed her soul”); Ezekiel 22:20-21 (“blow”); 37:9 (“breathe” [“the breath” 2x and “O breath” is נְפִי and “winds” is רוּחַ]); Haggai 1:9 (“blew” נִפְּחָהּ “I blew it away”); Malachi 1:13 (“sneer” אוֹתִי נִפְּחָהּ more literally, “and you blow at it”).

13“breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” so reads the Hebrew. LXX reads, ἐνεφύσησεν εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πνοήν ζωῆς “breathed into his face the breath of life.”

14“breath of life” in Genesis 2:7 in the Hebrew is נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים (nishmat chayyim). “breath of life” is also found in Genesis 6:17 (רוּחַ חַיִּים ruach chayyim); Genesis 7:15 (רוּחַ חַיִּים ruach chayyim); & Revelation 11:11 (πνεῦμα ζωῆς pneuma zôês [πνεῦμα is also translated “breath” in Revelation 13:15]). Πνεῦμα (pneuma) is predominately translated “spirit” in the NT (e.g. John 4:24 “God is Spirit” Πνεῦμα ὁ θεός).

15“breath of the spirit of life” נִשְׁמַת־רוּחַ חַיִּים (nishmat-ruach chayyim)

16There is a physical aspect to the Spirit of God depicted here. The Spirit has breath. For other physical manifestations of the Spirit of God, see Isaiah 40:7; Luke 3:22 (“bodily form”); Matthew 3:16 (“saw the Spirit of God”).

17Hebrew reads - כָּל הַבְּשָׁמָה תְּהַלֵּל יָהּ (Col hanneshâmâh tehallêl Yah) “Let all the breath praise Yah.”

18“they all have one breath” in Ecclesiastes 3:19 in the Hebrew is רוּחַ אֶחָד לְכָל (ruach 'echâd lakol).

19“my breath” נִשְׁמָתִי (nishmâti)

20“breath of God” רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים (ruach 'eloah)

21“in my nostrils” בְּאַפִּי (be'apiy) more literally, “in my nostril” (singular)

22“Spirit of God” רוּחַ יְהוָה (ruach 'êl)

23“breath of the Almighty” נִשְׁמַת שַׁדַּי (nishmat shaday)

24“spirit” רוח (ruach)

25“breath of the Almighty” in Job 32:8 in the Hebrew is נִשְׁמַת שָׁדַי (nishmat shaday).

26“gives him understanding” in Job 32:8 is more literally, “causes them to understand” תְּבִינֵם (teviyêm). This Hebrew verb is in the Hiphil form (causal form) and has the plural masculine pronominal suffix (“them”).

27Christ is wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:24). Wisdom is understanding (Proverbs 8:14).

28Proverbs 2:6 “from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.”

29“By the breath of God” in Job 37:10 in the Hebrew is מִנִּישְׁמַת־אֱלֹהִים (minishmat-'êl) more literally, “From the breath of God.”

30See also Psalm 147:15-18. There in verse 18 “His wind” in the Hebrew is רוּחוֹ (rucho). It can also be translated “His breath” or “His spirit” depending on context.

31“breath of the Lord” in Isaiah 40:7 is רוּחַ יְהוָה (ruach Yehvâh).

32נִשְׁבָּה (nâshvâh) “blows” found also only in Genesis 15:11 (וַיִּשְׁבֶּה אֶתְּם אַבְרָם) more literally, “Abram blew them away”) & Psalm 147:18 (וַיִּשְׁבֶּה רוּחוֹ) “He causes His wind to blow”).

33“breath of His lips” in Isaiah 11:4 is רוּחַ שֵׁפָתָיו (ruach sephâtâyv).

34“His breath” in Isaiah 30:28 is רוּחוֹ (rucho).

35“the breath of the Lord” in Isaiah 30:33 in the Hebrew is נִשְׁמַת יְהוָה (nishmat Yehvâh).

36In the Greek “with the breath of His mouth” in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 is τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ.

37“the host of heaven” (Psalm 33:6) includes the sun, moon, planets, stars (Genesis 2:1; Deuteronomy 4:19; 17:3; Isaiah 34:4) and any other heavenly created beings (e.g. 1 Kings 22:19; 2 Chronicles 18:18; Nehemiah 9:6; Isaiah 24:21; Ephesians 3:10; 6:12).

38Scripture elsewhere associates spoken word with breath. See Psalm 27:12 “and such as breath out violence” (וַיִּפְתַּח חֵסֶם) and Acts 9:1 “still breathing threats” (ἔτι ἐμπνέων ἀπειλῆς more literally, “still breathing a threat”).

39Psalm 33:6 “breath of His mouth” in the Hebrew is רוּחַ פִּיּוֹ (ruach piyv).

40“anointed of the Lord” in Lamentations 4:20 in the Hebrew is מְשִׁיחַ יְהוָה (meshiyâch Yehvâh). The noun מְשִׁיחַ (meshiyâch) “anointed” is not exclusively used in the OT to refer to *the* Messiah (Christ). It is predominately used to refer simply to someone anointed by God. For example, it is used for the “anointed” priest (Leviticus 4:3, 5, 16; 6:22 [H15]); the “anointed” king (1 Samuel 12:3, 5; 24:6 [H7], 10 [H11]; 26:9, 11, 16, 23; 2 Samuel 1:14, 16; 19:21 [H22]; 22:51;

Not Taught!

23:1); the “anointed” people (i.e. Israel, 1 Samuel 2:35?; 1 Chronicles 16:22; 2 Chronicles 6:42; Psalm 28:8; 84:9 [H10], 38 [H39], 51 [H52]; 105:15; Habakkuk 3:13); the “anointed” Cyrus (Isaiah 45:1); and *the* Messiah (1 Samuel 2:10?; Psalm 2:2 [Acts 4:25-26]; Daniel 9:25-26).

41In the LXX the “anointed of the Lord” is χριστὸς κυρίου (christos kuriou) “Christ of the Lord.”

42“Holy Spirit” πνεῦμα ἅγιον (pneuma hagion)

Two Virgin Births

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)

There is a virgin birth declared in Isaiah 7:14 which is not typically believed, but is explicitly stated. When taken for exactly what it says, it clearly declares a virgin birth in that time, in the time of Isaiah and king Ahaz.

In Isaiah 7 the Lord gives king Ahaz a prophecy via Isaiah concerning the king of Syria and the king of Israel. They had come up against Jerusalem (Isaiah 7:1), and the Lord via Isaiah tells Ahaz, king of Judah, that they will not prevail. Then Ahaz is told to ask for a sign, but he refuses (Isaiah 7:10-12). So, the Lord himself gives Ahab a sign - a virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14).

Some may argue against the translation "virgin" in Isaiah 7:14, because it is not the typical word for "virgin" in the Hebrew. The typical word for "virgin" is בְּתוּלָה (betulah).¹ But here in Isaiah 7:14 it is עַלְמָה ('almâh).² This word is translated "virgin" (e.g. Genesis 24:43; Proverbs 30:19; Song of Solomon 1:3; 6:8) or "maiden" (e.g. Exodus 2:8; Psalm 68:25), and the LXX translates it as παρθενος (parthenos) "virgin" in Genesis 24:43 and Isaiah 7:14.³

The passage that should remove all doubt as to how עַלְמָה ('almâh) is to be understood, particularly in Isaiah 7:14, is Matthew 1:23. Here the God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:15) writer gives παρθενος (parthenos),⁴ virgin, as the meaning of עַלְמָה ('almâh) in Isaiah 7:14, and declares Mary's virgin birth as a fulfillment of what **"was spoken by the Lord through the prophet"** (Matthew 1:22).

But, wasn't Isaiah 7:14 already fulfilled? Indeed, it was, as it is written,

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name

Not Taught!

Immanuel. Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings. (Isaiah 7:14-16)

With that language, it is quite clear this virgin born child was born then, in Ahaz's time, as a sign to Ahaz. Immediately before this the Lord told Ahaz,

Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above. (Isaiah 7:11)

Ahaz was to ask for a miraculous sign for himself, not for someone else in the future, but for himself. Furthermore, it was to be "**either in the depth or in the height above**". In other words, with no limits. Yet, Ahaz refuses, but God doesn't. He gives him a *very* miraculous sign, a virgin birth!

The Lord tells Ahaz the child will not be very old ("**before the Child shall know to refuse the evil**") before both kings Ahaz was concerned about will no longer be ruling in their lands. If the virgin born child hadn't been born in Ahaz's time, then Ahaz received no sign, and the above words of God were a lie, because He gives explicit details as to the child's development in relation to the kings of Syria and Israel.

But, the Lord cannot lie (Titus 1:2) and He did give Ahaz a sign, as it is written, "**the Lord Himself will give you a sign**" (Isaiah 7:14). That sign was a virgin born child who would eat curds and honey (Isaiah 7:15) and while yet quite young, Rezin and Pekah would no longer be in power in Syria and Israel.

Now, who was this virgin born child? His name is given in Isaiah 7:14 - Immanuel, אֱמַנּוּאֵל ('immānu' êl). This is the same name given in Matthew 1:23 "**which is translated, 'God with us'**".⁵ Is this the same person? Well, what did "**God with us**" mean in Matthew 1:23? It meant God Himself was with us. He "**became flesh and dwelt among us**" (John 1:1, 14). Why would it be any different in Isaiah 7:14?⁶ In Isaiah 7:14 it's a virgin birth (as in Matthew 1:23) and the same identical name is given, Immanuel (God with us). Moreover, if the birth in Isaiah 7:14 is a virgin birth, and the One born is "**God with us**", then who is the Father of this virgin born child in Isaiah 7:14? It could only be God.

In light of the above, Hebrews 1:6 makes an interesting statement.

But when He again brings the firstborn into the world,⁷ He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him."⁸

When does He **again** bring the firstborn into the world?⁹ The firstborn in Hebrews 1:6 is the Son of God. That's the context (Hebrews 1:1-5). Who is the

Father of the Son of God? Obviously, God is (2 Corinthians 1:3). If God brought His Son into the world in Isaiah 7:14, and He has only one begotten Son (John 3:16), then when does He again bring Him into the world? Matthew 1:23 records the "**again**". Matthew 1:23 reveals a **second** fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14. It's not a first fulfillment, as already noted. Isaiah 7:14 was fulfilled in Ahaz's time. Matthew 1:23 records an "**again**" of Isaiah 7:14.¹⁰

Now, some might argue that prophecy can only have one fulfillment, but such a standard is unfounded in holy writ. In fact, just the opposite is found not only in Isaiah 7:14, but, for example, in Malachi 4:5-6.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.

Jesus said this was fulfilled in John the Baptist, and will also be fulfilled in Elijah himself.

For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come. (Matthew 11:13-14)

And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already [via John the Baptist], and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands." (Matthew 17:10-12; see also Mark 9:11-13)

The angel who announced the birth of John the Baptist stated,

He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children," and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke 1:17)

So, we see Malachi 4:5-6 fulfilled in the gospels via John the Baptist, and, as Christ noted, it will yet be fulfilled in the future. "**Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things.**" (Matthew 17:11).

Endnotes:

1. בתולה (betulah) is found in Genesis 24:16; Exodus 22:16-17; Leviticus 21:3,

Not Taught!

14; Deuteronomy 22:19, 23, 28; 32:25; Judges 19:24; 21:12; 2 Samuel 13:2, 18; 1 Kings 1:2; 2 Kings 19:21; 2 Chronicles 36:17; Esther 2:2-3, 17, 19; Job 31:1 ("young woman" NKJV); Psalm 45:14; 78:63 ("maidens" NKJV); 148:12 ("maidens" NKJV); Isaiah 23:4, 12; 37:22; 47:1; 62:5; Jeremiah 2:32; 14:17; 18:13; 31:4, 13, 21; 46:11; 51:22 ("maiden" NKJV); Lamentation 1:4, 15, 18; 2:10, 13, 21; 5:11 ("maidens" NKJV); Ezekiel 9:6 ("maidens"); 44:22; Amos 5:2; 8:13; Joel 1:8 ("Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth." A betrothed virgin would have a husband. See Deuteronomy 22:23-24); Zechariah 9:17 ("young women" NKJV).

The word for "virginity" is the absolute plural Hebrew word בְּתוּלִים (betuliym) and it is found in Leviticus 21:13; Deuteronomy 22:14-15, 17, 20; Judges 11:37-38; Ezekiel 23:3, 8.

2. עַלְמָה ('almâh) is found in Genesis 24:43 ("virgin"); Exodus 2:8 ("maiden"); 1 Chronicles 15:20 ("Alamoth" [NKJV] is a transliteration. Plural of עַלְמָה ['almâh] is עַלְמוֹת ['alâmot]); Psalm 46:1 ("Alamoth"); 68:25 ("maidens"); Proverbs 30:19 ("virgin"); Song of Solomon 1:3; 6:8 ("virgins"); Isaiah 7:14 ("virgin").

3. LXX translates עַלְמָה ('almâh) in Exodus 2:8 as νεανίς (neanis) "young woman"; 1 Chronicles 15:20 as αλαμωθ (alaimôth); Psalm 46:1 as κρυφίων (kruphiôn) "secrets" (a word related to עַלְמָה ['almâh] is תַּעֲלָמוֹת [ta'alumot] which is "secrets" e.g. Psalm 44:21); Song of Solomon 1:3 and 6:8 (LXX vs. 7) as νεανίδες (veanides) "maidens". LXX does not have Proverbs 30:19.

The Jewish Publication Society (JPS, 1917) translates as follows: Genesis 24:43 and Exodus 2:8 "maiden"; Psalm 68:26 and Song of Solomon 1:3; 6:8 "damsels", and Proverbs 30:19 "young woman".

The JPS Tanakh (TNK, 1985) translates as follows: Genesis 24:43 "young woman"; Exodus 2:8 "girl"; Psalm 68:26 and Song of Solomon 1:3 "maidens"; Proverbs 30:19 "maiden"; Song of Solomon 6:8 "damsels".

The Complete Jewish Bible (CJB, 1998) translates as follows: Genesis 24:43 and Psalm 68:26 "girls"; Exodus 2:8 and Proverbs 30:19 "girl"; Song of Solomon 1:3; 6:8 "young women".

Moreover, the related masculine noun, עֶלֶם ['elem] means "young man" found in 1 Samuel 17:26; 20:22. There is also עֲלוּמַיִם ['alumiym] found in Job 20:11 ("youthful vigor"); 33:25 ("youth"); Psalm 89:45 ("youth"); Isaiah 54:4 ("youth"). The related verb is אָלַם ['âlam] and it means "conceal" or "hide" (e.g. Job 28:21 "It is hidden"; Psalm 90:8 "secret" [NKJV], passive participle with pronominal suffix, אֲלֻמֵּנוּ ['alumênu], "our secrets").

4. παρθενος (parthenos) is the NT word for virgin found also only in Matthew 25:1, 7, 11; Luke 1:27 (2x); Acts 21:9; 1 Corinthians 7:25, 28, 34, 36-38; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 14:4.

5. The Greek word Εμμανουηλ (emmanouêl) "Immanuel" in Matthew 1:23 is a Greek transliteration of אֱמָנָנִי אֵל ('immânu' êl). אֱמָנָנִי אֵל ('immânu' êl) is also found in Isaiah 8:8 & 10 ("God *is* with us" NKJV).

Moreover, "**God with us**" in the Greek in Matthew 1:23 is μεθ ημων ο θεος (meth hêmôn ho theos).

6. God born in the flesh is also found in Isaiah 9:6-7, "Mighty God" אֱלֹהֵי גִבּוֹר ('el gibbor), "Everlasting Father" אָבִי עָד ('aviy'ad). Note also Isaiah 52:13-53:12.

7. The KJV for Hebrews 1:6 does not follow the Greek word order. The KJV reads, "And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world". The Greek for this part of the verse is, *οταν δε παλιν εισαγαγη τον πρωτοτοκον εις την οικουμενην* (hotan de palin eisagagê ton prôtotokon eis tèn oikoumenên), more literally, "**But when again He brings the firstborn into the world**". The adverb "again", *παλιν* (palin), modifies the verb "He brings", *εισαγαγη* (eisagagê).

Some might argue that "again", *παλιν* (palin), modifies "say" of the prior verse (vs. 5) as the "again" in verse 5 does. With this, Hebrews 1:5-6 would read,

And again *say* . . . (verse 5)

But when again *say* He brings . . . (verse 6)

Such an idea doesn't fit, as it does, e.g. in Hebrews 2:12-13. There the adverb "again" modifies the verb "saying" of verse 12. Thus, the idea is as follows:

And again *saying* . . . (vs. 13a, "again" here modifies "saying" of the prior verse)

And again *saying* . . . (vs. 13b)

Furthermore, in the NT the time of *οταν* (hatan) "**when**" is always determined by the words following it. Thus in this case, the "when" in verse 6 is tied to the following words, "**again He brings the firstborn into the world.**" These words qualify what time frame ("when") the writer is talking about.

Claiming "again" modifies the "say" of verse 5 is in opposition to how *οταν* (hatan) "when" is used throughout the NT. In such a claim, the "when" would be determined by the prior word "say" (of verse 5), and it would put an artificial separation between "when" and "again", as opposed to tying them together (as they should be) with the following words, "He brings . . .". Thus, the meaning is as exactly as it says, "**when again He brings the firstborn into the world.**"

8. "**Let all the angels of God worship Him**", *και προσκυνησατωσαν αυτω παντες αγγελοι θεου* (kai proskunêsatôsan autô pantes angeloi theou). These

Not Taught!

exact same Greek words are found in the LXX in Deuteronomy 32:43. There is no like wording in the Hebrew text.

9. Some think Hebrews 1:6 is speaking of the "Second Coming" (i.e. when Christ returns, Revelation 1:7).

It is only at the Second Coming that the fullness of the prophecy, **And let all the angels of God worship Him**, will come to pass. At the present time angels do not understand the whole picture well enough to give the Son full worship. (*The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Hebrews*, p. 31, copyright 1983 by The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago)

Besides the obvious addition (Proverbs 30:5-6) of the last sentence, Christ revealed in John 17:5 that His glory with the Father is the same after His death and resurrection as it was before the creation of the world.

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

Since Christ does not change (Hebrews 13:8), and He was already slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8), and as John 17:5 reveals His glory does not change, then the worship due Him by the angels has no change. Hebrews 1:6 declares, "**Let all the angels of God worship Him**", as does Psalm 148:2 command,

Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts!

"Him" is both the Father and the Son. This command of worship is not a new or unknown thing to the angels, as MacArthur makes it out to be.

Moreover, the context of Hebrews 1:6 speaks of the Son being begotten and "a Son" to the Father (Hebrews 1:5). This fits an "again" of incarnation, just as Matthew 1:22-23/Isaiah 7:14 records. Any claim to the "Second Coming" would need to be proven Biblically, which MacArthur did not do.

10. Some might argue that Isaiah's son, Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, in Isaiah 8:3 is the child of Isaiah 7:14, but Isaiah 8:3 is not a virgin birth. It says,

Then I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. (Isaiah 8:3)

The Hebrew word used here for "**I went**" is עָרַב (‘e'grav) and simply means to "draw near" (e.g. Isaiah 5:19), but is also used for drawing near for sexual intercourse, for example, in Genesis 20:4; Leviticus 18:6, 14, 19; 20:16; Deuteronomy 22:14; Ezekiel 18:6. Isaiah clearly is the father of this child. Also, the name of the child is different.

Everyone has some kind of concept of hell (Ecclesiastes 3:11; Romans 1:18-32), but it is typically nowhere near what it really is. Welcome to the real,

Hell

Who knows the power of Your anger? For as the fear of You, so is Your wrath. (Psalm 90:11)

The Lord is known by the judgment He executes. (Psalm 9:16)

The reality of hell is the most horrifying, terror striking, fearful truth known to man. It encompasses the worst possible fear and the meanest conceivable existence, continual never-ending torture.

And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.
(Revelation 20:10).

Most men lie to themselves and those around them (Ecclesiastes 3:11; Romans 1:18-32), but no amount of prevarication or fabrication will ever remove the eternal reality of Hell.

There is no wisdom or understanding or counsel against the Lord.
(Proverbs 21:30)

I. The Place

Hell is a literal place (e.g. Matthew 5:29-30; 10:28). It is a literal place where literal people suffer the torment of a literal fire in physical bodies (e.g. Luke 16:19-31). Its location is down (Proverbs 15:24; Isaiah 14:9; Ezekiel 31:15-17; 2 Peter 2:4). Its temperature is burning hot (Luke 16:24; Revelation 19:20). Its luminance is "**outer darkness**" (Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30), also called "**the blackness of darkness**" (2 Peter 2:17; Jude 13). Its size is so massive it is never filled to capacity (Proverbs 27:20), though masses of people are in it and numbers more are added continually (Matthew 7:13-14; Romans 1:18). Its smoke will ascend forever (Revelation 14:11). Its fire will never be quenched, and the worm there will never die (Isaiah 66:24; Mark 9:43-46, 48).

Hell is the place where the vessels of wrath (Romans 9:22) will be on display before all of mankind (Isaiah 66:24) and before the holy angels and the Lord Himself (Revelation 14:10). It is where Christ will show His wrath and make His power known for all eternity (Romans 9:22; Revelation 20:10). Hell is to the glory of God (Psalm 96:7-13) and the utter destruction of the wicked (Psalm 92:5-7).

Hell is where the mockers are now mocked (Proverbs 1:26). The scoffers are now put to shame (Proverbs 3:35; 13:5). Murderers are now being tortured with perpetual death (Matthew 10:28; Revelation 21:8, "**the second death**"). Oppressors are now laid low (1 Samuel 2:7). Liars experience the reality that they have been lied to (Revelation 12:9). Kidnappers are now eternal captives (1 Timothy 1:10; Revelation 20:11-15). The rich suffer severe poverty (Proverbs 22:16; 28:22; Luke 6:24; 1 Timothy 6:9-10), and their riches will eat their "**flesh like fire**" (James 5:3). The full are now hungry (Isaiah 65:13; Luke 6:25). The proud are rebuked (Psalm 119:21) and fully repaid (Psalm 31:23). The disobedient are punished (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). Cowards are now "**utterly consumed with terror**" (Psalm 73:18-19; Proverbs 10:24; Revelation 21:8). Those who laughed are now weeping and mourning (Isaiah 65:14; Luke 6:25). Those honored by men are now despised and lightly esteemed by God (Luke 6:26; Psalm 73:18-20; 1 Samuel 2:30/Proverbs 14:2), and will in the future be abhorred by all mankind (Isaiah 66:24; Daniel 12:2). Those who have wickedly dug a pit, are now cast down into the pit (Psalm 7:14-16; 9:15-17; Proverbs 26:27; 28:10 [Ecclesiastes.10:8]). Lovers of pleasure are now tormented with fire (2 Timothy 3:4; Revelation 21:8). Those who cursed are now cursed (Proverbs 20:20). Those who considered the cross foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:18) are now shown the shrewdness of God (2 Samuel 22:26-28). God indeed is not mocked. Men will reap what they have sown (Galatians 6:7-8).

To get to hell, the directions are quite simple and easy to follow. All one has to do is continue to sin (Ezekiel 18:4, 20; Romans 6:23; Revelation 21:8), which, without the Savior, is impossible to do otherwise (John 8:34-36). Actually, all it takes is one ungodly statement of "**You fool!**" to put one in "**danger of hell fire**" (Matthew 5:22). It takes very "little" to get to hell. The gate that leads to hell is wide and the way that leads to hell is broad (Matthew

7:13). Continue on the course you have followed from birth (Psalm 58:3), and you are sure to get there (Romans 2:6-9).

Some Terms:

In the Old Testament, the most common word for hell is **שְׂאוֹל** (she'ol), e.g. Deuteronomy 32:22; Psalm 9:17; 55:15; Proverbs 5:5; 7:27; 9:18; 15:24; 23:14; Isaiah 5:14. Note in particular Isaiah 14:9-11; Ezekiel 32:18-21, 24-25, and 30. Yet, this word can also mean grave (e.g. Genesis 37:35; 42:38; 44:29, 31; 1 Samuel 2:6; Job 14:13; Psalm 6:5; 88:3; 89:48; 141:7; Ecclesiastes 9:10), and, at times, it appears to have both the grave and hell in view (e.g. Job 24:19; Psalm 49:15; 86:13).

Other Hebrew words describing hell are **בוֹר** (bor), e.g. Isaiah 14:15, translated "pit;" **שַׁחַת** (shachat) translated "pit" (e.g. Job 33:18, 22, 24, 28, 30) or "destruction" (e.g. Psalm 55:23; 103:4), and **בְּעֵר** (be'êr) translated "pit" (e.g. Psalm 55:23).

In the New Testament, Jesus used the Greek word **γέενναν** (geennan) in Matthew 5:22, 29-30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5 and James 3:6. Another Greek word for hell is **αδης** (Hadês), and is found in Matthew 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; Acts 2:27, 31; Revelation 1:18; 6:8; 20:13-14. This word is also spelled, **αιδη** (Haidê), in Luke 16:23 and 1 Corinthians 15:55. These are typically transliterated as "Hades." Also, there is the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20; 20:10, 14-15; 21:8). Moreover, it can be seen from Luke 16:19-31 and Revelation 20:11-15 that Hades is a temporary hell that will be cast into the final hell, the lake of fire.

There is also the hell where the angels who sinned are presently confined with "**chains of darkness**" (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Genesis 6:1-4;). The Greek word used in 2 Peter 2:4 is **ταρταρωσας** (tartarôsas) which is an aorist active participle describing those who are held captive in the dark hell called tartarus. There is also the "prison" (Greek word, **φυλακη**, phulakê) in which those who lived during the time of Noah are held (1 Peter 3:19).

Finally, there is also the Greek word **αβυσσος** (abussos) which is translated the "**abyss**" or the "**bottomless pit**" (e.g. Romans 10:7; Revelation 9:1-2, 11). In this abyss are very strange creatures that are held captive and will be released upon the earth in the near future to torment men (Revelation 9:1-11). Demons beseeched Christ not to send them there (Luke 8:31). The Antichrist will come out of this abyss (Revelation 11:7; 17:8) and deceive the world (Revelation 13:8; 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12). And in the future Satan will be confined to this abyss for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3), after which he will be cast to the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10). From this (Revelation 20:1-3 & 20:10), it is evident that the abyss is not the same place as the final hell, the lake of fire.

Also note worthy is the name of the angel of the abyss. His name is Abaddon. In the Greek it is **Αβαδδων** (abaddôn). See Revelation 9:11. This is the same Hebrew word, **אָבַדּוֹן** ('avaddon), for destruction in Job 26:6; Proverbs 15:11 & 27:20.

Not Taught!

II. The Pain

The rich man in Hades cried and said, "**I am tormented in this flame**" (Luke 16:24). Those in hell are tortured by God (Matthew 18:34-35) in an everlasting fire (Matthew 18:8; 25:41). They are being burned continually with a fire that will never be quenched (Mark 9:43-48). Those in hell melt away (Psalm 112:10) at the presence of God (Psalm 68:2), because God is in hell (Psalm 139:8) consuming them with His fire (Hebrews 12:29; Psalm 50:3; 97:3). The godly can dwell with everlasting burnings (Isaiah 33:14-16), but those who despise His word are destroyed in everlasting burnings (Psalm 37:38; Proverbs 29:1; Matthew 10:28).

This destruction (Psalm 37:38; Proverbs 29:1; Matthew 7:13; Romans 9:22; Philippians 3:19) is a continual state of being destroyed. It is an "**everlasting destruction**" (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Psalm 92:7), as the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed (Genesis 19:24; 2 Peter 2:6), and now,

are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. (Jude 7)

The people of Sodom and Gomorrah have been suffering the vengeance of eternal fire for roughly 4000 years now, and they have absolutely no hope of relief. They have been in horrible pain for 4000 years, and all they have to look forward to is more torture for the rest of eternity; and the Lord has set them forth as an example for mankind that this is what they too will receive if they continue to live ungodly lives. For,

Upon the wicked He will rain coals; fire and brimstone and a burning wind shall be the portion of their cup. (Psalm 11:6; see also Psalm 140:10)

Psalm 11:6 describes hell not as a passively burning fire, but rather an actively aggressive fire that is raining hot coals along with a burning wind down upon those in hell. The weather in hell is always bad. It not only has coals of fire (Proverbs 25:22; Romans 12:20) and burning wind, but it is smoky as well, burning with a smoke that will continually rise up from the torment of those in it (Psalm 37:20; Revelation 14:11; see also Isaiah 34:10; Revelation 19:3). So, smoke ascends upward, coals of fire descend downward, and the fire, sulfur, and people burn in its midst (Revelation 21:8). Jesus called hell "**the furnace of fire**" (Matthew 13:42, 50).

Moreover, hell's torture is quite physical. Jesus said,

Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matthew 10:28)

God destroys both the soul *and the body* in hell. Jesus likewise warned,

If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. (Matthew 5:29-30)

Clearly "the body" is cast into hell. The rich man in Hades exemplified this when he said,

"Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue." (Luke 16:24)

His tongue was (and still is) burning hot.

Along with the torture of fire, coals raining down, smoke, and a burning wind, is the continual stabbing of being eaten. **"Death shall feed on them"** (Psalm 49:14). The moth and **"the worm will eat them"** (Isaiah 14:11; 50:9; 51:7-8; 66:24; see also Job 24:19-20). While they are being eaten, they themselves will suffer in thirst and hunger (Isaiah 65:13; Luke 6:25; Proverbs 13:25). They will wail, weep, and gnash their teeth (Psalm 112:10; Matthew 8:12; 13:42, 49-50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:23-28). Some, or all, may be torn in pieces (Psalm 50:22), or cut in two (Matthew 24:51; Luke 12:46), and have their tongue cut out (Proverbs 10:31-32); and they will lie down in torment (Isaiah 50:11).

Those in hell will never experience **"the fullness of joy"** (Psalm 16:11; Matthew 7:23; 25:41; Luke 13:27). Although they will know Yahweh is **"the Most High over all the earth"** (Psalm 83:13-18), they will never know God (John 17:3) or enjoy His presence (Psalm 140:13). They will seek Him (Psalm 83:16), but they will not find Him (Proverbs 1:27-28). They **"will go away into everlasting punishment"** (Matthew 25:46), and **"the fire shall devour them"** (Psalm 21:9).

III. The People

Who goes to hell? The majority of mankind has and will go to hell (Matthew 7:13-14). Specifically, all false teachers (2 Peter 2:1-3), like Billy Graham, Rick Warren, James Dobson, John MacArthur, Greg Laurie, Tony Evans, Charles Stanley, Chuck Smith, Charles Blake, Chuck Swindoll, T. D. Jakes, David Jeremiah, Charles Spurgeon, Dave Hunt, David W. Cloud, Neil Anderson, John Hagee, Robert Schuller, Jack Hayford, Benny Hinn, Miles McPherson, Ray Comfort, Chuck Colson, C. S. Lewis, Pope John Paul, Hank Hanegraaff, Paul Chappell, et. al., will spend their eternity in the **"blackness of darkness"** (i.e. hell, 2 Peter 2:17; Jude 13).

False Christians, like those who respect such liars (Psalm 40:4) will also go to hell (Matthew 7:13; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 4:3; 2 Peter 2:2), if they do not repent. False Christians, like those who go to **"church of Christ"** churches will go to

Not Taught!

hell, if they don't repent. False Jews, if they do not repent, will be cast into this "**outer darkness**" (Matthew 8:12; Romans 2:28-29; Revelation 2:9; 3:9) along with false and real **Muslims**, **Jehovah's Witnesses**, **Catholics**, Hindus, Buddhists, **Mormons**, Christian Scientists, Baha'is (Revelation 21:8, "idolaters"), Psychologists, Psychiatrists (1 Corinthians 1:20), Atheists, Agnostics (Psalm 14:1), and anyone else who "**is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God**" (1 Timothy 1:10; Revelation 21:8).

Moreover, even if a person accepted Christ at some point in their life, if just one of the following characterizes their life, if they die in such a state, such a one will go to hell (Ezekiel 33:12-18; John 15:1-6; Romans 11:22). Whether a person claims to be a Christian or not, they will go to hell if they die as an unrighteous person (1 Corinthians 6:9). Hell bound are *all* fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners (1 Corinthians 6:9-10), those who are sexually immoral in any way, or malicious, or envious, or murderers, or whisperers, or backbiters, or haters of God, or violent, or proud, or boasters, or inventors of evil things, or disobedient to parents, or undiscerning, or untrustworthy, or unloving, or unforgiving, or unmerciful (Romans 1:28-31), or lewd, or unclean, or contentious, or jealous, or selfish, or dissentious, or revelrous, or angry (Proverbs 22:24-25; 29:22; Galatians 5:19-21), or foolish, or disobedient, or deceived, or hateful (Titus 3:3), or lawless, or offensive (Matthew 13:41-42), or insubordinate, or unholy, or kidnappers, or liars, or perjurers (1 Timothy 1:9-10), or lovers of themselves, or lovers of money, or blasphemers, or unthankful, or slanderers, or without self-control, or brutal, or despisers of good, or traitors, or headstrong (i.e. stubborn, 1 Samuel 15:23), or haughty, or lovers of pleasure (2 Timothy 3:2-4), or cowards, or unbelieving, or sorcerers (Revelation 21:8), or those who practice witchcraft, or soothsayers, or whoever interprets omens, or conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead, or diviners (Deuteronomy 18:10-14), or one who practices magic (Ezekiel 13:18-20; Acts 19:19), or gluttons (Proverbs 23:21; Philippians 3:18-19), or dogs, or whoever loves and practices a lie (Revelation 22:15).

Furthermore, the people in hell are all wicked and will continue to be evil for all eternity (Revelation 22:11). There is no salvation for those who go to hell. It is said of false teachers that they "**will utterly perish in their own corruption**" (2 Peter 2:12). Revelation 22:15 says,

But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

It can be seen from Revelation 21:8 that "**outside**" is in the lake of fire, because Revelation 21:8 reveals that these same people (sorcerers, sexually immoral, murderers, idolaters) "**have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.**" Therefore, even in the eternal state (Revelation 21-22), the wicked are outside of the kingdom of God in the lake of fire, still lost in their sin. That is hell!

Thus, the wicked, since they all hate God (Psalm 10:3-4; Proverbs 14:2), will hate Him for the rest of eternity as they suffer under "**His living and burning wrath**" (Psalm 58:9). They will be brought to confusion, shame, and everlasting contempt (Daniel 12:2), and "**their everlasting confusion will never be forgotten.**" (Jeremiah 20:11; Isaiah 45:16; James 3:16).

IV. Objections To The Reality Of Hell

A. Hell Is Cruel.

Yes it is. Hell is horribly cruel.

Some may say, "God would not be so cruel so as to torment such a mass of humanity for all eternity," yet those who say such things do not know the God of the Bible. In His wrath, God is cruel. Proverbs 27:4 says, "**Wrath is cruel,**" and the most cruel wrath in all existence is the anger of the Almighty God (e.g. Deuteronomy 28:15-68; 2 Chronicles 21:19; [Job 30:21/2:3] Revelation 16:10). When the Lord moves in His wrath towards the sons of men, He acts very cruelly. As Isaiah 13:9 says,

Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it.

Solomon described God's wrath as cruel when he said,

For man also does not know his time: like fish taken in a cruel net, like birds caught in a snare, so the sons of men are snared in an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them. (Ecclesiastes 9:12; see also Proverbs 17:11)

Death cruelly falls suddenly upon men by the hand of God, and what is more cruel than death (Song of Solomon 8:6)? The second death is eternally worse (Revelation 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8).

So, although men may complain against the cruelty of hell, it nonetheless is true, and all those who reject this truth will forever experience this cruel hand of God; and will know that the Most High rules over the sons of men.

B. Hell Is Eternal?

Some fools may argue against the eternity of hell, even though the language in Scripture is extremely clear (e.g. Matthew 25:41, 46; Jude 7; Revelation 20:10), and they themselves know that it lasts forever (Ecclesiastes 3:11; Romans 1:18-19, 32). The natural mind (1 Corinthians 2:14) may very well note Scriptures that speak of the destruction of the wicked (e.g. Psalm 21:9; 55:23; 92:7) and view this with an earthly understanding (Proverbs 3:5-6), as if it is an event with an end. What they fail to recognize is, that, even on the earth, it takes time, either short or long, to kill and destroy someone or burn them up. In hell, God takes all eternity to finish His cause. He takes forever to

Not Taught!

burn them up (Matthew 3:12). This is the significance of the "**unquenchable fire**" (Matthew 3:12), "**the everlasting fire**" (Matthew 18:8; 25:41), and "**everlasting destruction**" (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

Even though Isaiah 66:24 calls the people in hell corpses and in Revelation 21:8 the lake of fire is called the second death, Scripture describes this state of death, destruction, this state of being devoured, eaten, and dying, as a continual unending process that lasts all eternity. Matthew 25:46 calls it "**everlasting punishment.**" Those who were in Sodom and Gomorrah are presently very familiar with this "**everlasting punishment,**" because they themselves are right now "**suffering the vengeance of eternal fire;**" and there is no hope of any change of their torment. This is the significance of Jesus' statement in Mark 9 where He warns of hell. Three times He says,

Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched. (Mark 9:44, 46, 48)

He says, "**their worm,**" not "a worm." The people in hell have their own worm forever. The worm never dies, and it stays "theirs" forever. In other words, "theirs" (they) are still in existence, along with the worm and the fire that will never be quenched, as Revelation 20:10 describes those in the lake of fire with these words:

They will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Some may want to argue over words (1 Timothy 6:4) and argue against the words "forever and ever." The Greek words translated, "forever and ever," in Revelation 20:10 are τούς αιῶνας τῶν αιῶνων (tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn). These same exact words are used for God's eternal glory (Galatians 1:5; Philippians 4:20; 1 Timothy 1:17; 2 Timothy 4:18; Hebrews 13:21; 1 Peter 4:11; 5:11; Revelation 1:6; 5:13; 7:12), for Christ's eternal living, never ever to experience death again (Revelation 1:18), for God who lives forever and ever (Revelation 4:9-10; 10:6; 15:7), for Christ's eternal reign (Revelation 11:15), for eternal smoke (Revelation 19:3), and the eternal reign of the saints (Revelation 22:5).

C. Hell Is Immediate?

Another diversion from the fear of God is the argument of "soul sleep," that is, that people who have died are not conscious after death. They are asleep, neither in hell or heaven.

Scripture does describe death in the terms of "sleep" (e.g. Psalm 13:3; Daniel 12:2; 1 Corinthians 11:30; John 5:28-29; 11:11-14; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-16). Yet, those who are "asleep" talked to Christ while He was on the earth (Matthew 17:3), conversed with those in Hades (Luke 16:19-31), were preached to (1 Peter 3:18-20: 4:6), in the future will come back with Christ when He comes (1 Thessalonians 4:14), and will cry out to God,

How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth? (Revelation 6:10)

These here will be given white robes and told to rest a little while longer (Revelation 6:11). They may rest, but they will not be unconscious, because they will be aware of God's longsuffering toward the wicked on the earth and will have to endure this longsuffering "**a little while longer**" (Revelation 6:11).

Furthermore, Luke 16:19-31 is no parable or make believe story. Christ spoke truth about two real men. After their death, both Lazarus and the rich man were taken to a good and bad location. The rich man did not stay in some unconscious state, for he was "**tormented in this flame**" (Luke 16:24).

Moreover, while he was in torment, his brothers were yet alive on the earth, and he knew it and so did Abraham (Luke 16:27-31). The rich man pleaded with Abraham to send Lazarus to warn them of their soon coming fate. The rich man knew well they would not be sleeping after they died. He knew well that they would experience the same fate he had, if they did not repent. For when the wicked die, they indeed lie down, but they lie down in torment (Isaiah 50:11). The rich man has known this truth for over two thousand years. [For other pertinent Scriptures for the righteous, see 2 Corinthians 5:1-8; Philippians 1:21-24; and 1 Thessalonians 5:10.]

V. Conclusion

Don't go to hell like the rest of the world.

Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

For, He

"will render to each one according to his deeds:" eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness - indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil. (Romans 2:6-9; see also Acts 17:30)

Not Taught!

When was the last time you heard *this answer* to the question below?

How Can A God Of Love Send People To Hell?

The reason people are sent to [hell](#) is because God *is* a [God of love](#). This may sound incorrect to the human mind (1 Corinthians 2:14), but it is nonetheless the teaching of Scripture.

For example, why did God kill the firstborn of Egypt (Exodus 12:29-30)? Psalm 136:10 says because His mercy endures forever. Why did the Lord destroy the Egyptian army in the Red Sea? Psalm 136:15 says because His mercy endures forever. Why did He strike down great kings? Because His mercy endures forever (Psalm 136:17). Why did He slay famous kings? Because His mercy endures forever (Psalm 136:18). Why did He kill Sihon king of the Amorites and Og king of Bashan? Because His mercy endures forever (Psalm 136:19-20). Those who died in their wickedness went to hell. Yet, Psalm 136 begins with these words:

Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. (Psalm 136:1)

It is good for God to slay the wicked and send them to hell. David knew this well, thus he wrote,

Not Taught!

You therefore, O Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to punish all the nations; Do not be merciful to any wicked transgressors. (Psalm 59:5)

Oh, that You would slay the wicked, O God! (Psalm 139:19; see also 144:6)

The Lord has and will answer these prayers (Psalm 5:6; 21:8-10; 52:5; Proverbs 15:25; Isaiah 11:4; 13:9), because He is love; and love does *not* rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth (1 Corinthians 13:6).

A Song of Love (Psalm 45 title) declares,

Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; the peoples fall under You. Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness. (Psalm 45:5-7a; see also verse 1 which declares this to be a "good theme")

It is righteous to destroy the wicked, and in His love, this is what God does.

In Psalm 69 David appeals to the lovingkindness of God and His tender mercies (Psalm 69:16) and in these asks the Lord to pour out His wrath on his enemies. David writes,

Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see; and make their loins shake continually. Pour out Your indignation upon them, and let Your wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their dwelling place be desolate; let no one live in their tents. For they persecute the ones You have struck, and talk of the grief of those You have wounded. Add iniquity to their iniquity, and let them not come into Your righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous. (Psalm 69:23-28)

When David says, "**Let them not come into Your righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous,**" David is asking the Lord to assign them to eternal fire. The only way anyone is ever saved is by coming into the righteousness of God (Romans 3:21-22; 4:3-8), and by being written in the book of the living, written with the righteous (Revelation 20:15). Therefore, David is asking God not to save them, but to destroy them forever.

In Psalm 143:12 David likewise requests,

In Your mercy cut off my enemies, and destroy all those who afflict my soul; for I am Your servant. (Psalm 143:12)

Asking for them to be cut off, is asking for them to be killed (e.g. Exodus

How Can A God of Love Send People To Hell?

31:14) and sent to hell, for all who die in their sin experience the second death (Revelation 21:8). David requests the Lord to do this *in His mercy*.

In Malachi, the way the Lord proves to Israel that He loves them is by pointing out how He has hated Esau and his descendents.

"I have loved you," says the Lord. "Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved us?' Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" Says the Lord. "Yet Jacob I have loved; but Esau I have hated, and laid waste his mountains and his heritage for the jackals of the wilderness." Even though Edom has said, "We have been impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places," thus says the Lord of hosts: "They may build, but I will throw down; they shall be called the Territory of Wickedness, and the people against whom the Lord will have indignation forever. Your eyes shall see, and you shall say, 'The Lord is magnified beyond the border of Israel.'" (Malachi 1:2-5)

The Lord proves His love for Israel, by showing that He has hated Esau (Romans 9:11-13, 18) and sent him and his descendents to hell; as the Scripture says they are **"the people against whom the Lord will have indignation forever."** That depicts eternal torment (e.g. Isaiah 66:24)!

Some may consider such a predisposition and predestination (Romans 9:11-23) as anything but loving, but the Word reveals God's plan in creating the wicked for hell (Proverbs 16:4) is part of His lovingkindness and faithfulness. As **"A Song for the Sabbath"** reveals,

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; to declare Your lovingkindness in the morning, and Your faithfulness every night. (Psalm 92:1-2)

What is the first declaration of God's lovingkindness and faithfulness? It is God's predestined plan for the wicked.

O Lord, how great are Your works! Your thoughts are very deep. A senseless man does not know, nor does a fool understand this. When the wicked spring up like grass, and when all the workers of iniquity flourish, it is that they may be destroyed forever. (Psalm 92:5-7)

Why are the wicked presently flourishing? **"It is that they may be destroyed forever"** (see also Proverbs 16:4 & Romans 9:22), so they will never rear their ugly heads again! In other words, it is that they may be destroyed in hell forever never to be released (Isaiah 66:24; Revelation 20:10; 21:8).

Note also, it is good to declare this in the morning and every night (Psalm 92:2), because it is His lovingkindness and His faithfulness. In fact, this is one reason the godly love the Lord and His Word, because God destroys the

Not Taught!

wicked. As the Psalmist wrote,

You put away all the wicked of the earth like dross; therefore I love Your testimonies. (Psalm 119:119)

At the same time, this fearful Love also causes people of faith to fear God. This same Psalmist wrote in the very next verse,

My flesh trembles for fear of You, and I am afraid of Your judgments. (Psalm 119:120)

God's judgments are indeed dreadful (Isaiah 8:13), but they are nonetheless good (Psalm 34:8; 52:9; 54:5-6; 119:68; 135:3). Both His harsh wrath (Proverbs 27:4) and His merciful kindness is all rooted in the fact that He is a God of love, and that He *is* love (1 John 4:8, 16). Psalm 107 illustrates this well.

He turns rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground; a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of those who dwell in it. (Psalm 107:33)

Here we see His wrath. But then, Psalm 107 continues with,

He turns a wilderness into pools of water, and dry land into watersprings. There He makes the hungry dwell, that they may establish a city for a dwelling place, and sow fields and plant vineyards, that they may yield a fruitful harvest. He also blesses them, and they multiply greatly; and He does not let their cattle decrease. (Psalm 107:34-38)

Here we see His mercy and kindness. Yet, Psalm 107 continues,

When they are diminished and brought low through oppression, affliction and sorrow, He pours contempt on princes, and causes them to wander in the wilderness where there is no way. (Psalm 107:39-40)

Here we see again His wrath. Psalm 107 continues,

Yet He sets the poor on high, far from affliction, and makes their families like a flock. The righteous see it and rejoice, and all iniquity stops its mouth. (Psalm 107:41-42)

With both the wrath of God and His merciful kindness in view, Psalm 107 ends with,

Whoever is wise will observe these things, and they will understand the lovingkindness of the Lord. (Psalm 107:43)

Even though the God of Love has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11), He nevertheless loves justice (Psalm 37:28) and delights in and rejoices (e.g. Deuteronomy 28:63; Revelation 19:1-7) in judgment. As it is written,

Thus says the Lord, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord. (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

When the Lord kills the wicked, which also means they die and go to hell (Revelation 21:8), He is exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth, and in these He delights; and so do others.

When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices; and when the wicked perish, there is jubilation. (Proverbs 11:10)

To what end is all this? It is as Psalm 92 declared. In His love, God will have eradicated the wicked from the earth (Psalm 37:1-2, 9-10, 20, 28, 34, 38; Revelation 19 & 20), and this will make an awesome eternal existence for the godly! The wicked will be destroyed *forever* (Psalm 92:7). There will be no more evil people roaming around! They will all be in the lake of fire unable to have any evil influence on the new heavens, new earth, and New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:1-8). As Revelation declares,

And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie. (Revelation 21:24-27)

This is God's love. It is His love for those who are saved. It will be an eternity without wicked people!

Praise the Lord! For He has delivered the life of the poor from the hand of evildoers. (Jeremiah 20:13)

Not Taught!

In light of the previous chapter, it seemed apropos to point out specific strangers (John 10:5) who are estranged from the idea of God Himself sending people to hell. So here's a short chapter on,

False Teachers Who Teach God Does Not Send People To Hell

No doubt there are probably *many* others, but those we have documented are listed below.

[John MacArthur](#)

You will never find any place in the Bible that God sends people to hell. You will never find any place in the Bible that God damns people. (*The Troubling Gospel, Acts 13:42-52*, tape # 1746, copyright 1973)

[Greg Laurie](#)

How can a God of love send people to hell? **God doesn't send anyone to hell.** We send ourselves there. Hell was never created for man but for the devil and his angels. When speaking of the destiny of those who hypocritically claimed to follow him, Jesus said, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire *prepared for the devil*

Not Taught!

and his angels" (Matthew 25:41, italics mine). (*How To Share Your Faith*, p. 66, bold added; see also this same statement in *how to live FOREVER*, copyright 1999, p. 20)

Raul Ries

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. God never ever ever sends anyone to Hell because of His love. If you go to hell it is by your own choice you make, your own choice. (tape # sly00-02)

Pat Robertson

God doesn't send anyone to hell. Anyone who goes to hell will be there because of decisions they have made. In essence, you send yourself there. (*Bring It On*, p. 304, special CBN partner edition, copyright 2003)

Perry F Rockwood

Will A God of Love Send People to Hell?

Not at all! God has provided a way of escape through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ who came into the world to save sinners. Full provision has been made for salvation, but those who refuse this salvation determine their own destiny and choose Hell instead of Heaven. (www.tpg.org/archive/books/6.htm)

Fredrick K. C. Price

Read this statement very, very carefully: God does not and will not send anyone to hell except the devil and his angels. (*Beware! The Lies of Satan*, by Frederick K. C. Price, copyright 1995, p. 24)

Clearly these men lie. Indeed, people choose to do evil (Isaiah 66:3), and they love death (Proverbs 8:36) and seek death (Proverbs 21:6); and "**he who pursues evil pursues it to his own death**" (Proverbs 11:19); and they bring this trouble upon themselves (e.g. Jeremiah 2:17). But, God still is the One Who sends people to Hell, as Jesus warned,

Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him! (Luke 12:5; see also Revelation 20:11-15)

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matthew 10:28)

This you shall have from My hand: You shall lie down in torment.
(Isaiah 50:11)

The Master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 24:50-51)

Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire. (Matthew 25:41)

Not Taught!

Suicide

The following are a few examples of what is typically taught concerning the eternal destiny of those who commit suicide. It is completely contrary to what the Bible teaches.

1. Cornerstone Fellowship (718 Pendleton St., Tahlequah, OK), **lead Pastor Allen Nolan says,**

So when it comes to suicide, sometimes a person gets to the place where they feel like there's no hope. And they can't go on, and they take their life. And though it's wrong to commit suicide, it doesn't mean that they're damned to hell. It doesn't mean that they're not going to heaven. (29:44f, Suicide part two, cornerstonefellowship.tv/allmessages)

2. The Catechism of the [Catholic Church](#) teaches,

Grave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide.

We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives. (CCC, p. 550, #2282 & 2283)

3. The Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod) says,

Not Taught!

Q. What is the LCMS stand on suicide? If a person commits suicide, can his/her funeral be held in the church? Does the LCMS believe that the person is condemned to hell since after suicide there is no way to ask for forgiveness?

A. The Synod does not have an official position regarding the eternal state of individuals who have committed suicide, though theologians of the Synod have commented from time to time on pastoral questions that often arise in such cases.

Since the spiritual condition of an individual upon death is known only to God, our theologians have proceeded cautiously in making judgments in this regard. LCMS pastor and author Otto E. Sohn, for example, has stated:

"Assuredly we would not wish to judge anyone who resorts to self-destruction. It is impossible for us to plumb the depths of gloom into which even Christian people may sink and irresponsibly lay unholy hands upon themselves. Perhaps the Lord will not hold them responsible, but we do not know." (What's the Answer, CPH, 1960, p. 144).

In one of his "Table Talks," Martin Luther himself commented: "I don't have the opinion that suicides are certainly to be damned. My reason is that they do not wish to kill themselves but are overcome by the power of the devil." Luther goes on, however, to express concern that this statement not be misunderstood or misused in a way that would downplay the danger and seriousness of this sin in the minds of people (Luther's Works, American Edition, Vol. 54, p. 29). [www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=2123, [copy on file](#)]

4. John Piper of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, MN preached a "[Funeral Meditation for a Christian Who Committed Suicide \(1981\)](#)":

No single sin, not even suicide, evicts a person from heaven into hell. One thing does: continual rejection of God's Spirit. Our friend, we believe, gave up that resistance and accepted the forgiveness of Christ. What sort of momentary weakness, what brief cloud of hopelessness caused her to take her life remains a mystery. (hard copy on file)

It's not a mystery for those who know the truth (Colossians 1:23). She had such a debased mind (Romans 1:28), she killed herself, which is simply the result of an unregenerate heart.

5. [Chuck Smith](#) of Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa California writes in *Answers For Today*,

Q: Is a person who commits suicide totally lost for eternity?

A: Definitely not! I believe that a person who is driven to the point of committing suicide no longer has full responsibility for the things he's doing. Driven to a point of such mental extremes, he isn't necessarily responsible for the action of taking his own life. (p. 88-89; revised edition p. 116)

6. [Charles Stanley](#) of First Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, teaches,

. . . suicide is an act of rebellion against God. Fortunately for all of us, however, God's grace is without prejudice. Whoever believes will be saved. Nowhere in the Bible does God compartmentalize sin and reserve grace only for those who commit "acceptable" sins. There is no such thing. Does God forgive suicide? Yes, He does.

If the person who committed suicide at some time accepted Jesus' death on the cross as payment for his sin debt and asked Him into his life, he is forgiven. Absolute assurance of forgiveness is found in Romans 8:1: "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." If a person has ever taken that step and received Christ as Savior, nothing can alter the truth that, as children of God, we are forgiven. Even when we rebel against God. (*Handbook for Christian Living*, p. 49, italics in original)

7. Dr. Gary Cohen, "one of the translators of the NKJV Bible and serves on the Board of Zion's Hope" (p. 27) wrote in "Zion's Fire" magazine,

In the Middle Ages, it was commonly taught that suicide was an unpardonable sin, as it allowed no time for repentance or for obtaining forgiveness by partaking in the sacraments. This is not the Protestant viewpoint, and it is admitted by most that a saved person can commit such an unfortunate act as suicide. In any case, all of us must be careful not to make statements beyond what the Scriptures teach (Deuteronomy 29:29). [p. 31, "Zion's Fire," September-October 2010; "Zion's Fire" is published by Zion's Hope, the ministry of false teacher Marvin J. Rosenthal]

8. It is recorded that [Dr. J. Vernon McGee](#) (1904-1988, "Thru the Bible" radio) taught,

Q. I was completely surprised when one of my friends from

Not Taught!

church committed suicide. How could a Christian kill himself?

McGee's answer, in part, reads,

I can understand that a Christian might have a mental breakdown, a catastrophic illness, or certain other things which might cause him to do this. I would not sit in judgment upon a professing Christian who does this because, to begin with, the minute he commits this act he is out of your hands and out of my hands. We cannot pass judgment on him. And I do know this: if that person is a child of God, he is saved. I don't care what you say, he is saved if he is a child of God. (*Questions and Answers*, copyright 1990 p. 50)

9. [David Jeremiah](#), pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church in El Cajon, California, says,

I've had the funerals of a number of people who have taken their own lives, and quite often family members will come and say, "Is there any forgiveness if someone takes their own life." And I need to report that that sin is neither accorded any greater or lesser value in the economy of God than the other sins which are chronicled in the word of God. And it is possible, I believe, for a person who has gone through some terrible stress in their life and in a moment of not thinking clearly has ended their life that person very easily might find his place in heaven; especially because he could have given his heart to Christ in this life; and even to take one's life does not undue what God does in the inward act of salvation. (Saul's Suicide, tape TTW13)

10. [Billy Graham](#) is asked,

My cousin had very serious emotional problems most of her life, and finally they overwhelmed her and she committed suicide. I firmly believe she was a Christian, but did she lose her salvation by doing this? Is suicide the unpardonable sin? - Mrs. W.L.

In the third paragraph of Graham's answer he says,

Suicide is always a tragedy - but in itself it is not the unpardonable sin. The only sin God cannot pardon is the sin of rejecting Him. God knew your cousin's heart, and He also knows that mental illness sometimes clouds a person's judgment so much that they aren't fully responsible for their actions. (www.billygraham.org/MyAnswer_Article.asp?ArticleID=1861, copy on file)

In other words, it's possible she went to heaven, according to Graham.

11. [Mark Driscoll](#), founding pastor of Mars Hill Church in Seattle, Washington, wrote about the suicide of Rick Warren's son,

I rejoice that your son worshiped God's Son who not only died, but rose from death and ascended into heaven where he welcomed your son and is preparing a family reunion that will last forever upon the resurrection of the dead. It will be a glorious day when you hug your son again! (underlining added, <http://pastormark.tv/2013/04/10/rick-warren-critics-and-the-hope-of-god-s-son>)

Driscoll clearly believes Warren's son went to heaven.

12. The "Bible Answer Man" Hank Hanegraaff wrote regarding so-called Christians who commit suicide,

. . . God will never spurn them. (*The Complete Bible Answer Book*, p. 398)

13. [John F. MacArthur](#), pastor teacher of Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, California, makes the following claim in his article entitled "Can one who commits suicide be saved?"

Suicide is a grave sin equivalent to murder (Exodus 20:13; 21:23), but it can be forgiven like any other sin. And Scripture says clearly that those redeemed by God have been forgiven for all their sins--past, present, and future (Colossians 2:13-14). Paul says in Romans 8:38-39 that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

So if a true Christian would commit suicide in a time of extreme weakness, he or she would be received into heaven (Jude 24). [www.biblebb.com/files/macqa/IA-suicide.htm, [copy on file](#)]

These all speak directly against Matthew 24:13; John 15:1-6; Romans 11:22; 1 Corinthians 15:2; Colossians 1:23; Hebrews 3:6, 14; 12:25; and 1 John 5:4, 18. Committing suicide is not enduring to the end (Matthew 24:13). It is not abiding in Christ (John 15:1-6). It is not continuing in His goodness (Romans 11:22). It is not holding fast the word (1 Corinthians 15:2). It is definitely being moved away from the hope of the gospel (Colossians 1:23). It is not holding fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end (Hebrews 3:6). It is not holding the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end (Hebrews 3:14). It is refusing and turning away from Him who speaks from heaven (Hebrews 12:25). And, it is not overcoming the world (1 John 5:4), but rather being overcome by the world and the devil (1 Peter 5:8). That doesn't happen to those "**born of God.**"

Not Taught!

We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. (1 John 5:18).

The above list of false teaching on suicide opens wide the door of death and Hades (Luke 16:19-31; Revelation 20:11-15) to those in despair.

Some might argue, "What about Samson? He committed suicide." Samson's "suicide" was actually an act of war, as he killed three thousand Philistines in his vengeance upon them (Judges 16:28-30). He died in his effort to kill others, as he said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" (Judges 16:30). It was not, as a typical suicide of our day, because of a lack of hope, or a deranged mind. He died with the Philistines to "take vengeance on the Philistines" for his two eyes (Judges 16:28). Plus, this was the only choice he had, to kill them as he did.

Typical suicidal people today are those who have no hope, and they are thus not in Christ (Ephesians 2:12; 1 Peter 1:3; 3:15), or they have been moved away from the hope of the gospel and are thus lost (Colossians 1:21-23). Those with deranged minds, or who "might have a mental breakdown," are those who do not have a sound mind and are therefore not in Christ (Isaiah 26:3; 2 Timothy 1:7). These people will end up in hell if they die in such a state. Such people are not saved.

MacArthur, in the article mentioned above, ends his article with these words:

So though it may be possible for a true believer to commit suicide, we believe that is an unusual occurrence.

One unusual belief in this damning doctrine will result in one long eternity in hell!

Finally, below is an email sent to a man who argued Jesus committed suicide. He wrote,

(My own opinion: technically God committed suicide on the Cross; albeit for the all-time most altruistic reason).

From: [Darwin Fish](#)

Sent: Friday, June 6, 2014 3:29 PM

To: [Bron](#)

Subject: Re: Your need to repent.

On the cross and in His death, Jesus did not lose or forsake hope in God nor rebel against Him as those who commit suicide today do. Moreover, no man could or can do what Christ did, lay His life down of Himself (John 10:18; Ecclesiastes 8:8 **"No one has power over the spirit to retain the spirit"**). He also was murdered by men (Acts 7:52).

Paul says,

if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, . . . (Colossians 1:23).

Jesus said,

he who endures to the end shall be saved (Matthew 24:13).

God does not promise salvation to those who forsake Him (e.g. 1 Chronicles 28:9; John 15:1-6; Hebrews 10:26-31). Paul warns,

Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.
(Rom 11:22 NKJ)

“Mental Illness” (as in the realm we are talking, suicide, self-destructive behavior) is a symptom of a “**debased mind**” (Romans 1:28). When someone is so utterly given over to wickedness, hopelessness, and rejection of Christ that they kill themselves (as masochistic behavior is noted as demonic in Scripture, Mark 5:2-5; Ephesians 5:29 “**no one ever hated his own flesh**”), such behavior reveals there is no faith in Christ. God has made Himself very clear: “**the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God**” (1 Corinthians 6:9-10), the “**unbelieving**” go to the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). The Bible is not a lie.

From: [Bronwen Savini](#)

Sent: Friday, June 6, 2014 6:28 PM

To: [Darwin Fish](#)

Subject: RE: Your need to repent.

You make some extremely good points. I'll do some contextual study on the scriptures you've provided. Suicide as you characterize it is indeed the act of an unbelieving, desperately depraved man. Not all suicide fits in that box however. I also agree that those who fall away and reject Christ are doomed to hell.

So I will get to my studying. I will reply further later on. In reviewing my initial email to you I realize that I need to apologize for my tone. So I am sorry.

Not Taught!

Salvation

Because the truth is *not* typically taught,

They Think They're Saved, But They're Not!

What a horrifying reality, to think you will enter paradise on the day of your death, but then, come to find out on that day, you were actually deceived, and you find yourself in hell. Such is, and will be, the terror of most who call themselves Christians today (Matthew 7:13-14; Luke 13:24; 2 Peter 2:2). They will find themselves weeping and gnashing their teeth (e.g. Matthew 8:12; 22:1-14; 25:14-30; Luke 13:28).

Moreover, all of the world religions (e.g. Protestantism, Catholicism, Mormonism, JW's, Seventh Day Adventism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Atheism, etc.) lead to nowhere but hell (Revelation 21:8 "unbelieving, . . . idolaters"). Every single last person involved in them reject the truth of the Bible (Romans 1:18-25), and thus, the Truth of the Bible, God (John 14:6), will burn them forever in the lake of fire for hating Him so (Deuteronomy 32:39-41; Revelation 20:11-15).

Furthermore, if you are involved with the kind of Christianity that views Protestantism, or Catholicism, or the Orthodox church, or the "[church of Christ](#)", or [Billy Graham](#), or [Rick Warren](#), or Joel Osteen, or [James Dobson](#), or [Pat Robertson](#), or [John MacArthur](#), or [Tony Evans](#), or [Greg Laurie](#), or [Charles Stanley](#), or [Chuck Smith](#), or [Fred Price](#), or [J. Vernon McGee](#), or [Charles Blake](#), or [Chuck Swindoll](#), or [Gene Scott](#), or [Harold Camping](#), or [John Piper](#), or [T. D. Jakes](#), or [David Jeremiah](#), or [Charles Spurgeon](#), or [Dave Hunt](#), or [Marvin J. Rosenthal](#), or [David W. Cloud](#), or [Perry F Rockwood](#), or [Neil Anderson](#), or [Robert Schuller](#), or [Jack Hayford](#), or [Benny Hinn](#), or [Miles McPherson](#), or [Ray Comfort](#), or [Chuck Colson](#), or [C. S. Lewis](#), or [Hank Hanegraaff](#), or [Paul Chappell](#), or any of the like (or any of the likes on "Christian" TV or radio) as

Not Taught!

godly, you are not saved. Why? Because, you are on the broad way (Matthew 7:13; 2 Peter 2:2; 2 Timothy 4:3). You have not the characteristic of Christ's sheep (John 10:5). And, men such as these are wells without water (2 Peter 2:17).

I. The Broad Way

Jesus warned,

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (Matthew 7:13)

The false teachers mentioned above, and the many like them (2 Timothy 4:3), all teach a broad theological road that supposedly leads to heaven (e.g. see the book *False Teachers*). False teachers differ as to how broad this way is, but nonetheless, they all teach a broad way. As Charles Spurgeon put it,

What is the reason why there are so many [Christian] sects in the world? Surely it must be because we don't follow the guidance of the Spirit of God. If we followed the Word of God and the will of God in all things, we should be very much more alike than we are. I do not think that even then we should all run in the same groove, for **the road to heaven may be sufficiently wide to have several different paths in it**, and yet shall they all be in the same way and in the same road. (*Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Vol. 61, p. 514-515, Sept., 28, 1870, bold added)

Yes indeed, they are all "in the same way and in the same road." Jesus called it the "broad" road "that leads to destruction" (Matthew 7:13).

Spurgeon lies and speaks the exact opposite of Christ when he says, "the road to heaven may be sufficiently wide to have several different paths in it." Spurgeon believed both Calvinists and Arminians (different gospels on 5 points!) were on this wide path to heaven (see chapter on Spurgeon in *False Teachers*). He even believed there would be more people in heaven than in hell.

I believe there will be more in Heaven than in hell. If anyone asks me why I think so, I answer, because Christ, in everything, is to "have the pre-eminence", and I cannot conceive how He could have the pre-eminence if there are to be more in the dominions of Satan than in Paradise. (C. H. Spurgeon's *Autobiography*, Vol. 1, p. 171, in "A Defence Of Calvinism")

Jesus says it's narrow. Spurgeon says it's wide. Jesus says few enter eternal life (Matthew 7:14; Luke 13:24). Spurgeon says many. He taught the exact

opposite of Christ. Such teaching is antichrist, transgressing the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9), and damning (Revelation 21:8 "unbelieving").

False teachers, like Spurgeon and those mentioned above, teach that amongst saved Christians there is a wide spectrum of conflicting doctrines and this manifests itself as differing forms of Christianity (e.g., see our report on [Chuck Smith](#), or note Chuck Colson's book, *The Body*, or C. S. Lewis' book, *Mere Christianity*). False teachers create this delusion by holding to some form of creed, creeds, essentials, fundamentals, or core belief that supposedly unifies all true believers. If one stays within the bounds of this central belief, often called "orthodox Christianity" or "historic Christianity" (e.g. *Christianity In Crisis*, p. 31, 43), then a person is considered to be in the truth. And, other doctrines that the Bible addresses are counted as peripheral issues (or "secondary" or "non-essential") and are perceived as matters that do not pertain to salvation (e.g. *ibid.*, p. 47). As the phrase that's been attributed to the Catholic of old (Augustine) puts it,

In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; and in all things, charity.
(*Christianity In Crisis*, by Hank Hanegraaff, copyright 1993, p. 47)

These words well sum up the broad way (Matthew 7:13). They make room for many who do not see eye to eye regarding a myriad of Scriptural subjects. Thus, they create a wide theological path (as Spurgeon said) that supposedly leads to heaven, but in reality leads to hell; because people are led to "**not receive the love of the truth**" (as in 2 Thessalonians 2:10).

With this "essentials" doctrine (or any mentality like it), the broad way (Matthew 7:13-14) breeds complacency like gangrene in the hearts of men and women. Since there are so many matters in the Scriptures that are considered not pertinent to salvation, trembling before the word of God is made obsolete (Psalm 119:120; Isaiah 66:2, 5; Philippians 2:12), and no one makes haste to keep His commandments (Psalm 119:60). No one makes haste to keep all His precepts (Psalm 119:128, 151). So, wisdom cries out,

How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? For scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge. (Proverbs 1:22)

When "Christians" agree to disagree over what the Bible teaches, and only the "essential" matters matter (in regards to salvation), there resides an unbiblical simplicity in the mind and a deadly cancer (2 Timothy 2:16-17) in the hearts of such fools (false Christians) who learn to scorn and hate knowledge. Because, their perspective is, "Hey, it's not a matter of salvation." Therefore, their complacency will destroy them (Proverbs 1:32).

Contrary to any "essentials," Christ said,

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4)

Not Taught!

Life is had "**by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God**" (i.e. Genesis to Revelation). It is trust in the word of God that saves, as James exhorts,

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. (James 1:21)

It is the word of God that saves (e.g. Luke 8:11-12). It is the word of God that must be believed (e.g. Genesis 15:5-6; Romans 4:3). If you are directed away from faith in the word of God, whatever the issue, this can lead to the destruction of your soul. Because, Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness (Genesis 15:5-6; Romans 4:3). If you do not believe God, it will be accounted to you as wickedness (Psalm 119:118; 1 John 5:10).

Therefore, there are no Biblical issues we can agree to disagree upon, because Scripture warns and instructs,

If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself. (1 Timothy 6:3-5)

If anyone teaches anything other than holy writ and does not heed Scriptural correction ("teaches otherwise and does not consent" 1 Timothy 6:3), then we are instructed to withdraw and turn away from such a person (1 Timothy 6:5; 2 Timothy 3:5). This is the opposite of agreeing to disagree. It is rather, agreeing to leave and not fellowship with them. Because,

He who keeps instruction is in the way of life, but he who refuses correction goes astray. (Proverbs 10:17)

Those who go astray from the word of God, are not in the truth, and are not saved; and their words are words of deceit, as Psalm 119:118 declares,

You reject all those who stray from Your statutes, for their deceit is falsehood.

God rejects all those who stray from His word. It does not matter what the subject matter is. There is no salvation for any who heed not holy writ, as Psalm 119:21 proclaims,

You rebuke the proud, the cursed, who stray from Your

commandments.

No matter who you are, you are cursed if you do not follow after God's word. Thus, it is eternally important to love correction, as Proverbs asserts,

For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; reproofs of instruction are the way of life. (Proverbs 6:23)

Cease listening to instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge. (Proverbs 19:27)

This is what the false Christian world has done. They have strayed from the words of knowledge (2 Timothy 4:3; 2 Peter 2:18), and followed after a broad path that leads to hell (Matthew 7:13-14). In opposition to a wide path, is the theologically narrow way that leads to life (Matthew 7:13-14; Luke 13:24). How narrow? In the very context in which Christ warned about the broad way (Matthew 7:13), He ended His sermon with this warning.

Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall. (Matthew 7:24-27)

In the context in which Jesus spoke these words (Matthew 5:3-7:23), He preached about contriteness, mourning, meekness, hunger, thirst, purity, peace, persecution, anger, divorce, adultery, oaths, love, giving, prayer, forgiveness, fasting, possessions, needs, worrying, judging, rebuking, seeking, false prophets, etc.. Do you see any "non-essentials" in there? Christ makes no distinction concerning any of the many matters He addressed in His sermon. For Him, it all matters eternally. Because, the Lord describes in a very picturesque way, life or death and heaven or hell for those who hear His words and either do them or do not do them. Christ placed an eternal importance upon all that He said, as Proverbs instructs,

My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart; for they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh. (Proverbs 4:20-22; see also Proverbs 8:35 & 16:22)

My son, let them not depart from your eyes, keep sound wisdom

Not Taught!

and discretion; so they will be life to your soul and grace to your neck. (Proverbs 3:21-22)

Revelation likewise affirms,

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. (Revelation 22:14)

Those who keep God's word are those who have the right to the tree of life. In other words, they are the ones who will be granted salvation. The dividing line between those who are saved and those who are not is the Bible itself. If someone truly believes in the Scripture, they are believing in Christ, because Christ is the Scripture (John 1:1, 14; Galatians 3:8; Hebrews 4:12-13; Revelation 19:13); and they will obey Him, as John the Baptist said,

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. (John 3:36 NAS, see also 1 John 2:3-5).

Believing in Jesus is identical to believing in and obeying the Bible. 2 John likewise declares,

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. (2 John 9)

The doctrine of Christ is not only what He taught in Matthew 5:3-7:27, or all the red print in the gospels. The doctrine of Christ equals the entirety of Scripture (Psalm 119:160). Those who transgress and do not remain within the bounds of holy writ, do not have God. They are not saved (2 John 9).

There are not many different kinds of true Christianity, as Spurgeon depicted with his "wide" road with "several different paths in it." There is only *one* kind of true Christianity, and it is the kind that keeps His word (1 John 2:5), all of it (Psalm 119:128, 160, Matthew 4:4). Scripture teaches that true believers believe the same on every single Biblical doctrine (1 John 4:6, for a more in-depth explanation, see the chapter on [The Unity Of The Saints](#)). There is no agreeing to disagree, or essentials and non-essentials. The war is over the truth of the word of God (Genesis to Revelation), and true believers are in opposition to any and every error that would come against it (Psalm 119:104, 128). As Paul wrote,

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God,

bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

Be warned. It only takes one lie to love and practice to keep you outside the kingdom of God.

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. (Revelation 22:14-15; see also Revelation 21:8)

False teachers, like those mentioned at the beginning of this article, encourage people not only to love and practice a lie (like the "essentials" lie), but rather many lies as they divert people's trust off of God's word and onto their own great sounding words of emptiness (2 Peter 2:18). The amazing part of this is, the false teachers, being deceived themselves (2 Timothy 3:13), have people thinking they are following the Bible, when in reality they are following the doctrines of men (Matthew 15:8-9), like the "essentials" lie which is a damning doctrine of men, nowhere taught in the Word of God (Proverbs 30:5-6).

Most people are either pagans, lost in some false religion, or false Christians caught on the broad way (Matthew 7:13-14; 2 Timothy 4:3). Most people have not even found the narrow way, the way of truth (2 Peter 2:2). Yet, Christ warns even those who have found the narrow way with these words:

Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. (Luke 13:24)

Even among those who have actually found the narrow gate, many of them do not enter. Many go to perdition, as Peter writes,

For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter 4:17-18)

The righteous make it with difficulty (Matthew 7:14; Acts 14:22). It is not an easy path.

Therefore, if you follow the typical Christianity that prevails in the world today, or anything like it, if you are on this broad way, and you do not reject it (2 Timothy 3:5; Hebrews 12:14), you will lie down in torment (Isaiah 50:11; 66:24; Revelation 21:8); because you have not received **"the love of the truth, that [you] might be saved"** (2 Thessalonians 2:10); and because,

Not Taught!

II. Christ's Sheep Flee.

Those who have received the love of the truth would not hang around such broad way "Christianity," because they would know the truth does matter, and in loving the truth they would "**hate every false way**" (Psalm 119:104, 128, 163), as Proverbs 8:13 says, "**the fear of the Lord is to hate evil.**" False doctrine, on any Biblical matter, is evil (Proverbs 30:5-6).

Note how Jesus describes His sheep. He says they follow Him. They follow the truth (John 14:6).

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.
(John 10:27)

Earlier Jesus describes Himself and His sheep by saying,

And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. They will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers. (John 10:4-5)

Jesus' sheep are those who are saved (John 10:27-28), and they are described as those who "**will by no means follow a stranger.**" This "**by no means**" dictates that under no circumstances will Christ's sheep follow a stranger.

Who is a stranger? A stranger is anyone other than Christ whom the sheep do not know. The context of John 10:5 is false spiritual leaders (John 9:40-41). Christ's sheep hear neither strangers (John 10:5) nor thieves and robbers (John 10:8). Anyone who would speak so as to divert a person away from Christ would fit "a stranger," and this is what false teachers do. "**They speak great swelling words of emptiness**" (2 Peter 2:18), and bring people into the same bondage and corruption by which they themselves are held (Luke 6:39-40; 2 Peter 2:19).

Therefore, anyone following any of the men listed at the beginning of this chapter, or any like them, are not Christ's sheep. Because the Lord says, not only will they not follow them, but they "**flee from him.**"

Christ's sheep do not hang out with false teachers and false churches. They flee from those who do not speak the truth ("strangers"). Whether it is a [Catholic church](#), [Mormon church](#), [Jehovah's Witness Hall](#), [Muslim mosque](#), or any of the myriad of churches on the broad way (like a "[church of Christ](#)," or [Grace Community in Panorama City, CA](#); or [Lancaster Baptist in Lancaster, CA](#), etc.), Christ's sheep are not found counted in their ranks. The only ones who are found heeding such religion are the wicked, as Proverbs 17:4 declares,

An evildoer gives heed to false lips.

Evildoers are to be found in these churches, not those who follow Christ (John 10:5). Therefore, if you are involved in a false church, you prove yourself to be still lost in your sin. God calls you an evildoer (Proverbs 17:4),

and by His Word identifies you as not one of His own by the sheer fact that you do not flee such wickedness (John 10:5; 1 Timothy 6:5; 2 Timothy 2:20-21; 3:5; Hebrews 12:14; 13:13).

Someone might argue, "But, the Lord used [Billy Graham](#) [or some other false teacher] to bring me to Christ." This too is a lie, because false teachers, like those mentioned at the beginning of this article, are,

III. Wells Without Water.

Speaking of false teachers, Peter wrote,

These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. (2 Peter 2:17)

Peter calls false teachers "**wells without water.**" Jude says they are "**clouds without water**" (Jude 12). What does this mean?

In the Scriptures, water is used to speak of the Spirit of truth (i.e. the Holy Spirit, John 7:37-39; 14:15-18; 15:26; 16:13), God (Jeremiah 2:13/17:13), and salvation (Isaiah 55:1; Psalm 36:9; John 4:10-14; Revelation 7:17; 21:6; 22:1,17). Therefore, if false teachers are without this water, they do not have the Holy Spirit (like in Jude 19). They are without God (2 John 9), and do not have salvation (2 Peter 2:3, 12-14, 17; Jude 4, 11, 13). As 1 Timothy 6:5 says, they are "**destitute of the truth**" and know "**nothing**".

The Lord calls them "wells" and "clouds." A well is a hole in the ground that is supposed to have water, or gives the appearance that it would have water. A cloud likewise gives the appearance that it carries moisture. Yet, a well or a cloud without water gives a false impression, and false teachers do this well. They fool the masses into thinking God is using them to bring people to Christ, but it is all a Satanic facade (as in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15). They have no water. They have no truth (truth mixed with lies = deceit and no truth), no salvation, and no Holy Spirit. Thus, they do nothing but deceive people. They are as Jesus said, "**blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.**" (Matthew 15:14).

Jesus also said,

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.
(John 10:10a)

This statement is made in the context of "thieves and robbers" (John 10:1, 8). It is not speaking solely of Satan, but rather his ministers as well (2 Corinthians 11:15; John 10:1). It lets us know the sole purpose of these charlatans, and that is to deceive (to steal, kill, and destroy). They steal using "**great swelling words of emptiness**" (2 Peter 2:18). They kill by being used by the devil (1 Peter 5:8) to divert people away from the words of life (Proverbs 4:20-22; 14:12; 18:21; Philippians 2:16). And they destroy with their "**destructive heresies**" (2 Peter 2:1). They may not be aware of the depth of their own evil

Not Taught!

(e.g. John 16:2-3; 2 Timothy 3:13), but they are nonetheless "**like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed**" (2 Peter 2:12); and they do destroy others.

If the Lord were to use a false teacher for some good, it would be in spite of him, not because of him. As the Lord used Balaam the false prophet to bless Israel (Numbers 22-24), it was not because Balaam was a godly man or one who lead people to God (Numbers 25:1-9; 31:16; 2 Peter 2:15-16). It was simply because God turned the curse into a blessing (Deuteronomy 23:5; Nehemiah 13:2). Scripture does not teach that the Lord uses false teachers to lead people to Christ. On the contrary, the Word teaches that God uses false teachers to lead people away from Christ (Psalm 118:22-24; Romans 11:36; 1 Peter 2:7).

False teachers falsely boast of giving the gospel to people. But they are like the one mentioned in Proverbs 25:14.

Whoever falsely boasts of giving is like clouds and wind without rain.

They are clouds and wells without water, a dry disappointment.

If you are going to "**draw water from the wells of salvation**" (Isaiah 12:3), you need to go where the water is to be found (John 4:10, 13-14). It is not found with the likes of the men mentioned above. It is not found in the myriad of false churches and ministries. It is found in the pages of the Word of God (1 Peter 1:22-23; Hebrews 4:12-13; Revelation 19:13). **Fear God** (Luke 12:4-5), **cry out** (Proverbs 2:3), **weep** (James 4:9), and **seek** for understanding (Proverbs 2:4) like there is no tomorrow, because for most, there is no tomorrow (Psalm 9:17; 92:7; Proverbs 1:24-32; Matthew 7:13-14).

Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. (Luke 13:24, see also the chapter [What Must I Do To Be Saved?](#))

The question below and the immediate answer given are typically not strange to many "Christians" today, but what it really means, is rarely, if ever, heard. So we have,

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

The "**keeper of the prison**" asked this question, and Paul and Silas answered,

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household. (Acts 16:31)

This is what it takes to be saved, faith in the Son of God (John 3:16-18, 36; Romans 5:1). Scripture says that "**all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**" (Romans 3:23), and "**there is none righteous, no, not one**" (Romans 3:10). Isaiah says, "**All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way;**" (Isaiah 53:6) and "**You are indeed angry, for we have sinned - in these ways we continue; and we need to be saved**" (Isaiah 64:5).

Everyone needs to be saved because, "**there is none who does good, no, not one**" (Romans 3:12), and because God "**has appointed a day on which He will judge the world**" (Acts 17:31). When God judges the world, all who have *not* been saved will be judged according to their deeds (Romans 2:6) and cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15). They will be in endless torment for all eternity (e.g. Revelation 20:10; 14:11; Isaiah 66:24; Mark 9:43-48). Every one indeed needs to be saved!

But, not everyone will be saved. As Romans 9 says,

Not Taught!

Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved. For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, because the Lord will make a short work upon the earth." (Romans 9:27-28)

And the same is true, not only of Israel, but of all mankind.

Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?" And He said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able." (Luke 13:23-24)

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (Matthew 7:13-14; see also Matthew 7:21-23)

Typically, [false Christians, people who are on this broad way](#) ("**broad is the way**"), are led astray regarding what it takes to be saved. They are given a perverted answer to the above question, "**What must I do to be saved?**" (e.g. see our report on [Charles Stanley](#)). But, it is all very stealthful (2 Peter 2:1) and deceptive. The answer given may be in word identical to that found in Acts 16:31, but what is meant by it is typically vastly different than what it is in truth.

I. True Faith

Acts 16:31 says, "**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ . . .**" What is it to believe on Christ? It is to trust Him. It is to have faith in Him. It is to hope in Him. As Psalm 2:12 says, "**Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.**" and as Paul preached, "**repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ**" (Acts 20:21); and as 1 Peter 3:15 says,

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you,
...

True faith is a trust, hope and reliance upon God (on Christ). It is trusting and hoping in His mercy (Psalm 52:8; 147:11) realizing your "**goodness is nothing apart from**" Him (Psalm 16:1; Isaiah 57:15; 66:2; Matthew 5:3). Those with true faith enter a "rest" (Hebrews 4) that rests their "**hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought [to them] at the revelation of Jesus Christ**" (1 Peter 1:13) trusting not in their own righteousness (Titus 3:5), but in the righteousness of God that comes through faith in Christ (Philippians 3:9;

Romans 3:22).

True faith is not only trusting and hoping in the mercy and righteousness of God, but it is relying upon Him *in everything* (Proverbs 3:5-6; 1 Thessalonians 5:18), *for everything* (Isaiah 50:10; Ephesians 5:20), and *at all times* (Psalm 62:8). As Psalm 40:4 says,

Blessed is that man who makes the Lord his trust.

How then does this faith in Christ manifest itself? It manifests itself through good works (i.e. righteous living). As James says,

What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe-and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. (James 2:14-26)

The above passage reveals that you are a "**foolish man**" (verse 20) if you think that a person can have faith in God and not at the same time have godly living (good works, 1 Corinthians 6:9; Titus 2:11-14; Ephesians 2:10). True belief has a righteous effect on a person's life, as Romans 10:10 says, "**For with the heart one believes unto righteousness.**" The "**righteousness of God**" that comes "**through faith in Jesus Christ**" is "**to all and on all who believe**" (Romans 3:22). In other words, God's righteousness is upon those who believe, so therefore they live righteous lives.

This is why those who do respond to Christ in faith, respond in obedience to His call to be baptized (Mark 16:16). Those in Acts 16:30-34 were immediately immersed in Christ (Acts 16:33). Peter preached in Acts 2:38,

Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus

Not Taught!

Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Those who refuse to obey God in this command prove themselves to be still in rebellion against God (Proverbs 17:11; 2 Thessalonians 1:8) and receive no remission of sins (Acts 2:38). It is not that water, in and of itself, saves anyone (1 Peter 3:21). Certainly, the thief was saved (Luke 23:40-43). He was immersed (baptized) into Christ through faith (Hebrews 11:6). But, given the chance, true believers appeal to God for a good conscience via baptism (1 Peter 3:21 NAS).

II. The True "Lord Jesus Christ"

This faith must be in "**the Lord Jesus Christ**" (Acts 16:31), that is, the *true* Jesus, not the "**Jesus who is called Justus**" (Colossians 4:11) or any other "Jesus." In 2 Corinthians 11:4 Paul spoke of the reality of "another Jesus." [Mormonism](#), [Jehovah's Witness](#), [Catholicism](#), Buddhism, Hinduism, Atheism, [the present day false Christianity that is so prevalent](#) (2 Timothy 3:1-5; 4:3-4; 2 Peter 2:1), and any other false religion or philosophy, all have ideas of a "Jesus Christ" but it is not in accordance with truth. If a person believes in a "Jesus" but it is not the Lord Jesus Christ of the Bible, they are not saved (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

The true Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 10:36) which means He is equal with God (John 5:18). It also means He *is* God (Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1; 18; Philippians 2:6; Titus 2:13; 1 John 2:23; 5:20). The true Lord Jesus is also a man (1 Timothy 2:5; Luke 24:39), one of two Men (John 8:17-18). Therefore, He is both God and man (Colossians 2:9; 2 John 7).

The true Lord Jesus is also Holy Gods, as Joshua 24:19 literally says in the Hebrew, "He is Holy Gods," (see chapter with that title), and as Colossians 2:9 declares, "**in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.**"

The true Lord Jesus is also the truth (John 14:6) and the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24, 30; Luke 11:49; Matthew 23:34), and the Word of God (the "Logos", John 1:1, 14; Revelation 19:13; Luke 5:1; 8:11, 21; 11:28; John 8:55; 17:14, 17; etc., **1 Peter 1:23-25** has both λογου [logou] and ρημα [hrēma] for the word of God; see also Hebrews 11:3; John 1:3). Jesus is God, and Jesus is the Word of God, therefore the Word of God is God (John 1:1). As the Word of God says,

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. (Hebrews 4:12-13)

As the above Scripture says, there is no creature hidden from the sight of the word of God. All things are naked and open to the eyes of the word of God,

because the word of God *is* God. Galatians 3:8 also illustrates that the word of God (i.e. Scripture) is God Himself.

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." (Galatians 3:8; see also Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18)

Here Scripture is described as "**foreseeing**" and preaching. The word of God is indeed alive (1 Peter 1:23).

Therefore, since the Lord Jesus is the Word of God, Scripture, those who believe in Him, believe in the Scriptures (the Holy Bible), since that is who He is. Therefore, to say, "**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ**" (Acts 16:31) this is the same as saying "believe on the word of God," or "believe what God says." Just as Jesus saves (Matthew 1:21), so does the word of God save (Matthew 4:4; James 1:21; 1 Peter 1:22-23). They are one and the same.

Thus, salvation comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, i.e. what God says. Abraham illustrates this:

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

Abraham was "**accounted**" righteous (i.e. justified, Romans 4:5) by God. He was saved. Why? Because He believed God. He believed what God said.

Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. (Genesis 15:5-6)

Abraham believed God in the midst of what appeared to be an absolute impossibility. Abraham had no children. He was an old man, and his wife was old and barren. Yet, the Lord told him that his descendants would be as "**the stars**" in number! Abraham,

who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be." And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness." (Romans 4:18-22)

Not Taught!

Why was it "**accounted to him for righteousness**"? Because he believed what God said in what appeared to be, and was, impossible to ever be true. But God "**calls those things which do not exist as though they did**" (Romans 4:17). "**For with God nothing will be impossible**" (Luke 1:37).

Therefore, Abraham believed God. Abraham believed in Christ, the Word of God. And as it was with Abraham, so it is with all those who "**are blessed with believing Abraham**" (Galatians 3:10). They are "**accounted righteous**" (i.e. saved) because they "**do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.**" (2 Corinthians 4:18). They "**walk by faith, not by sight**" (2 Corinthians 5:7). This is true faith in the true Lord Jesus Christ.

III. True Salvation

Furthermore, being "**saved**" (Acts 16:31) is not just fire insurance. True salvation is being saved from sin (Matthew 1:21), both the power of sin in the here and now (Romans 6:14) and from the wages of sin which is eternal death (Romans 6:23; Revelation 21:8). It is also being saved from the power of Satan (Acts 26:18; Ephesians 2:1-5; Colossians 1:13).

Therefore, those who are saved are those who live godly lives and do not practice sin (John 8:31-36; 1 John 1:5-6; 2:3-5; 3:4-10). As 1 John says,

Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. (1 John 3:4-10)

This does not mean believers are without sin (1 John 1:7-10), but they do not continue to live in any evil way. They also do not follow after lies (as a pattern of their life), but after truth, the word of God; because they believe God, follow after Him, and take heed to what He says. As Jesus said, "**He who is of God hears God's words**" (John 8:47; see also Matthew 7:21-27).

True salvation is being saved from sin and error, not only in the life to come, but in the here and now. [Those who teach otherwise](#) (1 Timothy 6:3) turn the grace of God into lewdness (Jude 4), and deny the power of godliness (2 Timothy 3:5). Because, it is lewd and foolish to teach that a person can be saved from the power of sin and Satan, yet still be caught in the trap of sin and

Satan. The power of godliness is the power resident in a true believer's life to overcome sin, deceit, and Satan. **"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world"** (1 John 5:4), and **"the wicked one does not touch him."** (1 John 5:18).

Salvation produces a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15) in which the one who believes is born again (John 3:3-6; 1 Peter 1:3), that is, born of God (John 1:12-13; 1 John 3:9; 5:4). It is a transformation from spiritual death to spiritual life (Ephesians 2:1-5).

IV. The Cost

The salvation of souls cost the Son of God His life (Luke 22:63-23:48; Romans 5:6-10; 1 Corinthians 15:3). He shed His own blood (Colossians 1:20) and **"bore our sins in His own body on the tree"** (1 Peter 2:24). **"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."** (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Christ paid the price. Therefore, those who believe in Him are **"justified freely by His grace"** (Romans 3:24). Ephesians 2:8-9 says,

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Even the faith it takes to believe in Christ is **"the gift of God"** (Ephesians 2:8). Therefore, eternal life comes as a gift (Romans 5:15-18; 6:23), and is not something worked for or given by God by merit (Ephesians 2:1-9; Romans 4:1-5). In fact, salvation is **"not of the will of man, but of God"** (John 1:12-13). **Those who teach man chooses God based on his own free will**, apart from God causing them to turn to Him (Proverbs 16:9; 20:24), propagate a gospel of works which is contrary to Romans 9:11-16 and Ephesians 2:1-10.

Now, since Christ paid the price, and this eternal life is a gift, and it is not based on **"works lest anyone should boast"** (Ephesians 2:9), does this mean salvation costs the believer nothing? No. In fact, being **"bought at a price"** by Christ dictates that the believer has lost everything to Christ (Philippians 3:8), even his own body.

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. (2 Corinthians 5:15)

Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we,

Not Taught!

having died to sins, might live for righteousness-" (1 Peter 2:24)

Jesus said,

If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it- lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, "This man began to build and was not able to finish." Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. (Luke 14:26-33)

Here Jesus exhorts the multitude that was following Him (Luke 14:25) to "**count the cost**" of following Him. There is a "**cost**" to having true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The cost is the loss of everything (Philippians 3:8; Matthew 13:44-46). As Jesus said,

Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? (Mark 8:34-36; see also Luke 9:23-25)

V. The Answer

Finally, there are *many* ways to answer the question, "**What must I do to be saved?**" This does not mean that there are many ways of salvation (John 14:6), but that Scripture answers this question in a variety of ways in which all are consistent with Acts 16:31.

For example, Psalm 15 asks the same question, but with different words.

Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? (Psalm 15:1)

In other words, who may abide with God? Who goes to heaven? The answer?

He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart; he who does not backbite with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor does he take up a reproach against

his friend; in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the Lord; he who swears to his own hurt and does not change; he who does not put out his money at usury, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved. (Psalm 15:2-5)

Likewise, Psalm 24:3 asks,

Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place?

The answer?

He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully. (Psalm 24:4)

This is the kind of person who goes to heaven.

Of course, the New Testament concurs with this. "**The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God**" (1 Corinthians 6:9). And, as Romans 3:22 says the "**righteousness of God**" comes through faith in Christ. Here in Psalm 24, it says that the righteousness of God comes to the one "**who has clean hands and a pure heart**" (Psalm 24:4).

He shall receive blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face. Selah (Psalm 24:5-6)

Isaiah 55:6-7 also gives the answer to "**What must I do to be saved?**"

Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

This is synonymous with "**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved**" (Acts 16:31), because a true believer will "**seek the Lord while He may be found**" and call "**upon Him while He is near.**"

Hebrews 11:6 also gives the answer to "**What must I do to be saved?**"

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

What does the above verse let us know? God must be diligently sought after!
Proverbs 2:1-5 says,

Not Taught!

My son, if you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you, so that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; *then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.* (Proverbs 2:1-5)

The knowledge of God equals eternal life (John 17:3). Proverbs 2:1-5 mirrors Isaiah 55:6-7 in seeking wisdom. In other words, you must diligently seek wisdom in order to be saved, since the Lord *is* wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:24, 30). In fact, the reason people are born when and where they are (Acts 17:26), is,

so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. (Acts 17:27)

Those who do not seek wisdom will be damned. As Proverbs 1:32 says, "**the complacency of fools will destroy them.**"

1 Peter 3:10-12 also gives what one must do to be saved.

He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

Those who do evil go to hell (Psalm 11:6; Revelation 21:8). Therefore, we *must* refrain our tongue from evil, our lips from speaking deceit, and we *must* turn away from evil and do good. As Paul explained to King Agrippa that the Gentiles,

should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. (Acts 26:20)

Romans 10:9-10 also answers this question.

If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Romans 10:10 says, "**with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**" The confession that is made is "**Lord Jesus.**" In other words, submission is made to the only Potentate, King of Kings and Lord of Lords (1 Timothy 6:15).

The life is no longer in rebellion against God (Colossians 1:21), and this results **"unto salvation."**

For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. (Romans 14:7-8)

Those who do not live for God go to hell. As Romans 2:8-9 says,

those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness - indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil.

Therefore, in order to be saved, you *must* live for Christ and you *must* not live for yourself, *and* you *must* obey the truth (Romans 2:8; John 14:6).

Likewise, 2 Thessalonians 2:10 also reveals what it takes to be saved. It says, **"they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved."** One must not only obey the truth, but also love it (Mark 12:30; John 14:6).

Hebrews 12:14 says,

Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.

If you are **"without holiness"** you will not see the Lord. In other words, your life must be holy or you will not be saved (1 Timothy 1:9; 2 Timothy 3:2; 1 Corinthians 6:9).

Matthew 6:14-15 reveals you must be forgiving.

For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (see also Matthew 18:21-35; Mark 11:25-26)

The eternal gospel reveals you must fear God, worship Him, and give Him glory.

Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth-to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people- saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water." (Revelation 14:6-7)

Revelation 22:14 reveals you must **"do His commandments."**

Not Taught!

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. (Revelation 22:14-15)

Psalm 103 says likewise,

But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them. (Psalm 103:17-18)

Finally, you must *continue* to believe, or you'll go to hell. Jesus said, "**He who endures to the end shall be saved**" (Matthew 24:13). Hebrews says,

but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. (Hebrews 3:6)

Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. (Hebrews 3:12-14; see also 1 Corinthians 15:1-2 and Colossians 1:21-23)

All of these (continued faith, holiness, living for God, etc.) are good works that are resultant of true faith in Christ (James 2:14-26). Believers work out their salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12), not because they trust in their own righteousness, but because it is "**God who works in [them] both to will and to do for His good pleasure**" (Philippians 2:13). Faith and obedience go hand in hand (e.g. Hebrews 3:18-19).

What's the bottom line? You must believe God, otherwise you make Him a liar.

He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. (1 John 5:10)

As the chapter before, people may be familiar with these words, but what they actually mean is basically untaught.

Not By Works

Although [salvation](#) is not by works (2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5), God's judgment is:

Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth-**those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.** (John 5:28-29)

God,

"will render to each one according to his deeds": eternal life to those who by patient continuance in **doing good** seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and **do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness**-indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, **on every soul of man who does evil**, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to **everyone who works what is good**, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Romans 2:6-10)

But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For **by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.** (Matthew 12:36-37)

Not Taught!

God's judgment upon *all*, be they in Christ or not, is indeed going to be according to works (see also Matthew 25:31-46). Paul even says, "not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but **the doers of the law will be justified** (Romans 2:13). If this is so, and it is, how is it then that God, "has saved us and called us with a holy calling, **not according to our works**" (2 Timothy 1:9)? How can it be that it is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Titus 3:5)?

I. All Are Under Sin.

All men "are under sin" (Romans 3:9; 5:12). No matter who you are. No matter what you've done. You are a sinner.

As it is written: There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit; 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 ways; and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes. (Romans 3:10-18)

The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not one. (Psalm 14:2-3)

Therefore, all men are guilty before God (Romans 3:19) and need to be saved (Isaiah 64:5). And since they are guilty and sinful, men are incapable of doing good on their own (Psalm 16:2). Even their righteousness God considers as good as a rag with more than one menstruation upon it.

But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; (literally in the Hebrew, *a garment of periods*, עֲדִימַי בְּגָדֵי עֲדִימַי [begeg 'iddiyim] Isaiah 64:6; Hebrew Isaiah 64:5)

Good without God = 0. Therefore, men need to be saved. And since men have no righteousness of their own, salvation is impossible without the mercy and grace of God. As Jesus said, speaking of salvation,

With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible. (see Mark 10:26-27).

Men, left to their own merit, on their own good deeds, cannot be saved. It's impossible. Because, the very best they can do ("our righteousnesses") is worth

absolutely nothing. Actually, any "good" a sinner might do apart from God is disgusting in His eyes (Isaiah 64:6). Therefore, there is *no way* salvation could be based upon "works of righteousness which we have done."

II. All Are Spiritually Dead.

Moreover, being under sin, as all men are, this also means that they are spiritually dead. Because "**the wages of sin is death**" (Romans 6:23).

God was not lying when He said to Adam, "**in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die**" (Genesis 2:17; Titus 1:2). Adam and Eve died that day (Genesis 3:1-19). Physically they continued to live (Genesis 4:25; 5:5). But, spiritually they died, and from that day forward, spiritual death and physical death continued on in their descendants (Romans 5:12). Paul said to the Ephesians,

And you He made alive, **who were dead in trespasses and sins**, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. (Ephesians 2:1-3)

Before conversion, people are "**children of wrath**" and "**dead in trespasses and sins**." Spiritually dead people are incapable of doing anything spiritually good, as Isaiah 64:6 illustrates.

This is one reason why Jesus said,

Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (John 3:3, 5-6)

One *must* become spiritually alive, born, in order to be saved (i.e. "enter the kingdom of God"). And how does one become spiritually born? By their own efforts? By trying really hard to attain some spiritual nirvana? By finding some spiritual birth canal and going through it? No. Remember, they are spiritually dead. How does a dead man bring himself to life? He doesn't. But, the Lord can.

Paul continues his discourse to the Ephesians with,

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved). (Ephesians 2:4-5)

Not Taught!

This is the work of God, not the work of man. Man is dead in his sin, incapable of doing anything spiritually good (Ephesians 2:1-3; Isaiah 64:6), but God takes dead men, and makes them alive! *This* is why salvation is not by works. It cannot be by works, since no man, dead in his sin, can possibly have any good works whatsoever to attain anything from God. In fact, this is why it is called *salvation*. Men are being *saved* from their miserable, helpless condition, as Romans 5:6 says,

For when we were still **without strength**, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

III. There Is No Righteousness Apart From God.

What about after conversion? What about after we have been born again, made spiritually alive? Is our acceptance into heaven, our salvation, *now* based upon our own good works? No. Because we are *still* incapable of doing *any* good apart from God.

David, who was a saved man (1 Samuel 13:14), said,

O my soul, you have said to the Lord, "You are my Lord, **my goodness is nothing apart from You.**" (Psalm 16:2)

David admitted that he had no goodness in and of himself. He had no righteousness of his own. David also said,

Do not enter into judgment with Your servant, for **in Your sight no one living is righteous.** (Psalm 143:2)

This included David! Even though David was a righteous man (1 Samuel 13:14) he was not a righteous man because of his own goodness, but he was a righteous man because of the righteousness of God that was upon him (Psalm 4:1).

And, so it is for all who come to faith in Christ (Psalm 36:10; 89:16; 103:17; 118:19-20; Romans 3:22). Paul said,

Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, **not having my own righteousness**, which is from the law, **but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith** (Philippians 3:8-9).

Those who face the truth know that they are spiritually bankrupt. They have no righteousness of their own, no goodness apart from God (Psalm 16:2), even *after* they've come to Christ. Thus, Jesus said, "**Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven**" (Matthew 5:3; see also Isaiah 66:2). In

other words, these are the kind of people who go to heaven. These are the kind of people who are saved. They *know* they are not saved by works of righteousness which they have done (Titus 3:5), because they have *none* of their own. Because, even though they are made spiritually alive,

IV. The Flesh Stays Sinful.

In Romans 3:23 Paul wrote, "**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**" This is true of everyone, saved or not. Even saved people *still* sin and fall short of the glory of God, as Solomon said, "**there is no one who does not sin**" (1 Kings 8:46), and 1 John 1:8 says,

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Sin is still a factor in the believer's life, as Paul wrote,

For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? (Romans 7:14-24)

This sinful flesh, this body of death, with its ever present reality of sin, is constantly doing evil (verse 19). Paul said nothing good dwells in it (verse 18). Therefore, there is a constant war waging (verse 23). The sinful flesh part of Paul ("my flesh" which "nothing good dwells" verse 18), is in war against the redeemed part of Paul ("the one who wills to do good" verse 23, "the inward man" verse 22). And, as far as getting Paul's flesh to do anything good, Paul says it's impossible (verse 18). The sinful flesh stays sinful, even after being born again, and the sinful flesh will continue to be evil until the day of "the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23).

Therefore, being still in this sinful flesh, we have sin in us, and we still sin. As 1 John 1:10 says,

If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His

Not Taught!

word is not in us.

Ecclesiastes 7:20 likewise notes,

For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin.

Being still in this sinful state, this dictates a continual need for the grace, mercy, and forgiveness of God. As Hebrews 7:25 indicates.

Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, **since He always lives to make intercession for them.**

And 1 John 1:9 says,

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we confess our sins, He forgives us, and cleanses us from "**all unrighteousness.**" "All unrighteous" includes any unrighteousness, even sin that we might not remember to confess or know to confess. As 1 John 1:6-7 says,

If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:6-7)

Those who walk in the light (i.e. the pattern of their life is obedience to the word of God) get a continual cleansing via the blood of Christ. Thus, their sins are continually cleansed away and their salvation is secure, as long as they continue in the faith (Romans 11:20-22). Those predestined to salvation will, no doubt, continue (Romans 2:6-7; 8:29-39; for more on this, see the next chapter on Eternal Security).

Sad to say, many teach that a believer can actually live a sinful unrepentant life, and still enter the kingdom of God. This is a lie (1 Corinthians 6:9). An example of this can be found in David Jeremiah's book, *God In You* (copyright 1998). On page 145, Jeremiah writes,

So Paul says if we walk by means of the Spirit we won't be walking in the flesh. We won't be walking like God wasn't a part of us. Did you know that **you can be a Christian and act as though God isn't even in your life?** For all intents and purposes, **some Christians are practical atheists. They live their lives as if there is no God. Are**

they Christians? Yes, if they've trusted Christ. But somehow they've gotten away from walking with the Lord. They are walking in their old flesh nature. (bold added, entire paragraph quoted)

Both Psalm 14:1 and Psalm 53:1 say, "**The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'**" These people Jeremiah speaks of are fools. They are not Christians. They are false Christians. Because, right after Paul's discourse in chapter 7 about his war with the flesh, he writes in chapter 8 verse one,

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, **who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.**

There is no condemnation to those who do *not* walk according to the flesh. In other words, there *is* condemnation for those who *do* walk "in their old flesh nature." As Paul further explained,

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (Romans 8:5-8)

For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (Romans 8:13-14)

Sons of God live in righteousness and godliness finding out what is acceptable to the Lord (Ephesians 5:8-10; 1 John 2:3-5). The ungodly, the wicked, those on their way to hell, do not (Revelation 21:8).

Finally,

V. If It Is By Works, Then There Is No Salvation.

Israel of old was excluded from the righteousness of God, from His salvation, because they thought that they might attain to God's righteousness by their own good deeds. They thought that salvation would come to them if they kept the law. In Romans 9:30-32 Paul wrote,

What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works

Not Taught!

of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.

What, or Who, is that stumbling stone? It is Christ (Acts 4:10-11; 1 Peter 2:5-8). Jesus said,

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. (John 14:6)

It is only through faith (trust) in the Lord Jesus Christ that anyone will ever, and has ever, been saved (e.g. Romans 4:3). It is not by keeping the law (good works), because, "**by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin**" (Romans 3:20). In other words, the law reveals the sinfulness of men, and any efforts in keeping the law for salvation is in vain.

This is why Paul was so concerned about the church of Galatia. They had accepted the true gospel, but then sometime later they were given a false gospel in which they were told they must keep the Mosaic law (Galatians 3:3-5, 10, 17). This moved them away from walking by faith (Galatians 1:6) to walking by the flesh (Galatians 3:3-5) as they looked to be perfected, i.e. made righteous, by keeping the law, rather than by trusting God to work His righteousness in them by faith (Galatians 6:15-16; Philippians 3:9).

There is a rest for the people of God (Hebrews 4:9) in which we must be diligent to enter (Hebrews 4:11). In other words, we had better not trust in any righteousness of our own (e.g. **Luke 18:9-14**). This rest is faith in Christ. It is where the believer "**does not work**" to be found righteous in the sight of God (Romans 4:5). It is where the saint "**has ceased from his works as God did from His**" (Hebrews 4:10). What does this mean? It means that any hope of godly living, any hope of living a righteous life, any hope of making it to heaven, is all cast upon the grace, mercy, and kindness of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Peter put it this way,

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:13)

And Hebrews similarly says,

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16)

Find this one in your local church!

Eternal Security? Yes and No.

(Psalm 103:17-18)

Eternal Security is not a subject that acquiesces to the wisdom of this world and the mind of man (Psalm 94:11; 1 Corinthians 3:18-20). For example, Calvinists are on one side of this subject, and Arminians are on the other. Both are "mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God" (Matthew 22:29). God's works are great, and His thoughts are very deep (Psalm 92:5; Isaiah 55:8-9), and this is one subject that finds the words of Romans 11:33 quite apropos.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

On more than one occasion, Scripture teaches what appears to the human mind to be concepts that cannot be simultaneously true. "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Corinthians 2:14). But, when one becomes converted (see [What Must I Do To Be Saved](#)) and becomes like a little child (Matthew 18:3), spiritual matters are accepted, because God's word is believed (John 8:47), whether the concepts seem logical or not (Proverbs 3:5-6).

I. His Judgments

To begin with, the Word is very clear that the judgment of God *is* (Luke 13:1-5; 16:19-25; Romans 1:18), and will be, according to works (Romans 2:5-

Not Taught!

10). Even though it is true that salvation is "not by works of righteousness (see chapter on [Salvation Not By Works](#)) which we have done" (Titus 3:5), it is also true that God,

"will render to each one according to his deeds": eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness-indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Romans 2:6-10)

In other words, those who patiently and continually ("patient continuance") do good ("doing good"), those who have good works ("who works what is good"), those who make it their goal in life ("seek for", Philippians 3:11) to have eternal life ("immortality"), these are the ones whom God will save ("eternal life"). He will render eternal life to them based upon ("according to") their works ("deeds"). *But*, those who seek after what *they* want ("self-seeking"), and do not obey the Word of God ("the truth"), these will go to hell ("indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish"). Jesus said,

Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth-those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. (John 5:28-29)

Jesus' words prove certain that the actions of one's life (a person's deeds, works) will dictate where a person will spend their eternity. Those who have done good, will have eternal life. Those who have done evil, will go to hell. Jesus similarly said,

But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned. (Matthew 12:36-37)

In other words, God will judge each person and either justify them (salvation), or condemn them (hell), based upon what came out of their mouth.

This righteous judgment of God which is based upon what a person has done (i.e. how they have lived) is graphically portrayed in the words of Christ in Matthew 25:31-46.

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them

one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me." Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?" And the King will answer and say to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me." Then He will also say to those on the left hand, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me." Then they also will answer Him, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?" Then He will answer them, saying, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me." And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

Here, people are sent to hell or granted eternal life solely based upon their actions. Truly, "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26), and truly God is not mocked (Galatians 6:7-8).

For whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. (Galatians 6:7-8)

Paul said, "we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him" (2 Corinthians 5:9). Why?

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

This verse has been mutilated by the false Christian world (e.g. *The Believer's Study Bible*, p. 1653; [The MacArthur Study Bible](#), p. 1770-1771). Typically taught, the judgment seat here, βήματος (bēmatos), is viewed as a place of rewards with no condemnation in view. The problem with this view is,

Not Taught!

βῆμα (bêma) is used for a judgment seat in which condemnation is, or may be, meted out (Matthew 27:19, 26; John 19:13; Acts 18:12, 16, 17; 25:6, 10).

Moreover, the "bad" in this verse is typically interpreted as "useless" not "moral evil," as MacArthur says,

These Gr. terms do not refer to moral good and moral evil. (*The MacArthur Study Bible*, p. 1771)

This is a lie. In the Greek, in the Critical Text, φαυλον (phaulon) is used, and it is *always* used in Scripture in the sense of moral evil (see John 3:20; 5:29; Romans 9:11; Titus 2:8; James 3:16). In the Majority Text (and Received Text) κακον (kakon) is used, and this term is used for either harmfully bad (see Luke 16:25; Acts 16:28; 28:5; Revelation 16:2) or wickedness (see Matthew 21:41; 24:48; 27:23; Mark 7:21; 15:14; Luke 23:22; John 18:23, 30; Acts 9:13; 23:9; Romans 1:30; 2:9; 3:8; 7:19, 21; 12:17, 21; 13:3-4, 10; 14:20; 16:19; 1 Corinthians 10:6; 13:5; 15:33; 2 Corinthians 13:7; Philippians 3:2; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:15; 1 Timothy 6:10; 2 Timothy 4:14; Titus 1:12; Hebrews 5:14; James 1:13; 3:8; 1 Peter 3:9-12; 3 John 11; and Revelation 2:2). MacArthur, through his deceit, sways people away from the true fear of God (2 Corinthians 5:10-11; 1 Peter 1:17).

When Paul said,

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10),

he had in view the same kind of judgement as we've seen already (Matthew 12:36-37; 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Romans 2:6-10; Galatians 6:7-8). This is why Paul penned,

Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men (2 Corinthians 5:11, see also 2 Corinthians 5:14 for the motivation of love as well).

It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:31), and be found with an ungodly unrighteous life (e.g. Matthew 7:21-23). For

each one of us shall give account of himself to God (Romans 14:12).

Now, how can this be? Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), how can anyone reap what he has sown (Galatians 6:7-8), be judged according to his deeds (Romans 2:6-10) and not be condemned? Would not all men reap corruption (Galatians 6:8, i.e. hell, e.g. Isaiah 66:24) on the day of judgement, since "**There is none righteous, no, not one**" (Romans 3:10)? How is the righteous judgement of God reconciled with His salvation?

When the Lord saves a soul, when He causes them to be "born again to a

living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3), He imputes righteousness to them (Romans 4:6). This God given righteousness (Romans 3:22) not only includes the forgiveness of sins (Romans 4:7-8), but also practical righteous living (John 8:31-36; Romans 6:18-22; 8:1-2; 10:10; Ephesians 2:10). Therefore, on the day of judgement, those who are His will not only have their sin already washed away by the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7) so that there will be no condemnation (Romans 8:1), but, granted they live any length of time, they will also have behind them a life filled with the righteousness of God (Romans 10:10). In other words, their words, thoughts, and actions will have exemplified a godly holy life (Psalm 15), and they will be justified, just as Abraham was justified (James 2:21-24), by works (Romans 2:13; 8:4). By faith, one is accounted righteous (Romans 4:3), and the result of this faith produces godliness (Titus 1:1).

Therefore, it behooves every believer to **"make their call and election sure"** (2 Peter 1:10), because we, **"call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work"** (1 Peter 1:17). Thus, we ought to conduct ourselves throughout the time of our stay here in fear (1 Peter 1:17), because the warnings are numerous.

II. His Warnings

Throughout the word of God, particularly in the New Testament, God warns over and over again that an ungodly life cannot be lived without the consequence of the lake of fire (e.g. Revelation 21:8). In Matthew 6:14-15, 18:21-35; and Mark 11:25-26 (note also Luke 6:37; 17:1-4; and 2 Corinthians 2:10-11) Jesus points out that you cannot be unforgiving (Romans 1:31; 2 Timothy 3:3) and still yourself be forgiven by God. If you are not forgiven by God, the wrath of God is still upon you (John 3:36), and if you live in this condition unto your death, you will go to hell (Revelation 21:8)!

Moreover, note what Jesus said in Mark 9:43-48.

If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched- where "Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched." And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched- where "Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched." And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire- where "Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched."

Why this *serious* and repeated warning? Because it's true! Sin is a *serious* issue, and it is not to be taken lightly. If there is something in your life that encourages you toward some kind of evil ("causes you to stumble"), be it outright wickedness, or the evil of getting your eyes off the Lord (e.g.

Not Taught!

Zephaniah 1:12), *cut it off!* Because, if you don't, if it succeeds in turning you away from the Lord, and you continue in sin, you will lie down in torment (Isaiah 50:11; 66:24). For Scripture warns that "**the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God**" (1 Corinthians 6:9).

In Matthew 10:28, Jesus was speaking to the twelve apostles, those who followed Him and believed in Him, and He warned them,

Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.
(see also Luke 12:4-5)

Likewise, in Matthew 24:45-51 Jesus gave this warning in the context of His return:

Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, "My master is delaying his coming," and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Jesus made it very clear that it doesn't matter what someone may claim to believe or claim to be (Matthew 7:21-23), if you are wicked (i.e. unjust, evil, unrighteous) you will be cast into the fire.

The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 13:41-42)

So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 13:49-50)

In Matthew 25:14-30 Jesus warns that if you are lazy (verse 26) and do not bring to God a profit (verses 24-27) you will go to hell (verse 30). In Matthew 22:2-14 Jesus gives this warning:

The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who

were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. Again, he sent out other servants, saying, "Tell those who are invited, 'See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.'" But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then he said to his servants, "The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding." So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, "Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?" And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, "Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." For many are called, but few are chosen.

What does the "**wedding garment**" represent? It represents "**the righteous acts of the saints**" (Revelation 19:7-8). This man was found without the required "righteous acts" in his life, and he is therefore bound hand and foot and cast into hell (Revelation 21:8). The scariest part about this parable is the fact that he actually made it into the wedding hall! For all practical purposes, it appeared that he had inherited the kingdom of God. Yet, when examined, he is rejected and cast to the abode of hypocrites, that place of "**weeping and gnashing of teeth**" (Matthew 24:51).

III. His Exhortations

God is not joking when He says,

For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person [sin makes a person unclean, e.g. James 4:8; 1 John 1:7, 9], nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. (Ephesians 5:5-6)

And so He exhorts, "Therefore, do not be partakers with them" (Ephesians 5:7). Why? Because if you do, the wrath of God will come upon you too! As Ezekiel says,

When I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, but he trusts

Not Taught!

in his own righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous works shall be remembered; but because of the iniquity that he has committed, he shall die. (Ezekiel 33:13)

When the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he shall die because of it. (Ezekiel 33:18)

Paul exhorts,

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

As 2 Corinthians 5:10 is so often perverted, so is this passage commonly twisted to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:16; e.g. *The Believer's Study Bible*, p. 1632; *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1 Corinthians*, copyright 1984, p. 214-216). Some say that what Paul is talking about is "the race of soul winning" (*The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1 Corinthians*, p. 214). The truth is, Paul is speaking of the race of faith (Hebrews 12:1) which is unto eternal life, as Romans 2:7 says, "**eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality.**" There is a crown of *life* given to those who run with endurance, to those who truly love Him (James 1:12; Hebrews 10:36).

Even in the context of soul winning (the previous passage, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23), Paul said,

I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you. (1 Corinthians 9:22-23)

When he says, "**that I may be partaker of it with you,**" he is saying he does these things that he also might reap the benefits of the gospel, which is what? Salvation! Paul knew the reality of, "**I believed therefore I spoke**" (Psalm 116:10; 2 Corinthians 4:13). If a person really believes, they *will* endeavor to win souls (Proverbs 11:30).

Therefore, when Paul says, "**lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified,**" he was concerned about the welfare of his soul, because disqualification equals perdition. Disqualification is *far* more than being disqualified "from Christian service," as MacArthur teaches (*Strength For Today*, by John MacArthur, copyright 1997, October 2). Every

time ἀδοκιμος (adokimos) is used, the Greek word for "disqualified," it always refers to a wicked lost state (see 2 Corinthians 13:5-7; 2 Timothy 3:8; Titus 1:16; Hebrews 6:8). So Paul exhorts the Corinthians to run the race so as to win! And in the next chapter he exhorts, **"let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall"** (1 Corinthians 10:12).

In Philippians 2:12 Paul urges, **"work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."** In 1 Timothy 4:16 Paul exhorts Timothy to,

Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

The Greek word here for **"save"** is σωσεις (sôseis), and it means exactly what it says. Paul instructs Timothy in the importance of making sure he is living a godly life and teaching sound doctrine. How important is this? If he is faithful in it, he will ensure the salvation of both himself and those who take heed to what he says ("you will save both yourself and those who hear you").

The book of Hebrews is filled with God's exhortations to make sure we are in the faith, endure to the end, and inherit the promises (i.e. eternal life). For example,

Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation. (Hebrews 2:1-3a)

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.' So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'" Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. (Hebrews 3:7-13)

These words are to the **"brethren"**, i.e. believers. In fact, the entire book was written to believers (Hebrews 10:32-34). Some false teachers wickedly dissuade people from the *serious* warnings and exhortations given in this book. John MacArthur is one false teacher who does this. In his commentary on this book he writes,

We must understand that three basic groups of people are in view throughout this epistle. If one does not keep these groups in mind, the book becomes very confusing. If, for example, as some have said, it

Not Taught!

was written exclusively to Christians, extreme problems arise in interpreting a number of passages which could hardly apply to believers. And because it so frequently addresses believers, it could not have been written primarily to unbelievers either. So it must have been written to include both. (*The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Hebrews*, copyright 1983, p. xi; see also *The MacArthur Study Bible*, copyright 1997, p. 1895, "Interpretive Challenges")

MacArthur goes on to describe three groups,

GROUP I: HEBREW CHRISTIANS
GROUP II: HEBREW NON-CHRISTIANS WHO ARE
INTELLECTUALLY CONVINCED,
GROUP III: HEBREW NON-CHRISTIANS WHO WERE NOT
CONVINCED.

The problem with these groups is, two out of the three do not exist, and are nowhere found in the book of Hebrews. MacArthur pulls these groups out of the air (the prince of the power of the air, Ephesians 2:1), and places a delusion upon all who follow his deceit keeping them from the *serious* warnings and exhortations which God gives. Like,

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Hebrews 10:26-31)

The writer here includes *himself* in this warning. He says, "**For if we . . .**" There is no other "group" here. This is an exhortation (Hebrews 13:22) to believers that they had better fear (Hebrews 4:1), "**lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience**" (Hebrews 4:11).

So, the writer of Hebrews exhorts,

See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven. (Hebrews 12:25)

Peter likewise exhorts believers with these words:

For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. (1 Peter 4:17-19)

The *righteous* are "**scarcely saved.**" Only a *fool* (James 2:20) would think that you can live an unrighteous life and still make it to heaven. Thus, Peter exhorts,

You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen. (2 Peter 3:17-18)

IV. His Reality

Romans 11:36 says that all things are "**of Him and through Him and to Him.**" There is no reality, but God's reality. Even if something doesn't exist, the Lord "**calls those things which do not exist as though they did**" (Romans 4:17). God speaks nothing but truth (Titus 1:2). Therefore, when His word says something, it is reality. It is truth, even though it may not mesh with our idea of what really exists.

With the subject at hand, God's word reveals several things that are true that are extremely pertinent to eternal security and salvation. These things stand as true, because His word is true, and He means what He says. Even though we may find it hard to reconcile one matter with another, when God says something, it is nonetheless true (John 10:33-36). To begin with, there *is* such a thing as:

A. Temporary Faith

As the exhortations above imply (e.g. 2 Peter 3:17-18; etc.), a person can actually be in the faith for a time, and then no longer believe. Some may argue that when this happens, the person never really believed in the first place; their faith was false. No doubt, there is such a thing as false faith (Matthew 7:15, 21-23; 2 Corinthians 11:13, 26; Galatians 2:4; 2 Peter 2:1). But, Scripture also teaches that a person can actually *believe*, have a temporary faith, and then fall away. A clear example of this can be found in Luke 8:13.

But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.

Not Taught!

Christ says that they "**believe for a while.**" He does not say they *appear* to believe, or they have a false faith, but rather they "**believe,**" but it is only "**for a while.**" It is temporary faith.

In 1 Corinthians 15:2 Paul says to the Corinthians, "**unless you believed in vain.**" Contrary to what some think (e.g. [Charles Stanley](#), *Handbook for Christian Living*, p. 174), a person may *believe*, but the result of their faith has no eternal benefit. They may believe for a while; they may temporarily have faith, but it is all in vain. And why? Because they do not continue to believe.

Paul, in dealing with the Galatians, wrote,

Have you suffered so many things in vain-if indeed it was in vain?
(Galatians 3:4)

I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain. (Galatians 4:11)

The Galatians had been swayed toward a false gospel (Galatians 1:6-9), and Paul was concerned that the things they had originally suffered for Christ, and his efforts in getting them to follow Christ, might all turn out to have no good eternal consequence. In other words, they would end up in hell after all. Why? Because if they believed the true gospel for a while, but then were swayed to following a false gospel, in this, they would have turned away from Christ (Galatians 1:6) and no longer believed the truth. And this leads to hell, because Christ takes "**vengeance**" "**on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ**" (2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17).

This reality (temporary faith that results in no eternal benefit) was a continual concern for Paul. To the Philippians Paul wrote,

Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain. (Philippians 2:14-16)

Here again, Paul is concerned about his labor (his efforts in leading people to Christ), that it might end up having no eternal benefit for them. It could all be in vain, if they did not hold "**fast the word of life.**" In other words, if they did not continue to believe, they would end up in hell. If they only had temporary faith, they would end up in the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). But, if they did "**hold fast,**" this would cause rejoicing in the day of the Lord, because they made it and inherited the promises (Hebrews 6:11-12).

Likewise, to the Thessalonians Paul wrote,

But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short

time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. Therefore we wanted to come to you- even I, Paul, time and again-but Satan hindered us. For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy.

Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know. *For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.* (1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:5)

Paul was very concerned that his efforts in leading the Thessalonians down the narrow road of faith might end up having no eternal benefit for them ("**our labor might be in vain**"). This is why he longed so to see them that he might "**establish [them] and encourage [them] concerning [their] faith**" (1 Thessalonians 3:2). When Timothy had come back from visiting them, Paul was greatly encouraged to hear that they were standing strong in the faith, and so he wrote,

But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also to see you- therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 3:6-8)

Paul says, "**For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.**" Paul was exuberant ("**For now we live**") about the fact that they were having abiding faith, continued belief. Why? Because "**he who endures to the end shall be saved**" (Matthew 24:13).

Furthermore, Paul wrote to the Corinthians,

in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness- besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation? (2 Corinthians 11:27-29)

Why such "**concern for all the churches**" and such zeal and indignation about

Not Taught!

someone being caused to stumble? Because,

we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12),

and our salvation is still being worked out (Philippians 2:12).

This is why the apostles exhorted believers to *continue* in the faith (e.g. Acts 11:23; 13:43; 14:22), and Jesus said, "By your patience possess your souls" (Luke 21:19). 1 John 5:13 says,

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue* to believe in the name of the Son of God.

Paul wrote Timothy,

Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. *Continue in them*, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you. (1 Timothy 4:16)

If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. (2 Timothy 2:12)

But you *must continue* in the things which you have learned . . ." (2 Timothy 3:14)

And to the Romans Paul wrote,

Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, *if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.* (Romans 11:22)

Temporary faith, which *is* a reality (Luke 8:13), will get no one to heaven. Trust and obedience (Hebrews 3:18-19) to Christ *must continue* (Colossians 1:21-23; Hebrews 3:14).

B. Temporary Grace

Along with the reality of a temporary faith, Scripture also reveals that the grace of God can be temporarily received and possessed. For example, in 2 Corinthians 6:1 Paul exhorts the Corinthians not to receive the grace of God in vain.

We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. (2 Corinthians 6:1)

Paul *pleads* with them. This is no small matter! This is an eternal, life or death, hell or heaven matter! If they receive the grace of God in vain, and die in such a state, they will burn forever (Isaiah 66:24).

To the Galatians Paul wrote,

You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. (Galatians 5:4)

Here is depicted the reality of being in the grace of God, and then falling from it, i.e. being no longer in it. This is a horrifying reality! It is the "**grace of God that brings salvation**" (Titus 2:11). Therefore, if someone was once in the grace of God, but then fell from it, they fell from that which was saving their soul! They fell from a place of favor and no condemnation (Romans 8:1), God's grace, back to a place of wrath and indignation (John 3:36). A graphic illustration of this is found in Matthew 18.

Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses." (Matthew 18:21-35)

Not Taught!

In this parable Jesus points out the seriousness of making sure we forgive. If we don't forgive others, God will not forgive us (Matthew 6:14-15), and we'll be tortured by the Father if we live this way (Matthew 18:35).

In this parable, the servant is actually forgiven of his debt, but then, based upon the servant's lack of grace toward others, the Master overturns his decision of forgiveness, and requires payment. What does that depict? **Someone can actually be forgiven of their sins; they can actually be in the grace of God, but if they fail to show mercy towards others, the forgiveness is retracted and condemnation is meted out** (Mark 11:25-26).

So there is not only temporary faith, but there is also temporary grace and temporary forgiveness. This is all consistent with the fact that a person can be temporarily in Christ.

C. Temporary Branches

In John 15:1-6 Jesus said,

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, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

Here Jesus speaks of being in Him, in Christ, but not remaining (not abiding). Some might argue that the branches that don't remain were not really "in Christ," but this goes directly against what Christ says. He says, "**Every branch *in* Me,**" not "Every branch that *appears* to be in Me." The significance of this is quite profound. A person can actually be *in Christ*, yet, if they do not remain and bear fruit, they will end up in hell (John 15:6). Hebrews 6:4-8 illustrates this.

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame. For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; but if it bears thorns and briars, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.

These who fall away have been "**enlightened.**" They have come "**to the knowledge of the truth,**" which comes with salvation (1 Timothy 2:4). They have "**tasted the heavenly gift.**" What is the heavenly gift? Is it not God's grace (Ephesians 2:8)? Is it not eternal life (Romans 6:23)? These have "tasted" of God's gift. They've experienced it.

Note further it says they "**have become partakers of the Holy Spirit.**" The Greek word for "**partakers**" is μετοχους (metochous) and it is used of *true believers* who have become "**partakers of the heavenly calling**" (Hebrews 3:1), "**partakers of Christ**" (Hebrews 3:14), and "**partakers**" of the chastening of the Lord (Hebrews 12:8). Furthermore, these who fall away have also "**tasted the good word of God.**" Scripture says,

the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14)

But, these in Hebrews 6 received the word, like those in Luke 8:13.

These also tasted "**the powers of the age to come.**" At least in part, this would be the power of godliness (2 Timothy 3:5) and righteousness (2 Peter 3:13). In other words, they've experienced the power of the practical righteousness of God which comes to all and is on all who believe (Romans 3:22).

These people have been *in Christ* in an intense way, and yet they fall away. According to the passage, they bear no good fruit (Hebrews 6:8; John 15:2) and end up in hell (Hebrews 6:4,6,8; John 15:6). This is no hypothetical scenario that never takes place; this is God's word. He is speaking truth (reality). This is about *real* people who have been in the faith, but then fall away.

Hebrews 10:26-31 paints a similar scene, and in this passage, the depth of being "in Christ" is revealed. Note verse 29.

Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

It is apparent that, whoever falls under these verses (Hebrews 10:26-31), the grace of God was upon them ("**insulted the Spirit of grace**"), and they were actually sanctified, i.e. made holy, "**by the blood of the covenant.**" In other words, they were in the New Covenant (Hebrews 8:7-13), the covenant enacted by Christ through His blood (Hebrews 9:11-12), but they ended up choosing sin rather than continuing in the faith.

So, the reality is, Scripture teaches that faith (Luke 8:13), forgiveness (Matthew 18:21-35), the grace of God (2 Corinthians 6:1; Galatians 5:4), being in Christ (John 15:1-6), and being set apart by the blood of Christ, i.e.

Not Taught!

sanctification (Hebrews 10:26-31), can all be lost, simply by not continuing in the faith (Romans 11:22).

Another reality akin to this is the loss of your "**part**."

For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. (Revelation 22:18-19)

This is no idle threat from John. This is a *real* threat, and what it reveals is something being taken away that is actually there! In verse 19, the Greek word for "**take away**" is from ἀφαιρέω (aphaireō), and it is always used in Scripture for taking away something that is actually there to take away (Matthew 26:51; Mark 14:47; Luke 1:25; 10:42; 16:3; 22:50; Romans 11:27; Hebrews 10:4). No matter what Greek text you might follow (The Critical and Majority Text have "tree of life" rather than "Book of Life"), John here indicates that a person can actually have "**his part**" of the Book of Life (or tree of life) be taken away. In other words, he actually has a part that is his, but it's taken away! Whether it is the Book of Life or the tree of life, both are a reference to eternal life (Genesis 3:22; Revelation 20:11-15; 22:2, 14)!

In the book of Revelation, several times over Christ says, "**To him who overcomes . . .**" or "**He who overcomes . . .**" and He makes promises that accompany salvation (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 21). Who is it who overcomes?

Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 John 5:5)

These are the only ones who overcome. Those who believe, that is, those who believe and do not stop believing. These are the ones who overcome.

V. His Security

Now, after all that we've seen so far, God's judgments, His warnings, His exhortations, and His reality, Scripture also teaches that His salvation is eternally secure for those who are:

A. Born of God

Who are those who believe and do not stop believing? Who are those who continue in the faith, and do not fall away? Those who are *born of God*.

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world-our faith. (1 John 5:4)

Those who are born of God are those who *will* endure to the end (Matthew

24:13), who will *not* fall away (Hebrews 10:39), who will *not* fall for a false gospel (Galatians 1:6), who *will* stay in His goodness (Romans 11:22), who *are* forgiving (Matthew 5:7; 18:21-35), who remain (abide) in Christ (John 15:1-5), because they are those who *overcome* the world. They overcome anything and everything that might come their way that would pull them away from Christ (Romans 8:37). This is so profoundly true that 1 John 3:9 goes so far as to say,

Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

The *one* thing that will destroy a soul is sin (Romans 6:23). This is the *only* thing that will keep anyone from heaven. Be it through some kind of sinful living, unbelief, or following after some kind of deception, it is all sin, and this is the *only* thing that would destroy a soul (Matthew 1:21; Mark 9:42-48).

Therefore, when 1 John 3:9 says that those who are born of God "cannot sin," what this is telling us is that it is impossible for those born of God to fall away (Hebrews 6:4-6). They cannot sin. If they cannot sin, they cannot turn away from Christ (Galatians 1:6). They cannot "sin willfully" (Hebrews 10:26). They are incapable of being unforgiving (Matthew 18:21-35). They are incapable of believing in vain (1 Corinthians 15:2). They are incapable of insulting the Spirit of grace (Hebrews 10:29). It is impossible for them to fall from grace (Galatians 5:4), or receive the grace of God in vain (2 Corinthians 6:1), or to be an unprofitable servant (Matthew 25:14-30), or to live an unrighteous life (1 Corinthians 6:9), or to ever be disqualified (1 Corinthians 9:27). Those born of God cannot sin, that is, they are incapable of practicing sin (1 John 3:4-10). In other words, they will never fall back into a lifestyle of sin. They will indeed still stumble into sin (James 3:2), but not live unrepentantly in it (1 John 1:7-10; 3:7-8). For more on sin in a believer's life, please see the chapter, "Not By Works" under IV. The Flesh Stays Sinful.

1 John 3:9 gives the reason someone born of God "**cannot sin.**" It is because "His seed remains in him." Daniel D. Corner, a man of Arminian persuasion, says just the opposite.

God's seed, his word, impedes sin **if hidden in our hearts** (Psalm 119:9-11). However, as one might not remain in the vine (Jn. 15:6), God's seed might not *remain* in the person who gets born of God! (*The Believers Conditional Security*, by Daniel D. Corner, copyright 1997, p. 383, italics and bold in original)

Here Mr. Corner makes God out to be a liar. God says, "**His seed remains in him**" (1 John 3:9). Mr. Corner says, "God's seed might not *remain* in the person." Who is speaking the truth? Dan Corner or God? God, who cannot lie (Titus 1:2). God says of those who are born of God that the word of God, "**His seed**" (Luke 8:11; Galatians 3:16; 1 Peter 1:23), remains in them.

1 John 5:18 further says of those who are born of God:

Not Taught!

We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.

He who is born of God keeps himself. Where does he keep himself? He keeps himself in the love of God, as Jude says, "**keep yourselves in the love of God**" (Jude 21). 1 John 5:18 says the wicked one can not touch him. In what way? Paul had a messenger of Satan that touched him (2 Corinthians 12:7). In what way does the wicked one not touch him? The answer is found in Romans 8.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-39)

Satan is included in the concept of either "angels" or "powers" or "any other created thing." The wicked one can in no way separate those who are born of God from the love of God. What this means then is, that those who are born of God are eternally secure, and will never experience the fires of hell; because "**He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death**" (1 John 5:4; Revelation 2:11).

B. Elect

What is the context to Romans 8:35-39? Those whom God has "**predestined**" (Romans 8:29-30). Those who are "**elect**" (Romans 8:33). The elect of God will never be separated from His love. They are eternally secure.

Scripture teaches that God has made vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy (Romans 9:11-23), and He has thus predetermined the eternal destiny of every individual of mankind before time began (Ephesians 1:4-5, 11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2; Revelation 17:8; 20:15). And, His counsel will stand (Psalm 33:11; Proverbs 19:21). Nothing can thwart the will, counsel, and predetermination of God (Isaiah 46:9-10). Therefore, the elect *will* make it. They *will* endure to the end. God's sovereignty demands it.

Romans 11:36 says, "**For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things.**" *Everything*, no matter what it is, is "**of Him and through Him and to Him.**" Therefore, if someone inherits eternal life and enters the Paradise of God, it is by God's doing that this happens. If someone is cast to hell and burns in torment for all eternity, it is God's doing. Because "**He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens**" (Romans 9:18). Even if a person

turns away from God, it is God who caused it to happen. "**He hardens**," as Isaiah asks,

O Lord, why have You made us stray from Your ways, and hardened our heart from Your fear? (Isaiah 63:17)

The answer?

He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. (Romans 9:18)

Someone might argue against this by quoting 1 Timothy 2:3-4.

For 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.

This is quite amazing and perplexing for the human mind, but God chooses not to give people a heart to obey Him, even though He longs for them to be saved and obey Him. For example, in Deuteronomy 5:29 the Lord says,

Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!

Yet, later in Deuteronomy Moses points out that,

the Lord has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this very day. (Deuteronomy 29:4)

Even though God longed for them to have a heart in them that they would fear Him (Deuteronomy 5:29), He chose not to give them a heart that would do so (Deuteronomy 29:4).

Likewise, God "**desires all men to be saved**" (1 Timothy 2:4), yet He has only chosen to save a minority of them (Matthew 7:13-14; Romans 9:27-28; 11:8-10). This decision to destine people to hell (Romans 9:21-22) or heaven (Romans 9:23), has *nothing* to do with whether the person has "**done any good or evil**" (Romans 9:11). It is "**not of works**" (Romans 9:11). It is solely based upon the "**purpose of God**" (Romans 9:11). Jesus said to His disciples, "**You did not choose Me, but I chose you**" (John 15:16), and David reveals a person's life is all set in order, determined by God, before the person is ever on the scene.

And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them. (Psalm 139:16)

Not Taught!

David's life was already written down and predetermined ("fashioned") before David was ever born. Indeed, all things are "**of Him and through Him and to Him.**"

C. Christ's Sheep (John 10)

Note how Jesus describes His sheep. He says,

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. (John 10:27-29)

Jesus gives the characteristic of His sheep. They follow Him. They do not follow something or someone else (John 10:5), but they faithfully follow Him. They are not of those who fall away (Hebrews 10:39), because He says "**they shall never perish.**" And, He says, no one can alter this, not even the devil himself ("**no one**").

1 Peter 5:8 warns,

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Satan *would* indeed, given the opportunity, snatch Christ's sheep out of His hand and destroy them (John 10:10). But, Jesus says this is impossible. Truly Christ's sheep are eternally secure, because being snatched out of His hand would come through some kind of Satanic attack, be it deceit (Revelation 12:9) or temptation (1 Thessalonians 3:5). But, Jesus says, "**no one is able to snatch them.**"

The Arminian Dr. Chris Jakway makes this into "no one can snatch us out of the Father's hand against our will" (*The Believer's Conditional Security*, by Dan Corner, foreword by Jakway, p. iii). This is *not* what Jesus said, and goes directly against the truth of Christ's words. Jesus' statement reveals that Christ's sheep do not "will" to be away from Him. "**My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me**" (John 10:27).

So, those who are born of God (1 John 5:4), those who are elect from the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4-5), these are eternally secure. They can never and will never lose what has been theirs from eternity past (2 Timothy 1:9).

VI. His Conclusion

If this is so, then why does God give so many warnings and exhortations to those who believe? Why not relax and just accept that those who are elect will make it, and the rest will not, and who cares anyhow, because it has all been predestined before time began? No one can change God's plan, so why bother even being concerned? In fact, why did Paul suffer so (2 Corinthians 6:4-10;

11:23-29)? And why was he so concerned about the churches (2 Corinthians 11:29)?

According to man's wisdom, this might be a "logical" conclusion. That is, to give no care about the salvation of souls, since it's all by God's hand anyway (Romans 11:36). But, Paul reveals the wisdom of God.

Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. (2 Timothy 2:10)

Paul suffered "**for the sake of the elect.**" In other words, he suffered for those who would *definitely* make it. Why? For their salvation, and that their salvation would be with eternal glory. Because Paul knew, even though indeed, the elect will be saved and nothing can change that (Romans 8:28-39), he also knew that:

This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. (2 Timothy 2:11-12)

Though the elect will certainly make it (Romans 8:29-39), yet these words, for the elect (Paul says "**we**"), stand true as well. This is hard to mesh into the mind of man (2 Peter 3:16), but nonetheless, God works the impossible (Romans 4:17). We might typically think that since God is doing it all, then we need to do nothing. But, in reality, just the opposite is true. As Paul said to the Philippians,

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. (Philippians 2:12-13)

Why do we need to "**work out our salvation with fear and trembling**"? Because God is working in us, and He is doing whatever He pleases (Psalm 115:3)! Therefore, since God is doing it all (Ephesians 2:1-10), we had better live it out! Doesn't that make good logical sense? It may not to some, but it makes very good Biblical sense. "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men" (1 Corinthians 1:25).

This good Biblical sense can be seen further in what Paul says in Philippians 1:6 and 2:16. In Philippians 1:6 he says that he is,

confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Yet, in Philippians 2:16 he exhorts them to hold "**fast the word of life, so that**

Not Taught!

[he] may rejoice in the day of Christ that [he has] not run in vain or labored in vain."

Likewise, remember Paul's concern for the Thessalonians how he was very concerned that "**by some means the tempter had tempted** [them], **and** [their] **labor might be in vain**" (1 Thessalonians 3:5)? Well, in this same book Paul wrote that he knew of their "**election by God**" (1 Thessalonians 1:4). In other words, he knew they would make it (Romans 8:29-39)!

Furthermore, the writer of Hebrews in chapter 10 gives one of the most serious warnings in Scripture to the believers he was writing to, and he even includes himself in the warning (Hebrews 10:26); but at the end of the chapter he writes:

But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. (Hebrews 10:39)

The writer of Hebrews is saying, "**If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins**" (Hebrews 10:26). "**But we are not of those**" who would do such a thing ("**who draw back to perdition**")! How about that for some good human logic! It just doesn't fit with the wisdom of this world, but this is God's wisdom, foolishness to the world (1 Corinthians 1:23).

The likely human response might be, "Why did you bother warning us then, if we are not those who would do such a thing!" The Answer? Because you need to be warned, so you don't do it (Hebrews 10:36; 13:22). Is this hard to understand? Perhaps Paul's time at sea might help.

20 Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on us, all hope that we would be saved was finally given up. 21 But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss. 22 And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. 23 For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, 24 saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.' 25 Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. 26 However, we must run aground on a certain island."

27 Now when the fourteenth night had come, as we were driven up and down in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors sensed that they were drawing near some land. 28 And they took soundings and found it to be twenty fathoms; and when they had gone a little farther, they took soundings again and found it to be fifteen fathoms. 29 Then, fearing lest we should run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern,

and prayed for day to come. 30 And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, when they had let down the skiff into the sea, under pretense of putting out anchors from the prow, 31 Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." 32 Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off. (Acts 27:20-32)

In verses 22-25 Paul assures the people on the ship that God gave him His word that no life would be lost. If you understand that God does not lie (Titus 1:2) and He does not change His mind (Numbers 23:19), then you would understand that it was impossible for Paul's prophecy not to come true (Deuteronomy 18:21-22). In other words, there would indeed be no loss of life. Yet, at the same time, Paul says to the centurion, "**Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved**" (Acts 27:31). The centurion could have foolishly answered Paul with, "What does it matter, you said we would have no loss of life." But, instead, the centurion took heed to Paul's warning, and the ropes were cut.

God simultaneously works the impossible. Those who are His, elect from the foundation of the world, will indeed inherit eternal life. But, at the same time, *they* must "**work out [their] salvation with fear and trembling**" (Philippians 2:12). If they do not, they "cannot be saved" (see John 3:36 NAS; 4:24; 15:1-6; 2 Thessalonians 1:8).

VII. Our Response

So what should be our response? We should do what Paul told Timothy to do - lay hold on eternal life.

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life. (1 Timothy 6:12)

Eternal life, salvation, is not something to passively ponder. It is to be pursued (Romans 2:7). It is to be laid hold of, grasped and held fast (1 Corinthians 15:2; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; Hebrews 3:6, 14; 4:14; 6:18; 10:23; Revelation 2:13, 25; 3:3, 11).

Paul wrote,

Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay

Not Taught!

hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 3:8-14)

This is the Christian life, and this is the *only* life that ends in eternal life. One that has forsaken all (Luke 14:33) and diligently pursues the Lord and His salvation (Hebrews 11:6). Because, we have not only been saved (Ephesians 2:8; Romans 8:24; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5), but we are *being* saved (1 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Corinthians 2:15; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; Hebrews 2:11; 7:25; 1 John 1:7,9; 2:1); and we *shall be* saved in the future (Romans 5:9-10; Hebrews 9:28). Salvation is not only an initial act of God (Ephesians 2:1-5), but it is a continual on going act of God (Philippians 2:13) that must be lived out (Philippians 2:12). If it is not, the soul will not land in Paradise (Revelation 21:8; 22:14-15).

Judging Is Believing.

Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him. (Malachi 3:18)

Yes, and why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right? (Luke 12:57)

What is right?

The statutes of the Lord are right (Psalm 19:8).

False Christians (and others) often tell us it is not right to judge. Some fools hypocritically condemn us for judging (Luke 6:37), and they all hypocritically judge that we judge.¹ When we identify preachers as false teachers leading both themselves and those who follow them to hell, when we declare others as on their way to hell, and especially when we warn *them* they are lost, we often hear these words (or the equivalent), "Judge not" (Matthew 7:1). Yet, these words are exactly *why* we judge.

Jesus said,

Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. (Matthew 7:1-2)

Jesus also said,

Not Taught!

Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. (Luke 6:37a-b)

We take these words very seriously. [They literally scare us](#). In fact, we are terrified of them (Psalm 119:120; Isaiah 66:2). We do not want to be judged by our "**measure**" as Christ warns in Matthew 7:1-2, because we know we fall short (Romans 3:23); and our measure is guaranteed to be faulty (Psalm 16:2).

Moreover, we desire not to be judged as the Lord says in Luke 6:37a. We also desire not to be condemned as Jesus promises in Luke 6:37b. Therefore, we strive, in the fear of God, to be certain to never judge and never condemn anyone.

This is why we have chosen to write and speak solely in accordance with God's judgments² and [Yehvah's](#) condemnations, as it is written,

With my lips I have declared all the judgments of Your mouth. (Psalm 119:13)

Everyone judges. No matter who you are, you make judgments every day. The most complacent judge there is nothing to be concerned about (Zephaniah 1:12). The most paranoid judge there is trouble everywhere (Proverbs 28:1). Everyone judges and makes judgments concerning their surroundings and those around them. Those with the mind of Christ judge according to Christ (1 Corinthians 2:15-16).³ Those with a mind of their own (Isaiah 65:2) judge according to their own and are among those described in Isaiah 5:20-21.

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

Those who judge according to their own understanding (Proverbs 3:5) are those who are "**prudent in their own sight**" and they "**call evil good and good evil**," because the human heart is desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9) and does not rightly judge.

For example, false Christians typically think if a person claims to be a believer, they assume they are. In a perverted twist of Romans 10:9-10 they think if a person simply proclaims "**Lord Jesus**" and claims to believe God raised Him from the dead, they think such a one is saved. Such thinking is simplemindedness.

The simple believes every word, but the prudent considers well his steps. (Proverbs 14:15)

Without submission to the Word of God (Scripture, John 1:1, Hebrews 4:13-14), confessing "**the Lord Jesus**" and claiming to "**believe in your heart that**

God has raised Him from the dead" (Romans 10:9) is a meaningless and idle proclamation. Jesus said,

Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"

If a person is not one "**who does the will of My Father**" they are not saved. If they are those "**who practice lawlessness**," they are those who practice sin, for "**sin is lawlessness**" (1 John 3:4); and therefore, they are lost (1 John 3:4-10). But, those who judge against the Word judge such people to be Christians, when they are not. Thus, they "**call evil good**," and bring upon themselves the "**Woe**" of Isaiah 5:20.

God's judgments are what matter, and if we declare only *His* judgments (1 Corinthians 2:2), and not our own, we will escape the condemnation of Matthew 7:1-2 & Luke 6:37 and avoid the woe of Isaiah 5:20-21. For then, it is not us who judge, but Him, and His judgments are right (Psalm 119:7, 39, 62, 75).

Evidenced from the many who assail us as judging wrongly (because they themselves are judging wrongly), many think Matthew 7:1-2 & Luke 6:37 dictates a silence on the matters we judge (false teachers, people's lost condition, etc.), but such a perspective is only rebellion (Proverbs 17:11) and unbelief (Jude 5).

I. Rebellion

The Lord commands over and again to judge in accordance to His Word. He told the Jews,

Do not judge according to appearance, but judge⁴ with righteous judgment. (John 7:24)

Judging according to appearance is judging according to your own measure and perspective (Matthew 7:1-2). Judging with righteous judgment is judging according to God's judgments, as it is written,

The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. (Psalm 19:9)

God's judgments are righteous (Psalm 119:137), and those who do not judge according to His judgments as Christ commands in John 7:24 rebel against Him; and they will receive their condemnation (Romans 2:8).

Not Taught!

In Matthew 7:3-5 the Lord gives a command in *how to judge*.

And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, "Let me remove the speck from your eye"; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

The command here is to first remove the plank from your own eye, "**then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.**"

Immediately after this Jesus commands,

Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces. (Matthew 7:6)

It is impossible to obey this command unless a judgment is made on who is a dog and who is not, and on who is a pig and who is not (see also Philippians 3:2).

Christ commands to "**Beware of false prophets**" (Matthew 7:15). The only way that can be obeyed is by discerning (judging) whether someone is a false prophet or not. Otherwise, there would be no one to beware of, since it would be unknown as to who was a false prophet and who was not. But, such is not the case with those who believe, as Jesus said to those who heed His warning, "**by their fruits you will know them**" (Matthew 7:20). Knowing them equals judging them to be false prophets.

Jesus also commands,

Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, "I am the Christ," and will deceive many. (Matthew 24:4-5)

The only way that can be obeyed is by judging (discerning) the many making this claim as liars, not the Christ.

Similarly, Christ commands,

Then if anyone says to you, "Look, here is the Christ!" or "There!" do not believe it. (Matthew 24:23)

If you obey this verse, what are you judging? You are judging the one who is saying such a thing to be lying.

Jesus continues,

For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great

signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. Therefore if they say to you, "Look, He is in the desert!" do not go out; or "Look, He is in the inner rooms!" do not believe it. (Matthew 24:24-26)

If you obey Christ and "**do not believe it**" you will be judging the people telling you these things to be lying, and you will be judging those claiming to be Christ and prophets to be liars and false. Obedience demands judgment, and as these false christs and false prophets will be rightly judged as false in the future by believers, so are false prophets and false teachers today rightly judged by all who believe God's Word (1 Corinthians 2:15).

In 1 Corinthians 5 Paul rebukes the Corinthians for not judging (in accordance with Scripture) an immoral man as evil and kicking him out of the church, and he ends the chapter with,

For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore put away from yourselves the evil person. (1 Corinthians 5:11-12)⁵

These words of Paul are simply in obedience to Christ's command to not tolerate an evil person. In Matthew 18:15-17 Christ commands believers to remove from their midst any brother who refuses to admit and repent from simply one sin committed against another brother. Such a judgment is commanded by Christ (and Paul). Refusal to judge and note such people as evil is direct disobedience against the Lord.

In Romans 16:17 Paul commands,

Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.

It is impossible to obey this command to "**note**" and "**avoid**" these people unless a judgment is made on the people and their behavior.

In Ephesians 5:11 Paul commands,

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.

The only way this command can be obeyed is by judging (identifying) "**the unfruitful works of darkness**" and then exposing (declaring to others) what these works are and how they are Satanic (works of darkness). This necessitates the identification of those involved (see our report on [Identifying False Teachers](#)) and the obvious judgment that they are ministers of the devil (as in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

Not Taught!

In 1 Timothy 6:3-5 Paul commands to "**withdraw**" from anyone who "**teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words.**" This is impossible to obey without judging the teaching of others, judging their actions ("**does not consent**"), and judging they are among those who are "**proud, knowing nothing**" and "**destitute of the truth**" as Paul declares in 1 Timothy 6:4-5. Without such a judgment, no belief and obedience to Paul's words can be implemented, and those who hear or read 1 Timothy 6:3-5, but judge not and withdraw not, are not "**doers of the word,**" but "**hearers only, deceiving**" themselves (James 1:22). The same applies to 2 Timothy 3:1-5 where Paul likewise commands, "**from such people turn away!**"

Likewise, Paul commanded Timothy,

Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (2 Timothy 2:22)

The *only* way this command can be kept is by discerning (judging) who calls "**on the Lord out of a pure heart**" and who does not. This command demands *judging* the hearts of individuals, that is, whether they have a pure heart or not. Without such a judgment, there can be no obedience to 2 Timothy 2:22, because the command is to pursue these things, not with just anyone or everyone, but with particular individuals - "**those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.**"

But how could a judgment ever be made? Jeremiah 17:9 says,

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?

The answer to that is, God can know it. He knows all things (John 16:30; 21:17), and He has revealed much in His word about the heart of man. He has actually revealed in Scripture all we need to know (2 Timothy 3:16-17). For example, Proverbs 14:2 says,

He who walks in his uprightness fears the Lord, but he who is perverse in his ways despises Him.

As this verse reveals, a believer can know (judge) whether someone calls upon the Lord out of a pure heart or not by whether they walk in uprightness or whether they are perverse. Uprightness dictates the fear of God and a pure heart. Perversity reveals a wicked heart, one who "**despises Him**" (see also Proverbs 3:32; 6:12; 11:20; 12:8; 21:8).

Finally (but not exhaustively), the Bible calls people fools (e.g. Psalm 14:1; Romans 1:22), describes them (e.g. Proverbs 1:7; 10:18; Ecclesiastes 5:3; etc.), and gives instruction on how to deal with them (e.g. Proverbs 23:9; 26:4-5). It is impossible to obey these commands if a judgment is not made on whether a

person is a fool or not.

II. Unbelief

The bottom line on this issue is unbelief. Those who hail, "Judge not," are those who believe not. For if they did believe, they would not be proclaiming this "Judge not" folly. For example, Galatians 5:19-21 clearly states,

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Similar lists can be found in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 21:8; 22:15; etc.. Anyone who believes the Bible knows (because he believes) that all those listed in these lists are people headed for hell, as Revelation 21:8 explicitly declares,

But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

Therefore, whenever a true believer comes across *anyone* who is a coward, or a murderer, or sexually immoral, etc., they know (indeed they *judge* because they believe) that such a one is headed for eternal torment. Any true believer would not only know this (judge this), but would warn (given the opportunity) the coward, idolater, liar, drunkard, homosexual, effeminate,⁶ etc., that they are headed for impending eternal doom. Not only does faith in God's word dictate this, but sheer love demands it! Those who would have us not judge, would have us not believe God's word and not love God's people (Psalm 24:1).

Now, some may argue such a judgment cannot be made because we do not know a person's final state. They may argue, "Perhaps, they will repent." That is immaterial, because the judgment being made is not concerning their final state, but their present state of unbelief and danger of hell fire (as in Matthew 5:22).

Although, a final state can presently be known in some cases. For example, in the time of Christ, those who committed blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:22-30) were eternally doomed at that very time as Christ spoke. Jesus very clearly declared such a sin will never be forgiven (Matthew 12:31-32).

Likewise, anyone who falls away from the faith as described in Hebrews 6:4-8

Not Taught!

and 10:26-31 is likewise sealed in their fate to hell. Hebrews 6 declares they cannot be renewed to repentance (Hebrews 6:4-6), and Hebrews 10 says “**there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.**”

Likewise, Scripture declares false teachers as also eternally doomed without hope of salvation. 2 Peter 2:12 declares that they are “**like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed**”. Therefore, believers in 2 Peter 2:12 judge false teachers as doomed to hell without hope, because they know, they believe, they judge, false teachers were made, as the Scripture says, “**to be caught and destroyed**”. This means, as it is written, that “**the blackness of darkness**” is “**reserved**” for them “**forever**” (2 Peter 2:17). Jude pronounces them as having already “**perished**” (Jude 11), “**twice dead**” (Jude 12) and “**who long ago were marked out for this condemnation**” (Jude 4). Believers in the Bible, when they see a false teacher, judge and believe this is their fate.

Speaking of false teachers, the Bible warns there will be false teachers among you (2 Peter 2:1), and we can heed this warning via believing 2 John 9.

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. (2 John 9)

This verse has absolutely no meaning, significance, or application if no judgment is made. But, a judgment has been made, because the verse in itself is God's judgment and we need to believe it. It declares who has God and who does not, all solely on who “**abides in the doctrine of Christ**” and who does not. Since Christ is the Word of God (John 1:1, 14; Revelation 19:13), His doctrine is the whole Bible. 2 John 9 is simply telling us that those who abide in Scripture have God, and those who teach falsely (abide not in the doctrine of Christ) do not have God.

Simple faith in this verse mandates judging (discerning) who has God and who does not. When it is discovered (Ephesians 5:11) that someone's teaching characteristically transgresses and does not abide in the teaching (doctrine) of Christ, then faith in 2 John 9 demands the judgment that such teaching, and the one who teaches it, does not have God. In other words, they are false and lost, as Galatians 5:20 notes; those who practice heresies will not inherit the kingdom of God.

III. Judge Nothing

Now, some may be confused when they are confronted with what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 4:5.

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God. (1 Corinthians 4:5)

With these words, Paul was not telling the Corinthians to ignore what the Bible says. Nor was he telling them to discard the words he wrote earlier in 1 Corinthians 2:15 where he said,

he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.

"**Judges all things**" (1 Corinthians 2:15) and "**judge nothing**" (1 Corinthians 4:5)? Is Paul confused? No, the reader might be (2 Peter 3:16), but Paul isn't. 1 Corinthians 2:15 is talking about a spiritual man, in contrast to a natural man (1 Corinthians 2:14), who receives the things of the Spirit of God and therefore judges all things in light of "**the mind of Christ**" (1 Corinthians 2:16), that is, in accordance to the Word (John 1:1, 14).⁷ In other words, he does not "**think beyond what is written**" (1 Corinthians 4:6), because he limits himself to only what Scripture reveals (Proverbs 4:20-27).

Consistent with this, in 1 Corinthians 4:5 Paul says "**judge nothing before the time.**" The judgment Paul is speaking of here is a premature judgment that will not be revealed, as Paul says, "**until the Lord comes.**" For it is then He will "**bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts.**" "**Hidden things**" are not to be judged. In other words, matters in which the Lord has not given revelation (there is no Scripture given) are therefore not to be judged, because they cannot be known. In such a judgment, Matthew 7:1-2 & Luke 6:37 would be breached, as would the judgment in James 4.

Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?
(James 4:11-12)

What is speaking evil? It is either speaking lies about another (i.e. slander), judging according to one's own standard (as Matthew 7:1-2 forbids), or judging another prematurely as forbidden in 1 Corinthians 4:5. Even if someone happened to be correct in their judgment (as a later date may reveal, or the day of judgment will reveal), if it is premature (1 Corinthians 4:5) it is speaking evil; for that kind of judgment is forbidden and cannot be known. If they judge something before the time as in 1 Corinthians 4:5, they are disobeying the Word and thus speaking evil.

Moreover, such a one also, as James says, "**speaks evil of the law and judges the law.**" For when a person judges another, since it is not God's judgment, but man's, he judges God's law (God's word) as insufficient, faulty, and in need of man's standard (man's law). This one is "**not a doer of the law,**" and this judge foolishly sets himself up as "**a judge.**" And, of course, that is all amiss,

Not Taught!

because there is only one "Lawgiver;" and that Man is not fallen.

Finally, in Romans 14 Paul writes,

Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. (Romans 14:3-4)

But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. (Romans 14:10)

Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way. (Romans 14:13)

The judging Paul is talking about here has to do with matters of personal conscience before God (Romans 14:1-6, 22-23). He is not talking about Biblical doctrine. For on these same matters, eating and day observance (Romans 14:2-3, 5-6), when dealing with Biblical doctrine (teaching), Paul judges these things as serious (see 1 Timothy 4:1-3; Galatians 4:10-11).

But, as a matter of personal conscience in what a person feels right about doing or not doing, these things are to be left to the individual and we are not to judge one another on that. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 4:5 and here in Romans 14:10-12, Christ will judge these matters at a later time.

IV. God's Judgment

No one will escape God's judgment (Romans 2:7-10; 14:10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:10). All will be judged according to the Word of God (Hebrews 4:12-13). We know this, and this is why we judge as we do. Our judgment is simply a declaration of God's judgments that He has already made known (e.g. John 3:18 "**condemned already**"). We declare them. We are *required* to declare them (Psalm 105:1-6), and so we bear His reproach for doing so (2 Timothy 4:10; Hebrews 13:13). False christians (and others) hate the light (John 3:19-20), and so they foolishly proclaim, "Judge not." We refuse to heed this "Judge not" counsel of the ungodly (Psalm 1:1), for we do not want to be condemned with them (Luke 6:37). For in hypocrisy they judge, and in hypocrisy they condemn, and so they will receive their condemnation (John 5:29). We know this and proclaim it, because we believe what God says.

And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak (2 Corinthians 4:13).

Endnotes:

1. Those who judge that we judge and tell us we shouldn't be judging, are hypocrites, and the words of Romans 2 apply to them.

Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.
(Romans 2:1)

When they judge us as judging and tell us not to judge, they practice the very same thing they condemn us for, and so Paul continues,

But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. (Romans 2:2)

So, just as Jesus warns in Matthew 7:1-2 & Luke 6:37, Paul declares,

And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? (Romans 2:3)

2. Jeremiah 8:7-9 parallels our days.

Even the stork in the heavens knows her appointed times; and the turtledove, the swift, and the swallow observe the time of their coming. But My people do not know the judgment of the Lord. How can you say, "We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us"? Look, the false pen of the scribe certainly works falsehood. The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken. Behold, they have rejected the word of the Lord; so what wisdom do they have?

3. In Ezekiel 18:8 a righteous man is described in this way.

If he has not exacted usury nor taken any increase, but has withdrawn his hand from iniquity and executed true judgment between man and man; . . .

4. This command by Christ to judge in John 7:24b is in the Greek, κρινετε (krinete, Critical Text, present active imperative; Majority and Received Text have aorist active imperative, κρινατε [krinate]), which is the same Greek word for the command *not* to "judge" in Matthew 7:1 (likewise, κρινετε - Luke 6:37; 12:57; John 8:15; Acts 13:46; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 5:12; κρινατε - John 18:31; Acts 4:19; Romans 14:13; 1 Corinthians 10:15; 11:13).

5. See also Deuteronomy 13:5 at the end of the verse for a similar statement. Obviously, in Deuteronomy 13:5 the putting away there was unto death. In 1

Not Taught!

Corinthians 5 the person is put out of the church.

6. The Greek word translated "effeminate" in the KJV & NAS ("homosexual" NKJV) in 1 Corinthians 6:9 is μαλακοι (malakoi) and it literally means "soft." It is translated "soft" in the NKJV, KJV, and NAS in both remaining passages in the N. T., Matthew 11:8 and Luke 7:25.

7. An example of a spiritual man judging according to the Word can be found in Romans 2:25-29. Here, speaking of the inward Jew (verse 29) who fulfills the law (verse 27), Paul asks the rhetorical question,

And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law?

It's a given. Indeed he will. This is how godly people act. They judge with righteous judgment (John 7:24).

Sex

Here's an unlikely Sunday morning sermon.

Sex During Menstruation

You shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness as long as she is in her customary impurity. (Leviticus 18:19)

If a man lies with a woman during her sickness and uncovers her nakedness, he has exposed her flow, and she has uncovered the flow of her blood. Both of them shall be cut off from their people. (Leviticus 20:18)

Whatever things were written before were written for our learning (Romans 15:4).

I. God hates it.

Although we are not under the law (Galatians), there is much to be learned from the law.

Indeed the marriage bed is undefiled (Hebrews 13:4), but there is something that can defile the marriage bed. Besides "**strangers with you**" (Proverbs 5:17), sexual intercourse during menstruation also defiles. Even though Leviticus 18:19 is in the law, and Christ is the end of the law for righteousness for everyone who believes (Romans 10:4), it nonetheless reveals that sex during menstruation is *still* an abomination to God.

Not Taught!

Several other sins are listed off in Leviticus 18, uncovering the nakedness of near of kin, marrying a woman to rival her sister, adultery, idolatry, homosexuality, and bestiality. These are all identified as things that defile and are things that God *still* hates. Yah declares,

Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you. For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants. You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you (for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled), lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you. For whoever commits any of these abominations, the persons who commit them shall be cut off from among their people. Therefore you shall keep My ordinance, so that you do not commit any of these abominable customs which were committed before you, and that you do not defile yourselves by them: I am the Lord your God. (Leviticus 18:24-30)

Before this law was given to Moses (Leviticus 18:1), the nations and their land had already been defiled by these things, and the land had already vomited out nations that practiced them. This makes it clear, that these practices, which includes sex during menstruation, are, according to God, evil (i.e. sinful), and He viewed them as evil *before* the law was given to Moses.

Furthermore, the decree God gave the Israelites for anyone who had sex during the menstrual cycle was death.

If a man lies with a woman during her sickness and uncovers her nakedness, he has exposed her flow, and she has uncovered the flow of her blood. Both of them shall be cut off from their people. (Leviticus 20:18)

"Cut off" = put to death (see e.g. Exodus 31:14; Leviticus 20:1-5; Daniel 9:26). The Lord obviously takes this very seriously and instructed the Israelites to kill anyone who did such a thing.

Therefore, God's condemnation of the wicked people of Jerusalem, although under the law at that time, is nonetheless a warning to all. In the context of a list of some very wicked things, the Lord says,

In you men uncover their fathers' nakedness; in you they violate women who are set apart during their impurity. (Ezekiel 22:10)

God hates this practice.

II. It's a Matter of Righteousness and Life and Death

Ezekiel 18 further reveals that sex during menses is indeed ungodly. Notice how the Lord describes a "just" man in Ezekiel 18:

But if a man is just and does what is lawful and right; if he has not eaten on the mountains, nor lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, nor defiled his neighbor's wife, nor approached a woman during her impurity; . . . (Ezekiel 18:5-6)

Along with several other things that depict a "just" (righteous) man, is one who does not approach **"a woman during her impurity."** God says this man **"shall surely live!"** (Ezekiel 18:9) Conversely, after this the Lord says if this just man,

begets a son who is a robber or a shedder of blood, who does any of these things . . . (Ezekiel 18:10)

What is in view with the words, **"who does any of these things"**? One of those things is approaching **"a woman during her impurity."** God says of this man,

If he has done any of these abominations, he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him. (Ezekiel 18:13)

The death God speaks of here is one of eternal death (Revelation 20:14). This is made clear later in the chapter where He says,

"The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself."

"But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; because of the righteousness which he has done, he shall live. Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?" says the Lord God, **"and not that he should turn from his ways and live?"**

"But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has

Not Taught!

committed, because of them he shall die." (Ezekiel 18:20-24)

All men die, the righteous and the wicked (Ecclesiastes 2:14-16; 9:2-3), but not all men will be dead (Matthew 22:31-32; John 8:51; 11:26). The Lord is not speaking of simply physical death in Ezekiel 18. He is indicating their eternal home, life or death (Isaiah 66:24). Sexual intercourse during a period is a serious matter.

So, how long should one wait? In the law, the woman was unclean for seven days (Leviticus 12:2). This is a typical cycle, somewhere around seven days for it to be complete. Leviticus 20:18 describes the concern to be with the flow of blood. Actually, the answer to how long one should wait is quite simple. When the period is over, when there is no blood flow, then clearly there is no abomination before God if sexual intercourse is resumed (Hebrews 13:4).

Now, some may wonder about Leviticus 15:19-24, 32-33.

If a woman has a discharge, and the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be set apart seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening. Everything that she lies on during her impurity shall be unclean; also everything that she sits on shall be unclean. Whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. And whoever touches anything that she sat on shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. If anything is on her bed or on anything on which she sits, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until evening. And if any man lies with her at all, so that her impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean. (Leviticus 15:19-24)

This is the law for one who has a discharge, and for him who emits semen and is unclean thereby, and for her who is indisposed because of her customary impurity, and for one who has a discharge, either man or woman, and for him who lies with her who is unclean. (Leviticus 15:32-33)

Is the issue here having sex, or simply lying down with a woman during this time? It appears to be the latter. In Leviticus 20:18, five chapters later, sex is definitely the context, and the practice is seriously condemned. Here, in Leviticus 15, there is no such language of condemnation, but simply an uncleanness for seven days, and not even a sin-offering for the man is required.

Thus, for a practical application for today, it is not that a man can't sleep (*sleep*, that is) with his wife during her time, or even enjoy her breasts (Proverbs 5:19 "**at all times**"). It's the sexual intercourse and the exposure of the flow of blood that God forbids (Leviticus 20:18).

Finally, what if a husband were to demand to have intercourse during his wife's menstrual cycle? Should the wife submit to this (1 Peter 3:1-6)? No, it is an abomination to God (Leviticus 18:19-30). She should resist this even to her

own death (Revelation 12:11). As it is written,

For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. (Hebrews 12:3-4)

Resisting and striving against sin, even to the point of bloodshed, is Biblical. The people of faith in Hebrews 11 knew this well, that is, those who were tortured, scourged, stoned, slain with the sword, and sawn in two (Hebrews 11:35-37).

Of course, if a woman was overpowered by her husband, and the woman was an unwilling participant, then she has not sinned. The husband sinned, but the woman would be as one who was raped as in Deuteronomy 22.

If a man finds a betrothed young woman in the countryside, and the man forces her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die. But you shall do nothing to the young woman; *there is in the young woman no sin deserving of death, for just as when a man rises against his neighbor and kills him, even so is this matter. For he found her in the countryside, and the betrothed young woman cried out, but there was no one to save her.* (Deuteronomy 22:25-27)

III. God's View of Menstruation

In addition, God's view of menstruation, even though He is the one who made it (Romans 11:36), is not one of pleasantries. He uses the woman's monthly cycle as an illustration of severe disgust and hatred. Ezekiel 36:17 illustrates this:

Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own ways and deeds; to Me their way was like the uncleanness of a woman in her customary impurity. (note also verse 18)

Israel's sin was seriously wicked (e.g. 2 Kings 17:7-18), and the Lord hated their ways so much, He likened it to menses.¹

Even men's own righteousness God likens to a rag of menstruations.

But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; (Isaiah 64:6; in the Hebrew text it is Isaiah 64:5)

A more literal translation of this is, "**all our righteousnesses are like a rag of periods.**" The Hebrew word בָּגְדָה (beged) for "rag" (or "rags" as the NKJV has it) is actually in the singular, and the Hebrew word יְדִימָה ('iddiyim)

Not Taught!

translated "filthy" is actually in the plural, and is more akin to our word "period" or "time" than "filthy" (see Lexicons, Brown, Driver, and Briggs, p. 723 or Koehler and Baumgartner, p. 790).

IV. Conclusion

The Bible makes it clear that God's view of a woman's monthly cycle is one of disgust and an unclean thing, and intercourse during this time is something He hates. It's an abomination to Him. So, be warned, those who practice what God hates will spend forever in eternal torment in the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8), because they are abominable and unclean (Ephesians 5:5).

Endnote:

1. Lamentations 1:17 in the KJV reads,

Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them.

The NKJV reads,

Jerusalem has become an unclean thing among them.

(Lamentations 1:17)

The Hebrew noun translated "**menstruous woman**" (KJV) and "**unclean thing**" (NKJV) is נִדְּאָה (neddâh) and is used for the "impurity" of menstruation (Leviticus 12:2, 5; 15:19-20, 24, 25 [3x], 26 [2x], 33; 18:19; Ezekiel 18:6; 22:10; 36:17) and also other impurities, taking a brother's wife (Leviticus 20:21), or the water of "purification" (Numbers 19:9, 13, 20-21 [2x]; 31:23); "rubbish" (2 Chronicles 29:5 KJV; NKJV); "unclean" & "uncleanness" (Ezra 9:11 [2x]; KJV "unclean"; "filthiness"); "unclean thing" (Lamentations 1:17; KJV "a menstruous woman"); "refuse" (Ezekiel 7:19; "removed" KJV), 20 ("far" KJV); "vile" (Lamentations 1:8; "removed" KJV); and "uncleanness" (Zechariah 13:1). The related verb, נִדְּאָה (nâdâh), is found only in Isaiah 66:5 ("cast . . . out" KJV; NKJV) and Amos 6:3 ("put far away" KJV; "put far off" NKJV).

Polygamy

In the Song of Songs, Solomon, a holy man of God moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21), wrote,

There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and virgins without number. (Song of Solomon 6:8)

Years later, the apostle Paul, another holy man of God moved by the same Spirit, warned,

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, (1 Timothy 4:1-3)

What was once viewed as a good thing (see below), now in these latter times "**deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons**" prohibit what God does not.

Introduction

Although Scripture clearly condemns polyandry (a woman having more than one husband, Romans 7:2-3), it does not condemn polygyny (a man having more than one wife). Yet, in today's [false Christian culture](#) (2 Timothy 3:1-5; 4:3; 2 Peter 2:1-3) this kind of polygamy (i.e. polygyny) is typically viewed as evil, even though the Word of God never teaches any such thing (Proverbs 4:27; 30:5-6).

For example, the official *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states,

Adultery, divorce, polygamy, and free union are grave offenses against the dignity of marriage. (CCC, p. 576, #2400, underlining added)

Not Taught!

Likewise, popular Bible teacher John MacArthur writes in his Study Bible,

8:30,31 many wives. Gideon fell severely into the sin of polygamy, an iniquity tolerated by many but which never was God's blueprint for marriage (Gen. 2:24). Abimelech, a son by yet another illicit relationship, grew up to be the wretched king in Judg. 9. Polygamy always resulted in trouble. (*The MacArthur Study Bible*, p.348, copyright 1997, Word Publishing)

MacArthur calls polygamy an "iniquity," faults Gideon for "the sin of polygamy," and calls polygamy and concubinage (Abimelech was the son of Gideon's concubine, Judges 8:31) "illicit" relationships. On page 37 of this same Study Bible MacArthur calls bigamy (having two wives) "open rebellion against God" and a "violation of marriage law" (see MacArthur's footnote for Genesis 4:19). The problem with this is, Scripture nowhere says any such thing (Proverbs 30:5-6). When MacArthur, and those like him, maintain such heresy, they blaspheme (2 Timothy 3:2) godly men (e.g. Abraham, Gideon, David, Josiah [MacArthur's footnote for 2 Kings 23:25]), teach as a doctrine the commandment of men (Matthew 15:8-9), and even speak evil of God Himself. For the Lord describes Himself to be married to two sisters in Jeremiah 3:6-14 and Ezekiel 23:1-5, 36-37, 43-45 ("adultery" reveals married).

Some may argue that Matthew 19:9 condemns polygamy.

And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, *except for sexual immorality*, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.
(Matthew 19:9; see also Mark 10:11; Luke 16:18)

There is a key phrase here, "**except for sexual immorality.**" If the divorce is "**for sexual immorality**" (i.e. the woman has been sexually unfaithful), the man has *not* committed adultery, though he has divorced and married another woman.

Moreover, there is another key word here, "**divorces.**" Polygamy does not involve divorce. Polygamy is the polar opposite of divorce. Polygamy keeps faithful the marriage vow. Divorce does not. Jesus calls *divorce* and remarriage adultery. He does *not* call simple marriage to another woman adultery. Those who use this passage for that pervert it and add to the text (Proverbs 30:5-6).

So, even in Matthew 19:9 there is a marriage to another woman that is not condemned. The wrong in Matthew 19:9 is the divorce. That is the context and discussion at hand, divorce (Matthew 19:3-9). God is against divorce. As Jesus says,

So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate. (Matthew 19:6; see also Malachi 2:13-16)

I. Polygamy Was Not Uncommon

As often as polygamy is recorded in Scripture, it is quite evident the Lord never condemns the practice. Both wicked men and righteous men were polygamous, and the Lord called neither to repent of it.

Lamech is the first recorded polygamist (Genesis 4:19).¹ Abraham had more than one wife (Genesis 16:3-4; 25:6 "concubines"). Nahor, Abraham's brother, had both a wife and a concubine (Genesis 11:29; 22:20-24). Esau took on a third wife (from Ishmael), after seeing his Canaanite women did not please his father Isaac (Genesis 28:6-9). Jacob was tricked into polygamy (Genesis 29:20-30), yet later he received two additional wives (from his wives) making a grand total of four wives (Genesis 30:4, 9). Ashhur, the father of Tekoa, had two wives (1 Chronicles 4:5). Michael, Obadiah, Joel, Ishiah, and those with them "**had many wives**" (1 Chronicles 7:3-4). Shaharaim had at least four wives, two of which he "**sent away**" (1 Chronicles 8:8-11).

Moses had three wives (Exodus 18:2; Numbers 12:1; Judges 4:11²), but there's no information on whether or not they were contemporaneously married; since their deaths are not mentioned. Caleb had two wives (1 Chronicles 2:18) and two concubines (1 Chronicles 2:46, 48). Gideon had many wives (Judges 8:30). Elkanah is recorded as having two wives, one of which was the godly woman Hannah (1 Samuel 1:1-2, 8-2:10). King Saul had "**wives**" (2 Samuel 12:8).

David, a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22), had a grand minimum total of 20-22 wives³ (10-12 wives and 10 concubines, 2 Samuel 3:2-5, 13-14; 5:13; 11:27; 12:8; 15:16). Solomon, who breached both Deuteronomy 7:1-4 and 17:14-17, had 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11:1-6). Rehoboam had eighteen wives and sixty concubines (2 Chronicles 11:21), and sought many wives for his sons (1 Chronicles 11:23). Abijah had fourteen wives (2 Chronicles 13:21). Ahab had more than one wife (1 Kings 20:7). Jehoram had wives who were taken captive (2 Chronicles 21:17). Jehoidah the priest gave king Joash two wives (2 Chronicles 24:1-3), and Jehoiachin had more than one wife (2 Kings 24:15). Polygamy is mentioned several times over in the Bible and never once is polygyny condemned.

II. Polygamy Was Governed

Not only is polygyny not forbidden, but God actually gave laws concerning its practice. For example, in Deuteronomy 21 the Lord gave Moses a law regarding a man who had two wives.

If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated,⁴ and they have born him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated: Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he

Not Taught!

hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn: But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.
(Deuteronomy 21:15-17 KJV)⁵

This law is very much like Jacob's situation in which he "**loved Rachel more than Leah**" (Genesis 29:30-33). It says Leah was "**hated**." And, as in the above law, the firstborn, Reuben, was the son of the "**hated**" wife, Leah. So here in the law of Moses, God does not condemn the man who has two wives. He simply governs how he deals with the offspring.

Immediately before this passage, we find Deuteronomy 21:10-14.

When you go out to war⁶ against your enemies, and the Lord your God delivers them into your hand, and you take them captive, and you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and desire her and would take her for your wife, then you shall bring her home to your house, and she shall shave her head and trim her nails. She shall put off the cloths of her captivity, remain in your house, and mourn her father and her mother a full month; after that you may go in to her and be her husband, and she shall be your wife. And it shall be, if you have no delight in her, then you shall set her free, but you certainly shall not sell her for money; you shall not treat her brutally, because you have humbled her.

Here the Lord makes no mention as to whether "**you**" are already married or not. He simply gives the Israelites the permission to marry a captive girl and how to deal with her. This law applies to either a single man or a married man, and in its application of a married man, the Lord is giving permission for polygamy. In fact, this passage rests in that very context, because the very next statement after verse 14 is, "**If a man has two wives, . . .**" (Deuteronomy 21:15).

Another interesting law in the light of polygamy is found in Deuteronomy 25:5-10.

If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. And it shall be that the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel. But if the man does not want to take his brother's wife, then let his

brother's wife go up to the gate to the elders, and say, "My husband's brother refuses to raise up a name to his brother in Israel; he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother." Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him. But if he stands firm and says, "I do not want to take her," then his brother's wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders, remove his sandal from his foot, spit in his face, and answer and say, "So shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother's house." And his name shall be called in Israel, "The house of him who had his sandal removed."

This passage requires the living brother to marry his brother's wife, and there is absolutely no statement whatsoever in regards to the living brother's marital status. He could be single, or he could already be married. The passage says nothing either way. All that is said is,

If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.

If the living brother was already married, then we have here a command from God for a man to have a polygamous relationship. If the living brother was already married, in order to obey the Lord, the man would be required to have more than one wife. If he refused to do so, he would be spit in the face and bear reproach (Deuteronomy 25:9-10).

Similarly, if a married man were to have sex with a virgin who was not betrothed, he would be required to marry her, and thus end up with another wife.

If a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall surely pay the bride-price for her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the bride-price of virgins. (Exodus 22:16-17)

Here again there is no specification on whether the man is married or not. Therefore, this law would apply to both a single or married man.

Likewise, Deuteronomy 22 says,

If a man finds a young woman who is a virgin, who is not betrothed, and he seizes her and lies with her, and they are found out, then the man who lay with her shall give to the young woman's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be

Not Taught!

his wife because he has humbled her; he shall not be permitted to divorce her all his days. (Deuteronomy 22:28-29)

In this case, if a married man did the above, he was *required* to marry the girl. Thus, here we have yet another law that actually commands polygamy to be practiced.

Another law regarding polygamy can be found in Leviticus 18:18. Here the Lord forbids rivalry.

Nor shall you take a woman as a rival to her sister, to uncover her nakedness while the other is alive.

"As a rival" is an infinitive in the Hebrew. The BDB Lexicon has "to make a rival" which indicates motive. Note again Jeremiah 3:6-14 and Ezekiel 23:1-5, 36-37, 43-45, where the Lord describes Himself married to two sisters. Surely, God does *not* do wrong.

An example of sisterhood rivalry within polygamy can be found in Genesis 29:16-30:24.⁷ Jacob was tricked into marrying both of these sisters. He only wanted one of them (Genesis 29:15-28).

Also, the Lord did not allow a man to marry a woman and her mother.

If a man marries a woman and her mother, it is wickedness. They shall be burned with fire, both he and they, that there may be no wickedness among you. (Leviticus 20:14)

These laws (Leviticus 18:18 & 20:14) do not prohibit polygamy, but rather they ban certain acts of polygyny.

Finally, there is one passage in Deuteronomy that some may think condemns polygamy. But the truth of the matter is, it actually allows it. For the king, Deuteronomy 17:14-17 places a very general limit to the practice of polygyny.

When you come to the land which the Lord your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, "I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me," you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the Lord has said to you, "You shall not return that way again." Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.

This law is given for the king of the land. There is no such law concerning the common Israelite. In other words, if an Israelite were to multiply wives for himself, he would not be breaching this law or any other command from God; because no such command exists. This law does not apply to everyone. It only applies to the king.

Now, does the law say the king cannot have more than one wife? No, it does not. In fact, please note there are three other things the king is not to "**multiply for himself**," horses, silver, and gold. Could he have a few horses? Certainly, David had at least 100 horses (2 Samuel 8:4), and in this, he did not disobey God (1 Kings 15:5). Could a king have some silver and gold? Indeed, David had silver and gold (2 Samuel 12:30; 24:24), and he did not disobey God (1 Kings 15:5). Likewise, could a king have a few wives? Yes he could. David had at least 10-12 wives and 10 concubines and was not disobedient against the Lord in doing so, as 1 Kings 15:5 says.

David did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

III. David's Example

In the matter of Uriah the Hittite, God further reveals His noncondemning perspective toward polygamy. In the midst of rebuking David for his adultery and murder, the Lord says,

I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more! (2 Samuel 12:8)

This verse more literally reads,

And I gave to you the house of your lord and the women of your lord in your bosom. And I gave to you the house of Israel and Judah. And if little, and I add to you as they and as they.⁸

In other words, "**And if that was too little, so I would have added to you more.**" More what? The context? More houses and more women. Clearly, God does not have a problem with polygamy.

What is translated in 2 Samuel 12:8, "**into your keeping**" (NKJV) is more literally "**in your bosom**" בְּחֵיקְךָ (bechêyqekhâ).⁹ For example, see 2 Samuel 12:8 KJV "**into thy bosom.**" This same exact "**in your bosom**" is what Sarai said to Abraham when she gave Abraham her maiden for a wife.

My wrong *be* upon thee: I have given my maid into thy

Not Taught!

bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee.
(Genesis 16:5 KJV)

Thus, in the midst of rebuking David for his sin, God tells David he would have given him more women, if those he had wasn't enough. God is indeed against adultery, but He is not against a man having wives, and in this context, even quite a few of them.

As for a king who breached Deuteronomy 17:17, [Solomon](#) is the classic example. He had 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11:3). Solomon obviously multiplied wives to himself. Deuteronomy 17:17 warned him not to do so, "**lest his heart turn away.**" And that's what happened. "**His wives turned away his heart**" (1 Kings 11:3) "**after other gods**" (1 Kings 11:4).

Interesting to note in this polygamous context is the statement about David in 1 Kings 11:6.

Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not fully follow the Lord, as did his father David.

With the women God gave David from Saul, David had at least 10-12 wives and 10 concubines. And it is said, David *fully* followed the Lord.

Polygamy was the pattern of David's life. He practiced it unrepentantly. God even specifically commanded him not to "**multiply wives for himself**" (Deuteronomy 17:17). Although David was a sinner like anyone else (Ecc. 7:20), he did not disobey this specific command given to him by God;

because David did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. (1 Kings 15:5)

David was a polygamist, and he "**did what was right in the eyes of the LORD.**" Polygyny is right in the eyes of the Lord.

IV. Polygamy Included Concubinage

Some today may think that concubinage in the Bible was a form of an immoral sexual relationship similar to having a personal mistress. Webster's Third New International Dictionary gives this kind of a definition for "concubine" as one possible meaning.

concubine . . . b: a woman who cohabits with a man without being his wife: MISTRESS (p. 472, copyright 1986, unabridged)

The Hebrew word for concubine is *pilegesh* (פִּלְגֶּשֶׁת), and it is used for an illicit

sexual relationship, but only once.

And she lusted after their paramours, whose flesh is like the flesh of donkeys and whose issue is like the issue of horses.
(Ezekiel 23:20 NAS)

Here in Ezekiel 23:20, the Hebrew word for concubine is translated "paramours." A paramour is an illicit sexual lover indeed, and the context of this passage supports this translation. It is speaking of a woman with her male immoral partners (paramours). The "concubines," so to speak, are male here, not female, and this is the only time this word is used for males.

Every time pilegesh is used for a female, it is used for a woman who is married to a man. Keturah is called Abraham's concubine, פִּילֶגֶשׁ (pilegesh), in 1 Chronicles 1:32. But, in Genesis 25:1 she is called Abraham's woman, אִשָּׁה ('ishâh, NKJV "wife"). David's ten concubines are indeed called concubines, but they are also called his women by the Lord Himself (אִשְׁתֵּיךָ NKJV "your wives" 2 Samuel 12:11; 16:21-22). In Judges 19 & 20 the Levite's concubine "**played the harlot**" (Judges 19:2) and left "**her man**" (Judges 19:3, אִישָׁהּ, NKJV "her husband"). She is called a concubine in Judges 19:1, 2, 9, 24, 25, 29; 20:4 and 5, yet at the same time, her male partner, the Levite, is called her "man" in Judges 19:3 and 20:4 (NKJV "the husband of the woman" אִישׁ הָאִשָּׁה). Moreover, the concubine's father is called the "**father-in-law**" (Judges 19:4, 7, 9), and the Levite is called the "**son-in-law**" (Judges 19:5). Clearly, concubinage is displayed as a marital commitment.

So, what is the difference between a "wife" and a "concubine"? Wives are free, concubines are not. Scripture portrays concubinage as the marriage of a slave girl. Note Leviticus 19:20.

Whoever lies carnally with a woman who is betrothed to a man as a concubine, and who has not at all been redeemed nor given her freedom, for this there shall be scourging; but they shall not be put to death, because she was not free.

Betrothal (engagement) is the promise to marry, and here in Leviticus 19:20 we have the betrothal of a slave girl to a man. Being a slave, she is called a concubine, and for this immoral act she is not killed as a free woman would be (as in Deuteronomy 22:23-24), "**because she was not free.**"

In Judges the concubine's husband is twice called "**her master**" (Judges 19:26-27, אֲדֹנָיָהּ). Other concubines are identified likewise. Bilhah, Jacob's concubine (Genesis 35:22), whom Rachel gave to him for a wife (Genesis 30:3-4), was a slave (Genesis 35:25 "**maidservant**"). Likewise, Zilpah was a slave-wife (Genesis 35:26; 30:9). Marrying a slave girl was not only practiced, it was legislated in the law of God as well.

And if a man sells his daughter to be a female slave, she shall

Not Taught!

not go out as the male slaves do. If she does not please her master, who has betrothed her to himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has dealt deceitfully with her. And if he has betrothed her to his son, he shall deal with her according to the custom of daughters. If he takes another wife, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, and her marriage rights. And if he does not do these three for her, then she shall go out free, without paying money. (Exodus 21:7-11; see also Deuteronomy 21:10-14)

Notice it does not say, "He cannot take another wife." It says, "**If he takes another wife.**" Here we have another law concerning polygyny and it is not forbidden.

Although some today may view concubinage as an evil deed, Leah, in the Scriptures, viewed it as part of that which pleased the Lord.

And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. Leah said, "God has given me my wages, because I have given my maid to my husband." So she called his name Issachar. (Genesis 30:17-18)

Leah had given Zilpah, her maidservant, to Jacob as a wife, because she perceived that she had stopped bearing children (Genesis 30:9). Yet, she continued to pray for more sons. God heard her plea ("God listened to Leah"), and Leah understood this to be a reward from the Lord for giving Jacob a concubine.

V. Polygamy Today

Historically, the United States has had a strong false Christian influence (Puritan/Protestant/Catholic). Not surprisingly then, do we find forbidding to marry when God does not. Polygamy is illegal in the U.S.A.. They "**call evil good, and good evil**" (Isaiah 5:20). Homosexuals, who practice "**what is against nature**" (Romans 1:26-27), can legally marry (Leviticus 20:13). But, for those who want to practice "**the natural use of the woman**" (Romans 1:27), they've made it illegal. Yet, the very polygamous King, Solomon, who found many wives wrote,

He who finds a wife finds a *good* thing, and obtains favor from the LORD. (Proverbs 18:22)

Men are quite proud, thinking they know more about what is right or wrong than God Himself (Psalm 10:4). Yet, without God there *is no* right or wrong. "**There is one Lawgiver**" (James 4:12).

Some might argue that Christ has only one wife, the church. Therefore, we are not to have more than one wife either. The problem with this reasoning is, Christ does not have only one wife. He has two. Indeed, the assembly of believers is depicted as His wife (Ephesians 5:25-32; Revelation 19:7-8), but so is the Holy City, the New Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven (Revelation 21:9-27).

Now, an overseer or a deacon is only to have one wife.

This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, . . . Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, . . . (1 Timothy 3:1-2, 12; see also Titus 1:6).

One of the qualifications of a bishop (literally "overseer") and a deacon (literally "servant") is that he be the husband of one wife. If he were to have two or more, he could not hold either position. Why? It doesn't say. One can only wonder if it is because of the additional "**cares about the things of the world**" (1 Corinthians 7:33) another wife brings.

In the beginning the Lord indeed formed one man and one woman and the two became one flesh (Genesis 2:24; Genesis 1:31; Mark 10:6-8). Whether it be in a monogamous marriage or a polygamous marriage, the two still become one flesh. The man becomes one flesh with each of his wives. We know this by the fact that even if a man has sex with a harlot, he nonetheless becomes one flesh with her. As it is written,

Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." (1 Corinthians 6:16)

Therefore, the two becoming one still applies to each union in a polygamous marriage.

Many find the idea of polygamy a bad thing. But, Ecclesiastes depicts it as a good thing.

If a man begets a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with goodness, or indeed he has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better than he (Ecclesiastes 6:3).

Living many years is typically regarded as a good thing (e.g. Proverbs 3:2; Ephesians 6:3). Having children is explicitly stated to be "**a reward**" (Psalm 127:3). Having "**a hundred children**" depicts having more than one wife. For example,

Gideon had seventy sons who were his own offspring, for he

Not Taught!

had many wives. (Judges 8:30)

Ecclesiastes 6:3 depicts polygamy as a good thing, not a bad thing. Although according to this verse, it clearly takes more than long life and many children to be "**satisfied with goodness.**"

The wisest man who ever lived (1 Kings 3:12) said, "**He who finds a wife finds a good thing.**" Who's to say it's an evil thing to find more than one? God doesn't say it, and neither should we.

Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar. (Proverbs 30:5-6)

Finally, the first verse given in this article was the Song of Songs 6:8. At the time, evidently Solomon had 60 and 80 concubines. Yet, the one of whom this song sings really stood out among them all.

My dove, my perfect one, is the only one, the only one of her mother, the favorite of the one who bore her. The daughters saw her and called her blessed, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her. (Song of Solomon 6:9)

The other wives praise this fellow wife.

Endnotes:

1. Terah, Abraham's father, may have had more than one wife, but there is not enough information to say for certain. Abraham had a half sister via Terah (Genesis 20:12), but we don't know who the mother was or the circumstances to her relationship with Terah.

2. In Judges 4:11 Hobab is noted as the "**father-in-law of Moses.**" In Exodus 2:18-21 "**Reuel**" (vs. 18), "**the priest of Midian**" (Exodus 2:16), is also noted as Moses' father-in-law. Reuel (Exodus 2:18) "**gave Zipporah his daughter to Moses**" (Exodus 2:21). Evidently, Moses had both Reuel's daughter and Reuel's grand daughter as wives, since Hobab was both the "**son of Reuel the Midianite**" (Numbers 10:29) and the "**father-in-law of Moses.**" Moses also had another wife, the Ethiopian woman, mentioned only in Numbers 12:1.

3. David's first wife is Michal (1 Samuel 18:27). He eventually loses her for a while and obtains Abigail and Ahinoam (1 Samuel 25:42-44). Four more are listed by name along with these two in 2 Samuel 3:2-5. In 1 Chronicles 3:1-5 this same list of six wives is given and it is clear they do not include David's concubines, because it says,

These were all the sons of David, besides the sons of the concubines (1 Chronicles 3:9).

In the context, the list of sons is from those six named, plus Bathsheba, and from some other wife or wives. Verses 6-8 list nine more sons but do not give any name for the mother or mothers.

The context in 2 Samuel 3 is while he was in Hebron (verse 2). Those listed are Ahinoam, Abigail, Maacah, Haggith, Abital, and Eglah. Then he also gets Michal back (2 Samuel 3:13-14). Then after he moves to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:6-9) it says,

And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron. Also more sons and daughters were born to David. (2 Samuel 5:13)

So up to this point, the number of named and recorded wives is a grand total of 7 (Michal, Ahinoam, Abigail, Maacah, Haggith, Abital, and Eglah). Then in 2 Samuel 5 we are told "**he took more . . . wives**" which indicates he took a minimum of two more wives at this point. That makes a minimum total of 9 wives. Then later in 2 Samuel 11 he takes on Bathseba, which makes a grand minimum total of 10 wives. In addition, the only number given for concubines is 10 (e.g. 2 Samuel 15:16).

Moreover, in 2 Samuel 12:8 it reveals David had some wives from Saul.

And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. (2 Samuel 12:8 KJV)

If these are not included in the wives he took from Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:13), then this would be an additional 2 or more wives. Thus, understanding concubines are slave wives, David had a grand minimum total of 20-22 wives (10-12 wives and 10 concubines).

Finally, the names given of David's wives are:

Michal מִיכָל (miykhal) means "brook," same as in 2 Samuel 17:20, מִיכָל "brook" (KJV, NKJV, NAS) only found here.

Ahinoam אַחִינּוֹאִם ('achiyno`am) means "my brother is delight"

Abigail אַבִּיגַיִל means "my father is joy" e.g. אֲבִיגַיִל "my joy" Psalm 43:4

Maacah מַעֲכָה (ma`akhâh) "she pressed"? e.g. Ezekiel 23:3 "their breasts pressed" KJV מַעֲכָה

Haggith חַגִּית (chaggiyt) "festal"

Abital אַבִּיטָל "my father is dew"

Eglah עֲגֻלָּה = "heifer" e.g. "heifer" עֲגֻלָּה Genesis 15:9

Bathsheba בַּת־שֶׁבַע (bat-sheva`) "daughter of seven"

Not Taught!

4. NKJV has "unloved" both in Deuteronomy 21:15-17 and Genesis 29:31 & 33. But, the Hebrew word is "**hated**" as the KJV has it, שְׂנֹאָה (senu'áh).

5. MacArthur writes,

21:15-17 has two wives. In the original, the words are rendered "has had two wives," referring to events that have already taken place, evidently intimating that **one wife is dead** and another has taken her place. **Moses, then, is not legislating on a polygamous case where a man has two wives** at the same time, but on that of a man who has married twice in succession. (*The MacArthur Study Bible*, copyright 1997, footnote for Deuteronomy 21:15-17, bold added)

The text says nothing of any death of a spouse, but MacArthur adds this to the text (Proverbs 30:6). Also, MacArthur lies about "the original." There is no tense distinction in the Biblical Hebrew ("the original") between "has" and "has had." Context would dictate that, which here, is not justified.

The verb representing the "has" or "has had" that MacArthur is referring to is תִּהְיֶינָה (tiheyena). It is simply an imperfect third feminine plural verb for "to be." The imperfect does not mandate a "has had" translation as MacArthur claims.

Moses is legislating on a polygamous case where a man has two wives, one is loved, the other is hated (as in Genesis 29:31-33). That's the heart of the passage. MacArthur adds a death to the text, lies about the original, and denies the words of Scripture by saying, "Moses, then, is not legislating on a polygamous case" when in fact he is.

6. In the booty of war, as described in Deuteronomy 21:10-14, a wife might be obtained. Consistent with this concept, wise ladies say to Sisera's mother in Judges 5:30, "**To every man a girl or two**" (more literally, "**a womb, two wombs to each man**" רַחֵם רַחֵם תַּיִם [racham, rachamâtayim]).

7. There is rivalry found between Hannah and Peninnah in 1 Samuel 1, but there is no comment on whether or not they are sisters.

8. "**as they and as they**" - כַּהֵנָּה וְכַהֵנָּה (kâhênâh vekhâhênâh) - כַּהֵנָּה (khâhênâh) is found one other place, Genesis 41:19 "**such as**" (KJV). In 2 Samuel 12:8 the "**such as**" (or more literally, "**as they**") refers back to the previous houses ("**such as**") and women ("**and such as**").

9. "**in your bosom**" בְּחֵיקָהּ (bechêyqekhâ) is also found in Exodus 4:6 ("**in your bosom**" NKJV); Numbers 11:12 ("**in your bosom**" NKJV); and 1 Kings 1:2 ("**in your bosom**" NKJV). In Genesis 16:5 NKJV translates this "**into your embrace**."

Next, we have an "untouchable" subject.

Masturbation

No doubt, much evil is done in the name of masturbation. A search on this subject on the internet (*not* recommended) will substantiate that. But is masturbation evil, in and of itself? Some seem to think so.

For example, the [Catholic](#) Catechism states,

By *masturbation* is to be understood the deliberate stimulation of the genital organs in order to derive sexual pleasure. "Both the Magisterium of the Church, in the course of a constant tradition, and the moral sense of the faithful have been in no doubt and have firmly maintained that masturbation is an intrinsically and gravely disordered action." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, copyright 1994, p. 564, #2352)

One Catholic web site plainly posts,

Masturbation is against the biblical teachings which always talks about sex with respect in the marriage context and to have children. To pursue sexual pleasure or orgasm in manner not associated with marital intercourse that is love-giving and open to the creation of new life violates the will of God and is immoral. (www.biblia.com/sex/masturbation.htm)

Not Taught!

It is declared to violate the will of God and be immoral, yet no such teaching can be found in the word of God (Proverbs 30:5-6).

I. Arguments Against

According to the Jewish Virtual Library, masturbation is strictly forbidden.

Jewish law clearly prohibits male masturbation. This law is derived from the story of Onan (Gen. 38:8-10), who practiced coitus interruptus as a means of birth control to avoid fathering a child for his deceased brother. G-d killed Onan for this sin. Although Onan's act was not truly masturbation, Jewish law takes a very broad view of the acts prohibited by this passage, and forbids any act of *ha-sh'cha'tat zerah* (destruction of the seed), that is, ejaculation outside of the vagina. In fact, the prohibition is so strict that one passage in the Talmud states, "in the case of a man, the hand that reaches below the navel should be chopped off." (Niddah 13a)
(www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/sex.html)

Clearly here we have another example of Jesus' words,

This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. (Mark 7:6-7)

Certainly, Scripture *never* teaches, "the hand that reaches below the navel should be chopped off," or anything like it! Nor, as is admitted above, does Genesis 38 even address the issue of masturbation. Onan "emitted" (NKJV, more literally, "ruined") on the ground. Indeed, Onan ruined or destroyed his seed on the ground, but there is a reason given as to why he did this:

lest he should give an heir [literally, "seed"] to his brother.
(Genesis 38:9)

His motive for doing this was evil. He rebelled against the direct command of his father (Genesis 38:8), and displayed contempt towards both his dead brother and his wife. Indeed, this was evil in the eyes of the Lord, "**therefore He killed him**" (Genesis 38:10); but it was no act of masturbation. It was an ungodly act during intercourse (Genesis 38:9). The Jewish Virtual Library use of this passage is perverted.

Jews are not the only ones who teach "as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:8-9). [Broad way "Christians" do so as well](http://bible.com/answers/amasturb.html), even on this particular subject. For example, Bud and Betty Miller of Christ Unlimited Ministries teach that masturbation is self-abuse and sexually immoral citing 1 Corinthians 6:18 (<http://bible.com/answers/amasturb.html>).

Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. (1 Corinthians 6:18)

The problem with their use of this passage is that masturbation is never described in the Bible as sexually immoral. The context of 1 Corinthians 6:18 is sex with a harlot (1 Corinthians 6:13-17), which is certainly sexually immoral. But, masturbation is never identified in this way.

Their self-abuse argument comes from "modern dictionaries," because masturbation is given as a synonym for self-abuse in modern dictionaries. But this begs the question at hand. Is it truly abusive, in and of itself? Is masturbation an intended use of the sex organ, or is it abuse? Obviously, people (at least those compiling the dictionaries) think so, and so they identify the term synonymously with self-abuse.

Bible Media Online, an ecumenical ministry in South Africa, argues,

The Bible gives us no direct answer to the question. It does not even mention masturbation. But we can deduct from Scripture principles that **masturbation is an unnatural sexual practice. It is not according to the purpose of God** who gave sex as a gift to be used between a man and his lawful wife, within the marriage bond only. Any other deliberate sexual act, where true love is not the main driving force, is unnatural.
(www.bmedia.co.za/faq/masturbation.htm, bold added)

The Bible does mention masturbation, at least, the result of it (see below), but Scripture does not teach that it is "not according to the purpose of God." Moreover, the Word of God never identifies it as "unnatural." Homosexuality is unnatural (Romans 1:26-27). Masturbation is never spoken of in this way.

Another argument that could be made, is that Colossians 3:5 says to put to death "passion."

Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, (etc. Colossians 3:5).

Also, Galatians 5:24 says,

Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (Galatians 5:24)

What passions are being spoken of here? Sinful passions (Romans 7:5) and vile passions (Romans 1:26) are what have been crucified and are to be put to death. Passion, in and of itself, is not evil. Otherwise, the passion found between a married couple would also have to be put to death. But, on the

Not Taught!

contrary, Scripture cultivates this passion (see the Song of Solomon and Proverbs 5:19), and never identifies self sexual gratification as an evil passion or lust.

What about "uncleanness" (Colossians 3:5)? Doesn't the law identify masturbation, or at least the result of it, unclean? Yes it does.

If any man has an emission of semen, then he shall wash all his body in water, and be unclean until evening. And any garment and any leather on which there is semen, it shall be washed with water, and be unclean until evening. (Leviticus 15:16-17; see also verse 32)

Heterosexual intercourse is not in view here, because that comes in the following verse (verse 18). Therefore, there are two ways in which this "emission of semen" could happen. The ejaculation could be the result of a wet dream, "some occurrence in the night" (NKJV Deuteronomy 23:10; NAS "nocturnal emission," Hebrew, *miqquerêh-lâylâh*). Or, it could be the result of masturbation. Either way, the man is "unclean" until evening.

In the law, people are called unclean, but they have done nothing evil (Romans 14:14; Colossians 2:20-22), in and of itself (e.g. Leviticus 11:39; 15:5-8, 10-11, 19-23, 27; 17:15). In fact, in Numbers 19:7-8, 10, & 22, there they are obeying God's command, yet they become "unclean." Also, the very next verse classifies people who have been involved in heterosexual intercourse as unclean as well (Leviticus 15:18), and clearly copulation of this sort is not evil in and of itself (Hebrews 13:4).

Moreover, Leviticus also says a woman who has a period is unclean (Leviticus 15:19-24). Does that make having a period evil? Leviticus also says when a woman has a discharge of blood other than her period she is unclean (Leviticus 15:25-30). Does that make such activity evil? Also, in the same verses that speak of uncleanness via an emission of semen, it also says you are unclean if you touch a corpse, an insect, or someone who is unclean (Leviticus 22:4-5). Does that mean it is evil to touch a corpse, or an insect, or someone who is unclean? Since Jesus touched a leper (Mark 1:41), and a leper is unclean (Leviticus 13:44), did Jesus sin? The answer to these questions should be obvious.

What about 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8?

This is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore he

who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8)

These are some serious words to heed (Psalm 119:60)! But, again, what is being spoken of is sexual immorality, and masturbation is never identified as such. Someone may argue, "masturbation is not 'in sanctification and in honor.'" Says who? The Lord says no such thing (Proverbs 30:5-6).

II. Evil Thoughts Are Evil

Wicked men have debased minds that are filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, and evil-mindedness (Romans 1:28-29). They are "**past feeling**" and "**have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness**" (Ephesians 4:19). Therefore, it is no wonder that masturbation would be greatly abused and misused.

Jesus said,

You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:27-28)

Jesus made it clear that adultery can be committed in the heart, even though no physical intercourse has taken place. "**The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth,**" (Genesis 8:21) so it would not be surprising to find evil masturbatic activity rampant in society. Masturbation with evil imaginations, which could include the use of pornographic material, is most certainly wicked (see also Job 31:1-4; Proverbs 6:25).

But, masturbation, in and of itself, does not demand such evil thoughts. To say it does, goes beyond what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6), adds to the word of God (Proverbs 30:5-6), and denies Biblical freedom in Christ (Colossians 2:20-22).

III. To The Pure All Things Are Pure (Titus 1:15)

Paul wrote,

All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. (1 Corinthians 10:23)

Masturbation is lawful. There is nothing in the word of God that condemns it. The Lord never even intimates that it is some form of abuse or not according to His purpose. There is nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9), and it is not as if this is a new thing of which the Lord was unaware! Leviticus 15:16-17

Not Taught!

addresses the issue, at least the result of it, and no condemnation is given. Therefore, neither should we condemn what God does not (Matthew 7:1-2).

Furthermore, since it is a practice the Lord does not condemn, and Paul point blank says "**All things are lawful**," it is something that the pure, with pure thoughts, could practice and still be pure (Titus 1:15). In fact, those who maintain that masturbation is impure, are those who put man made regulations upon men. As Paul rebuked the Colossians for submitting to such things, saying,

If you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations - "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," which all concern things which perish with the using - according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.
(Colossians 2:20-23)

Such a regulation of "Do not touch, . . . do not handle" your genitals, i.e. do not masturbate, is a commandment and doctrine of men. It may very well have the appearance of wisdom, but no such "wisdom" is found in the word of God. It is the wisdom of the world, which God calls foolishness (1 Corinthians 3:19); and it is indeed "**self-imposed religion**." It may very well result in "**neglect of the body**," that is, the body that is crying out for relief! It is also of "**no value against the indulgence of the flesh**." If anything, it exacerbates the problem. People left to no sexual satisfaction whatsoever, like Catholic priests who are told they cannot masturbate or get married, are left to the temptations of the flesh with little to no power to overcome.

"But," someone might argue, "believers, who have the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:23, "self-control"), should be able to overcome in such a situation." On the contrary, Scripture identifies Spirit filled married people as those who lack self-control in this area (1 Corinthians 7:5). Spirit filled single people may as well (1 Corinthians 7:9). Having the Holy Spirit does not mandate absolute control in this arena, especially when man made standards are placed upon an individual, standards that were never meant by God to be imposed (in righteousness, that is).

Finally, Paul said, "**All things are lawful, but not all things are helpful**." Can masturbation be helpful? Certainly, it can be helpful in alleviating the sexual drive, as long as it is done with pure thoughts, as it is written, "**To the pure, all things are pure**" (Titus 1:15). A godly person, motivated by a godly motive, certainly could masturbate without it being sinful or self-seeking. For example, a man of God wanting to alleviate the sexual drive in his striving to be pure and not wanting to be in a vulnerable position for temptation towards sexual immorality via pent-up sexual desires, could certainly masturbate with this in

mind (wanting to be sexually pure) and it would be pure. Nothing in the word of God condemns this.

IV. Godly Limits

Even though Paul says, "**All things are lawful for me,**" he also says, "**but I will not be brought under the power of any**" (1 Corinthians 6:12). Masturbation should not control the individual. The individual should be in control of any masturbation. Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:23) and should be a continual reality in the life of any believer (Romans 8:5-6).

Also, for married people Paul writes,

Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (1 Corinthians 7:3-5)

Since the wife and husband do not have authority over their own bodies, then masturbation should be in subjection to the spouse. In other words, any masturbation needs to be in submission to the spouse's desires and it should in no way diminish or take away from sexual intercourse and orgasm within the relationship. If it does, then a husband or a wife might deprive their spouse, either in part or in whole, in disobedience to 1 Corinthians 7:3-5.

Furthermore, as long as the spouse is available, sexual pleasure should be found in this relationship, as Proverbs declares to the man,

Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth. As a loving deer and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; and always be enraptured with her love. (Proverbs 5:18-19)

V. Conclusion

Those who maintain that masturbation is evil, in and of itself, are like the Pharisees of old of whom Christ said:

They bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. (Matthew 23:4; see also Luke 11:46)

The sexual desire is a God given desire (Romans 11:36) and it is not evil in and

Not Taught!

of itself (Romans 14:14). Moreover, God has made a way for even those who are not married (male or female), or those who are away from their spouse (like a soldier at war), to at least somewhat satisfy the sexual drive via masturbation. It is oppressive to teach that such an act is against the will of God, and it is evil to maintain such a cause against the innocent in this matter (Proverbs 30:5-6).

Scripture says,

To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled. (Titus 1:15)

If you have been defiled on this subject by those who profess to know God but deny Him (Titus 1:16) and your conscience is not pure on this matter (Romans 14:22-23), it is high time to renew your mind.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:2)

This subject is a good example of Christ's words found in Matthew 11:28-30.

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

The commandments of men are burdensome, but God's commandments are not (1 John 5:3).

They are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh. (Proverbs 4:22)

Questions

Bryan Keith (ironsharpens@yahoo.com) wrote asking several questions on this subject. Most of the questions and the answers are listed below.

"Does, 1 Corinthians 7:8-9, instruct a single person to marry or masturbate if they cannot exercise self-control?"

Neither. It instructs the church to "let them marry".

"If it is to marry, then is teaching an unmarried person to masturbate, instead of marrying, adding to the scripture (Proverbs 30:5-6) of 1 Corinthians 7:9?"

It certainly is, and our article teaches no such thing. If you think it does, please give us the quote so we can correct it.

"do you condemn others for adding to scripture (Luke 6:37)?"

Yes we do, time and again, as Scripture does (Proverbs 30:5-6).

"Is it written, in Romans 14:1-13;21, that a believer is not to judge or cause another believer to stumble concerning disputable matters of faith, even matters such as what to eat or to drink or which day(s) is/are sacred or anything else"

The "disputable matters of faith" in Romans 14 are matters of one's own conscience before God (see verses 22-23). If they are left to one's own conscience, they are "disputable" and not to be judged (as both parties are told not to judge, see verses 3-4, 10-13). If they are matters of doctrine, then they are a serious matter, as these same issues are addressed as matters of doctrine (the faith) in 1 Timothy 4:1-3 (eating) and Galatians 4:10-11 (days).

In 1 Timothy 4:1-3 Paul addresses two doctrines (forbidding to eat certain foods and to abstain from marriage) as identifying doctrines for those who "depart from the faith" and follow "doctrines of demons." So, in Romans 14, when left to one's own personal conscience (not doctrine), we are not to judge. When it is a matter of doctrine, we judge.

Likewise, in Galatians 4:10-11 Paul says, "I am afraid for you" because "You observe days . . ." etc.. In Romans 14, when left to one's own personal conscience, observing days is no big deal (Romans 14:5-6). When it becomes doctrine, as it was in Galatians, it's a matter of heaven or hell, that's why Paul was afraid for them, because they were being taught a false gospel (i.e. false doctrine, Galatians 1:8-9).

"In light of, 1 Corinthians 7:8-9, would not masturbation be one of these disputable matters?"

Indeed, as a matter of personal conscience. If it was taught as doctrine, it should be contended (Jude 3) for what the Biblical view is.

"If someone, who is not married, were to adhere to your teaching and during masturbation think of another person in a sexual nature, would they not end up committing fornication?"

Of course, if they were lusting for that person (similar to Matthew 5:28).

"If so, have you not led them to stumble/sin, especially if according to their faith they had previously refrained from masturbation?"

No, because we have a whole section in that article addressing such wickedness. If they did so, they would be rejecting what we have taught.

"Is it reasonable to believe that someone who previously refrained from masturbation, because it was an area of weakness in the past, might again be tempted if someone is teaching them that it is alright to do so because God is silent on the matter?"

God is not silent on the matter, or on any matter, that Scripture does not condemn (1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23; Titus 1:15). That person, if they believed

Not Taught!

God, would find it quite liberating, because God puts no such prohibition on man anywhere in the Word.

"What about a previous alcoholic, would it be edifying for them if they were encouraged by someone to drink because scripture does not condemn it?"

Again, if they believed what the Bible teaches on that subject (www.ATRUECHURCH.INFO/ALCOHOL.HTML), they would find it quite liberating (2 Corinthians 3:17), and since they would have the Spirit of God, they would have self-control (Galatians 5:23) and would be able to drink in moderation.

"Would it be edifying for a previous alcoholic to have another person of faith drink around them (Romans 14:21)?"

That depends on the conscience of the ex-alcoholic. If he is weak in his faith/conscience (as described in Romans 14), then no. That's why Romans 15:1-2 goes on to say that those who are strong in the faith are to "bear with the scruples of the weak" . . . "leading to edification." In other words, the strong in faith are to not be offensive in the matter, that they might build the others faith and bring them to the point where the weak brother's conscience lines up with the teaching of the faith. Of course, all along the weak brother must acknowledge the teaching of Scripture on the matter. That's how he could not judge those who are strong (Romans 14:3). Nonetheless, the weak brother is encouraged to get his conscience in line with the teaching of the Word, so that he is comfortable (in conscience) on the matter.

"Is it written, in Galatians 5:22-23, that self-control is a fruit of the Holy Spirit?"

Indeed it is.

"Is masturbating an indication of self-control or is abstaining from masturbation and controlling your sexual passion an indication of self-control?"

Neither is necessarily an indication of self-control. Only when one views masturbation as a sin does it indicate to one's mind a lack of self-control. Moreover, one can abstain from masturbation and still lack self-control. Married couples are explicitly told they lack self-control (1 Corinthians 7:5). That doesn't mean they masturbate.

"Is masturbating, of the Spirit or of the flesh?"

Neither, specifically. "Whatever is not from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). If you give to the poor, but not from faith, it is sin. If you plow a field not from faith, it is sin (Proverbs 21:4).

"Do you think Jesus masturbated?"

The Bible doesn't say (Proverbs 30:5-6).

"Do you think Jesus had control over His sexual passion or did He "burn with

sexual passion" (1 Corinthians 7:9)?"

No doubt, Jesus had self-control over His sexual desires (Galatians 5:23). Burning with sexual passion is never identified as sin. It is simply noted as having strong sexual desire, as 1 Corinthians describes it as literally, "to burn" (Greek infinitive; "with sexual passion" is not in the Greek). Such temptation Christ certainly experienced (Hebrews 4:15). The sexual desire is not sinful in itself.

"Is it possible for a person of faith to consider or believe that masturbation is a lack of self-control?"

Yes, if they are ignorant of the Word on the matter.

"Do you think that, Romans 14:21, leaves room for something like masturbation, when it says "It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak?""

This is not something that would be practiced with any brother present. Paul is not addressing abstinence from eating or drinking when the brother is nowhere around. 1 Corinthians 10 deals with this very same subject matter, and there it shows that it has to do with anyone present. See 1 Corinthians 10:23-33. See also 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.

"Therefore, is masturbation disputable?"

Only when talking about one's own conscience before God.

"If God is silent in scripture as to whether masturbation is good or evil, should a person of faith be silent on the matter also (in so much as not judging others concerning disputable matters)?"

God is not silent on what He is silent on (1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23; Titus 1:15).

"Can you **prove**, through **scripture**, that an **unmarried** person, **gifted by God** with self-control in regards to **NOT** burning with passion (1 Corinthians 7:7-9) would have a need to achieve self sexual gratification?"

Your question implies sin on your part. There is no Biblical mandate to prove such a thing, unless you have a manmade standard (Matthew 7:1-2; 15:8-9), and that standard would be sin (Proverbs 30:5-6). When things are lawful (Titus 1:15), there is freedom to do or not to do. It is not a matter of need. Your question is like asking,

"Can you **prove**, through **scripture**, that a **sober** person, **gifted by God** with self-control in regards to **NOT** having a passion to drink would have a need (minus 1 Timothy 5:23) to drink alcohol?"

God "gives us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Timothy 6:17). It is lawful to enjoy what He has given. We should consider its profitability (Matthew 25:14-30; 1

Not Taught!

Corinthians 6:12; 10:23 "helpful") within our own conscience before God (Romans 14:22-23; 1 Timothy 1:5), but it is not a matter of need.

With divorce as rampant as it is today, some may be quite surprised at what the Bible teaches regarding,

Divorce & Remarriage

I. Divorce & Remarriage Is Adultery

Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery. (Mark 10:11-12)

Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery. (Luke 16:18)

Jesus describes divorce and remarriage as an act of adultery. Even though there may be official paper work involved (e.g. Deuteronomy 24:1, "certificate of divorce"), when a man or woman divorces their spouse and remarries another, this is an immoral act. They have committed adultery, and this is radically serious; because,

Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge. (Hebrews 13:4; see also 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Revelation 21:8)

Even in cases where there is an "innocent party" involved (i.e. where the

Not Taught!

woman does not want the divorce), if this "innocent person" remarries, she has committed adultery. As Jesus said, **"whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery"** (Luke 16:18), and in Matthew 5:32 He says, **"whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery."** If the man divorced his wife because she was sexually immoral, then the woman would have already committed adultery. But, if she was not sexually immoral, and the man divorced her, and then she remarried, she would then be committing adultery; and her husband who divorced her is the one who caused her to do so (Matthew 5:32). Divorce and remarriage equals adultery (Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18).

II. Divorce Does Separate Nevertheless

Some may think, because of Christ's words on divorce and remarriage, a divorce does not really separate the marriage of a husband and a wife. After all, Jesus calls it adultery if a man divorces his wife and then marries another. Doesn't it follow then, that in the eyes of God, even though they have been divorced, they are still viewed as married; and this is why Jesus calls divorce and remarriage adultery?

No, speaking in the context of divorce Jesus said,

what God has joined together, let not man separate (Matthew 19:6).

Men do **"separate."** Men do divorce (separate from their wives).

Even though Christ declared divorce and remarriage adultery, He also nonetheless recognized that divorce does separate a husband and a wife. Divorce does separate the one flesh of marriage (Matthew 19:5-6). Malachi calls it **"violence"** and treachery (Malachi 2:14-16).

1 Corinthians 7 testifies to this as well.

Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife. (1 Corinthians 7:10-11, see also verse 27 **"loosed from a wife"**)

Here a woman who departs from her husband (i.e. divorces her husband) is said to be **"unmarried."**

Also, note Deuteronomy 24.

When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house, when she

has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man's wife, if the latter husband detests her and writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife, then her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance. (Deuteronomy 24:1-4)

In Deuteronomy 24 God calls it an abomination for a woman to return to her first husband, after she has been married to another.

III. The Exception Of Sexual Immorality

Are there any exceptions to Christ's statement? Yes, Jesus also said,

And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery. (Matthew 19:9)

Here in Matthew 19:9 Jesus gives an exception to his statement made in Mark 10 and Luke 16. If a man divorced his wife because she was unfaithful (sexually immoral), and then married another woman, such a situation would not be a case of adultery. Why the Lord does not consider it adultery is not spelled out. But nonetheless, He does say such a set of circumstances does not constitute adultery. He does not say it is right or OK to divorce under these circumstances (as some believe, see below). He only addresses whether adultery is being committed or not.

Some might argue, "The reason divorce and remarriage in the case of sexual immorality is not considered adultery is because, under the law of Moses, an adulterous was to be killed (Leviticus 20:10). Therefore, death would be involved in such a case. Thus theoretically, the marriage bond would be broken via death under the law." This kind of argument may sound good, but Jesus said no such thing.

First of all, if the woman was killed under the law, there would be a death not a divorce. Second, Scripture illustrates sexual immorality being committed by the woman and no death penalty given (e.g. Hosea 1:1-3; 3:1-3; Matthew 1:19; John 8:3-11).

IV. Men And Women Are Not The Same

Matthew 19:9 gives the exception of a man divorcing his wife because of sexual immorality. It does not address a woman divorcing her husband because

Not Taught!

of sexual immorality. In fact, both passages that give the "exception clause" (i.e. Matthew 5:32 & 19:9) end stating adultery has been committed if a divorced woman is married.

. . . and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery. (Matthew 5:32)

. . . and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery. (Matthew 19:9)

Scripture does not give a woman permission to divorce her husband. Even under the law, it was the men who were permitted to divorce their wives (Deuteronomy 24:1; Matthew 19:8), not the women. Some might argue that a woman has the right to divorce her husband if he is sexually immoral. Scripture nowhere says any such thing. Jesus said no such thing.

Moreover, the very passages that would most likely be used to justify such a conclusion (Matthew 5:32 & 19:9), end stating any one who marries a divorced woman commits adultery. Therefore, Scripture teaches that a divorced woman involves herself in adultery whether her husband was sexually immoral or not. Because, Jesus says repeatedly (three times, Matthew 5:32; 19:9; Luke 16:18) marrying a divorced woman constitutes adultery.

In marriage, women are not viewed in the same way as men are. For example, in the law, if a married *man* (or unmarried man) had sex with a virgin who was not betrothed, he would simply have to marry her or at least pay the bride price (Exodus 22:16-17). This act is never called adultery, even though he had sex with another woman. If a married *woman* had sex with *any* man other than her husband (Numbers 5:20), if it was concealed and there were no witnesses against her (Numbers 5:12-13) she would be cursed (Numbers 5:27). If there were witnesses against her (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15), she would be killed, along with the man (Leviticus 20:10). Scripture calls it defilement (Leviticus 18:20; Numbers 5:13, 20) and adultery (Leviticus 20:10) when a married woman has sex with a man other than her husband, whether the other man is married or not. For the married *man*, it is only viewed as adultery if he has sex with a married or betrothed woman (Deuteronomy 22:22-24, note verse 24 "wife"). If he had sex with a virgin who was not betrothed, this is not called adultery (Deuteronomy 22:28-29). It is evident, in the law, that marriage for the woman is not exactly the same as marriage for the man.

Moreover, in Romans 7:2-3 Paul writes,

For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another

man.

Here we have a case in which a woman is married to two men. There is no divorce in this passage. It is simply the case of a woman having two husbands. This is called polyandry, and it is clearly depicted as evil; because such a woman would rightly be called an adulteress (Romans 7:3). *No such teaching is given for the man.*

On the contrary, a man could have two (or more) wives, yet he would not be committing adultery. Polygyny (a man having more than one wife) is never condemned in Scripture. Polygamy for the man is never described to be an adulterous relationship. Polygamy for the woman is (Romans 7:2-3). Polygamy for the married man in the law, under certain circumstances, was actually commanded (Deuteronomy 22:28-29; 25:5-10; see the chapter on polygamy). Polygamy for the woman is strictly forbidden (Romans 7:2-3).

For a man, if he were to divorce his wife and remarry another woman, he would clearly be committing adultery (Matthew 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:12; Luke 16:18). But, if he did not divorce his wife, and married another woman, keeping his first wife as well, Scripture never calls this adultery; because polygamy, for the man, is never condemned. Therefore, it is not the sexual intercourse with another woman, in and of itself, that makes divorce and remarriage, for the man, adultery. It is *the divorce* (the breaking of the covenant), along with the remarriage, that makes this adultery. If the divorce is removed from this equation, no adultery has been committed, even though he has married another woman. This is true for the man, but not for the woman.

Moreover, when the Lord declares divorce and remarriage adultery (Matthew 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:12; Luke 16:18), He leaves the man, who is divorced by his wife, uncondemned. No mention of adultery on the man's part is mentioned. Christ simply says,

And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery. (Mark 10:11-12)

She is the one who commits adultery. Christ is silent about the man. Thus, if a man were divorced by his wife, and he were to remarry, there is nothing in Scripture that would identify him as one who committed adultery (as long as he did not marry a divorced woman). But, for the woman, Christ clearly declares,

whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery. (Matthew 5:32)

If a man divorces his wife, he causes her to commit adultery. If a woman divorces her husband, the man is not declared to be under any such curse. So, for the woman, being divorced by her husband is worse than for a man to be divorced by his wife.

V. The Exception In Christ

Further exceptions to Christ's teaching about divorce and remarriage (Matthew 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18) are given to believers in 1 Corinthians 7. In 1 Corinthians 7:8-9 Paul writes,

But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am; but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion. (1 Corinthians 7:8-9)

In this passage, Paul addresses believers who are "**unmarried**." This would include anyone who is not married, even divorced believers, because this same term is used for a divorced woman in 1 Corinthians 7:11. Therefore, for the unmarried, who lack self-control, Paul tells the church to, "**let them marry**."

Later in this chapter Paul discusses the state in which one is found when they came to Christ. Paul encourages the believers "**to remain with God in that state in which**" they were called (1 Corinthians 7:17-24). In this context Paul writes,

Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But even if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you. (1 Corinthians 7:27-28)

Here Paul clearly declares that a man who is divorced from a wife (i.e. loosed), and then remarries, has not sinned. If he has not sinned, then he has not committed adultery. Therefore, for those who come to Christ in a state of having been divorced (loosed), Scripture gives them the freedom to marry.

How can this be? Jesus said, "**Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery**" (Luke 16:18). Yet, Paul says, "**let them marry**" (1 Corinthians 7:8-9) and "**you have not sinned**" (1 Corinthians 7:26-28). It seems Paul is contradicting Christ, but he is not; because,

if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthian 5:17)

This is true of both males and females (Galatians 3:28). A person who comes to God in truth (Psalm 145:18; Isaiah 55:6-9) has a clean slate with the Lord (Isaiah 1:8; Psalm 51:7; 103:11-13, 17-18). He has died (Galatians 2:20) and his life is hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3). Christ makes him a new creation, and indeed the old things have passed away, and all things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17). A divorced person who repents and comes to

the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4) has been given a new start. All things have become new. Therefore, such a man or woman could remarry, in the Lord (1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 6:14), and not be guilty of adultery. The old wicked person has died, and now the person lives anew in Christ (Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20; 5:24).

Furthermore, if a person were divorced by their unbelieving spouse after they came to Christ, this one would also be free to remarry without committing any sin. Under these circumstances, God would not view this as adultery, even though a divorce and remarriage has taken place; because the Lord does not regard such people as still bound by the marriage law.

But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace. (1 Corinthians 7:15)

In case some wondered whether this verse truly gives the OK for such a person to remarry, simply note that Paul clearly says they are "**not under bondage**." The only "bondage" in the context is the bondage of marriage. Also, just a few verses later Paul writes, "**you have not sinned**" if you, who are loosed from a wife, should marry (1 Corinthians 7:27-28).

Now, what if an unbelieving spouse departs from their believing spouse and they neglect or refuse to file for a divorce? Is the believer still under bondage in such a case? 1 Corinthians 7:15 says no.

1 Corinthians 7:12-13 deals with an unbeliever who is "willing to live with" the believer and the instruction in this case is to not divorce. 1 Corinthians 7:15 deals with the opposite situation in which the unbeliever is *not* willing to live with the believer (i.e. they depart). Thus, Paul says, "let them depart." Therefore, it would not be wrong to file the divorce papers, that is, if the unbeliever neglected or refused to do so. Even though the believer may be the one filing for the divorce, the unbeliever is the one to blame for the divorce. The unbeliever is the one who has separated what God had joined together (Matthew 19:6) by refusing to live with their spouse.

VI. Unholy Unions?

Now, under these last two sets of circumstances (already divorced, or divorced by your unbelieving spouse), some might think that it would be better to remarry the ex-wife or husband, if at all possible. After all, they were your marriage partner before and wouldn't it be good to reconcile with your ex? No, it would not. It would actually be sin to do so, because the Lord commands,

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:14; see also verses 15-7:2 and 1 Corinthians 7:39).

Not Taught!

The believer is to live a holy life (1 Peter 1:15-16), and part of this holiness includes not being tightly knit together with unbelievers. Marrying an unbeliever, whether they are a former spouse or not, is sin. It is a move toward an unholy life, and without holiness, no one will see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14). Therefore, it would be ungodly to remarry an unbelieving ex-spouse.

Someone might wonder then, "What about a man (or woman) who comes to Christ while they are married and their spouse does not repent as they have? Now they are married to an unbeliever. Isn't such a marriage suddenly an unholy union?" No,

the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. (1 Corinthians 7:14)

The believer can continue being married to the unbeliever, without having to be concerned about any lack of holiness.

VII. Sexual Immorality Does Not Make Divorce OK

Some teach that sexual immorality gives the believer the right before God to divorce their spouse and remarry another (e.g. John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, footnotes for Matthew 5:32, 1 Corinthians 7:11 & 15), but this is a lie. It is a very destructive lie (2 Peter 2:1), because it encourages the destruction of a family. It encourages people to disobey the Word of God (1 Corinthians 7:10-13). And, it encourages unforgiveness, which, if continued, leads to hell (Matthew 6:14-15; 18:21-35; Mark 11:25-26).

This destructive lie comes from a twist and perversion of Christ's words in Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9.

And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery. (Matthew 19:9)

Notice, Jesus does not say, "If sexual immorality is committed, it is OK in the sight of God to divorce your spouse for such an act," or anything like this. Jesus addresses the issue of adultery, and how this is being committed in divorce and remarriage. He does not address when it is right, or OK, in the sight of God to divorce your spouse. He answered this issue earlier in verse 6 with, "**what God has joined together, let not man separate**" (Matthew 19:6). In other words, it is not right in the sight of God to divorce your spouse. The command from Christ is basically, "Do not get a divorce." Any man (or woman) who separates a marriage is going directly against the words of Christ

(Mark 10:9).

When a divorce is enacted because of sexual immorality, and the person remarries another in such a case, the person has not committed adultery in the sight of God (Matthew 19:9). The Lord makes this clear. Why it is not considered adultery in God's sight, He does not explain; but nonetheless, adultery has not been committed in such a situation. But, has the person who divorced their spouse done that which is pleasing in the eyes of God (Ephesians 5:8-10)? The answer to that is an emphatic, NO!

VIII. God Hates Divorce

"For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence," says the Lord of hosts. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously." (Malachi 2:16)

God hates divorce. It is treachery to divorce one's spouse (Malachi 2:13-16), as Jeremiah 3:20 illustrates.

"Surely, as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, so have you dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel," says the Lord. (Jeremiah 3:20)

God calls it treachery and violence. Why? To begin with, it rips apart flesh.

But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. (Mark 10:6-8)

Marriage creates a union between a male and a female so that they are no longer two, but one flesh. When divorce hits, it violently rips this union apart, a union that is designed to die only when one of the partners dies (e.g. Romans 7:2-3; 1 Corinthians 7:39).

Moreover, divorce does violence to the vow before God, that is, the marriage commitment (see Proverbs 31:2, "**son of my vows**"; Malachi 2:14, "**wife by covenant**"). Marriage is a commitment for life (Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:2-3; 1 Corinthians 7:39), and when the spouses are still alive, yet divorced, the commitment has been violated; and the person who divorced their spouse is manifested to be both unfaithful and hateful (Titus 3:3).

Finally, divorce typically leads to adultery, as Christ said, "**whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery**" (Matthew 5:32).

Not Taught!

So, if divorce is so bad, then why did God allow for it under the law of Moses? In some cases, no divorce was allowed (Deuteronomy 22:13-19, 28-29), but in those cases that were allowed (e.g. Deuteronomy 21:14; 24:1), Jesus said, it was because of the hardness of their hearts.

Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. (Matthew 19:8)

The Israelites were so down-right wicked and hard-hearted that the Lord chose to deal in this way with such a throng of snakes (Psalm 140:3; Romans 3:13; Luke 3:7). The Lord made room for their evil, but He in no way liked it (Malachi 2:14-16). The Lord hates divorce.

IX. God's Divorce

Why then did the Almighty divorce Israel, if He Himself hates divorce?

Thus says the Lord: "Where is the certificate of your mother's divorce, whom I have put away? Or which of My creditors is it to whom I have sold you? For your iniquities you have sold yourselves, and for your transgressions your mother has been put away." (Isaiah 50:1)

The Lord divorced Israel because of their extreme harlotry (idolatry) and unfaithfulness against Him.

Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also. (Jeremiah 3:8)

Was this divorce permanent? For those God killed, it was (e.g. Deuteronomy 28:63; Hosea 4:5; 9:12-16; Amos 9:1-4, 10). But, in the very passage in which the Lord says he had "**given her a certificate of divorce,**" He also says,

"Return, O backsliding children," says the Lord; "for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion." (Jeremiah 3:14)

In the midst of saying He has divorced them, He also says He is married to them. In verse 8 the Lord speaks of having "**put her away,**" but then in verse 14 of the same chapter He says, "**I am married to you.**" God did utterly destroy the sinful kingdom, Israel (Amos 9:8; Hosea 1:6), yet, at the same time, He did not completely forsake His people (Psalm 94:14); and He will again bring them into their land (Amos 9:14-15). He will again be married to Israel

(Hosea 2:16-20).

God's marriage and divorce is an illustration of both God's wrath and His mercy to the children of Israel. If someone was to use this as an excuse for their own divorce, they would not be justified in this before God. Besides the clear declaration of Malachi 2:14-16 and 1 Corinthians 7:10-13, the book of Hosea parallels God's dealings with Israel, and in this is found a man, Hosea, who stays faithful to his wife through and through and does not forsake her, even though she commits radical sexual immorality. The Lord never instructs Hosea to divorce his "**wife of harlotry**," or even intimates that it is OK if he does. The Lord commanded him to marry a woman who was already exceedingly sexually immoral, a woman who already had children as a result of her prostitution (Hosea 1:2), and then, after Hosea has been married for some time, she continues in her immoral ways as she lives in adultery (Hosea 3:1). Yet, in the midst of this, without any repentance indicated on her part, Hosea is instructed to love her. Hosea tells her she is going to stay put and not play the harlot (Hosea 3:1-3). He displays some serious command with his adulterous wife.

X. Divorce in Faith

A. Abraham

As Ecclesiastes 3:1 says,

To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.

There is a time for divorce. For example, in Genesis 21 God commanded Abraham to divorce his wife.

So the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing. Therefore she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac." And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son. But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called." (Genesis 21:8-12)

Abraham obeyed Sarah's voice, because of God's command and "**sent her away**" (Genesis 21:14). The Hebrew word שָׁרָה (gârêsh) Sarah used when she said, "**Cast out**" in verse 10 means exactly that. But, this word is also

Not Taught!

translated "**divorced**" in Leviticus 21:7, 14; 22:13; Numbers 30:9 and Ezekiel 44:22. The Hebrew word **שָׁלַחָהָהּ** (shallechehâ) used in verse 14 for "**sent her away**" means exactly that, but is also translated "**divorce**" in Deuteronomy 22:19, 29; 24:4 ("**divorced**"); Jeremiah 3:1 ("**divorces**") and Malachi 2:16. When it comes to dealing with one's wife, casting out and sending her away equals divorce (see also Deuteronomy 24:1, 3; Isaiah 50:1; Jeremiah 3:8). The language here is definitely that of divorce. Abraham divorced, sent away, cast out, his wife, Hagar (Genesis 16:3), and this was all done by the direct command of God. Was this a godly divorce? Yes it was. Abraham obeyed God.

Why did the Lord command Abraham to do this? The two answers Scripture gives is: One, because "**in Isaac your seed shall be called**" (Genesis 21:12). The Lord wanted Ishmael and his descendants to be distant from Abraham so that Abraham's name would carry on only in Isaac and his descendants.

The second reason given for Abraham's divorce of Hagar is that Sarah and Hagar and their children were symbolic of the two covenants God made with the children of Israel (Galatians 4:21-31). The casting out of the bondwoman is a major piece of the pie in the symbolic representation of the "**Jerusalem which now is**" and the "**Jerusalem above**" (Galatians 4:25-26).

B. Ezra

Another example of divorce, actually a massive example, is recorded in Ezra chapters 9 and 10. These two chapters document how the Israelites, who came back to the land from their captivity, married pagan women. The concern expressed is not that they were simply foreign in birth, but that their faith was foreign.

For example, in the book of Ruth, Boaz married Ruth, who was a Moabitess. Yet, she was a believer in Yah (e.g. Ruth 1:16; 2:12). But, in Ezra and Nehemiah the Jews married Moabite women (and other foreign women) and were condemned for it (Ezra 9:1-2; Nehemiah 13:23). The Moabites are *not* in the list of forbidden marriages in Deuteronomy 7. So, why were the Jews condemned for marrying them?

The reason given, both in Ezra and Nehemiah, is because of their pagan faith. Ezra addresses the "**abominations**" of the pagan women (Ezra 9:1,14), and Nehemiah uses Solomon's example saying, "**pagan women caused even him to sin**" (Nehemiah 13:26). They caused Solomon to sin, because of their pagan (foreign) faith (see 1 Kings 11:1-2, 4).

Likewise, in Malachi the Lord has some very harsh words for the Jews who married pagan women. And again, His condemnation is not simply because the women were foreign in birth, but because they were foreign in faith.

Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has profaned the LORD'S holy institution which He loves: He has married the daughter of a foreign god. May the LORD

cut off from the tents of Jacob the man who does this, being awake and aware, yet who brings an offering to the LORD of hosts! (Malachi 2:11-12)

Marrying "**the daughter of a foreign god**" dictates the concern is about the faith of the women.

So, when Ezra was made aware of the Jews unholy unions with unbelieving women, he commanded them to repent, "**do His will**" (Ezra 10:11), and separate themselves from the pagan women and their children (Ezra 10:3-5). In other words, he instructed them to divorce their pagan wives. The people obeyed saying,

let all those in our cities who have taken pagan wives come at appointed times, together with the elders and judges of their cities, until the fierce wrath of our God is turned away from us in this matter. (Ezra 10:14)

This concern about marrying pagan women and their influence upon the godly is consistent with Proverbs 12:26; 13:20; 1 Corinthians 15:33 and 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1. It is also consistent with the Hebrew language used in Proverbs for the "**seductress**" (NKJV). In Proverbs 2:16; 5:20; 6:24; 7:5; 23:27; 27:13 what the NKJV translates as "**seductress**" is the same term for "**pagan**" wives in Ezra and "**pagan**" women in Nehemiah (NKJV). The only difference is, in Proverbs it is in the singular, נְקִרִי (nâkriy). In Ezra and Nehemiah it's in the plural, נְקִרִיּוֹת (nâkriyyot).

So, Proverbs warns of the "pagan" or "foreign" woman, that is, foreign in faith. As Proverbs 2:16-17 more literally reads,

To deliver you from a female stranger, from a pagan woman who flatters with her words. Who forsakes the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God. (see e.g. ASV, LEB, WEB)

Herein describes an adulteress, who no longer follows Yah ("**forgets the covenant of her God**"). This "**pagan woman**" is used for the adulteress also in Proverbs 6:24 and 7:5, and in Proverbs 5:20; 23:27 and 27:13 it is without the immediate context of adultery.

XI. Ungodly Divorce Is Disgusting

We noted earlier how divorce covers one's garments with violence (Malachi 2:16) and how it is treacherous (Malachi 2:14-16; Jeremiah 3:20). Yet, for some, it would seem that divorce is almost a virtue or reward. The practice of divorce is quite common today both in the secular world and the realm that falsely calls itself Christian. Whether it's a secular divorce or a "Christian"

Not Taught!

divorce, Psalm 119:158 well describes a godly perspective on the matter.

I see the treacherous, and am disgusted, because they do not keep Your word. (Psalm 119:158)

This is down right politically incorrect, but nonetheless, here we have the,

Scriptural View Of Women

"Here is what I have found," says the Preacher, "Adding one thing to the other to find out the reason, which my soul still seeks but I cannot find: One man among a thousand I have found, but a woman among all these I have not found." (Ecclesiastes 7:27-28)

The Word of God (Hebrews 4:12-13) does not flatter women (nor men). He tells it like it is, and it is often not the way people think it is (Isaiah 55:8; Romans 1:18). Women are not the same as men. Some, it seems, have not noticed this simple fact. But, the reality is, the Creator made two different kinds of human beings, one male and one female. The male was made out of the dust of the ground (Genesis 2:7). The female was made out of the male's rib (Genesis 2:21-23). The male is the glory of God, but the female is the glory of man (1 Corinthians 11:7). They are similar, but not the same.

The reason women even exist is not so that they can be independent entities. The reason they exist is so that they can help men.

For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. (1 Corinthians 11:8-9)

The Lord created the woman for the man's sake. As it is written,

And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone;

Not Taught!

I will make him a helper comparable to him." (Genesis 2:18)

Women are to be man's "**helper**." But, that is often not the case.

I. The Curse

All mankind is under the curse of sin (Romans 3:9; 11:32), and women are under a particular curse. Besides their pregnancy and labor being ill-fated, their relationship with men is also stricken by God.

To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."
(Genesis 3:16)

When the Lord said, "**your desire shall be for your husband**," He was not speaking of the woman's great love for man. On the contrary, God was cursing the woman with the desire to control her husband. We know this not only by the fact that this statement is made in the context of condemnation (Genesis 3:1-19), but also by God's use of this same phrase to Cain in Genesis 4:7.

If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.

Sin desired to get Cain to submit and be controlled by evil. Sin desired Cain, but Cain was told that he should overcome sin's desire. Likewise, the woman was told that she will desire her husband. She will desire to get him to submit to her. But, he shall rule over her nevertheless.

What do we see in society as a result of this curse? Women desiring to rule over not only their husbands, but other men as well. Solomon, who knew women well (1 Kings 11:3), wrote,

And I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are fetters. He who pleases God shall escape from her, but the sinner shall be trapped by her.
(Ecclesiastes 7:26)

Snares, nets, fetters, escaping, and being trapped all describe a wicked woman's drive to control a man. Praise God for the promise at the end of this verse! Solomon also wrote,

Better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, than in a house shared with a contentious woman. (Proverbs 21:9; see also 21:19; 25:24)

A continual dripping on a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike; whoever restrains her restrains the wind, and

grasps oil with his right hand. (Proverbs 27:15-16)

Why are there contentious women and women whose hands are fetters?
Because of sin and the curse.

II. Authority

In the salvation of God, "**there is neither male nor female**" (Galatians 3:28). No distinction is made between Jew and Greek, slave or free, male or female, but all the children of God are one in Christ (Galatians 3:26-28). The forgiveness and grace of God is upon all who believe. But, when it comes to God's established order of authority, there is a difference between slave and free, male and female.

Although God has in the past placed women in authority over men (e.g. Judges 4:4), and even today the Lord places women in authority over men (e.g. Romans 13:1), this is nonetheless a shameful reality, as Isaiah illustrates.

As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O My people! Those who lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths. (Isaiah 3:12)

The fact that Israel had women ruling over them was a shameful thing, just as it was shameful that children were their oppressors. Israel was weak, trapped in their sin. Consequently, women ruled over them.

The Lord did not design men to have women rule over them. He designed men to rule over women. "**The head of woman is man**" (1 Corinthians 11:3), and "**Adam was formed first, then Eve**" (1 Timothy 2:13). This is why women are to be submissive (1 Corinthians 14:34). God has placed men as the authority (head) over women, and therefore they need to submit to this authority. Moreover, this authority was established from the very beginning, before the fall (Genesis 3), because Adam was formed first, then Eve. This order in creation reveals man's preeminence over woman. The Lord established this authority before the woman's first breath, by creating man first.

III. Submission

Women are required by God to submit to men. In particular, Scripture commands,

A. Submission To Husbands

Women who are married are to be homemakers, and they are to obey their husbands (Titus 2:5; 1 Timothy 5:14; Proverbs 31:10-31). The husband is their authority (head, Ephesians 5:22-23), and they are to be as subject to their husbands as believers are to Christ (Ephesians 5:24). In other words, they are to obey their husbands as they would obey the Lord, in everything (Ephesians 5:24). Of course, this does not mean they disobey God in order to obey their husband. The reason they obey their husband should be because they desire to

Not Taught!

obey God (Mark 12:30).

Yet, this submission is so intense that "**Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord**" (1 Peter 3:6), and she is given as an example to follow. Moreover, it doesn't matter if the husband is a believer or not (1 Peter 3:1). The wife is still to submit to him, even if he beats her. Of course, it is evil if a man were to do such a thing. It is evil for a man to mistreat his wife in any way. But, nonetheless, the instruction for the woman is still to submit and trust God. As it is written,

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; . . . Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, . . .

In the context of slaves submitting to being beaten (1 Peter 2:20), and how taking such beating patiently is "**commendable before God,**" Peter tells the wives to "likewise" submit to their husbands (1 Peter 3:1), as "**Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example**" (1 Peter 2:21). Christ was beaten, and committed himself to Him who judges righteously. So likewise, slaves and wives are to submit themselves to their God given authority, as Christ submitted Himself to His Lord in His suffering (Isaiah 53:10). [For how a husband might likewise suffer, see our article on Men].

B. Submission In Prayer

Women are required not only to be submissive to their husbands, but they are also required to show their submissiveness when they pray or prophesy.

But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head. But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of

man. For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God. Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering. But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God. (1 Corinthians 11:3-16)

This passage clearly teaches that a woman is to have her head covered when she prays or prophesies. Some may think this is a cultural matter, but Paul reveals otherwise. It is an angelic matter.

For this reason the woman ought to have *a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.* (1 Corinthians 11:10, NKJV)

Why and in what way angels are affected or concerned about a woman having her head covered Scripture does not say. But, nonetheless women ought to have authority on their head, because of the angels.

In 1 Corinthians 11:10 in the Greek there is no "a symbol of." The New King James translators added this and this is why they put it in italics. Therefore, 1 Corinthians 11:10 more literally reads, "For this reason the woman ought to have authority on her head." What is the authority? It is something covering her head (1 Corinthians 11:5-6, 13). It can either be her long hair (1 Corinthians 11:15) or something else. Either way, whether it be her long hair or some other covering (1 Corinthians 11:6), her head is to be covered when she prays or prophesies (1 Corinthians 11:5-16), and this indicates her submission to her authority, man (1 Corinthians 11:3).

This man (1 Corinthians 11:3) could be either her husband (Colossians 3:18) or her father (Ephesians 6:1; Romans 1:30). As 1 Corinthians 7 illustrates, unless they get married, daughters are to be under their father's authority whether they be young or old.

But if any man thinks he is behaving improperly toward his virgin, if she is past the flower of youth, and thus it must be, let him do what he wishes. He does not sin; let them marry. Nevertheless he who stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so determined in his heart that he will keep his virgin, does well. So then he who gives her in marriage does well, but he who does not give her in marriage does better. (1 Corinthians 7:36-38)

Not Taught!

Herein described is a man keeping his daughter from getting married! Paul calls this the better way, and in this better way, the daughter stays under her father's authority. He keeps her. This does not mean that she is to go out and get a job. The father is responsible to provide for his household (1 Timothy 5:8). The daughter can be an unmarried homemaker (Titus 2:4-5). But, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14:34, "**they are to be submissive,**" so women are to be submissive, both to their husbands and their fathers, "**as the law also says**" (e.g. see Numbers 30:1-16).

C. Submission In The Church

In 1 Timothy Paul gives instructions concerning how things ought to be conducted in the church (1 Timothy 3:15). Part of these instructions are found in 1 Timothy 2:11-12.

Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. (1 Timothy 2:11-12)

Women are to learn in silence. This silence is described further in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.

Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.

In church, when believers have gathered together for the mutual edification of the body and the time has come for one person to be addressing the entire assembly of believers (1 Corinthians 14:26-31), women are not to teach (1 Timothy 2:12) or even ask a question (1 Corinthians 14:35), but to keep silent. Their silence even extends to asking their husband a question in church, because Paul says, "**let them ask their own husbands at home**" (1 Corinthians 14:35).

Why is such an order of silence placed upon the women? Because Adam was not deceived, but the woman was (1 Timothy 2:14). Women are weaker (1 Peter 3:7; see also Isaiah 19:16; Jeremiah 51:30; Nahum 3:13). God does not want those who are spiritually weaker to either teach in the church or even speak in the church. The first woman was deceived when the first man was not, and this depicts a reality about both men and women. Women are more easily deceived. They are the weaker vessel, and should not be teaching or speaking in the church.

Now in the past, women have rightly spoken (prophesied) in the midst of believers and unbelievers (Acts 2:5-18), but it was not the same context as Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 14. In Acts 2 everyone was speaking (Acts 2:4), and

it was a unique event. Women are not forbidden to speak under all circumstances. They are only commanded to "**learn in silence**" (1 Timothy 2:11) when it is time to be quiet and learn (1 Corinthians 14:26-35). In this, they are to "keep silent" (1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:12).

On an individual basis, women can certainly speak to one another (men or women) as the word of Christ dwells in them "**richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs**" (Colossians 3:16). They are not forbidden to do this. Actually, they are commanded to do this. Not only are they commanded to fulfill Colossians 3:16, but other verses as well that include speaking to their fellow believers (see Ephesians 4:25; 1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11; Titus 2:3-4; Hebrews 3:13; 10:24-25; James 5:16). Women are indeed to be silent, but this does not mean silent all the time. There is "**a time to keep silence and a time to speak**" (Ecclesiastes 3:7).

IV. The Wise Woman

A wise woman would submit herself to the truth, and not fight her circumstances.

The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish pulls it down with her hands. (Proverbs 14:1)

The way a wise woman would build her house is by submitting herself to the authority in her life as she loves the Lord and fears Him, and serves those around her. Proverbs 31 describes such a virtuous woman whose "**worth is far above rubies**" (Proverbs 31:10).

The heart of her husband safely trusts her; so he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not evil all the days of her life. She seeks wool and flax, and willingly works with her hands. She is like the merchant ships, she brings her food from afar. She also rises while it is yet night, and provides food for her household, and a portion for her maidservants. She considers a field and buys it; from her profits she plants a vineyard. She girds herself with strength, and strengthens her arms. She perceives that her merchandise is good, and her lamp does not go out by night. She stretches out her hands to the distaff, and her hand holds the spindle. She extends her hand to the poor, yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household is clothed with scarlet. She makes tapestry for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies sashes for the merchants. Strength and honor are her clothing; she shall rejoice in time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness. She watches over the ways of her

Not Taught!

household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: "Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all." Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. (Proverbs 31:11-30; see also Proverbs 11:16)

Some may think Proverbs 31 is inconsistent with being a homemaker (Titus 2:5). But, on the contrary, it displays an excellent homemaker who is busy as a bee bringing profit to her household. She is building her house (Proverbs 14:1).

V. Precious In The Sight Of God

Any woman who believes God's Word and submits herself to God's ways is very precious to God. As the Lord says,

Do not let your adornment be merely outward - arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel - rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.
(1 Peter 3:3-4)

Typically, women rebel against God's order of submission. They refuse to obey their husbands (Ephesians 5:22). They refuse to keep silent in "church" (1 Timothy 2:11). They teach contrary to God's command (1 Timothy 2:12). They exercise authority over men (1 Timothy 2:12). They refuse to make sure their head is covered when they pray (1 Corinthians 11:10). Such women are condemned (John 3:18). Those who raise such mutiny against God's order are no better than witches. As 1 Samuel 15:23 declares, "**rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.**" Likewise, Proverbs 11:22 says,

As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, so is a lovely woman who lacks discretion.

To rebel against God's order is a serious lack of discretion and is evil. Such rebellion is rampant today, because it is ingrained in women to attempt to control men (Genesis 3:16). Only the salvation of God can root out such wickedness (John 8:31-36). Holy women are submissive (e.g. 1 Peter 3:5). The wicked, those on their way to hell (Revelation 21:8), are not (Proverbs 17:11). The submissive woman is precious in God's eyes (1 Peter 3:4). The rebellious woman is an abomination to Him (Proverbs 11:20; 15:9, 26).

True masculinity is rarely if ever taught. So we have,

Scriptural View Of Men

Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, but who can find a faithful man? (Proverbs 20:6)

Introduction

Faithful men are those who take heed to God's Word (e.g. Matthew 24:45-51; 25:21-23; Luke 12:42-48; 16:10-12; Revelation 17:14), and they are particularly rare in our days. Most men, particularly false Christian men, are lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, etc. (2 Timothy 3:1-5), and most men will go to hell (Matthew 7:13-14; Luke 13:24; 1 Peter 3:17-18); because **"they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved"** (2 Thessalonians 2:10).

But, those who heed God's word, are **"like Mount Zion which cannot be moved, but abides forever"** (Psalm 125:1). The righteous man **"will hold to his way, and he who has clean hands will be stronger and stronger"** (Job 17:9). True godly men, are not cowards (Revelation 21:8), but stand fast in the faith (Hebrews 3:6), act like men (1 Corinthians 16:13 NAS), and are strong (Proverbs 24:5).

I. Godly Masculinity

The Lord expects men to act like men. God said to Job, **"Now prepare**

Not Taught!

yourself like a man" (Job 38:3; 40:7). The Lord commands in 1 Corinthians 16:13, "**act like men**" (NAS, ανδριζεσθε [andrizesthe], to conduct oneself in a manly way). Jesus made women for a specific purpose, and He made men for a specific purpose (1 Corinthians 11:7). When these God ordained sexes fulfill God's design, they do not perform the same function. Women are the glory of man (1 Corinthians 11:7). Men are the image and glory of God (1 Corinthians 11:7).

As the glory of man, when a woman fulfills her God given role in submission to men (see prior chapter), she glorifies the man in her life (e.g. Proverbs 12:4; 31:23), and in this glorifies and pleases her Creator (1 Corinthians 10:31; 1 Peter 3:4). As the image and glory of God, when a man fulfills his God given role (see below), he displays not only what God looks like (His image, Genesis 1:26-27; 5:1-3), but also His character as well (Colossians 3:9-10).

Moreover, when a man acts not like a man, he rebels against his Creator. For example, it is an abomination to God for a man to wear women's clothing (Deuteronomy 22:5). The Lord hates men who have sex with other men (Genesis 19:1-24; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Psalm 5:5). And, the Lord describes it as a shameful thing when women rule over men (Isaiah 3:12). Although, there may be a time and place to cry like a woman in labor (Isaiah 42:14; Ecclesiastes 3:1), nevertheless, God expects men to act like men.

This truth is so profound that cowards go to hell (Revelation 21:8), and so do the "soft" (1 Corinthians 6:9). The Greek word translated "homosexual" (NKJV, "effeminate" in KJV & NAS) in 1 Corinthians 6:9 is μαλακοι (malakoi) and literally means "soft." It is translated "soft" in the NKJV, KJV, and NAS in both remaining passages in the N. T. (Matthew 11:8 and Luke 7:25). Soft men go to hell! Those "light in the loafers" will not inherit the kingdom of God.

What is it to act like a man? The ungodly Philistines knew what it was.

Be strong and conduct yourselves like men, you Philistines, that you do not become servants of the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Conduct yourselves like men, and fight! (1 Samuel 4:9)

Here acting like a man (like men) is described as being strong and courageous. Is this part and parcel to acting like a man? Yes it is. David's departing words to Solomon well describe what it is to act like a godly man.

Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: "I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. And keep the charge of the Lord your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn;" (1 Kings 2:1-3)

How does David charge Solomon to "prove [himself] a man"? By being strong and taking heed to God's Word. This is similar to 1 John 2:14.

I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.

Paul told Timothy,

You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 2:1)

And he exhorted him,

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7)

Godly masculinity is strength and courage, not cowardice and timidity. This strength does not originate in the flesh (although, it may very well display itself in the flesh, e.g. Hebrews 11:34), but rather this strength is in the spirit. As the Word says of John the Baptist,

So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel. (Luke 1:80)

John the Baptist was so strong in the spirit that when Jesus spoke of John He sarcastically said,

What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Matthew 11:7; see also Luke 7:24)

John was anything but a reed shaken by the wind! He was a man who lived in the barren Judean desert, wore camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey for his sustenance (Matthew 3:4; Mark 1:6). John was one rugged man.

In fact, speaking of John, Jesus also sarcastically said,

But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.
(Matthew 11:8)

Camel's hair is not exactly silk laden, nor is eating locusts and wild honey the practice of those who love pleasure (Luke 7:25). Imagine having to eat locusts

Not Taught!

and wild honey for your daily survival, and along with this, having to deal with the extreme hot and colds of the Judean wilderness. A typical man would most likely be downcast and burdened simply with the task of survival. But John, who is recorded as the greatest man ever born (Matthew 11:11), is not only not downcast, but finds strength to preach to the masses in the power of God. And, his message is no milk toast message. John cuts to the heart of the matter and calls it like it is.

Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." (Luke 3:7-9)

Some Jews accused John of being demon possessed (Matthew 11:18; Luke 7:33). But, the truth is, John gave "**the multitudes that came out to be baptized**" the hard core reality of the Word of God. John was no reed shaken by the wind.

Did John "turn the crowd off" by calling them a bunch of snakes? No, the people rightly responded with, "**What shall we do then?**" (Luke 3:10) In other words, "Since we are a bunch of snakes, what should we do?" Such a response exemplifies faith (Luke 7:29-30). Rejection of John's message would have simply been symptomatic of unbelief (John 8:47).

John was a godly man, strong in spirit, and he's a good example to follow. This doesn't mean we have to live in the desert and eat locusts to be godly men, but we do need to be strong in spirit, as our Lord was and is.

And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. (Luke 2:40)

Paul commanded the Ephesians to "**be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might**" (Ephesians 6:10). No doubt, women can and should be strong in the Lord (Proverbs 31:10-31), but how is godly masculine strength displayed?

II. In Authority

In the beginning, the Lord gave man dominion over the earth.

Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Genesis 1:28)

Some may argue that this authority over creation was given to "them," that is, male and female, and that it was not until the fall that the woman was placed under man's rule (Genesis 3:16). While it is true that God did give both the male and the female rule (dominion) over the earth, it is not true that Adam's authority over the woman did not exist until after the fall. Scripture declares that "**Adam was formed first, then Eve**" (1 Timothy 2:13; see also 1 Corinthians 11:3). The order of creation established the order of authority between male and female, and this was before the fall, and before the above command (Genesis 1:28).

Moreover, some may argue that man's dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:28) was lost via the fall (Genesis 3:1-19). Scripture says no such thing, but rather confirms this supremacy long after the fall.

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen - even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas. (Psalm 8:3-8)

The Lord has given man dominion over this earth, and he is responsible before God for all that he does (Proverbs 5:21) and any consequences of his actions (Revelation 11:18).

Furthermore, in this sovereignty is the rule over men as well.

The Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men. (Daniel 4:17)

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. (Romans 13:1)

What does this dominion and authority have to do with godly masculinity? Whether it be in some rule over animals, men, or any aspect of authority in creation, men should act like men, be strong, and work righteousness and justice in the earth.

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

Not Taught!

A righteous man regards the life of his animal, but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. (Proverbs 12:10)

The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spoke to me: "He who rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." (2 Samuel 23:3)

Working justice and righteousness is what it is to know God. As the Lord said to Shallum the son of Josiah, king of Judah,

"Did not your father eat and drink, and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. Was not this knowing Me?" says the Lord. (Jeremiah 22:15-16)

III. In The Home

A man has God given responsibility (1 Timothy 5:8) and authority in his home. This is evident in the wording of 1 Timothy 3:4-5 & 12.

... one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?)
(1 Timothy 3:4-5)

ruling their children and their own houses well. (1 Timothy 3:12)

Both bishops (overseers, pastors, 1 Peter 5:2) and deacons (literally servants) are required to rule their houses well. They are to be examples to the flock in how all men should rule their homes (1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Peter 5:3). They are to have their children in submission with all reverence, and even their wives **"must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, [and] faithful in all things"** (1 Timothy 3:11). How could a man have such control over his household? Such command comes by being strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might (Ephesians 6:10).

In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, and His children will have a place of refuge. (Proverbs 14:26)

Blessed is every one who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways. When you eat the labor of your hands, you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you. Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the very heart of your house, your children like olive plants all around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord. (Psalm 128:1-4)

When a man fears the Lord, he has the wisdom of God to rule his house well (Job 28:28), and as he exercises godly authority in his home, the Lord will bless his work (Psalm 128).

IV. With The Wife

A man not only has the responsibility to provide for his family (1 Timothy 5:8), to bring up his children in the training and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4; see also Deuteronomy 6:4-9) and be strong in this and not leave a child to his own destructive ways (Proverbs 19:18), but he is also accountable before God in how he deals with his wife.

Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered. (1 Peter 3:7)

Psalm 66:18 says, **"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear."** It is indeed iniquity to deal with one's wife without understanding. So, what is to be understood? Understand that the wife is the weaker vessel (1 Peter 3:7), and that she is under a curse that particularly effects the marriage relationship (Genesis 3:16, see prior chapter); and with this in mind, remember Proverbs 14:29 & 17:27.

He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, but he who is impulsive exalts folly. (Proverbs 14:29)

He who has knowledge spares his words, and a man of understanding is of a calm spirit. (Proverbs 17:27; see also Proverbs 18:2; James 1:19-22)

A man who has understanding, a man who lives with his wife in an understanding way, is a man who is slow to wrath (Proverbs 14:29) and is calm (Proverbs 17:27). **"A man of understanding walks uprightly"** (Proverbs 15:21), and it is upright to deal gently with one's wife (Galatians 5:23).

Moreover, **"the heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge"** (Proverbs 15:14), and,

Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out. (Proverbs 20:5)

A godly man will seek to intimately know (1 Corinthians 7:3; Ephesians 5:28) and understand his wife and to draw out of her the deep counsels of her heart, so that he might deal with her in an understanding way, and in this, wash her

Not Taught!

with the pure water of the word (Ephesians 5:26; Proverbs 10:13a).

In this gentle understanding, a husband submits himself in love to his wife (Ephesians 5:21, 25), not in exchange of authority, or cowing down to her fleshly whims and desires (Romans 8:5), but in the strength of the Spirit of God (Galatians 5:16), he leads her into godliness and righteous living (Ephesians 5:23, 25-29) as he gives her the affection due (Proverbs 5:18-19; 1 Corinthians 7:3). He is to "likewise" (1 Peter 3:7) submit himself to her, even to the point of suffering if she is physically abusive, for that is the context of the "likewise."

1 Peter 2:18-21 tells slaves to submit, even in the case of being beaten (1 Peter 2:20). Then 1 Peter 3:1 tells wives to submit in like manner (see prior chapter). Then He tells the husbands to live "likewise." If a man were to have such an abusive wife, he could live out Jesus' words in Matthew 5:39.

But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. (Matthew 5:39)

It takes a strong man to live this out!

V. In The Church

Not only has the Lord placed women in submission to men (1 Timothy 2:11-14), but there are certain men whom God has given "rule" in the church as well. As the writer of Hebrews wrote in Hebrews 13:24, "**Greet all those who rule over you,**" and in Hebrews 13:7,

Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.

These men who rule are to be obeyed by the rest of those who follow Christ.

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you. (Hebrews 13:17)

Also, 1 Timothy 5:17 says,

Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. (1 Timothy 5:17)

Elders (pastors, overseers, 1 Peter 5:2) who rule well are those who hold fast the faithful word (Titus 1:9), rightly divide Scripture (2 Timothy 2:15), exhort

and convict those who contradict (Titus 1:9), are not quarrelsome but patient (2 Timothy 2:24), yet rebuke sharply when needed (Titus 1:13), and contend for the faith (literally "fight," Jude 3; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5). Such men are to be held in high esteem.

And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves. (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13)

Whether a man rules well in the church, in his home, or in some other realm of God's creation, if he acts like a man (1 Corinthians 16:13) and is strong in the Lord (Ephesians 6:10), he will find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man.

My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands; for length of days and long life and peace they will add to you. Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, and so find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man. (Proverbs 3:1-4)

Not Taught!

Drinking, Smoking, & Gambling

Drinking Alcohol

Within the false Christian world, (2 Timothy 3:1-5; 4:3; 2 Peter 2:2) among the many doctrines of men (Matthew 15:8-9), are teachings about the drinking of alcohol that are not Biblical.

Three main errors abide:

1. Biblical wine was substantially different in alcoholic content than today's wine.
2. Drinking alcoholic beverages is a sin.
3. A person can be a Christian on their way to heaven and at the same time be a drunkard.

Each one of these is a lie.

I. Word Games

For an example of the first lie (Biblical wine was substantially different in alcoholic content than today's wine), Pastor Andy Pietrylo of Bible Baptist Church Of Mandarin (4211 Julington Creek Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32223-2001) states,

Not Taught!

Unfermented wine was the most common wine in biblical times. It was not what we know today. You cannot defend wine drinking today on the basis of biblical times because the two are totally different (Wine and Alcohol, www.jax-inter.net/~dajohn/Wine.html, 10-29-01, hard copy on file)

"Unfermented wine"? That's like clean filth. Wine, by its very definition, is fermented, as Webster states,

wine (win) n. . . . **1** the fermented juice of grapes, used as an alcoholic beverage **2** the fermented juice of other fruits or plants (*Webster's New World Compact School and Office Dictionary*, copyright 1995, p. 493)

So, besides his use of an oxymoron ("unfermented wine"), Dr. Pietrylo supports this conclusion, not with Biblical proof, but rather he uses the testimony of Aristotle, The Donovan Bible Commentary, Smith's Bible Dictionary, and his own words, which all prove nothing; because Scripture is the standard, not Aristotle, Donovan, Smith, or Pietrylo no matter what they say (Colossians 2:8-10)!

Pietrylo's main argument is that,

The wine was stored by boiling the juice until the water was evaporated. What was left was a thick, nonintoxicating syrup or paste. (ibid.)

This statement is nowhere substantiated in Scripture. The closest thing to it would be Joel 1:10, but that describes dried up wine as a bad thing. Whether Joel 1:10 is saying the wine is dried up, i.e. dehydrated, or dried up, i.e. all gone, is hard to determine. Nevertheless, Scripture teaches no such dehydration process with wine.

Another example of the first lie can be found in an article written by Pastor Rick Rogers (Calvary Baptist Church, 9122 Durand Ave., Sturtevant, WI, 262-886-4463). He writes,

Wine today is different than Biblical wine.
(<http://logosresourcepages.org/alcohol.htm>, under Biblical background, 2., hard copy on file, printed 10-21-01)

And,

D. Biblical Warnings (Remember, we are speaking of Biblical wine and strong drink - that which is much weaker than alcohol today). (ibid.)

And,

E. Biblical Questions: what about the passages that seem to condone the use of alcohol?

1. Remember foremost that the terms were different in biblical times than now! (ibid.)

So says Mr. Rogers, not the word of God (Proverbs 30:5-6). Rogers supports his claim, in part, by arguing,

B. Biblical Background:

1. Wine, including fermented, was used in earlier times to purify water that was stored in cisterns and wells. That was a major use of it! It was mixed with water at a very low ratio, consisting of the lowest ration of (3 parts water to 1 part wine-which was the lowest acceptable ratio; this produced a drink that was 2.5%-2.75% alcoholic) up to (20+ parts water to 1 part wine). (ibid.)

"Wine, including fermented"? Again, that's like saying, "Humans, including homo sapiens." This "unfermented wine" idea is contrary to reality. Nevertheless, Roger claims this mixing was a "major use" of wine in Scripture, yet he does not back this up with a single verse. Not only is this idea unsubstantiated in the Word of God (Proverbs 30:5-6), but the Word reveals just the opposite. Isaiah 1:22 depicts the mixing of water with wine as a bad thing.

Your silver has become dross, your wine mixed with water. (Isaiah 1:22)

In other words, it is no good. Silver that has become dross is bad silver. Likewise, wine mixed with water is bad wine.

As part of their deceit, both Pietrylo and Rogers state that the Hebrew word for new wine, תירוש (tyrosh), is "fresh grape juice." This cannot be substantiated anywhere in the Word. In fact, the same Hebrew word is used in Hosea 4:11 translated "new wine."

Harlotry, wine, and new wine enslave the heart. (Hosea 4:11)

It should be obvious that fresh grape juice is not addicting ("enslave the heart") as new alcoholic wine can be.

If the Lord wanted to say "grape juice" He could have, and, in fact, He did in Numbers 6:3.

He shall separate himself from wine and similar drink; he shall drink neither vinegar made from wine nor vinegar made from similar drink; neither shall he drink any grape juice, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins. (Numbers 6:3)

Not Taught!

The Hebrew words for "grape juice," מִשְׁרַת עֲנָבִים (mishrat `anâviym), are literally rendered, "juice of grapes," or in other words, "grape juice." When the Bible says, "wine" it means "wine." Those who say otherwise make God a liar (as in 1 John 1:10; 5:10).

Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, a Seventh-Day Adventist, makes God a liar and argues over words (1 Timothy 6:4) stating,

"Wine" in Biblical Perspective. Building on the conclusions reached in Chapter 2, I proceeded in Chapter 3 to examine the reasons for the Biblical approval and disapproval of wine. What I found is that the positive references to "wine" have to do with unfermented and unintoxicating grape juice. . . .

On the other hand, the negative references to "wine" have to do with fermented and intoxicating wine.

(www.biblicalperspectives.com/books/wine_in_the_bible/1.html, hard copy on file, 10-29-01)

How convenient. Change the word "wine" into the idea of "unfermented" grape juice and then conclude, without any Biblical support, that the positive references to wine actually refer to this oxymoronic "unfermented" wine, and the negative passages refer to fermented wine.

II. Terms

What are the Hebrew and Greek words for wine and what do they mean? In short, they mean what they say.

A. The Old Testament

In the Hebrew there are several different words for wine, and they are never used to mean "grape juice." The most common Hebrew word for wine is יַיִן (yayin, used 141 times), and drunk to excess, can certainly intoxicate (e.g. Genesis 9:21). It is used in Genesis 9:21, 24; 14:18; 19:32-35; 27:25; 49:11-12; Exodus 29:40; Leviticus 10:9; 23:13; Numbers 6:3 (2x), 4, 20; 15:5, 7, 10; 28:14; Deuteronomy 14:26; 28:39; 29:6; 32:33, 38; Joshua 9:4, 13; Judges 13:4, 14 (2x); 13:7; 19:19; 1 Samuel 1:14-15, 24; 10:3; 16:20; 25:18, 37; 2 Samuel 13:28; 16:1, 2; 1 Chronicles 9:29; 12:40; 27:27; 2 Chronicles 2:10, 15; 11:11; Nehemiah 2:1 (2x); 5:15, 18; 13:15; Esther 1:7, 10; 5:6; 7:2, 7-8; Job 1:13, 18; 32:19; Psalm 60:3; 75:8; 78:65; 104:15; Proverbs 4:17; 9:2, 5; 20:1; 21:17; 23:20, 30-31; 31:4, 6; Ecclesiastes 2:3; 9:7; 10:19; Song of Solomon 1:2, 4; 2:4; 4:10; 5:1; 7:9; 8:2; Isaiah 5:11, 12, 22; 16:10; 22:13; 24:9, 11; 28:1, 7 (2x); 29:9; 55:1, 21; 56:12; Jeremiah 13:12 (2x); 23:9; 25:15; 35:2, 5 (2x), 6 (2x), 8, 14; 40:10, 12; 48:33; 51:7; Lamentations 2:12; Ezekiel 27:18; 44:21; Daniel 1:5, 8, 16; 10:3; Hosea 4:11; 7:5; 9:4; 14:7; Joel 1:5; 3:3; Amos 2:8, 12; 5:11; 6:6; 9:14; Micah 2:11; 6:15; Habakkuk 2:5; Zephaniah 1:13; Haggai 2:12; and Zechariah 9:15 & 10:7.

The next most common Hebrew word for wine is תִּירוֹשׁ (tyrosh, used 38 times). This also can intoxicate as יַיִן (yayin) can. See Hosea 4:11 where both words are used for the enslavement of alcohol.

תִּירוֹשׁ (tyrosh) is usually translated "wine" or "new wine" and is found also in Genesis 27:28, 37; Numbers 18:12; Deuteronomy 7:13; 11:14; 12:17; 14:23; 18:4; 28:51; 33:28; Judges 9:13; 2 Kings 18:32; 2 Chronicles 31:5; 32:28; Nehemiah 5:11; 10:37, 39; 13:5, 12; Psalm 4:7; Proverbs 3:10; Isaiah 24:7; 36:17; 62:8; 65:8; Jeremiah 31:12; Hosea 2:8-9, 22; 7:14; 9:2; Joel 1:10; 2:19, 24; Micah 6:15; Haggai 1:11; and Zechariah 9:17.

Another Hebrew word translated "wine" is חֶמֶר (chemer) used only twice, Deuteronomy 32:14 & Isaiah 27:2. This word is closely linked to the Hebrew word חֶמָר (châmar) for "ferment" (e.g. Psalm 75:8 "the wine foams" NAS) or "red" (e.g. Psalm 75:8 "the wine is red" NKJV). In Aramaic this word for wine is חַמָּר (chamar), and is found 6 times, Ezra 6:9; 7:22; Daniel 5:1, 2, 4, & 23.

Another Hebrew word translated "wine" is עֲסִיִּים (âsiys) used 5 times. This word is translated "sweet wine" in Isaiah 49:26 and Amos 9:13. In Song of Solomon 8:2 it is translated "juice" ("of my pomegranate"), and it is describing "spiced wine" (see Song of Solomon 8:2). In Joel 1:5 and 3:18 (Hebrew 4:18) it is translated "new wine." If anyone wondered if עֲסִיִּים (âsiys) truly means "wine" (i.e. fermented), Isaiah 49:26 and Joel 1:5 should remove any doubt.

Another Hebrew word for "wine" is שְׂמָרִיִּים (shemâriym) used 5 times. This word is used for older wine in Isaiah 25:6 (2x), for the "dregs" of wine in Psalm 75:8 and Jeremiah 48:11, and figuratively in Zephaniah 1:12 for those who are "settled in complacency" (literally, "thickened on their dregs"). Dregs (or lees) refers to the sentiment that accumulates in the fermentation process. Therefore, with the idea of "dregs," the wine spoken of here is indeed wine.

Another Hebrew word for "wine" is מִמְסָךְ (mimsâkh) used twice. This word is translated "drink offering" in Isaiah 65:11 and "mixed wine" in Proverbs 23:30. The passage in Proverbs is in the context of drunkards who search for it.

Finally, there is the Hebrew word מַזְגֵּג (mâzeg) used once. It is translated in Song of Solomon 7:2 (Hebrew 7:3) as "blended beverage" (NAS "mixed wine," KJV "liquor").

The Hebrew word translated "strong drink" or "intoxicating drink" is שֶׁחָר (shêkhâr) used 23 times. This is used in Leviticus 10:9; Numbers 6:3 (2x); 28:7; Deuteronomy 14:26; 29:6; Judges 13:4, 7, 14; 1 Samuel 1:15; Psalm 69:12; Proverbs 20:1; 31:4, 6; Isaiah 5:11, 22; 24:9; 28:7 (3x); 29:9; 56:12; and Micah 2:11. One use of this word gives a death blow to the folly of men like Rick Rogers.

In the article mentioned above, Rogers states,

Wine today is different than Biblical wine. "Strong drink . . . unmixed wine . . ." in Biblical times was only 3-11% alcohol. Those who drank this form of alcohol were considered barbaric! Distillation, which increases alcohol content, was not discovered until A.D. 1500.

Not Taught!

Modern wine has 9-11% alcohol; 80-100 proof whiskey and brandy has 40-50% alcohol; Biblically and culturally, these would have been unthinkable! (ibid.)

Rogers reveals his historical tunnel vision in his statement about distillation. Just because modern man records distillation as first being discovered in A.D. 1500, this does not mean the ancients of old did not use distillation (Ecclesiastes 1:9-11).

Moreover, if Rogers is correct, then the Lord did the unthinkable and encouraged the Israelites to be barbaric, because Yahweh said,

And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household. (Deuteronomy 14:26)

The Hebrew word for "similar drink" in this verse is שֶׁחָר (shêkhâr). It could well be translated "strong drink," as it is in Proverbs 20:1, or "intoxicating drink," as it is in Leviticus 10:9. The Israelites are told by God to get whatever their heart desires, and this could include strong drink.

B. The New Testament

In the Greek, the most common word for wine is οἶνος (oinos) used 28 times. This word is used for the wine Jesus made (John 2:3, 9, 10 [2x]; 4:46), the wine Paul commands not to get drunk with (Ephesians 5:18), and the wine Paul tells Timothy to drink a little of it for his stomach's sake and his frequent ailments (1 Timothy 5:23). The word is elsewhere used in Matthew 9:17 (2x); 27:34; Mark 2:22; 15:23; Luke 1:15; 5:37-38; 7:33; 10:34; Romans 14:21; 1 Timothy 3:8; Titus 2:3; and Revelation 6:6; 14:8, 10; 16:19; 17:2; 18:3, 13; & 19:15. There is nothing peculiar about this word. It means "wine."

After οἶνος (oinos), not much is left in the Greek New Testament for the term "wine." The Greek word for "sour wine" is οἶνος (oxos) used 5 times. It is found in Matthew 27:48; Mark 15:36; Luke 23:36; and John 19:29 & 30.

The Greek word translated "new wine" in Acts 2:13 is γλευκούς (gleukous), and is only used here, in the context of an accusation of being drunk from drinking it (Acts 2:15).

Also, there is σικερα (sikera) and it is found one time in the New Testament for "strong drink" in Luke 1:15 where Gabriel states that John the Baptist will not drink wine nor strong drink.

Finally, the Greek word for "grape juice," τρυξ (trux), is not used in the New Testament.

Therefore, in conclusion, it should be evident that the terms used in the Bible for wine and strong drink do not indicate anything different than our present day wine and strong drink. Those who argue to the contrary are only supported by arguments from history and the supposed practice of that day, but upon a Biblical foundation they do not stand.

III. Is Drinking Alcohol Sin?

Southhaven Church of Christ (1483 Brookhaven Dr., Southhaven, MS, 38671, 662-393-2690) has on their web site an article by Kevin D. Beard in which he writes,

For many years, not only members of the Lord's church, but also religious people in general have understood the drinking of alcohol in any quantity to be sinful. But that attitude is changing. Many in the Lord's church believe there is nothing wrong with so-called "social" drinking. But such is not true. The only Scriptural grounds for drinking beverage alcohol is found in 1 Timothy 5:23, but the purpose of Paul's instruction to Timothy is not for pleasure, but for the medicinal qualities of the wine. Scripture condemns the recreational use of beverage alcohol in any amount. (www.southhavencoc.org/Articles/drinking.htm, hard copy on file, 10-29-01)

To support his stand, Mr. Beard argues it is wrong because the Bible commands self-control (e.g. Galatians 5:22-23), soberness (e.g. 1 Peter 1:13), separation from the world (e.g. Romans 12:1-2), and condemns drunkenness (e.g. Romans 13:13). Amen to self-control, soberness, separation from the world, and a refusal to get drunk, but all these can be lived out, and yet an alcoholic beverage can be enjoyed in moderation breaching not one of these commands (e.g. Luke 7:33-34; Hebrews 7:26).

Mr. Beard goes so far as to indicate that you will lose your soul if you drink alcohol "in any amount" (except for medicinal purposes).

Drinking beverage alcohol in any amount is wrong. Christians must have no part of it, no matter what the world may say. But if any still doubt the danger of it, answer this question: Is your soul worth it? (ibid.)

Nothing is worth losing your soul (Mark 8:36; 9:42-48). But, drinking an alcoholic beverage is not wrong. Paul wrote,

The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17)

Paul's statement is made in the context of drinking wine (Romans 14:21). It is not wrong to drink wine (Luke 7:33-34), or even strong drink (Deuteronomy 14:26 KJV).

Those who claim, as Kevin Beard does, that drinking wine is sinful, actually pronounce sin upon Him who is "without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Because, Christ drank wine.

For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking

Not Taught!

wine, and you say, "He has a demon." The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, "Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!" (Luke 7:33-34)

In the context of drinking wine, Christ says He came "drinking." In other words, He came drinking wine. As the haters of Christ accused Him of sin on this very same issue many years ago accusing Him of being a drunkard (winebibber), so today, men who teach drinking wine is wrong accuse the same One of similar sin. In fact, the wicked of old were more Biblically accurate in their accusation. It would certainly be wrong to be a winebibber (a drunkard, Proverbs 20:1), but to simply drink an alcoholic beverage is not a sin. Otherwise, Jesus Himself sinned.

Terry Watkins, in his reliance upon his own understanding, comes right out and calls Jesus a sinner!

What about when Jesus turned the water into wine at the marriage in Cana. If Jesus Christ turned water into fermented liquor, he directly disobeyed Habakkuk 2:15, "*Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also . . .*" **And, if Jesus disobeyed Habakkuk - HE WAS A SINNER!** (emphasis in original, *World's Deadliest Drug* tract, Dial-The-Truth Ministries, 5990 Willow Ridge Rd., Pinson, Al 35126; 205-681-9956)

Watkins radically perverts Habakkuk 2:15. He leaves out the very phrase that would expose his perversion. The end of the verse, which Watkins leaves out, reads, ". . . **that thou mayest look on their nakedness!**" (Habakkuk 2:15, KJV). What is condemned in Habakkuk 2:15 is getting someone drunk so that you can look on their nakedness, not just getting someone drunk (see below, **VI. Giving Strong Drink**). Lot's daughters made their father drunk so that they could look on his nakedness (Genesis 19:32-35). Jesus did no such thing. Yet, He did make real wine (i.e. fermented), and according to Terry Watkins, if Jesus really did make wine (i.e. fermented), then "**HE WAS A SINNER!**"

Christ was no sinner (John 8:46; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Yet, He did make real wine (i.e. fermented). As it is written,

When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!" (John 2:9-10)

What is "good wine"? Old wine.

And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, "The old is better." (Luke 5:39)

Jesus made wine (οἶνος), good wine, real wine (fermented), and don't let anyone tell you otherwise (Colossians 2:8-10).

Another example of the condemnation of drinking wine can be found with Dr. Pietrylo. He clearly declares the drinking of wine to be sin.

2. DOES THE BIBLE PROHIBIT DRINKING WINE?

- **YES**

There are many warnings and commands by God that instruct us not to drink wine. In **Proverbs 23:29-35** we are told not even to look at alcohol. (ibid.)

What is Proverb 23:29-35 talking about?

Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine. (Proverbs 23:30)

The entire passage is in the context of the use of alcohol in excess.

Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things. (Proverbs 23:29-33)

Verse 32 says, "**At the last it bites like a serpent . . .**" It is not at the first, but at the last. A small glass of wine or even a shot of whiskey will not cause you "to see strange things" or "utter perverse things." These verses describe a drunken stupor, not someone who has drank in moderation.

For those who might be tempted to linger long at the wine, Scripture indeed exhorts,

Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly. (Proverbs 23:31)

In other words, don't let yourself be tempted. This is consistent with Christ's exhortation in Matthew 18:8-9 and Mark 9:43-47 where Jesus says to cut off anything that causes you to sin. Likewise, Proverbs 5:8 exhorts to not even go near the door of the immoral woman's house. So, here, Proverbs instructs to not even look at the wine, because if you go down the road of debauchery,

Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying: "They have struck

Not Taught!

me, but I was not hurt; they have beaten me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?" (Proverbs 23:34-35)

Alcoholic beverages, used in excess, indeed can destroy. Proverbs 20:1 warns,

Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.

It does not say, "whoever drinks it is not wise," but rather, "whoever is led astray by it." To drink wine or strong drink to the point of drunkenness is not wise, and it is a breach of the Lord's commands.

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18)

Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, . . . (Romans 13:13)

Several times over we are instructed to be sober (1 Thessalonians 5:6, 8; Titus 2:2; 1 Peter 1:13; 5:8). Drinking large amounts of alcohol makes this impossible to obey, and those who live this way are most definitely "led astray" (Proverbs 20:1). But, to drink in moderation, is not only allowed by God, it's commanded.

Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has already accepted your works. (Ecclesiastes 9:7)

In opposition to this Word, Rick Rogers argues,

Consider: Dr. Norman Geisler writes: "Christians ought not to drink wine, beer, or other beverages for they are actually strong drink and forbidden in Scripture. Even ancient pagans did not drink what Christians drink today." ["A Christian Perspective on Wine Drinking," Bibliotheca Sacra January - March, 1982, p. 51] The Bible condemns strong drink (remember, 3-11% alcohol?) which covers virtually all alcohol popular today. No Biblical defense can be used to support the consumption of alcohol! (ibid., under B. Biblical Background)

Besides the fact that: 1) Christ both made (John 2:1-11; 4:46) and drank wine (Matthew 11:18-19; Luke 7:33-34). 2) Paul says the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking (Romans 14:17, 21). 3) Ecclesiastes 9:7 encourages to "**drink your wine.**" And, 4) the Lord instructed the Israelites to drink strong drink if they so desired (Deuteronomy 14:26). A Biblical defense can indeed be further made to support the consumption of alcohol.

To begin with, Melchizedek is a good example to follow (Genesis 14:18).

When Abraham returned from warring with Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, Melchizedek, the priest of God Most High (Genesis 14:18), the eternal man (Hebrews 7:1-3, 8, 16), came to Abraham and brought with him bread and wine. Bread is for food. Wine is for drink.

Furthermore, though the priests could not drink wine or intoxicating drink when they went into the tabernacle (Leviticus 10:9), they could drink wine at other times (Numbers 18:12). Though the Israelites did not drink wine or similar drink as they wandered in the desert those 40 years (Deuteronomy 29:5-6), nonetheless, in anticipation of finally arriving in the promised land, the Lord commanded them to drink wine in their worship of Him (Deuteronomy 14:23). Moreover, someone who took a Nazirite vow could not drink wine during the time of his separation (Numbers 6:3), but after this, after he has properly presented his offering before the Lord, **"the Nazirite may drink wine"** (Numbers 6:20).

Isaac drank wine (Genesis 27:25) and blessed his son Jacob with plenty of it (Genesis 27:28, 37). Jotham declares wine to cheer both God and men (Judges 9:13). The godly woman Abigail (1 Samuel 25:3-35) brought David wine for him and his men to drink (1 Samuel 25:18). Nehemiah and those with him drank wine (Nehemiah 5:18). Esther, who was a godly woman (Esther 2:7; 4:15-16, etc.), made a banquet of wine (Esther 5:6; 7:2, 8). Job, a man who was blameless and upright (Job 1:1, 8; 2:3), allowed his children to drink wine (Job 1:13, 18). The Song of Solomon, several times over, describes wine as a good thing (Song of Solomon 1:2, 4; 2:4 **"banqueting house"** NKJV, Hebrew, בַּיְתַּיִן [bêyt hayyâyin] **"house of wine"**; 4:10; 7:9). Solomon says, **"I have drunk my wine"** (S.S. 5:1), and his wife says, **"I would cause you to drink of spiced wine"** (S.S. 8:2). Psalm 104:14 says the Lord makes wine (brings it forth), and it **"makes glad the heart of man."** Isaiah 25:6 says,

The Lord of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees.

Isaiah 55:1 figuratively says to **"buy wine."** Wine is seen as a blessing from God (Proverbs 3:9-10; Isaiah 25:6; Jeremiah 31:12; Joel 2:18-19, 24; Amos 9:13), and to be thwarted from drinking it is illustrated in a curse (Micah 6:15; Zephaniah 1:13).

Scripture does not support the notion that drinking an alcoholic beverage is sinful. What is sinful, is drinking in excess (e.g. Isaiah 5:11). And, even in Proverbs 30:4-5 this is what is in view.

It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink; lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted. (Proverbs 31:4-5)

Prior to this, Lemuel's mother instructs,

Not Taught!

Do not give your strength to women, nor your ways to that which destroys kings. (Proverbs 31:3; see also Proverbs 7:26)

This verse is not a condemnation of all women, nor a condemnation of all sexual activity, but rather, it warns of immoral women and the practice of immoral sex. Likewise, Proverbs 31:4 does not forbid the moderate use of wine or intoxicating drink, but rather the misuse of it, "**lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted.**" The balance is found in Ecclesiastes 10:17.

Blessed are you, O land, when your king is the son of nobles, and your princes feast at the proper time - for strength and not for drunkenness! (Ecclesiastes 10:17)

Finally, some may wonder about 1 Peter 4:3 - "**drinking parties**" (NKJV, NAS, ESV, NSV; "banquetings" KJV; "drinkings" Darby; "drinking-bouts" Young's Literal; "carousings" ASV, ERV; "wild parties" NLT). The Greek word translated "drinking parties" is ποτοις (potois) which is only found in 1 Peter 4:3 in the NT. In the LXX (Greek translation of the OT) it is used a few times to translate a few different Hebrew words.

The LXX uses this word, for example, in Genesis 19:3; 40:20; 1 Samuel 25:36 (2x); 1 Kings 3:15; Esther 1:5, 9; 2:18; 6:14; Job 1:4-5; and Ecclesiastes 7:2 all for a translation of the Hebrew word מִשְׁתֶּה (mishteh) "feast." In Genesis 19:3 it is used for the "feast" Lot made for the angels. In Genesis 40:20 it is used for the "feast" Pharaoh gave on his birthday. In 1 Samuel 25:36 the context is Nabal feasting his way into drunkenness. In 1 Kings 3:15 it is used for the "feast" Solomon made for his servants after his godly dream in the context of worshipping God. In Esther 1:5 it is used for the feast king Ahasuerus made for all the people. In Esther 1:9 it is used for the feast Queen Vashti made for the women. In Esther 2:18 it is used for the feast for Queen Esther. In Esther 6:14 it is used for the "banquet" of wine which Esther had prepared. In Job 1:4-5 is used the feast of the children of Job. In Ecclesiastes 7:2 it simply says,

Better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men; and the living will take it to heart.

In 1 Kings 10:21 the LXX also uses this word to translate the Hebrew word מִשְׁקָה (mashqâh) "**drinking**" for Solomon's "drinking vessels."

In Job 8:11 the LXX translates מַיִם (mâyim) "water" with the singular of this word, πότου (potou).

In Esther 1:8 the LXX translates שְׂתֵי יָהּ (shetiyyâh) "**drinking**" in the context of the feast of king Ahasuerus.

In Proverbs 23:30 the LXX translates מִמְסָאֲחַ (mimsâkh) "**mixed wine**" (more literally, "mixed drink"). There the context is speaking of drunkards.

As can be seen from reading these verses and their contexts, context has much to do with how this word is to be understood. The context in 1 Peter 4:3 is "**drunkenness**" and "**revelries**" which are obviously evil. The context is clearly evil in Proverbs 23:30, but the use of the word in Genesis 19:3; 1 Kings 3:15; 10:21; Esther 6:14; Job 1:4-5; 8:11; and Ecclesiastes 7:2 imply nothing inherently bad. Esther 1:8 is indeed in the context of the feast of a king, but note what it says regarding the "drinking" (LXX, πότος) there.

In accordance with the law, the *drinking* was not compulsory; for so the king had ordered all the officers of his household, that they should do according to each man's pleasure. (Esther 1:8)

This gave them freedom to drink little or much.

Thus, the "**drinking parties**" spoken of in 1 Peter 4:3 is not talking about a gathering of moderate drinkers, and the context bears this out. In the very next verse it says,

In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. (1 Peter 4:4)

Here is a clarifying statement. What Peter is talking about is "**dissipation**," "**excess**" (KJV), as Ephesians 5:18 says,

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is *excess*; but be filled with the Spirit (KJV, "excess" is a translation of ἀσωτία [asôtia] from the same root as in 1 Peter 4:4 for "**dissipation**" [NKJV] or "**excess**" [KJV], ἀσωτίας [asôtias]).

IV. How Much, When, And With Whom?

Since Scripture encourages the moderate use of alcohol (e.g. Genesis 14:18; Deuteronomy 14:23, 26; Ecclesiastes 9:7; Luke 7:33-34; etc.), at what point does the drinking become sin? When God is disobeyed, then it is sin. The Lord says, "do not be drunk with wine" (Ephesians 5:18), and "be sober" (1 Peter 1:13). As long as these commands are not breached, then the drinking has been moderate, and no sin has been committed.

Yet, sin has been committed, if, by drinking alcohol, a brother has been caused to stumble or is offended (Romans 14:20).

It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. (Romans 14:21)

Not Taught!

If a brother in the Lord is offended, or even if an ungodly man is offended, abstinence, for their sake, should be observed (1 Corinthians 9:19-22; 10:31-33; 2 Corinthians 6:3). Paul says,

All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats [or drinks] with offense. (Romans 14:20)

Eating or drinking with offense is eating or drinking in defiance of those who are known to be in disapproval of the behavior. This is the context of both Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-33. This does not address a circumstance in which such disapproval is unknown. Scripture does not dictate a believer should completely abstain from drinking any alcohol, lest someone someday somewhere might be offended. Jesus openly came eating and drinking (Luke 7:33-34), and His example can be followed. Abstinence can also be practiced, if so desired. Either way, one thing that should never be submitted to, or given any kind of approval, is false doctrine concerning this matter. Paul writes,

So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths. (Colossians 2:16)

Out of love we may choose not to drink in someone's presence. But in truth, we should stand firm on what Scripture teaches about this issue, speak the truth, and in no way cower to any doctrine of men.

And, although we may have the freedom to drink, we do not have the freedom to be fellow drinkers with those who over indulge.

Hear, my son, and be wise; and guide your heart in the way. Do not mix with winebibbers, or with gluttonous eaters of meat; for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty. (Proverbs 23:21; see also 1 Corinthians 15:33).

V. Drunkards Go To Hell!

God says,

Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may follow intoxicating drink; who continue until night, till wine inflames them! (Isaiah 5:11)

Woe to men mighty at drinking wine, woe to men valiant for mixing intoxicating drink. (Isaiah 5:22; see also 28:1-8; 56:12)

In Galatians 5:21 drunkenness is listed as one of the deeds of the flesh and those who practice such will not inherit the kingdom of God. Likewise, in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 drunkards are listed as unrighteous and among those who

will not go to heaven. Even in the law, it is recognized that the drunkard should not be included with the sober (Deuteronomy 29:19).

Yet, despite such clear declarations in Scripture, there are still those who teach to the contrary. Like Jack Hayford, who says,

I'll tell you something, there's never been a person who was addicted to smoking, **addicted to liquor**, never been a person who was addicted to immorality, never been a person who was on the brink of suicide, there's never been a person who named the name of Jesus Christ, and His life and in fact entered them, that no matter how encrusted or encased they were with their sin, there's never existed the person to whatever degree, small or great, that bondage has been in their life, that there still was not enough power of Jesus in them to minister to somebody else. Oh, listen! Greater is He that is in you than everything else that's around. Hallelujah. (tape # 02439B, "The Sin Of Suicide," bold added)

Contrary to Hayford's statement, Jesus is not in drunkards. Those who are "addicted to liquor" are still lost in their sin (John 8:34) and are without God (Ephesians 2:12). Hayford turns the grace of God into lewdness (Jude 4), and proclaims the exact opposite of the Word (John 8:31-36).

In Rick Rogers article mentioned above, Roger claims,

Alcohol is responsible for approx. 66% of all fatal accidents; 70% of all murders; 50% of all rapes; 60% of child abuse and child molestation cases; and commits more people to the mental hospital than any other cause!

Actually, it is people who lack self-control and are wicked who are responsible for 100% of all these things. The misuse of alcohol is only part of their evil, and the subsequent damage and crimes are simply resultant of their rebellious hearts and evil ways (Proverbs 17:11).



VI. Giving Strong Drink

One astounding passage that not only runs against the grain of some of the error we've seen so far (e.g. Terry Watkins), but pushes right off the edge the promotion of sobriety for the wicked (that is, for those who refuse to repent, Psalm 7:11-12).

Give strong drink to him who is perishing, and wine to those who

Not Taught!

are bitter of heart. Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more. (Proverbs 31:6-7)

Scripture actually instructs us to give strong drink to the wicked (him who is perishing). Why? So he can "**drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.**" In other words, so he can get drunk and forget all his troubles!

Here is a practical application of Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 15:32.

If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"

The wicked, who refuse to heed the gospel of God, live in this very lie. They live as if, and believe in their hearts (Psalm 14:1), that "the dead do not rise." Therefore, they do not consider their latter end (Deuteronomy 32:29). And, what is so amazing about all of this is, the Lord does not tell us to attempt to clean up these sinners, even though they heed not the Word. Instead, He tells us to give them booze, so that their days can be spent with less personal turmoil; because "**wine makes merry**" (Ecclesiastes 10:19).

Proverbs 31:6-7 throws out any idea of a "Christian" rehabilitation center. If a drunkard took heed to the gospel, he would be set free (John 8:34-36) and would no longer be a drunkard. He would need no rehab to get him off of the abuse of alcohol. The Savior would give him all he needs (2 Peter 1:3). This is the power of godliness (2 Timothy 3:5)!

If a drunkard refused to believe in Christ, should we then still attempt to get him off the bottle? No. Scripture commands to actually encourage him to drink, to give him a bottle (Proverbs 31:6-7). We should certainly warn him that drunkards will go to hell, and give him the truth of the gospel; but if he refuses to take heed, buy him a six pack or a pint of Jack Daniels. This is what the Lord says to do (Proverbs 31:6-7). Indeed, His thoughts are not our thoughts (Isaiah 55:8).

Drug & Alcohol Recovery Programs Are Satanic.

[See also "Alcoholics Anonymous Is A False Religion" in the book, *False Teachers*.]

Whether it be secular or religious, Drug & Alcohol Recovery (or Rehabilitation) Programs (DARP) are of the devil. They deny Christ and His power to save (John 8:31-36). They are antichrist (2 John 7). They disobey the Word (Proverbs 31:6-7).

I. Deny Christ

DARPs deny the Savior and His power to save from sin. Scripture plainly declares,

if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Anyone who heeds the Word of God, who believes the Bible (= believes the gospel), who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ (= believes the Bible), is a "**new creation**" *instantly*. In other words, as soon as they stop repeating the lie of Psalm 14:1, as soon as they stop their rebellion of Proverbs 17:11, as soon as their eyes are opened and they turn "**from darkness to light**" (Acts 26:18), as soon as they stop their suppression of Romans 1:18, as soon as they stop their self-seeking of Romans 2:8, as soon as the veil of 2 Corinthians 3:16 is taken away, as soon as God grants them repentance and they escape the snare of the devil (2 Timothy 2:25-26), they are *instantly* in Christ and *instantly* a "**new creation**" and *instantly* saved from their sin and the overbearing power of it (Romans 6:14). Thus, once they turn to the Lord, they no longer have a drug or alcohol **addiction**, but are free from that bondage. Christ has promised freedom (John 8:31-36), and He is not a liar.

Not Taught!

For example, "**Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector and was rich**" (Luke 19:2), was saved the very same day Christ came to him and said He was staying at his house (Luke 19:5). Zacchaeus, revealing his newly redeemed heart that day said,

Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold. (Luke 19:8)

Jesus responded,

Today, salvation has come to this house,"

Zacchaeus was saved from his sin and had a change of heart that very day. It didn't take SERP (Stealing & Extorting Recovery Program) to deliver him. It didn't take counseling. It didn't take a prolonged process of sanctification. It took Christ and His power and faith in Him.

The thief on the cross is another example. He was reviling Christ, along with the other robber, as he was hanging there next to Jesus (Matthew 27:44; Mark 15:32). Yet, just moments later,¹ after reviling Him, we find this encounter:

Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us." But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." (Luke 23:39-43)

During his short stay on the cross, the thief went from a reviler of Christ to a defender of Christ. He was saved and transformed in a moment. He became a "**new creation**" *instantly* (2 Corinthians 5:17). It didn't take a 10 week anger management class, or "12 steps away from reviling". It took simple faith in the Word.

This is just as Paul told the Corinthians. In first Corinthians 6:9-10 Paul lists off people who will not go to heaven, but will indeed go to hell - fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, and then Paul writes,

And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:11)

Paul says, "and such *were* some of you", *not* "such *are* some of you". In other

words, some *were* thieves, **drunkards**, revilers, etc., but they are no longer. In other words, they were saved from the dominating power of sin that was in their life. Truly, "**if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation**" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Drug & Alcohol Recovery, Rehabilitation, or Treatment Programs, by their very existence, deny this essential truth. For if those who ran them believed Christ, and believed Christ alone saves from the power of sin, then *the program would not exist*. All that would exist would be the preaching of the gospel to any and all who might hear.

For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.
(Romans 10:13; see also Psalm 145:18; John 4:24)

Any and all who are saved receive the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39), and therefore, they receive self-control (Galatians 5:23). Thus, the Holy Spirit is the Savior. He delivers from drug and/or alcohol addiction.

It doesn't take man's programs (rehab or otherwise) to free from the power of sinful behavior (e.g. drug and alcohol abuse, etc.). It takes the Savior, who saves "**His people from their sins**" (Matthew 1:21). Drug abuse and alcohol abuse is sinful behavior, and the only true solution to it is the Savior Himself, Scripture (James 1:21).

For example, Proverbs 8:13 says,

The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.

Anyone who is truly [terrified of God](#), as Job was (Job 23:15-16), as the Psalmist was (Psalm 119:120), as Jesus commanded (Luke 12:4-5), will hate evil. And,

by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil. (Proverbs 16:6)

The fear of the Lord is the Savior (Psalm 19:7-11). It causes one to hate evil and to depart from it. Therefore, by the fear of the Lord one departs from drug and/or alcohol addiction. Anyone who fears God is too afraid of Him to continue doing wrong (e.g. Job 31:1-4). Anyone who believes the Bible (the fear of the Lord) knows the horror of those who refuse to submit to Him (e.g. Revelation 20:10-15; 21:8; 22:14-15). They don't go there!²

Therefore, drug addicts and/or drunkards (aka: alcoholics) need the good news of God's Word given to them, and that is all, *nothing more*, to deliver them from their addiction.

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1 Corinthians 1:18)

Not Taught!

If they heed not the message of the cross, there is no other way (John 14:6) for them to be truly free. And, any effort to set them free by any other means is antichrist.

II. Antichrist

Any effort to clean up a sinner, be it from their drug addiction, alcohol debauchery, or any other misconduct, using anything other than God's Word, or claiming to use His Word but actually adding some additional means (Proverbs 30:5-6), is antichrist. Paul warned,

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.
(Colossians 2:8)

Any philosophy (e.g. psychology), tradition of men (religious or otherwise), any man-made approach (basic principles of the world, e.g. pragmatism) to dealing with sin (drug addiction,³ etc.) is to be rejected, as Paul warned. It is empty deceit to attempt to clean up a sinner from their sin in any other way than via the simple truth of Scripture (Christ). The reason Paul gives this warning is because,

in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, . . . (Colossians 2:9-10)

Jesus Christ is Scripture (the Word) incarnate (John 1:1, 14). He is God in a human body ("**all the fullness of the Godhead bodily**"). Anyone who believes in Him is "**complete in Him**" (Colossians 2:10) and has "**all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him**" (2 Peter 1:3). "**Jesus Christ has come in the flesh**" (1 John 4:2) and anyone who uses any other means (Colossians 2:8) than Scripture *alone* to deliver from the dominating power of sin does,

not confess Jesus Christ coming in flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. (2 John 7, a more literal translation)

III. Disregard The Word

Finally, Drug & Alcohol Recovery Programs ignore the wisdom found in Proverbs 31:6-7.

Give strong drink to him who is perishing, and wine to those who are bitter of heart. Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more. (Proverbs 31:6-7)

Those who heed not the gospel (God's Word) are those who are perishing

(Psalm 37:20; 73:27; 92:9). The Lord does not command us to clean such people up. He does not command us to help them recover from addiction. He **does** command us to proclaim His Word to them (Psalm 96:2-3). But, if they heed not His warning, then what does the Word of God say to do? Give them strong drink. In other words, the wisdom of God does not instruct us to get them off the bottle, but to encourage them along **with** the bottle.

Anyone who gets a drug addict or alcoholic off of their addiction via a drug or alcohol recovery program (or by any other worldly means) is not only distaining Proverbs 31:6-7, but they are doing the same kind of thing Christ condemned the Pharisees for doing. Jesus said to the Pharisees,

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. (Matthew 23:25-26)

The Pharisees had the outside clean doing outward acts of "righteousness" (e.g. Matthew 23:27-28), but inside they were evil to the core. This is what happens when someone is cleaned up via man's devises (rehab, recoveries, treatment programs, etc.). The outside gets clean, but the inside stays filthy, and they become worse than they were before. As Jesus said to the Pharisees,

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. (Matthew 23:15)

God instructs to give strong drink to him who is perishing, to those who are on their way to hell. If instead of giving them alcohol, you clean them up and get them **off** their booze, they are worse off. When you do so, you remove their most obvious sin and lead them to believe they are delivered from their wickedness, when they are not. You make them think they are now wise, no longer a foolish drunkard or drug addict (when in reality they are still a fool, Romans 1:22), and the hope of them ever truly being saved from their sin becomes ever so remote. Sadly then, Proverbs 26:12 becomes their reality.

Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him. (Proverbs 26:12)

Encouraging people off of their drug addiction and alcohol abuse, when not giving them solely Scripture, is actually doing **more** damage to their souls, and not helping them in the least. Moreover, if it is done in the name of Christ, but not truly in Christ (as all "Christian" drug and alcohol programs are), then it is even worse (Matthew 23:14).⁴ Such programs are the work of false teachers, deceivers and antichrists (2 John 7), who,

Not Taught!

allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error.
(2 Peter 2:18)

May God repay them according to their deeds (Galatians 1:8-9).

Endnotes:

1. The thief on the cross had a change of heart somewhere within the three hours of first being crucified, which was around the third hour (Mark 15:25), and the sixth hour when the darkness came. See Mark 15:25-33 (Matthew 27:44-45) & Luke 23:43-44.

2. Does this mean sinless perfection? No, sinless perfection is impossible in this life (1 John 1:8-10, for more on that, see chapter "Not By Works").

Drug & Alcohol Recovery Programs boast to deliver people from their addictive behavior. Does anyone accuse them of claiming to produce sinless behavior? Not typically. What the Recovery Programs claim is that people in the program get delivered from their addictive behavior. If that was not their claim and that was not happening (at least superficially), the program would prove itself to be a flop (worthless). The whole point in the program is to recover from addiction. If they aren't doing that, they are not doing what they exist to do.

Yet, this rehab, this freedom from the addiction, is exactly what Christ does for any and all who call upon Him in truth. But, it is not the superficial outside of the cup clean up that the recovery programs do. It is inward, real, and everlasting for all who "**continue in His goodness**" (Romans 11:22; see also 2:7).

3. It may be argued in some severe drug addiction cases that medical treatment may be necessary to sustain life when a person stops using a particular drug. Even so, any medical services for whatever and whenever is not what delivers the heart from addiction. The person could easily go right back to drug abuse if they have no change of mind.

A body that is physically addicted to a substance is a consequence of a sinful lifestyle. Scripture does not promise to free, in this life, from the physical consequences of sin. God may choose to do so, but He does not promise He will (Psalm 115:3).

4. As Matthew 23:14 illustrates, religious hypocrisy receives greater condemnation. See also Mark 12:38-40 (Luke 20:45-47).

Drugs, a Biblical Perspective

Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, . . . (Genesis 1:11)

And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so. Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. (Genesis 1:29-31)

Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. (Genesis 9:3)

On the third day when God made the plants of the earth, He said they were "**good**" (Genesis 1:12). Just because evil men misuse something, that does not make that something bad (Romans 14:14). Nevertheless, in a denial of God's Word, there are many who claim some plants are bad, so much so, they kill and incarcerate because of them.

I. Insanity

The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 9:3,

Truly the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead.

Not Taught!

The "evil" and "madness" of men is well illustrated in both the abuse of drugs and the laws prohibiting them. The abuse is quite self-evident, as evil men ruin their minds and lives in self-destructive behavior. But, the prohibition, though very destructive as well, is covered in deceit.

At the beginning of creation and after the flood all green herbs were given for food. That well sums up God's perspective of the lawfulness of possessing and consuming green plants. Unlike man's laws that make the simple possession of certain green plants illegal (e.g. hemp, marijuana, coca, poppy, peyote, etc.), God never commanded any such thing. But, "**deceiving spirits**" forbid what God has not.

1 Timothy 4:1-3 says,

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith,¹ giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry,² and commanding to abstain from foods³ which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

It is consistent with the working of Satan, "**who deceives the whole world**" (Revelation 12:9), to speak the opposite of God (e.g. Genesis 3:4). And, since the "**whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one**" (1 John 5:19), it is no surprise to see "**the violent perversion of justice and righteousness**" (Ecclesiastes 5:8) via governments "**commanding to abstain**" from what God "**created to be received.**"

The prohibition man puts on plants and substances is just another example (of many) of man's perverted mind and deceived heart (Jeremiah 17:9). Isaiah 5:20 says,

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil.

Government is "**for the punishment of evildoers**" (1 Peter 2:14). But, when they punish for that which is not evil, they become "**God's ministers**" (Romans 13:4-6) who oppress⁴ and bring the woe of Isaiah 5:20 upon themselves. Moreover, their "**speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron**" (1 Timothy 4:2) is well illustrated via the prohibition against hemp (a food).

The punishment for possessing *industrial* hemp is particularly insane ("madness"). It isn't even a mind altering drug. It has no psycho-active effect, and it is indeed good for human consumption (food) and quite useful in a variety of ways. Communist China is noted as the world's biggest producer of hemp, with over [30 other countries allowing industrial hemp cultivation as well](#).

Yet, in "the land of the free" (one of the most incarcerated countries in the world) the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) insanely forbids its cultivation and possession, [not even allowing a "sovereign" nation to grow it](#). Historically, not too long ago, hemp was *promoted* by the very same government that now vehemently *prohibits* it. For example, see the video, "[Hemp For Victory](#)." The video well illustrates the government's hard-hearted hypocrisy, as it documents benefits of hemp.

Likewise, the prohibition against marijuana (another form of hemp/food) is insanely evil as they kill people and incarcerate others for possession. Marijuana has been known for a long time to be quite medically beneficial. According to history, cannabis has been known and used as medicine in the United States at least as far back as 1850.

By 1850, marijuana had made its way into the United States Pharmacopeia [an official public standards-setting authority for all prescription and over-the-counter medicines], which listed marijuana as treatment for numerous afflictions, including: neuralgia, tetanus, typhus, cholera, rabies, dysentery, alcoholism, opiate addiction, anthrax, leprosy, incontinence, gout, convulsive disorders, tonsillitis, insanity, excessive menstrual bleeding, and uterine bleeding, among others. Patented marijuana tinctures were sold...

(<http://medicalmarijuana.procon.org/view.timeline.php?timelineID=000026>)

From 1850 to 1941, cannabis was listed in the *U.S. Pharmacopeia* (USP) and *National Formulary* (NF).

(www.uspharmacist.com/continuing_education/ceviewtest/lessonid/106975/)

Yet, in like manner as with industrial hemp, the Federal government's ban on marijuana is one of psychotic⁵ duplicity. The [DEA claims](#) cannabis (marijuana) has "no currently accepted medical use." Yet, it is reported that the U.S. government has been providing marijuana to patients [for medical purposes](#) since 1976. And, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services presently holds a U.S. patent citing medical benefits of cannabis (dated Oct. 7, 2003). In [this patent](#) abstract it says,

Cannabinoids have been found to have antioxidant properties, unrelated to NMDA receptor antagonism. This new found property makes cannabinoids useful in the treatment and prophylaxis of wide (sic) variety of oxidation associated diseases, such as ischemic, age-related, inflammatory and autoimmune diseases. The cannabinoids are found to have particular application as neuroprotectants, for example in limiting neurological damage following ischemic insults, such as

Not Taught!

stroke and trauma, or in the treatment of neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and HIV dementia. (p. 1)

Later in the patent it notes,

As used herein, a "cannabinoid" is a chemical compound (such as cannabitol, THC or cannabidiol) that is found in the plant species *Cannabis saliva* (marijuana), (p. 14, column 10)

The following examples show that both nonpsychoactive cannabidiol, and psychoactive cannabinoids such as THC, can protect neurons from glutamate induced death, by a mechanism independent of cannabinoid receptors. Cannabinoids are also shown (sic) to be potent antioxidants capable of preventing ROS toxicity in neurons. (p. 15, column 12)

There are also several other U.S. granted patents concerning cannabis describing various medical benefits therein (e.g. [6,113,940](#); [6,132,762](#); [6,410,588 B1](#); [2004/0039048 A1](#); [7,597,910 B2](#); [8,071,641 B2](#)). And, as of this date, there are about 32 States and the DEA's own DC that have legalized the use of marijuana for numerous medical purposes.

The DEA's ban on hemp (both industrial and medicinal) is a sad example of an evil government that is not for the people on these matters, but against them. The DEA's stand is the polar opposite of 3 John 2:

Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, . . . (3 John 2).

If the government truly cared about people on these things, hemp (both industrial and medicinal) would not be illegal. If they were truly concerned about some misusing drugs, they wouldn't be killing them or throwing them into cages like wild beasts (Romans 13:10). Those in government would not want to be treated that way (Luke 6:31). They are as it is written, "**hateful and hating one another**" (Titus 3:3).

II. Illegal Water//Illegal Plants

It is sad to see this folly prevail. The abuse of drugs is sad, and the prohibition against certain plants and particular drugs just makes matters worse. When there is a law against something, it is normal human nature to now want it *because* it is illegal. As it is written,

Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.
(Proverbs 9:17; see also Proverbs 20:17; Romans 7:7-11)

Men are evil (Psalm 14:1-3). People like to do evil things (e.g. Exodus 32:22; Micah 3:1-2). They like to rebel (Proverbs 17:11). So, what was once legal, but is now made illegal, simply making it illegal provokes evil men to want to break the law. Like in the proverb, *stolen* water is sweet. It's the *illegal* water that is sweet to men.

Thus, by these laws, the government provokes into existence a whole new class of criminals, who now find sweet savor in the new forbidden fruit (as in the days of prohibition of alcohol). Moreover, those who once peacefully and lawfully farmed, cultivated, prepared, transported, sold, used, and possessed these substances, now suddenly are criminals, if they continue to do so. The creation of these kinds of laws is a crime against peaceful law abiding citizens.

It is no wonder then that we have both a drug abuse problem and an enforcement issue. Of course, the former would not evaporate if drugs were legalized, since drug abuse is immoral by God's law (1 Peter 5:8); and men like to rebel against that (Proverbs 17:11). But the government, by making it illegal to possess, simply gives evil men another reason and provocation to rebel that wouldn't otherwise be there.

But, the enforcement issue would evaporate, since it is a creation of the State. It is [reported](#) that in the U.S. almost half of the prison population is incarcerated⁶ because of drug related crimes, and that America leads the world (except perhaps North Korea) in [its incarceration](#) rate (per capita). No such issue would be an issue if these laws were non-existent. Man often creates his own problems (Jeremiah 2:17).

Even worse, it is reported drug laws result in the [deaths of thousands](#) via [violent drug cartels](#) and street gangs, who are funded via the [sales of illegal substances](#). They prosper, thrive, and get rich because of the drug war (like Al Capone in the days of prohibition) making large profits off the sales of high priced substances due to their illegality. Children are enticed into a life of crime, and police and innocents lose their lives fighting over plants.

Stories are told of death via police, who raid homes of private citizens (sometimes even the wrong homes) and kill people ([even in the wrong homes](#)). What a tragedy! Are these innocent people's lives, both police and citizens, really so worthless so as to keep this useless war raging? How many more police and innocent people have to die in this *endless* war on drugs?

It is reported that Seattle City Attorney Pete Holmes said:

All we've achieved by prohibition is to fill our jails and make drug dealers quite rich.⁷

Sadly, most governments would rather see people dead or in prison rather than alive at home foolishly abusing their mind. Whether they realize it or not, that's the decision they make by enforcing the drug laws. Such insanity fits well with Satan's agenda, who himself wants people dead (John 8:44 "murderer") and

Not Taught!

oppressed (e.g. Acts 10:38). Man wages a drug war that God has never waged in His law, and he causes serious harm and destruction, thinking he's doing good (Proverbs 16:2; 21:2); but he is not. It is reported in the U.S. drugs continue to be available to those who want them, children (even in the schools), adults, and even in prisons.

The drug war, in truth, is not a war on "bad" drugs. There are plenty of legal drugs that are used and/or abused and plenty of them have in their list of possible bad side effects: "**death**." The drug war is really a war on humans. People are the ones who are being killed and taken prisoner in this war, and those doing the killing and imprisoning are Satan's pawns fulfilling his desire (as in John 8:44; 2 Timothy 2:26). The killing and imprisoning has been effective in removing people to their eternal doom (Hebrews 9:27), but the drugs continue, just as moonshine in the days of prohibition. No doubt, this is all the wrath of God upon men via men (Romans 1:18f; 11:36).

III. Biblical Standard

Although many foolishly think it to be the moral high ground to wage such a sociopathic⁸ and destructive drug war, Scripture dispels that folly. Before, during, and after the Law of Moses, the Lord in His perfect Word (Psalm 19:7) never prohibits either the possession or use of any plants, and plants are nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9-11). Likewise, no drug is ever generally forbidden, and drugs are nothing new to the mind of man (Ephesians 2:3 "desires of the . . . mind"). Sobriety is commanded (1 Thessalonians 5:6, 8; Titus 2:2), but to possess a particular substance is *never* outlawed. God's law is perfect (Psalm 19:7). Man's law fits well into Proverbs 14:12 & 16:25.

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

Death and unnecessary incarceration (which can result in rape, ruin and death) well characterize the drug war. The prisons for this war could well be called, "Criminal Training Centers."

Evil company *corrupts* good habits. (1 Corinthians 15:33)

And,

the companion of fools will be destroyed. (Proverbs 13:20b)

Prisons are not a good environment.

Moreover, if and when people are released, because our system and our society are unforgiving (Romans 1:31, here for a crime that shouldn't even be a crime), they encourage further unlawful behavior and embolden people into a *life* of crime. For one, due to the stigma of a criminal record, it is difficult to obtain a decent job. Second, they have just come out of a "Criminal Training Center" in

which they have had plenty of time to scheme evil plans and plenty of encouragement to do so. And third, it is quite enticing to make good money selling illegal drugs (1 Timothy 6:10). It's no wonder jail and imprisonment is a revolving door for some.

2 Samuel 23:3 says,

He who rules among man is righteous who rules in the fear of God. (a more literal translation)⁹

Making certain plants and drugs illegal to possess is neither righteous nor fearing God, because they forbid what God has not (Titus 1:15-16). Thus, they unjustly kill and imprison people for it.

Evil men do not understand justice (Proverbs 28:5).

They do not understand God's Word is the standard for right and wrong (Hebrews 4:12-13). Whether in government or anywhere else, to declare something as evil (e.g. possession of a certain plant or drug) what God has not declared to be evil, is evil (Isaiah 5:20). All those who do so will be judged by and for their ungodly standard (Isaiah 5:20; Matthew 7:1-2; Revelation 21:8).

The Law of Moses, the law God gave to govern sinful men,¹⁰ provides for great freedom in this area (Psalm 119:45; 2 Corinthians 3:17). But, unloving men (Romans 1:31; 2 Timothy 3:3) do not believe in nor understand such liberty (1 Peter 2:16). They do not know the liberty of love. The liberty that loves their neighbors as themselves (Mark 12:31). The liberty that treats others as they would want to be treated (Luke 6:31). That love doesn't kill people and throw them into jail for possessing plants.

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. (1 John 5:3)

God's Word (the love of God) lays no such burden upon men. But, unloving, deceived (2 Timothy 3:13), and perverted men do (Proverbs 14:2). As Israel of old (Hebrews 3:10), they do not know the ways of the Lord. Man's ways are not God's ways (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Who is wise? Let him understand these things. Who is prudent? Let him know them. For the ways of the Lord are right; the righteous walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them. (Hosea 14:9)

IV. Biblical Example

The only example we have in Scripture of a drug is the drug of alcohol. With this drug, God's example is to give it to them, not forbid it. Proverbs 31

Not Taught!

instructs,

Give strong drink to him who is perishing, and wine to those who are bitter of heart. Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more (Proverbs 31:6-7; for more on this, see our report on [DARP](#), particularly point III. Disregard The Word).

This imperative is given to a King (Proverbs 31:1). This instruction tells the one in power to "Give . . ." the drug. In the days of the prohibition of alcohol the government *took* and confiscated the drug (alcohol). Instead of having compassion or mercy on the foolish, the government killed and punished the one "**who is perishing**." So, they do today likewise with other drugs.

Nevertheless, it is the rulers, the government, who should stay away from this particular drug (alcohol), as the verses immediately prior to this say.

It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink; lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted. (Proverbs 31:4-5)

Likewise, even though part of the worship of God involved alcohol (e.g. Exodus 29:40), even "**strong drink**" (Numbers 28:7 NAS), it was not to be consumed by the priest when he entered the tabernacle of meeting (Leviticus 10:9-11 NAS). This prohibition was given a specific reason. It was so that the priest,

may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean (Leviticus 10:10).

And that he,

may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them by the hand of Moses (Leviticus 10:11; see also Isaiah 28:7).

In addition, those under the Nazirite vow were forbidden to consume not only alcohol, but also any grapes along with other regulations as well (Numbers 6; see also Judges 13:3-5, 7, 14). Consequentially, those who gave a Nazirite wine were condemned (Amos 2:11-12).

Of course, abuse and misuse of alcohol is clearly forbidden (Deuteronomy 21:20; Proverbs 20:1; 23:21, 29-35; Isaiah 5:11, 22; Ephesians 5:18), but possession and moderate consumption is actually encouraged.

For example, in the worship of God the Israelites were told they could purchase both wine and strong drink.

And you may spend the money for whatever your heart desires, for oxen, or sheep, or wine, or strong drink, or whatever your heart desires; and there you shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household. (Deuteronomy 14:26 NAS).

Ecclesiastes says,

Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart; (Ecclesiastes 9:7; see also Ecclesiastes 8:15; Proverbs 21:17)¹¹

Wine and a merry heart go hand in hand. It makes a person happy, as it is written,

But the vine said to them, "Should I cease my new wine, which cheers both God and men," (Judges 9:13)

Wine makes both God and man happy. So, evidently, even God drinks wine. He did so when He was here (Luke 7:33-34).

Moreover, Psalm 104 speaks of the works of God and says,

He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the service of man, that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine that makes glad the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread which strengthens man's heart. (Psalm 104:14-15)

Wine makes the heart of man happy, as Ecclesiastes 9:19 also notes,

A feast is made for laughter, and wine makes merry;

Proverbs 17:22 reveals this is a good thing, as it is written,

A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones.

Alcohol is also recommended to be used in a pharmaceutical way in 1 Timothy 5:23. Paul writes Timothy,

No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities. (1 Timothy 5:23)

Clearly, wine is good for the heart, stomach, and even other ailments. For more on alcohol in Scripture, see our article on [Drinking Alcohol](#).

Not Taught!

Therefore, as the drug of alcohol illustrates, there's a proper and an improper use. So it is with plants and/or drugs. Because some people misuse plants and/or drugs, and even abuse themselves and in excess, this does **not** make those plants or drugs evil. The people who do so are evil. The substance is not (Romans 14:14).

V. Pharmakeia

In regards to drugs in general, some may argue the use of the Greek word *pharmakeia* in Scripture shows God's disapproval of drugs. In the Greek NT there is the Greek term φαρμακεία (*pharmakeia*). It is found in Galatians 5:20; Revelation 9:21; and 18:23 all translated by the KJV; NKJV; NAS (etc.) as "sorcery," "sorceries," or "witchcraft." There is also the Greek word φάρμακοι (*pharmakoi*) found in Revelation 22:15 & 21:8 typically translated "sorcerers." Depending on the English translation, these words (and a few others) are sometimes translated as "drug" or "drugs."

The following are a few examples of this:

- Common English Bible (CEB) translates Galatians 5:20 as "**drug use and casting spells**," and Revelation 9:21; 21:8 "**drugs**" and 22:15 "**drug**." It translates Revelation 18:23 "**spell you cast**." "Drug" or "drugs" is not found elsewhere in the CEB except in the [apocrypha](#) (Wisdom 12:4; 18:13; 3 Maccabees 5:2, 10).
- Complete Jewish Bible (CJB) in Galatians 5:20; Revelation 9:21; 21:8; 22:15 are all translated "**drugs**." JCB translates Revelation 18:23 "**magic spell**."
- Contemporary English Version (CEV) translates the Greek word *choles* (χολῆς) in Matthew 27:34 as "**drug**" (NKJV, KJV "gall"). In Acts 8:23 it translates this same word as "**jealous**" (KJV "gall;" NKJV "poisoned"). *Choles* is found in the LXX in Deuteronomy 27:18 (LXX, H 17, KJV "gall"; NKJV "bitterness"); 32:32 (KJV, NKJV "gall"); Psalm 69:21 (LXX 68:22; H 69:22, KJV, NKJV "gall"); Proverbs 5:4 (KJV, NKJV "wormwood"); Job 16:13 (KJV, NKJV "gall"); 20:14 (KJV "gall"; NKJV "venom"); Jeremiah 8:14 (KJV, NKJV "gall"); 9:15 (LXX, H 14, KJV, NKJV "gall"); Lamentation 3:15 (KJV, NKJV "wormwood"); 3:19 (KJV, NKJV "gall").

In Mark 15:23 the CEV translates the participle *esmurvismenon* (ἐσμυρνισμένον NKJV, KJV "**mingled with myrrh**") as "**mixed with a drug**." This Greek word is only found here in Mark 15:23. The Greek word for "**myrrh**" is *smurna* (σμύρνα) and is found in the LXX in Exodus 30:23; Psalm 45:8 (H9; LXX 44:9); Song of Solomon 3:6; 4:6, 14; 5:1, 5 (2x), 13. In the NT it is found in Matthew 2:11 & John 19:39 and is the name of the city in Revelation 1:11 & 2:8, "Smyrna."

- Darby translates the Hebrew word *sammīym* (סַמִּיִּם) "**fragrant drugs**" in Exodus 25:6; 30:34; 31:11; 35:8, 15, 28; 37:29; 39:38. In Exodus 30:7; 40:27; Leviticus 4:7; 16:12; and Numbers 4:16 Darby translates the same word "**fragrant**" and in 2 Chronicles 2:4 & 13:11 "**sweet**."
- GOD'S WORD Translation (GWT) translates Galatians 5:20 "**drug use**." It translates Revelation 9:21 "**practicing witchcraft**;" 18:23 "**witchcraft**;" 21:8 & 22:15 "**sorcerers**." For Matthew 27:34 GWT translates *choles* (χολής) "**a drug called gall**," and Mark 15:23 (*esmurvismenon*) "**mixed with a drug called myrrh**."
- Good News Translation (GNT) translates Mark 15:23 (*esmurvismenon*) "**mixed with a drug called myrrh**." "Drug" or "drugs" is not found elsewhere in the GNT except in the [apocrypha](#) (Sirach 38:7 "druggist").
- J. B. Phillips New Testament translates the Greek word *choles* in Matthew 27:34 as "**drug**." In Acts 8:23 it translates this same word as "**jealousy**." In Mark 15:23 the participle *esmurvismenon* is "**drugged**."
- Orthodox Jewish Bible (OJB, a paraphrase) for Revelation 22:15 (OJB, Hisgalus 22:15) reads,

“Outside are the kelevim (dogs) and the mekhashfim (sorcerers, abusers of **drugs**; [T.N. the original language “pharmakoi” is where we derive the word for “**drugs**”; sorcerers often abused **drugs** to hallucinate or induce a passive state when they worked their magic and witchcraft; see Ga 5:20 and Rv 21:8] (bold added)

For Galatians 5:20 OJB has "**kashefanut (sorcery, witchcraft)**," Revelation 9:21 "**kishufim (sorceries)**;" 18:23 "**kashefanut (sorcery)**;" 21:8 "**mekhashfim (sorcerers)**." In 1 Timothy 3:2 (OJB Timotiyos I 3:2) they have "**drug free and clear-headed**" for the Greek word *nephalion* (νηφάλιον KJV "sober"; NKJV "sober-minded").

We can look further at the above Greek words (and those related) via the Septuagint (LXX, Greek OT) to understand their meaning. In the LXX there is *pharmaka* (NKJV "witchcraft," 2 Kings 9:22; "sorceries," Micah 5:12 [LXX & H 11]; Nahum 3:4 [2x]), *pharmakeia* (NKJV "enchantments," Exodus 7:11, 22; 8:7 [LXX & H 3], 18 [LXX & H 14]; "sorceries," Isaiah 47:9, 12), *pharmakos* (NKJV "sorcerers" Exodus 7:11; "magicians," 9:11; "sorceress" 22:18 [LXX 17; H17]; "sorcerer" Deuteronomy 18:10; "charmners" Psalm 58:5 [LXX 57:6; H58:6]; "sorcerers" Jeremiah 27:9 [LXX 34:9]; Daniel 2:2; Malachi 3:5), and the verb *pharmakeuo* (NKJV "used sorcery," 2 Chronicles 33:6; "charming," Psalm 58:5 [LXX 57:6; H58:6]). It's evident from the usage, when the context is clear, these are used for a sorcery/witchcraft type of meaning.

Not Taught!

The passage in Exodus 7:11 is particularly emphatic in that both *pharmakeia* and *pharmakos* are used in the verse and the context is clearly sorcery. To get an idea of how it reads, here is a translation of Exodus 7:11 (LXX) with those two Greek words transliterated (not translated).

And Pharaoh called together the wise of Egypt and the *pharmakous*, and the magicians of Egypt also did likewise with their *pharmakeiais*.

Here the *pharmakous* (plural of *pharmakos*) are the ones doing the *pharmakeiais* (plural of *pharmakeia*), and what do they do? They turn two rods into snakes (Exodus 7:12). That's sorcery. Likewise, as noted above, Exodus 7:22; 8:7, 18 (*pharmakeia*) and 9:11 (*pharmakos*) are all in this context of sorcery.

VI. "Christian" Folly

Nonetheless, many make an unbiblical case against drugs. For example, Steve Rudd ("church of Christ") has an article entitled "Drugs and the Bible: E, Shrooms, Cocaine, Crack, Marijuana" (www.bible.ca/s-marijuana.htm) in which he states,

Simon would give hallucinogen [sic] drugs like "THC" (cannabis) "Psylocibin" [sic]¹² or "Cybelcyblin" [sic] (magic mushroom) "Cocaine", "Heroin" (poppy plant) to someone, wait a few minutes then as the drug starts to set in, start waving his hands around giving the impression that HIS POWER is causing all the pink elephants to fly.

The "Simon" he speaks of is the Simon of Acts 8:9. Rudd does well here at adding to God's Word (Proverbs 30:5-6). Scripture says no such thing.

Steve Rudd further writes,

"Where was Jesus offered drugs and refused?": on the cross
"Gall" Mt 27:34.

Even if that was a "drug," it doesn't say *why* He refused it. People may claim to know why, but Scripture doesn't say; and so neither should we (Proverbs 30:5-6).

Also in this article Steve Rudd writes,

The argument of a glass of wine a day as a reduction in heart problems, is invented by wine companies who fail to tell you that you get 10 times the positive effect by just drinking straight grape juice!

Actually, as already noted, it was "invented" by God. The beneficial use of alcohol is clear in Judges 9:13; Psalm 104:15, and Proverbs 17:22. "Cheers" (Judges 9:13), "makes glad" (Psalm 104:15), and "merry" (Proverbs 17:22) are all from the same Hebrew root word **רָמַח** (sameach). When you put these verses together it can be seen that wine is good medicine for the heart, as Proverbs 17:22 more literally says,

A merry heart does good medicine

Rudd continues his argument against drugs and writes,

Illicit drugs destroy the body and are condemned: 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19.

Neither of those passages condemns drugs. First of all, the Bible knows nothing of *illicit* drugs, let alone drugs in particular (other than alcohol). Thus, there is no condemnation thereof (1 Corinthians 6:12). Second, it is the *misuse* of drugs that destroy the body. Scripture condemns the misuse of *anything* (Romans 2:8 "**self-seeking**"; 1 Corinthians 10:31).

Moreover, 1 Corinthians 3:16 says,

Do you not know that you [plural] are the temple [singular] of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you [plural]?

1 Corinthians 3:16 addresses the body of Christ, the church. 1 Corinthians 6:19 does indeed address the physical body of believers, but the immediate context (prior verse) is not about drugs, health issues, or putting things into the body, but rather sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 6:18). Then, the following verse says,

For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

The believer's physical body is certainly God's, and the believer should surely "**glorify God**" in his body. But, how is that done? "**By taking heed according to Your word**" (Psalm 119:9), and the word says nothing about illicit drugs. Scripture does talk about obeying the governing authorities (Romans 13:1-5; 1 Peter 2:13-17). So, if the government has declared them illegal, then they are illegal (by the decree of men). But, the Bible itself does not declare any drugs illegal or illicit.

Rudd continues his argument against drugs saying,

5. Illicit drugs are condemned because its fruit is rotten. Matthew 7:17ff. Frequent drug users are losers with messed up lives constantly shooting themselves in the foot. Eventual loss of family, wealth, jobs, friends and life itself. Drug users are associated with biker gangs, going to bars, immoral sexual

Not Taught!

activity, illegal activity. Successful people do not use drugs. Take a look at the people who use drugs and line them up with people who do not... big difference!

Because people misuse a substance that, in itself, does not mean the substance is "rotten." Water can be misused (Revelation 12:15). That doesn't make water "rotten."

Furthermore, Rudd seriously twists Matthew 7:17. The bad fruit in Matthew 7:17-20 is *from* a human, a bad tree, a false prophet (Matthew 7:15-23). Drugs are *from* a literal plant (or substance) and are put *into* a human. Rudd has it backwards. But, so does the rest of the [false Christian world](#). They are as Jesus said to the Jews:

**Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:
"These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."** (Matthew 15:7-9)

Endnotes:

1. Historically, the U.S. was founded largely by false Christians and throughout its history has had a great deal of influence from false Christianity (both Catholic and Protestant and otherwise). To this day, [false Christianity](#) is quite prevalent throughout the United States.

1 Timothy 4:1 says they **"will depart from the faith."** That is how false teachers are described in 2 Peter 2:21.

For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.

2. As the **"commanding to abstain from foods"** in 1 Timothy 4:1-3 is applicable to our wicked government, so is the **"forbidding to marry"** realized in our ungodly laws. It is illegal in the United States to marry more than one wife. That is explicitly **"forbidding to marry."** God lays no such prohibition in His Word (see our article on [polygamy](#)), but **"deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons"** (1 Timothy 4:1-3) prohibit what God does not.

3. In 1 Timothy 4:3 what the NKJV translates as "foods" the KJV translates as "meats," but it is not technically the word for meats. Κρέα (krea, found in Romans 14:21 & 1 Corinthians 8:13) is the word for meat in the NT. The Greek word in 1 Timothy 4:3 translated "foods" (NKJV) or "meats" (KJV) is βρωμάτων (brōmatōn). It is a general word for food. That can be seen, for example, in Matthew 14:15 where it is translated "food" (NKJV) or "victuals" (KJV, "victuals" = food), or 1 Corinthians 10:3, spiritual "food" (KJV spiritual

"meat"). For the spiritual food of 1 Corinthians 10:3 see Psalm 78:23-25 ("angels' food," more lit., "mighty ones' bread" מַלְאָכִים וְעֹשֵׂי כֹחַ; see also Exodus 16:4 & Nehemiah 9:15). Likewise, LXX translates the Hebrew general word for "food," לֶחֶם ('ochel), with this Greek word, βρῶμα (brōma), in Psalm 107:18, and likewise also in Ezekiel 4:10. There the context is not meat (see Ezekiel 4:9).

Moreover, some may argue over the Greek word κτίσμα (ktisma) in 1 Timothy 4:4 which is translated "creature" by the NKJV & KJV (ASV; Douay-Rheims; Darby; ERV; Webster's; WEB; YLT). The argument might be that 1 Timothy 4:1-4 is only referring to the forbidding of eating certain *animals*. Therefore, the forbidding of certain plants could not be included here.

A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament (Arndt & Gringrich) defines κτίσμα (ktisma) as "*that which is created.*" That is how the NAS translates it.

For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude (1 Timothy 4:4 NAS; see also NLT; NIV; ESV; HCSB; WNT)

The prior verse, 1 Timothy 4:3, uses language consistent with this general wording. In 1 Timothy 4:3 in reference to the "**foods**" (βρωμάτων), these are the words used: "**which God created**" (1 Timothy 4:3, ἃ ὁ Θεὸς ἔκτισεν). The relative plural neuter pronoun, ἃ (ha) "**which**" in verse 3, refers to the plural neuter noun βρωμάτων (foods) in verse 3 and the singular neuter noun κτίσμα (ktisma) in verse 4.

Κτίσμα (ktisma) is also only found in the NT in James 1:18; Revelation 5:13 & 8:9. The use in those Scriptures begs the question: Is it biblically proper to call a plant a "**creature**" (α κτίσμα)? James 1:18 speaks of "**the firstfruits of His creatures.**" Revelation 5:13 has "**every creature**" praising the Lamb. Who all does that include? Revelation 5:13 says,

And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!"

This praise is very much like the praise of Psalm 148 which commands virtually *every created thing* to praise the Lord (see also 1 Chronicles 16:33; Psalm 69:34; 96:12; 96:12; Isaiah 14:8). In Revelation 8:9 "**a third of the creatures in the sea died**" (KJV). From the context (verses 8-9), it would indicate any kind of life (sea vegetation included) would be dead, as even the ships themselves are destroyed (verse 9).

Nevertheless, God has given both plants and animals for food (Genesis 9:3), for βρῶμα (brōma). Thus, "**commanding to abstain from**" that "**which God**

Not Taught!

created to be received" (which includes both plants and animals) is consistent with the activity of **"deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons"** (1 Timothy 4:1-3).

4. Oppress: to crush or burden by abuse of power or authority (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/oppress). King Asa (2 Chronicles 14:1-16:14) is a classic Biblical example of a ruler who actually started out good, and for quite sometime (2 Chronicles 15:17), but in the end **"oppressed some of the people"** (2 Chronicles 16:10) and **"did not seek the Lord"** (2 Chronicles 16:12).

5. Psychotic: having or relating to a very serious mental illness that makes you act strangely or believe things that are not true (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/psychotic).

6. Incarceration is an oppressive way to deal with mankind, particularly for something that shouldn't be illegal in the first place. In the Law of Moses God never gave locking up a criminal as a form of punishment, and **"the law of the Lord is perfect"** (Psalm 19:7).

But incarceration is nothing new under the Sun. Job knew prisons were oppressive. When he cursed the day of his birth, in speaking about the advantages of death, he says,

There the prisoners rest together; They do not hear the voice of the oppressor. (Job 3:18; see also Psalm 146:7)

Nevertheless, God Himself does use prisons and incarcerates men for their disobedience to Him, and when they turn to Him there, He delivers them. See Psalm 107:10-16. In the afterlife also, God has put some men in prison (1 Peter 3:19-20). But for those in that prison, there is a hope for salvation (1 Peter 3:18-20; 4:6).

7.

www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/9728034/Washington-state-lights-up-as-smoking-marijuana-becomes-legal.html (last paragraph)

8. Sociopathic: of, relating to, or characterized by asocial or antisocial behavior (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sociopathic). An appropriate term for such policies that are so antihuman and anticompassion.

9. אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לִי דַבֵּר צוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל מוֹשֵׁל בְּאָדָם צָדִיק מוֹשֵׁל יָרֵאת אֱלֹהִים. (Hebrew for 2 Samuel 23:3)

The God of Israel said to me, the Rock of Israel spoke, "He who rules among man is righteous who rules in the fear of God." (2 Samuel 23:3, a more literal translation)

10. The Law of Moses is a perfect law (Psalm 19:7) for governing sinful men (that's the context in which it was given). In God's perfect law, some sin is actually explicitly allowed. For example, Deuteronomy 24:1 allows husbands

to divorce their wives. Such an act is a serious breach of love (Galatians 5:14), and in Matthew 19:3-6 Jesus reveals it was sin to do so from **"the beginning."** Yet, the Law explicitly allowed it nonetheless.

Likewise, drunkenness is sin (Ephesians 5:18), but the Law never punishes anyone for simply getting drunk. A rebellious unrepentant son, who is a drunkard, certainly receives the death penalty (Deuteronomy 21:18-21) along with any who might hit or curse their parents as well (Exodus 21:15, 17; Leviticus 20:9). Yet, for a person who might simply get drunk, there is not even so much as a sin offering for that, or even a specific prohibition against it.

11. Ecclesiastes 9:7 says, **"and drink your wine with a merry heart."** The Hebrew for this is וּשְׂתֵהוּ בְּלֵב-טוֹב יַיָּקֵה This reads more literally, **"and drink your wine in a heart of good."** Very similar language is used elsewhere.

For example, in 1 Samuel 25:36 it says in the Hebrew, וְלֵב נָבָל טוֹב עָלָיו וְהוּא שָׁפָר עַד-מְאֹד This more literally reads, **"and the heart of Nabal was good upon him, and he was drunk unto excess."** 2 Samuel 13:28 says, **"when Amnon's heart is merry with wine."** This more literally reads, **"when Amnon's heart is good in wine"** (כְּטוֹב לֵב-אַמְנוֹן בַּיַּיִן). Esther 1:10 likewise reads (more literally), **"when the heart of the king was good in wine"** (כְּטוֹב לֵב-הַמֶּלֶךְ בַּיַּיִן). Judges 16:25 also more literally reads, **"And when their heart was good"** (וַיְהִי כִי טוֹב לִבָּם).

12. "Psilocybin" should be "psilocybin."

Not Taught!

Smoking

For some, smoking tobacco is a vice, but Scripture teaches no such thing. There is not a single verse that dictates that smoking is wrong. Being *addicted* to smoking is certainly sin, because it is a lack of self-control (Galatians 5:23). But, simply having an occasional smoke or smoking in moderation is never condemned in the word of God.

Some attempt to use 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 to prove smoking is evil, but it proves no such thing. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says,

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

The typical argument is that smoking is harmful to the body and therefore wrong. Tony Warren argues this way in his article entitled, "**Is Smoking a Sin?**"

Smoking is a Sin. And it is a sin on multiple levels.

Then his first point to prove smoking is a sin immediately follows:

It is a Detriment to the Body

Considering the universal Medical opinion, I don't know anyone who could legitimately argue today that smoking is not injurious to one's health. The fact is, nine out of ten lung cancer victims are smokers. The scientific evidence is that smokers have a three to one chance of heart attack, over non-smokers. Even smoking in (so-called) moderation, on the average, will shorten one's life span by many years.

Not Taught!

And then a little later after quoting 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 he writes,

To smoke (which we know hurts this body which is the Lord's), is desecration of the Lord's Temple.

[www.mountainretreatorg.net/faq/smoking.html]

This is nothing but the doctrine of men (Matthew 15:8-9). 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 is in the context of sexual immorality. It does not even address the issue of one's health. Yet, that is typically how it is argued.

Cooper Abrams, a fundamental independent Baptist missionary pastor in Utah, argues this way saying,

Smoking is clearly harmful to our health and that in itself makes it a sin, . . . (www.bible-truth.org/Smoking.html)

This may sound good, but Scripture doesn't teach this (Proverbs 30:5-6). Too much of anything is usually harmful (e.g. Ecclesiastes 7:16), but to smoke in moderation is not necessarily harmful, at least, harmful in any Biblical way.

The Bible does not teach this "health" concern in regards to the proper care of the body. We are surely stewards of the body God has given us (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), but how we care for it largely comes down to personal conscience (Romans 14:22-23), not a man-made standard of health (Matthew 7:1-2).

Paul wrote,

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. (1 Corinthians 6:12)

Being brought under the power of an addiction to smoking is indeed wrong, but smoking, in and of itself, is not unlawful. To the pure all things are pure (Titus 1:15), and God has indeed given us all things to enjoy (1 Timothy 6:17). There is nothing in Scripture that dictates smoking is somehow excluded from "all things."

Now, if you are around people who see it as a vice, it would not be to the glory of God to offend them by smoking (1 Corinthians 9:19-23; 10:31-33). Under these circumstances, smoking should not be done, not because it is evil, but because those there are offended by it, as Paul wrote,

We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. (2 Corinthians 6:3)

This does *not* mean that you should *never* smoke, because someone somewhere someday might be offended by it. That is not a concept taught in the Word. It indeed says "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22, KJV),

but what appears to be evil to some does not necessarily appear to be evil to all. For example, Paul also wrote,

. . . to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law. (1 Corinthians 9:20-21)

To a Jew, it would clearly appear to be evil for Paul to live "as without law." Paul was a Jew, and no doubt a religious Jew would quickly argue Paul was sinning against God by *not* living under the law (e.g. Acts 15:1-5). Yet, that is exactly how Paul lived, when he was not with Jews (those under the law), but with those who were without law (Gentiles).

It is interesting that Paul lived this way, because later what Paul taught and how he lived got quite perverted (Acts 21:20-21, 28). Yet, Paul did not conclude he should live differently. In other words, Paul did not conclude he should live as under the law *no matter where he was* lest someone somewhere someday might be offended. Paul understood the Jews quite well. He was one. Yet, when he was not around the Jews, but around Gentiles, he lived "as without law."

So, there are some principles and circumstances that may dictate a good reason not to smoke at times, but these do not demand total abstinence, because smoking, in and of itself, is not a sin.

Yet, some really get kind of insane when it comes to speaking against tobacco. A graphic example of this is a Pastor by the name of Kevin Badgley from Living Hope Fellowship Church in Grand Chain Illinois. He declares,

If you smoke, you are ungodly, because God doesn't do that. I believe that if you make your living selling or growing tobacco, you are a sinner, and you will go to hell for that.

(<http://livinghopefellowshipchurch.org/smoking+.html>)

This is a lie. The Bible nowhere teaches someone will go to hell for making a living off of selling or growing tobacco. Actually, there would be nothing wrong with that whatsoever. The Bible does not condemn such a practice. Badgley thinks so, but he adds to God's word and goes way beyond what is written (Proverbs 30:5-6).

Badgley also claims "God doesn't do that." How does he know? Scripture never says He does or doesn't. Whether God smokes tobacco or not is not revealed, but God does certainly smoke, as it is written,

Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. (Exodus 19:18)

Not Taught!

Smoke went up from His nostrils, and devouring fire from His mouth. (Psalm 18:8)

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. (Isaiah 6:1-4)

The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power. (Revelation 15:8)

Gambling may be seen by many as a vice, but the Bible does not actually condemn this either.

Gambling

False teacher Perry F. Rockwood well illustrates a common "Christian" perspective towards gambling. In his booklet, *Gambling - The Winner is the Devil*, he speaks of the "damnable sin of gambling," and maintains,

Gambling is a sin against God because it is mammon worship.
(www.tpg.org/archive/books/11.htm)

No doubt, many who gamble worship mammon (Romans 1:29; Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5; 2 Timothy 3:2), and that may be why they gamble; because they are evil and greedy (Proverbs 27:20). But, gambling, in and of itself, is not evil. A godly person could gamble and not sin. Yet, Rockwood goes so far as to say,

The only real Christian attitude towards **gambling of all kinds** is one of nonparticipation in what has grown to be **a great social evil**. **Every Christian should** let his bank manager know that he opposes the banks selling gambling tickets. **He should** inform his pharmacist, supermarket manager and other business men that he is against gambling and will not patronize his business until the practice is stopped. (bold added)

So, Rockwood claims "gambling of all kinds" is "a great social evil."
Rockwood fails to heed the Scriptures that teach:

Not Taught!

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. (1 Corinthians 6:12)

All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. (1 Corinthians 10:23)

Four times Paul says, "**all things are lawful.**" It is lawful to gamble, but it may not be profitable (1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23, NAS). In fact, for a majority of people who gamble it is *not* profitable. The rich casinos in Las Vegas, Nevada, exemplify that fact.

Moreover, gambling is lawful, but it may not edify (1 Corinthians 10:23). Actually, it *will not* edify a brother who, in his own conscience, believes it to be evil (Romans 14:16, 21-15:1).

Furthermore, gambling can certainly be, and typically is, the squandering of riches by the foolish (Proverbs 21:20). People foolishly hasten after riches (Proverbs 28:20) and it is typically frivolity (Proverbs 12:11); and the following Proverbs no doubt are fulfilled.

A man with an evil eye hastens after riches, and does not consider that poverty will come upon him. (Proverbs 28:22; see also Proverbs 21:5)

He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows frivolity will have poverty enough! (Proverbs 28:19)

Our use of unrighteous mammon is a serious matter before God, and it is not to be taken lightly (Luke 16:10-13). Yet, the wicked are frivolous in their ways (Romans 3:18) and squander their riches (Proverbs 21:20), some via gambling.

But, gambling, in and of itself, is not evil. All things are lawful (1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23). What makes it evil, when there is evil, is the desire for riches and the love of money (1 Timothy 6:9-10), which is covetousness (Hebrews 13:5), which is idolatry (Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5). So, the gambling itself is not the sin. It is the motive of people's hearts, why they are gambling, and, perhaps, in what way they are gambling (squandering their riches), which makes for a sinful event.

Money Matters

Debt

Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. (Romans 13:8)

Romans 13:8 is a simple, plain, straightforward command. But, because men are covetous (Proverbs 27:20) they argue against this verse to find room for their greedy hearts (2 Peter 2:14). Churches, Bible Colleges, and "Christian" Ministries often have incredible amounts of money that they owe to the banking institutions of the world. Their debts exist because they are not content with what they have (Hebrews 13:5). They want more money (Ephesians 5:5). So they covet and acquire debt.

The way of righteousness is not so. The Lord says to owe no one anything, and He means it.

I. The Verse And Its Context

The Greek word for "owe" in Romans 13:8 is the imperative *οφείλετε* (opheilete) and the basic idea of the word is "to be obligated." It is most often used in the New Testament with the infinitive to give the idea of "ought" (or "must," i.e. some kind of duty that ought to be done).¹ But here in Romans 13:8 it is not used with the infinitive. Examples of this same Greek word used without the infinitive can be found in Matthew 23:16 & 18 for "he is obliged" (i.e. obligated), 1 Corinthians 7:3 for "due" (i.e. the affection due), and Luke 11:4 "indebted to us." The remaining passages all speak of financial debt, Matthew 18:28 (who owed him & you owe), 30 (the debt), 34 (that was due); Luke 7:41 (One owed); 16:5 (you owe), 7 (you owe); and Philemon 18 (owes) [Philemon 19 "owe" is *προσοφείλεις* (prosopheileis)].

Not Taught!

The context of Romans 13:8 is the command to obey the governing authorities, and in verses 5-7 Paul writes,

Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

The Greek word for "due" in verse 7 is ὀφειλάς (opheilas) which is a noun form of the word used for "owe" in verse 8. In verse 7 Paul basically says, "Pay what you owe. If it's taxes, then pay the taxes. If it's customs, then pay the customs. If it's fear, then pay the fear. If it's honor, then pay the honor." Then in verse 8 he adds, "**Owe no one anything except to love one another.**" In other words, be indebted to no one except for the on going debt of loving one another. The Contemporary English Version captures the idea well with, "Let love be your only debt" (Romans 13:8 CEV).

Some take Romans 13:8 to mean, "Pay your bills on time,"² but this is an absurd interpretation. If this was really what Paul was saying, then Paul would be commanding, "Don't pay love on time." In other words, pay your bills on time, but don't pay love on time. Leave love delinquent. For whatever the first part of verse 8 means ("Owe no one anything," or more literally, "to no one nothing owe"), the second part of the verse is exempt from the command in the first part, because Paul says "except."

Therefore, it is inconsistent and erroneous to say, "Paul's point is that all our financial obligations must be paid when they are due" ([The MacArthur Study Bible](#), p. 1719, copyright 1997) for the first part of the verse, but then say "Believers are commanded to love" (ibid.) for the second part. Actually, if the first part was really "all our . . . obligations must be paid when they are due," then the second part, by necessity, would have to mean "except our love obligations." In other words, "our love obligations need not be paid when they are due." The debt of love is the exception to Paul's command at the beginning of the verse.

II. Lacking Nothing

Romans 13:8 is consistent with the type of life Paul commands in 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12.

But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more; that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your

own hands, as we commanded you, that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.

In the first section Paul exhorts them to love (as in Romans 13:8), and in the second section (verses 11-12) Paul exhorts them to be financially self-sufficient, self-supporting, to be in need of nothing.

Proverbs 22:7 says,

The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

One who is indebted to another is in servitude (indebtedness), and the Scripture commands,

You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. (1 Corinthians 7:23)

This is particularly bad when "Christians" proclaim, "**The Lord is my Shepherd. I shall not want**" (Psalm 23:1; more literally, "**I shall not lack**"). Yet, in hypocrisy, they want (or think they "lack") and put themselves in debt. It is particularly evil when God instructs to be content with what you have (Hebrews 13:5), but, in disobedience to this command, people are malcontent, want more, borrow, and become a slave to whomever they are indebted. Such servitude is a consequence of covetousness (Hebrews 13:5). And this is serious, because the covetous will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5-6).

III. Obligations, Borrowing, Lending, & Debt

In the Scriptures, financial obligations, like the obligation to pay your taxes (Romans 13:7), and borrowing, are not seen as evil in and of themselves. Romans 13:7 should make this clear regarding financial obligations ("Render therefore to all their due"), and in the case of borrowing, 2 Kings 4:1-7 manifests a good time for borrowing. In 2 Kings 4, Elisha instructs the poor widow to borrow empty vessels from her neighbors in order to get her out of debt. Here is a man of God giving a command to borrow. 2 Kings 6:1-7 similarly records a borrowed ax head by one (or some) of the prophets. Moreover, lending, the privileged side of the borrowing transaction, is seen as a godly thing in Scripture (Deuteronomy 15:7-8; Psalm 37:26; 112:5; Proverbs 19:17), especially when nothing in return is expected (Luke 6:35; see also Psalm 37:26 "merciful;" and 112:5 "graciously"). But, the wicked borrow and do not repay (Psalm 37:21), and so there is also a time for obtaining collateral (Deuteronomy 24:10-13; Proverbs 20:16; 27:11-13).

Not Taught!

Now, what is forbidden in Romans 13:8 is not a temporal obligation, like temporarily borrowing something. It is a continual obligation that is forbidden, a continual obligation that remains not paid off requiring that further payments be made on it. This is evident by its contrast with the debt of love. As it is written,

Owe no one anything, except to love one another.

It is the "**love one another**" debt that is to remain. It is an obligation that requires further payments. Love cannot be paid off. Everything else should be, leaving nothing further due. As it is written, "**Owe no one anything.**"

Therefore, Romans 13:8 is not forbidding financial obligations that are paid off like a tax bill. As Paul said in the previous verse, "Render therefore to all their due." What is forbidden in Romans 13:8 is allowing an obligation to continue without paying it off.

Furthermore, it can be seen from the law that indebtedness was not something God desired to continue among His people.

At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release of debts. And this is the form of the release: Every creditor who has lent anything to his neighbor shall release it; he shall not require it of his neighbor or his brother, because it is called the Lord's release. Of a foreigner you may require it; but you shall give up your claim to what is owed by your brother, except when there may be no poor among you; for the Lord will greatly bless you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance— only if you carefully obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe with care all these commandments which I command you today. For the Lord your God will bless you just as He promised you; you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow; you shall reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over you. (Deuteronomy 15:1-6)

In the Lord's discourse on debt here, He makes no comment on the rightness or wrongness of the debts. He simply grants their release every seven years, except for when someone is in debt and there are no poor in the land (verse 4). In this case, the debt would not be released. Which, makes good sense, if there are no poor in the land, the person in debt did not get in debt because of some need, but rather some want; and no doubt, this should not be released.

If the Israelites obeyed the Lord, as the passage says (verse 6), they would not be cursed with having to borrow (Deuteronomy 28:44), but instead would be blessed with having an abundance and would be the lender (Deuteronomy 28:12). God's people can live out not borrowing and becoming indebted today, by being gracious (Proverbs 11:24-25) and content (Hebrews 13:5).

IV. Contentment

What are we to be content with? What is the Biblical view of a godly standard of living? Paul says,

For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. (1 Timothy 6:7-8)

We are to be content with food and clothing. This means exactly what it says. It does not say, "having food, clothing, a house, and a car to get to work." It says, "having food and clothing, with these we shall be content." Those who are not content simply with food and clothing are in disobedience to God. And, immediately after verse 8 Paul writes,

But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. (1 Timothy 6:9)

In other words, those who are not content with food and clothing, but desire to be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. Being content is imperative to godly living and eternal life (Luke 14:33). As it is written,

Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5)

We are to be content with "such things as [we] have." In other words, whatever we presently possess (tois parousin), we should be content with this. This "such things as you have" can be ever so much or ever so little, as Paul wrote,

Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. (Philippians 4:11-12)

Paul was content with an abundance, and with being in need. He was content in "whatever state" he was. This not only included being hungry at times, but even thirsty, poorly clothed, and homeless. As Paul wrote,

To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. (1 Corinthians 4:11)

Paul was,

in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and

Not Taught!

thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness (2 Corinthians 11:27)

and yet he was content! Paul clearly was without covetousness (Hebrews 13:5). He worked with his own hands and provided for his own needs (2 Thessalonians 3:7-9), or other saints gave and helped meet his needs (Philippians 4:10-18). He was content with such things as he had (Hebrews 13:5), be that ever so little.

Paul was akin to those whom the world was not worthy (Hebrews 11:27-28). And Paul is our example.

Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. (Philippians 3:17; see also 1 Corinthians 11:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9)

The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:9)

The God of peace will be with those who follow Paul's example, and his example is to be content in whatever state we are in (Philippians 4:11-12). Owe no one anything (Romans 13:8) is truly to be lived out. Are you unwilling to be destitute? Are you unwilling to be afflicted and tormented? Are you unwilling to wander about in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth? Then you are unworthy to be ranked among the people of faith (Hebrews 11:37-38; Luke 9:23-24; 14:33).

It is faith, faith in God, that it takes to live this out (Hebrews 11:6). This faith is something Jesus wondered if there would be any of when He returned (Luke 18:8). To be truly content with what you have and not go beyond your present resources ("such things as you have") and become indebted to a lender (Proverbs 22:7), this takes faith and a heart that is not covetous (Hebrews 13:5). For if a person was content with what he had, believed that God would never forsake him (Hebrews 13:5), and trusted God for His provision (Matthew 6:25-34; Luke 12:22-34), then he would not be enslaving himself to someone (Proverbs 22:7) for more money (Hebrews 13:5). Besides, any willful debt is presuming upon tomorrow. How do you know you will be able to pay in the future on a sum of money you are incapable of paying for today? Proverbs 27:1 says,

Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth. (see also James 2:13-14)

Now, if we have no choice in the matter, if under some circumstance we become indebted against our will, such indebtedness would not be a lack of contentment and covetousness. In fact, indebtedness is not in and of itself evil

(1 Corinthians 6:12). The question is; why do you owe (Romans 13:8)? Because you are unwilling to suffer as Paul and be content (Hebrews 13:5) with the lot God has given you (Job 2:10)? If so, this is not a good reason.

V. Faithfulness

In order to live this out in wisdom, and not bring upon yourself the result of your own folly and undue harm, what does all of this mandate? Faithfulness. Faithfulness before God in what He has given you.

He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own? No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. (Luke 16:10-13)

We are held accountable before God for what we do with our money and possessions (i.e. unrighteous mammon, see also Proverbs 5:21; 1 Timothy 6:17-19). As Jesus indicates in the verses above, if we have not been faithful before God with the unrighteous mammon, what makes us think God will give us the true riches (i.e. salvation, Revelation 21:7; 1 John 5:4)? As Jesus said, "**You cannot serve God and mammon.**" Being unfaithful with the unrighteous mammon equates serving it. Being faithful with it equals serving God. There is no middle ground. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be loyal to the one and despise the other.

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life. (1 Timothy 6:10-12a)

We are to flee a desire to be rich (1 Timothy 6:9) and any love for money (1 Timothy 6:10; Luke 16:13), and we are to pursue righteousness (right living). Therefore, fear God and be prudent with all that you possess. And, if riches increase, do not set your heart upon them (Psalm 62:10).

VI. Debt For Someone Else?

Some may argue for financial indebtedness calling it a "debt of love" when it is to help someone else. There might be a time for that, medical bills, someone's life is in danger, etc.. For example, Paul in dealing with a run away slave was

Not Taught!

willing to take on *whatever* financial obligation Onesimus owed.

But if he has wronged you or owes *anything*, put that on my account. I, Paul, am writing with my own hand. I will repay-- not to mention to you that you owe me even your own self besides. (Philemon 1:18-19)

God desires mercy (Hosea 6:6), and there is a time (Ecclesiastes 3) to take another's financial burden as Paul illustrates. No telling how large or small it might have been. But, Paul's "**anything**" is quite open ended.

But, there is also,

one who makes himself rich, yet has nothing (Proverbs 13:7).

The human heart (Jeremiah 17:9) desires to be rich (1 Timothy 6:9), and this is one way it can manifest itself - giving away money that is not your own.

One of the realities of being rich is that a rich person can give money away. Proverbs 14:20 says,

The poor man is hated even by his own neighbor, but the rich has many friends. (see also Proverbs 19:4)

So, the question at hand is, are you getting in debt for mercy sake, or because you desire to be rich?

VII. Opposing Arguments

1) "The man who feared the Lord in 2 Kings 4 was in debt."

Actually, the text does not elaborate as to whether the debt was acquired before he died or after. It also does not state why the debt exists. Moreover, this text is a good example for us to be warned by. This debt almost destroyed this family. Had God not intervened via a miracle, the sons would have been taken away and the widow would have had no hope of livelihood.

2) "It is not financially prudent to not use debt."

It is financially prudent to take heed to the wisdom of God (Proverbs 3:16; 22:4) whether you benefit financially in this life or not. The enduring riches come through the application of God's Word (Proverbs 8:18).

3) "You typically can't buy a new car without making car payments."

Then don't buy a new car, if you can't buy it without incurring debt (Romans 13:8).

4) "Most families could never afford to buy a home without taking out a mortgage." (*The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Romans 9-16, p. 246, copyright 1994)

Then don't buy a house, if you have to be indebted for one (Hebrews 13:5).

5) "Many businesses could not operate without borrowing money to invest in such things as buildings, equipment, and raw materials." (ibid.)

Then don't operate a business where you would have to enslave yourself so (Proverbs 22:7; 1 Corinthians 7:20-23).

VIII. What If I Already Have Debt?

Pay it off, if you can. Owe no one anything (Romans 13:8). Sell what you can and make haste to keep the commandments of God (Psalm 119:59-60).

Endnotes:

1. The Greek word ὀφείλετε (opheilete), from ὀφείλω (opheilō), is used with the infinitive in Luke 17:10 (duty to do); John 13:14 (ought to wash); 19:7 (ought to die); Acts 17:29 (ought not to think); Romans 15:1 (ought to bear), 27 (duty . . . to minister); 1 Corinthians 5:10 (would need to go); 7:36 (it must be); 9:10 (should plow in hope); 11:7 (ought to cover), 10 (ought to have); 2 Corinthians 12:11 (ought to have), 14 (ought not to lay up); Ephesians 5:28 (ought to love); 2 Thessalonians 1:3 (bound to thank God); 2:13 (bound to give thanks); Hebrews 2:17 (had to be); 5:3 (he is required), 12 (ought to be); 1 John 2:6 (ought . . . to walk); 3:16 (ought to lay down); 1 John 4:11 (ought to love); and 3 John 8 (ought to receive).

2. e.g. *Believers Bible Commentary, New Testament, An Exposition of the Sacred Scriptures*, by William MacDonald, p. 549, copyright 1989

Not Taught!

When was the last time you heard a preacher actually pray *against* someone, especially as described below?

Prayer

SHOULD WE PRAY FOR THE FALSE TEACHER?

IN AN EFFORT TO DEFEND [Chuck Smith](#), Justin T. Alfred, (former pastor of a Calvary Chapel in Colorado Springs, Colorado) wrote several letters (letters on file). In one fairly lengthy letter he specifically attempted to deal with some doctrinal issues. A letter was sent back to Mr. Alfred commenting on just a few points. The letter ended with this last paragraph.

Finally, I will not pray for you Mr. Alfred. You are leading many to damnation. By your statement in regards to Catholics alone, you prove yourself to be one who teaches a broad way (Matthew 7:13-14). You are an enemy of the Truth (Christ, John 14:6) in disguise. Jesus called men like you dogs, swine, and snakes (Matthew 7:6; 23:33). I have decided to take on the same perspective and to pray just as David prayed (Psalm 58:6a).

Most people would consider such a response quite unlike our Lord Jesus Christ. They cannot believe that Christ would respond in such a way. Yet, those who are of this persuasion fail to acknowledge the very words of Christ Himself (our example to follow) who said to the false teachers of His day,

Not Taught!

Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? (Matthew 23:33)

Jesus also declared to these men,

. . . you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. (Matthew 23:28)

Such is the case, we contend, with the men we expose (Ephesians 5:11).

Should we pray for such men who are like wolves in sheep's clothing, as in Matthew 7:15? Should we pray for men who lead hundreds and thousands and sometimes millions of people to the fires of eternal torment where their worm will not die, **"and the fire is not quenched"** (Mark 9:48)?

At first glance, it might appear that we should.

You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, love your enemy, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, (Matthew 5:43-44).

But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. (Luke 6:27-28)

When we consider Stephen's prayer, **"Lord, do not charge them with this sin"** (Acts 7:60), we might further be persuaded that we should pray for the well-being of false teachers, especially when we note that Saul (a Pharisee, a false teacher, Philippians 3:5) was one of those present at Stephen's death (Acts 7:58; 8:1).

Furthermore, 1 Timothy 2:1 would seem to remove all doubt that we should pray that God might grant repentance to these wolves.

Therefore, I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men.

If only the above Scriptures were cited, it might be easy to persuade the simple that we should always pray for people, even false teachers. But, the above is not the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27) on this subject. The context of Matthew 5:43-44 and Luke 6:27-28 is a personal offense (Matthew 5:38-42; Luke 6:29-31). False teaching goes way beyond any kind of evil that might be afflicted upon one's person. False teaching is a direct offense against God. It is a direct offense and a dreadful woeful damning matter against His people. False teaching is a blow against the Truth. It's a blow against Christ (John 14:6).

Ecclesiastes Chapter 3 exemplifies that there is a **"time for every purpose**

under heaven," even **"A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing,"** and **"A time to love, and a time to hate"** (Ecclesiastes 3:5,8). We should indeed pray **"for all men"** (1 Timothy 2:1). But, there is also a time when we would not pray for someone.

If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. (1 John 5:16)

Here is one example where we are not instructed to pray for someone. It is sin that is so bad it leads to death, and John refuses to tell us to pray for such a person if they commit this sin. What sin is so evil that it is "unto death" (more literally in the Greek, "sin unto death," *αμαρτια προς θανατον*)? We find "sin unto death" in Hebrews 10:26.

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.

A willful turning of one's life over to sin after coming to Christ (Hebrews 10:29) and taking on His name, is "sin unto death". Why? Because "there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins" (Hebrews 10:26). They can never be forgiven. Their sin is unto eternal death (Revelation 21:8).

In other words, this person, by willfully turning back to a life of sin, has scorned the one and only sacrifice by which he might be saved (Hebrews 10:29). God's judgment is merciless to such a person (Hebrews 10:26-31). Therefore, any prayers for such a one would not only be futile, but would show a lack of belief in what God says concerning such a person (i.e. that it is impossible for them to ever repent, Hebrews 6:4-6).

Three times Jeremiah is specifically instructed NOT to pray for the Israelites.

Therefore do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me, for I will not hear you. (Jeremiah 7:16)

So do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them. (Jeremiah 11:14)

Then the Lord said to me, "Do not pray for this people, for their good." (Jeremiah 14:11)

Why did the Lord tell Jeremiah not to pray for them? Because God had determined destruction upon them!

Then the Lord said to me, "Even if Moses and Samuel stood

Not Taught!

before Me, My mind would not be favorable toward this people. Cast them out of My sight, and let them go forth. And it shall be, if they say to you, 'Where should we go?' then you shall tell them, 'Thus says the Lord: Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity. And I will appoint over them four forms of destruction,' says the Lord: 'the sword to slay, the dogs to drag, the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy.'" (Jeremiah 15:1-3)

In like manner, has God determined destruction upon false teachers? Yes! Speaking of false teachers, who "secretly bring in destructive heresies," Peter proclaims,

By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber. (2 Peter 2:3)

Jude says,

For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation. (Jude 4)

In Jude 13 the Lord calls them "**wandering stars**" and explains that the blackness of darkness (i.e. hell, Matthew 22:13) is reserved forever for them. Has God determined destruction upon them? Indeed He has! Note also 1 Peter 2:8, speaking in the context of the "builders" (i.e. those who are the false spiritual leaders), the Lord declares,

They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

So, does this mean that it is impossible for a false teacher to ever repent and be saved? Yes! Note further what 2 Peter says about false teachers.

But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, and will receive the wages of unrighteousness. (2 Peter 2:12-13a)

The Lord says that false teachers are like "brute beasts **made to be caught and destroyed.**" In other words, God has made false teachers for the express purpose of destroying them forever. As the above says, "**they will utterly perish,**" and they "**will receive the wages of unrighteousness.**" The wages of unrighteousness is the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). False teachers are beyond hope. In fact, note Jude 11. It says of them that they have "**perished** [past

tense] **in the rebellion of Korah.**"

The false teachers of Jesus' day (the Pharisees) who blasphemed the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:22-32) were in a similar plight. For what they had done, they could never be forgiven (Matthew 12:32). They had seen the undeniable work of God (the miracles), yet they called this work of the Holy Spirit Satanic due to their wicked opposition against Christ. They knew He was from God (note what Nicodemus, a Pharisee, tells Jesus in John 3:2), but lied against this knowledge to their own destruction.

Some may argue against the above by contending that Paul was a false teacher, and yet he was saved. Indeed, Paul was a false teacher, but not the same kind described in 2 Peter 2:1-22. His opposition to the truth was in ignorance and unbelief (1 Timothy 1:12-13). It took a radical miracle to get him to repent (Acts 22:1-11), but once he received "**the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**" (2 Peter 2:20), he never turned from it (2 Peter 2:21). Such is not the case described in 2 Peter 2 concerning the wolves that Peter warns us about. These men had the truth, but turned away from it (please see 2 Peter 2:20-22)!

Are all who are caught up in lies and deceit beyond hope? No. Note what Jude says,

And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh. (NKJV-following the majority of Greek manuscripts, Jude 22-23)

Jude calls us to make "a distinction," to use discernment. He says this in the context of the beloved (Jude 20). While we contend for the faith (Jude 3), we are to have compassion (Jude 22) on one another (Colossians 3:12-14) and contend in love (Galatians 5:13-15). But, at the same time we are to discern (making a distinction, verse 22) those who may have been caught up by error and need to be saved from it ("save with fear, pulling them out of the fire", Jude 23).

Exemplified in Ephesians 4:14, it is quite possible that a believer might be swayed into error and thus propagate the error himself. But, this is a serious matter nonetheless (2 Peter 3:17).

Job's friends (Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar) are examples of this sort. They were wise men (Job 34:2), but they were nonetheless propagating false doctrine to Job (e.g. Job 13:4) as they attempted to confront Job on, what they perceived to be, his sin (e.g. Job 22:5). They argued that Job was reaping what he had sown, because God punishes the wicked in this life and rewards the righteous (e.g. Job 4:7). Job contended his suffering was not because of his sin, and that God does not always punish the wicked and reward the righteous in this life (e.g. Job 21:7-13).

These friends of Job spoke falsely about God, and were caught in deceit. In fact, God was angry with them, and they were in serious trouble before Him. Therefore, the Lord says to Eliphaz the Temanite,

Not Taught!

My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has. Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you according to your folly; because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has. (Job 42:7-8)

Job rightly prayed for these men who had spoken falsely about God, and the Lord received Job's prayer (Job 42:9-10). Thus, there is a time to pray for those caught in error.

Moreover, James 5:19-20 describes a person who "wanders" from the truth. In other words, they are no longer in the truth (John 14:6), and thus, no longer wise (as Job's friends were). Note in James that it says their soul is being saved "from death" (hell! Revelation 21:8) when they are brought back to the truth (James 5:19-20).

Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins. (James 5:19-20)

Therefore, there are those who might be caught in error, but are not "false teachers," that is, of the sort mentioned in 2 Peter 2:1f (for whom the blackness of darkness is reserved, 2 Peter 2:17).

But what about the false teachers (2 Peter 2:1f)? What about these men who lead hundreds, thousands, and sometimes millions to the second death (2 Peter 2:2, "many will follow"; Revelation 20:14-15; 22:15)? Do we pray for them? No. The instruction Paul gives in Galatians 1:8-9 (for those who preach any other gospel) is that we let them go to hell.

But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:8, repeated in verse 9)

This is the exact opposite of praying for them. Characteristic of a righteous man is that a reprobate is despised in his eyes (Psalm 15:4), and he hates those who hate the Lord (Psalm 139:19-22). And, at the appropriate time, he not only does not pray for someone, but he actually prays for the vengeance of God upon them!

For example, Zechariah (the son of Jehoiada, the priest) prayed for God's vengeance when he was being murdered by King Joash. King Joash had been given the truth for many years by Zechariah's father, and Joash had followed this truth until the death of Jehoiada. But, after the death of Jehoiada, Joash turned away from the holy commandment delivered to him, and turned to idolatry (2 Chronicles 24:17-18). When Zechariah rebuked Joash, Joash killed

him. Thus, Zechariah rightly prayed as he died, "**The Lord look on it, and repay!**" (2 Chronicles 24:22).

Similarly, Paul rightly prayed against Alexander the coppersmith who did Paul "much harm" and "greatly resisted" the truth ("our words", 2 Timothy 4:14-15). Paul prayed, "**May the Lord repay him according to his works.**"

It is an amazing reality that the Scriptures are so abundant with this kind of mentality (and praying), but the "Christian" world knows little to nothing of either its existence or application (this is the result of the scratching of the wolves, 2 Timothy 4:3). Jesus spoke of this cry for vengeance by the righteous in Luke 18:1-8. John records it in Revelation 6:9-10. Nehemiah prays it in Nehemiah 4:4-5. David prays it in Psalm 35:1-8; 59:5,11-13; 68:1-2; 109:1-20; 140:8-11; 141:5,10. In Psalm 69:22-28, David explicitly prays that his adversaries would go to hell!

Add iniquity to their iniquity, and let them not come into Your righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous. (Psalm 69:27-28)

Likewise, in Psalm 55:12-15 David recalls a man who "walked to the house of God" with him (verses 12-14), but is now his enemy. In other words, he was a man in the truth, but has now turned away and become an enemy of the truth and thus an enemy of David. What is David's prayer for men like this?

Let death seize them; let them go down alive into hell, for wickedness is in their dwellings and among them. (Psalm 55:15)

Likewise, in Psalm 58:3-11 David describes the eternal doom that is upon those whose lies are like the poison of a snake, and he prays,

Break their teeth in their mouth, O God! (Psalm 58:6)

This should be our prayer against the men of our day who are leading others to perdition. It is extremely wicked to divert people away from the narrow way and onto the broad way that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13-14; Luke 13:23-24).

So, what about Mr. Justin T. Alfred (the pastor we mentioned at the beginning of this article)? He is a false teacher (2 Peter 2:1-2). He is (or at least was) leading hundreds of people to eternal torments. He pastored a church of about 300. He follows and supports the teaching of a wolf, [Chuck Smith](#), who is leading untold thousands to hell. In properly understanding the serious evil of a pastor who has been trained (brought up) by a wolf, Jesus' words are apropos.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. (Matthew 23:15)

Not Taught!

Sadly, this subject may very well still be divided by race, but the Bible is not unclear on,

Slavery

[This chapter has NOTHING to do with skin color. Scripture nowhere teaches the superiority of one race compared to another based upon the amount of melanin in the skin.]

In America, slavery is illegal (13th Amendment). So, for anyone in America to practice slavery, it would be wrong. It would be a violation of Romans 13:1-5 and 1 Peter 2:13-14. But, is slavery evil, in and of itself? Some think so.

Like the atheist Louise W. Cable who wrote,

Could anything be more immoral than the buying and selling of fellow human beings into a life of involuntary servitude? (Louise W. Cable, *SLAVERY and the BIBLE*, <http://home.inu.net/skeptic/slavery.html>)

Abraham Lincoln said,

If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. (letter to A. G. Hodges, April, 4, 1864, www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/images/ltohl.jpg)

"Christians" of the past have argued both for and against slavery.¹ Yet, Scripture is not unclear on this issue. Even atheists have caught the drift, and

Not Taught!

have therefore reviled the Word of God on this issue alone. As the atheist Elroy Willis has posted,

If the Bible really was the word of God we would at the very least expect it to condemn the ownership of one person by another, and we could expect it to be far more humane and enlightened than any human source of morality. But this simply isn't the case. The Bible not only accepts the practice of slavery without question - it even falls well short of the best human thinking about the subject. The Bible can't possibly be the infallible word of God.
(<http://web2.iadfw.net/~elo/news/slavery.html>)

So speaks the fool (Psalm 14:1). Yet, this fool knows what some "Christians" have not recognized, that is, that Scripture indeed accepts the practice of slavery.

For example, Alexander McLeod (1774-1833), pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of New York, wrote,

The practice of buying, holding, or selling our unoffending fellow-creatures as slaves is immoral. (Against Slavery, An Abolitionist Reader, edited by Mason Lowance, copyright 2000, p. 72, italics in original)

And,

To hold any of our fellow-men in perpetual slavery is sinful. (ibid., p. 73, italics in original)

And,

The practice of enslaving our fellow-men stands equally opposed to the general tenor of sacred scriptures. (ibid., p. 73)

This pastor was *way* off!

I. Godly Men Owned Slaves

Abraham owned slaves (Genesis 12:5; 16:1/21:9-10; 20:14; 24:2, 9, 35; Galatians 4:22). He had an army of 318 of them who were born in his own house (Genesis 14:14). The Lord blessed Isaac with "**a great number of servants**" (Genesis 26:12-14, 19, 25, 32). Jacob had both male and female servants (Genesis 30:43; 32:3-5). Job, a man who feared God and shunned evil, had many servants (Job 1:1-3, 13-17; 19:16; 31:13). Boaz had servants (Ruth 2:5, 15). Solomon, a holy man of God moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21), acquired male and female servants and had servants born in his house (1 Kings 9:20-21; Ecclesiastes 2:7). Cornelius, who feared God and worked righteousness (Acts 10:35), had servants (Acts 10:7). Likewise, Philemon was

388

a slave owner as well (Philemon). And these are only ones who are specifically named as owning slaves.

Believers in the first century owned slaves (Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 4:1; 1 Timothy 6:2), and they were not instructed to let them go; but rather, to treat them with justice, as Colossians 4:1 says,

Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven. (Colossians 4:1)

It is evident from this verse that just and fair treatment does not equal giving the slave his or her freedom. Some might argue that Luke 6:31 would demand a Christian slave owner to free his slaves. But, on the contrary, slave owners were to be treated with all honor by their servants (1 Timothy 6:1). This honor was due to Christian slave owners as well (1 Timothy 6:2), and if anyone taught otherwise, they were proud and knew nothing (1 Timothy 6:3-4).

Even the Lord owns slaves, as Colossians 4:1 and Ephesians 6:9 reveals.

And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him. (Ephesians 6:9)

The Christian slave owners were slaves themselves of the Lord of hosts. As 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 states,

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Every believer is a bought slave of the Master, Jesus Christ (see also Leviticus 25:55; Psalm 123:2; 134:1; 135:1; Isaiah 56:6; 65:13-15; 1 Corinthians 4:1; 7:22; 9:19; Revelation 1:1). *This* slavery will last forever.

And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. (Revelation 22:3)²

II. The Law Supports Slavery

Even though the Israelites were slaves at one time (Deuteronomy 6:21), they themselves owned slaves (Exodus 12:44; 20:8, 17; 23:12; Leviticus 25:6; Deuteronomy 5:21; 12:12, 18; 16:11, 14). They could enslave foreigners (e.g. Numbers 31:32-47). But, according to the law, they were not allowed to permanently enslave their Hebrew brethren (Leviticus 25:39-42, 47-54), unless the person *wanted* to be enslaved. If the man loved his master and prospered under him, he could permanently enslave himself to his master (Deuteronomy

Not Taught!

15:12-18). Or, another motivating factor for such a desire would be so that he could keep his wife and children. Because, according to God's holy and righteous law, if he was given a wife by his master while serving and had offspring, he could not take them with him if he left.

If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing. If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. But if the servant plainly says, "I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free," then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever. (Exodus 21:2-6)

So, under this law, an Israelite could even have a fellow Hebrew as his permanent slave.

Immediately following this law, we see that a man could actually sell his daughter into slavery.

And if a man sells his daughter to be a female slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves do. If she does not please her master, who has betrothed her to himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has dealt deceitfully with her. And if he has betrothed her to his son, he shall deal with her according to the custom of daughters. If he takes another wife, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, and her marriage rights. And if he does not do these three for her, then she shall go out free, without paying money. (Exodus 21:7-11)

It is evident from the text that this slavery involves a marriage, but nonetheless, she is still sold into slavery. She becomes a slave wife, a concubine (for concubinage, see the chapter on [Polygamy](#), **III. Polygamy Included Concubinage**).

III. Slaves Are Rightly Viewed As Property

In the past, some have bristled at the fact that slavery reduces a human being to "an article of property, a chattel personal" (Theodore Dwight, 1803-1895, *The Bible Against Slavery*). John Wesley wrote,

It cannot be, even setting Revelation aside. It cannot be, that either war, or contract, can give any man such a property in another as he

has in his sheep and oxen. Much less is it possible, that any child of man should ever be born a slave. Liberty is the right of every human creature, as soon as he breathes the vital air; and no human law can deprive him of that right which he derives from the law of nature. (<http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/wesley/thoughtsuponslavery.stm>)

Wesley did indeed set revelation aside. Because, the revelation of God reveals no such "law of nature," but rather the law of God which proclaims,

And as for your male and female slaves whom you may have—from the nations that are around you, from them you may buy male and female slaves. Moreover you may buy the children of the strangers who dwell among you, and their families who are with you, which they beget in your land; and they shall become your property. And you may take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them as a possession; they shall be your permanent slaves. But regarding your brethren, the children of Israel, you shall not rule over one another with rigor. (Leviticus 25:44-46)

Slaves are herein sanctioned to be bought. They are called "property," "an inheritance," "a possession" and "your permanent slaves." In Numbers 31:32-47 the Israelites' slaves are called "booty," "plunder," and "tribute," along with the sheep, cattle, and donkeys.

In Exodus 21, the Lord reveals that a slave, as the property of the slave owner, does not have the same status a free man has, even when it comes to killing a man. Exodus 21:12 says,

He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death.

Yet, later in the chapter, the Lord gives this instruction regarding slaves.

And if a man beats his male or female servant with a rod, so that he dies under his hand, he shall surely be punished. Notwithstanding, if he remains alive a day or two, he shall not be punished; for he is his property. (Exodus 21:20-21)

Note, if the slave lived a day or two, and then died, there would be no punishment at all, and the reason given is because "**he is his property.**" In other words, the slave owner had the right to beat his slaves, as Proverbs 26:3 states,

A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the fool's back. (see also Proverbs 10:13; 29:19)

If the slave was a fool, it would be appropriate, wise, and loving to use the rod

Not Taught!

upon his back. This does not mean it was right to inflict undue harm upon a slave (Micah 6:8; Colossians 4:1). But it does mean that a slave owner could render correction when needed.

Later in Exodus 21 this distinction between slave and free is again revealed, and it again involves the life of a slave.

If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, then the ox shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be acquitted. But if the ox tended to thrust with its horn in times past, and it has been made known to his owner, and he has not kept it confined, so that it has killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death. If there is imposed on him a sum of money, then he shall pay to redeem his life, whatever is imposed on him. Whether it has gored a son or gored a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him. If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned. (Exodus 21:28-32)

This law distinguishes between the life of a slave and the life of a free person.³ The life of the slave is depicted as having less value. The owner of a thrusting ox would be far better off if the ox killed a slave rather than a free person. With the one, he might lose his life or have to pay "**whatever is imposed on him.**" With the other, he simply would have to pay thirty shekels. Under these circumstances, one can only imagine the first question the owner of the ox might ask after hearing of a death by goring. "Was the person who was killed free or a slave?"

Furthermore, even though the law distinguished the life of a free man from the life of a slave, the law was not without mercy towards those under the yoke. Deuteronomy 23 commands kindness toward a run away slave.

You shall not give back to his master the slave who has escaped from his master to you. He may dwell with you in your midst, in the place which he chooses within one of your gates, where it seems best to him; you shall not oppress him. (Deuteronomy 23:15-16)

This is a grant of kindness commanded by the Lord toward run away slaves, but it is not an instruction of what slaves are to do. On the contrary,

VI. Slaves Are Instructed To Submit⁴

An evil man may very well encourage slaves to rebel against their masters (Proverbs 17:11), but Scripture teaches just the opposite.

Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters

according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. (Ephesians 6:5-8; see also Colossians 3:22-25; Titus 2:9-10)

The Lord does not instruct slaves to run away and claim their freedom. Instead, the Lord instructs them to stay where they are and be good slaves, as the Lord instructed Abraham's slave, Hagar.

Now the Angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai." The Angel of the Lord said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand." (Genesis 16:7-9)

Here Hagar was free. She had run away from her mistress (Genesis 16:4-6) and had freed herself from harsh treatment. Yet, even in the context of being treated harshly, the Lord told her to go back and submit herself to Sarai.

Likewise, Peter wrote to the slaves in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. (1 Peter 2:18-20)

V. Both Freedom And Slavery Can Be Good

Although slavery at times can be a curse (Deuteronomy 28:68; Joshua 9:23; Proverbs 12:24; Lamentations 1:1; Joel 3:8), it can also be good (e.g. Deuteronomy 15:12-17; Joshua 9:24). Proverbs 12:9 says,

Better is the one who is slighted but has a servant, than he who honors himself but lacks bread. (Proverbs 12:9)

Having a servant here is depicted as a good thing. It indicates the person is not poor.

The Lord promised Israel that they would have slaves after He put them

Not Taught!

back into their land (Isaiah 14:1-2). This was a blessing from God upon the Israelites. It was a good thing, not a bad thing.

Yet, freedom is also depicted as something good. In 1 Corinthians 7:20-23 Paul wrote,

Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it. For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's slave. You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.

Here Paul tells the slaves who might have an opportunity to become free, to take this opportunity for freedom and use it for the Lord. Similarly, in Philemon Paul strongly encourages Philemon to give his run away slave, Onesimus, his freedom (Philemon 15-16).

VI What About Kidnapping?

Some have argued⁵ against slavery based upon the prohibition of man-stealing per Exodus 21:16.

He who kidnaps a man and sells him, or if he is found in his hand, shall surely be put to death. (see also Deuteronomy 24:7)

1 Timothy 1:10 also lists kidnapping as a loathsome vice, and some even translate the Greek word for kidnappers as "slave traders."⁶ Either way, the word has inherit in it the idea of man stealing.

Yet, as can be seen from Exodus 21:16 and Deuteronomy 24:7, a kidnapper could very well be a slave trader, as he steals men and sells them to others. This is indeed condemned before God. Stealing, whether it be an inanimate object, or another human being, is wrong (e.g. Exodus 20:15). Yet, these verses, as should be evident from the Scriptures above, do not condemn slavery in and of itself. Only the stealing and subsequent selling of the stolen man is condemned. Moreover, men or women taken captive in war is not kidnapping. It is part of the spoils of war (e.g. Numbers 31:32-47; Deuteronomy 20:13-14).

This, of course, begs the question regarding American slavery of the past, which in and of itself is a whole can of worms. But, summed up, it was not the practice of slavery that was wrong. What was wrong was any mistreatment of the slaves (Micah 6:8), or pride of the Caucasians as if they were a superior race (Proverbs 16:5), or any man-stealing that took place (1 Timothy 1:10), or any rebellion on the part of the slaves (1 Peter 2:18). These things are indeed evil. But, slavery in and of itself is not.

VII. The Future

For those who may hope for the eradication of slavery from the earth (as

we know it) never to be seen again, such a hope is in vain. The Word reveals that slavery will be in vogue, even in the very last hour.

And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" (Revelation 6:15-17; see also 13:16 & 19:18)

Endnotes:

1. e.g. *The Annals of America*, Vol. 4, p. 507; Vol. 9, p. 299-300
2. See also John 15:15 which indicates a difference in this servitude.
3. See also Proverbs 19:10 regarding the proper place of a slave.
4. Death frees a man from this obligation, Job 3:19.
5. e.g. Theodore Dwight Weld and Alexander McLeod, found in *Against Slavery, An Abolitionist Reader*, p. 55 & 72
6. e.g. NIV, NLT. The Greek word in 1 Timothy 1:10 is ανδραποδισταις (andrapodistais). *A Greek English Lexicon Of The New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, p. 63, for ανδραποδιστης (andrapodistês) gives "slave-dealer, kidnapper."

Doctrinal Unity

Typically the opposite is taught (see the next chapter), but the Bible teaches all believers will all believe the same.

THE UNITY OF THE SAINTS

It is an amazing phenomenon, yet a present reality, that so many who claim to believe the Bible (and claim to love the truth) also conveniently find room for so much error (contrary to Psalm 119:104 & 128) and completely disregard the commands of Ephesians 4:3 ("keep the unity of the spirit"); 1 Corinthians 1:10 ("speak the same thing", "no divisions", "same mind", "same judgment"); 2 Corinthians 13:11 ("be of one mind"); Philippians 1:27 ("stand fast in one spirit, with one mind"); 2:2 (be "like-minded", "one accord, of one mind"); 3:16 ("be of the same mind"); and 1 Peter 3:8 ("be of one mind"). It is as if 1 John 4:6 was never penned:

We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Christianity, which is true Judaism (John 4:22), is the one and only true religion (John 14:6). Any and every other religion is false and leads to hell (Psalm 9:17; Revelation 22:15). Someone with at least somewhat of a Biblical understanding should recognize this.

Yet, when it comes to the myriad of denominations within what is called "Christianity," people typically hail many, most, or all of these denominations as legitimate assemblies of the church of God. Yet, the very reason they exist, is because they cannot agree about doctrine (i.e. what the Bible teaches). They are not of the same mind (1 Peter 3:16). They are not like-minded (Philippians 2:2). They do not speak the same thing (1 Corinthians 1:10). There are divisions among them (1 Corinthians 1:10). They do not hear one another (1 John 4:6).

For an example of the many "Christian" denominations, we have - American Baptist Churches, Apostolic Churches, Assemblies of God churches, Association of General Baptist churches, Association of Reformed Presbyterian churches, Baptist Bible Fellowship churches, Berean Fundamental Churches, Brethren in Christ churches, Brethren churches, Calvary Chapel churches, Christian Churches, Christian Reformed Churches, Church of Christ churches, Church of God churches, Church of the Brethren churches, Church of the Living God churches, Church of the Nazarene churches, Church on the Rock churches, Community Churches, Congregational Christian Churches, Congregational Methodist churches, Conservative Baptist Association churches, Conservative Congregational Churches, Evangelical Congregational Churches, Evangelical Covenant Churches, Evangelical Free Churches, Evangelical Methodist Churches, Faith Christian Fellowship churches, Fellowship of Grace Brethren churches, Free Methodist Church of North America churches, Free Will Baptist churches, Friends (Quakers) churches, Full Gospel Churches, Fundamental churches, General Association of Regular Baptists churches, General Association of Separate Baptists churches, Independent Baptist Churches, Independent Bible Churches, Independent Charismatic churches, Independent Fundamental Churches, International Foursquare Gospel churches, Maranatha Christian Churches, Mennonite Churches, Methodist churches, Missionary Churches, National Baptist churches, Open Bible Standard Churches, Pentecostal churches, Plymouth Brethren churches, Presbyterian churches, Presbyterian Church in America churches, Presbyterian Churches (USA), Primitive Baptists churches, Primitive Methodist Churches, Progressive National Baptists churches, Protestant Reformed Churches, Reformed Church in America churches, Southern Baptist Convention churches, Southwide Baptist Fellowship churches, Union of Messianic Jewish Congregation churches, United Baptists churches, United Brethren in Christ churches, Vineyard Churches, Wesleyan Churches, World Baptist Fellowship churches, . . . and on and on it goes, churches upon churches who cannot "hear" one another (1 John 4:6). And, if and when they do "cooperate" (in some form), they set their differing doctrines off to the side, rather than come to any kind of a Biblical solution (see below). Such is the making of ecumenism with its varying degrees and manifestations.

Contrary to any ecumenical mindset, Judah⁴ wrote,

4 Jude is written by "Judah," which is the same Greek name, Ἰουδᾶς (Ioudas), as the man "Judah" (Matthew 1:3), the man "Judas" (Matthew 10:4), and

Not Taught!

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

What is to be contended (fought) over? Jude says "the faith." Paul gets more specific and says,

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

"Every thought" is to be fought over. Every thought, every doctrine, every teaching, all of it, is to be subjected to and taken captive to the "obedience of Christ" (i.e. obedient to the Word of God; Christ being the Word, John 1:1; Hebrews 4:12-13; Revelation 19:13). This is what Jude exhorts every saint to do ("Beloved" Jude 3).

But how can this be done? There are so many differing views on what the Bible says! How could there be any unity in any assembly of believers, or any unity between assemblies (churches), if "every thought" is fought over? Left to the **false Christian world**, we could not have such a unity and therefore "know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (1 John 4:6). But, those outside the camp (Hebrews 13:13) can and do, by the power of the Spirit of God.

In 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 Paul writes,

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free - and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

Ephesians 4:4 further states,

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

God is in every true believer, and every true believer has "**been made to drink into one Spirit**" (1 Corinthians 12:13). His Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of truth (John 14:16-17), resides within every single follower of Christ. Because of this, those who have the Spirit of God (the Spirit of truth) are taught by God

the tribe of "Judah" (Revelation 5:5).

and they know the truth. As John says,

But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it. (1 John 2:20-21)

And,

These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him. (1 John 2:27)

This "anointing" (the Holy Spirit who teaches us "all things" - 1 John 2:27/John 14:26) is in every true believer. And, it is because of this, that there can be, and is, a unity of the saints in doctrine (i.e. what the Bible teaches), even unto "every thought" (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

Jesus, speaking of Himself and those who follow Him, said,

And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers. (John 10:4-5)

And,

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. (John 10:27)

Jesus says that His sheep (i.e. true believers) will follow Him (i.e. will follow the truth, John 14:6), and they will not follow a stranger (i.e. someone speaking contrary to the truth). When the truth is present and a lie also, the sheep will follow the truth. Why is this? Because they know His voice (they know the one they are following), and they have His Spirit residing in them teaching them "all things" ("every thought", 2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

This does not mean that perfect knowledge is ever attained (1 Corinthians 13:9), nor does it mean that believers will never be "tossed to and fro" by the winds of doctrine that abound (Ephesians 4:14). But, what it does mean, is that those who know their God, those who have the Spirit of truth in them, will be taught by God, and will take heed (as a pattern of their life, 2 John 9; 1 John 2:3-4) to the truth. They may struggle with issues. They may grope and cry out for wisdom (Proverbs 2). But, the Lord will hear (James 1:5). The Lord will direct them into all truth (John 14:26/1 John 2:27 - "all things"). As Proverbs 3:5-6 states,

Not Taught!

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will direct your paths.

So, why all these denominations then? Why all the confusion within "Christianity" about doctrine and what the Bible teaches? Why does it appear that "Christians" cannot agree on what the Bible says? **Because not all are "of God" (1 John 4:6).**

Satan deceives the whole world (Revelation 12:9), and he is fast at work within the camp of "Christianity" (2 Corinthians 11:14-15). Divisions do not come from those with the Spirit of truth in them. Divisions come from those who are devoid of the Spirit, as Jude exemplifies. Speaking of ungodly men, he writes,

These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit. (Jude 19).

If all people who claimed to be Christians (1 Peter 4:16) were truly Christians (and therefore had the Spirit of God within them, Romans 8:9/Ephesians 1:13-14), there would be no divisions. There would be no denominations. There would be no sustained differing doctrines. But such is not the case.

The world is filled with false brethren (2 Corinthians 11:26) and **false teachers** (2 Peter 2:1). The Lord told us beforehand that this would be the case. That is, that "Christians" would prefer false teachers. As He says in 2 Timothy 4:3,

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers.

Because of this, and because of the "heap" of teachers that scratch the ears, Peter wrote that **"the way of truth will be blasphemed"** (i.e. spoken evil of). In other words, the way of truth will be looked at NOT as the way of truth, but as the way of error (or evil). As Paul wrote in his own day, **"as deceivers, and yet true"** (2 Corinthians 6:8). Such is the perception of many who view us.

Yet, for those who are in the way of truth (who have the Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth in them), for them 1 John 4:6 is very much alive. Why is this? Because they live in and walk in the truth of God's Word. For them, they live, trust, and depend upon **"every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God"** (Matthew 4:4). Their authority and trust is in the revealed Word of God, and they follow it, and live it, and speak it. Those who also have the Spirit of God in them and live likewise, "hear" (1 John 4:6). Those devoid of the Spirit and who do not have their trust in **"every word"** (Matthew 4:4) don't hear (i.e. they don't agree). Therefore, those who are in the truth can know **"the spirit of truth and the spirit of error."**

The crux of the issue on any controversy is always this: Who is speaking the truth? Who is Biblical, and who is not? On any controversy, either one person (or position) is in the truth and the other is not. Or, they are both in error.

No doubt, anyone could be temporarily wrong (in error) on a subject. But, who do they listen to when such is the case? Those in error (or their own understanding, their own self-made deceit), or those in the truth (1 John 4:6). The one who does not consent to "**wholesome words**" (1 Timothy 6:3) is the one who is proud and destitute of the truth (1 Timothy 6:4-5).

Furthermore, there may also be a controversy that is based upon something the Bible does not even give information on. Thus Paul told Timothy to "**avoid foolish and ignorant disputes**" (2 Timothy 2:23). To argue (contend) over issues that the Bible does not even give the answer to is foolish and ignorant. Such men who insist on contending over such issues are to be warned twice, and if they don't take heed they are to be rejected (Titus 3:9-11).

Now, there are those who desire to give the impression that the truth cannot be known on what the Bible teaches on what some call "secondary issues" (e.g. limited atonement, election, eternal security, etc.). In other words, issues that the Bible does address, but there are many varying opinions from scholarly "godly" men. Many contend that such subject matters should not be a distinguishing mark between true and false brethren. In fact, to do so is "dangerous" in many "Christians" eyes.

This was exemplified in a letter (8-16-96) received (via the internet) from David Newell (Jerubal@aol.com) in which David stated in response to this very issue saying, "It is this line of thinking which is so very dangerous and unscriptural" (i.e. to distinguish between true and false brethren over "secondary issues"). What this man is saying is this: It is dangerous and unscriptural to apply 1 John 4:6 ("He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error."). And, he is saying that it is dangerous and unscriptural to apply 1 Timothy 6:3-5.

If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, . . . destitute of the truth . . . from such withdraw yourself.

If it is "dangerous and unscriptural" to contend (fight, Jude 3) over "secondary issues" ("every thought" 2 Corinthians 10:3-5), and thus distinguish between "the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (1 John 4:6), then the war is over (2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:10-18). And, for men like David Newell, it is. He cannot distinguish between "the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (1 John 4:6). He exemplified this by stating in this same letter,

You [Al Soto] and your Pastor Darwin Fish have developed what seems to be a ministry where you search out and expose the errors of

Not Taught!

teachings of self professing Christian writers, speakers and TV personalities. In your zeal you have handled topics of a controversial nature (not a big problem) but also in which good men have valid, scriptural, dissenting view.

In this statement, David reveals that he does not know the truth, and is unable to distinguish between the "spirit of truth and the spirit of error." Just because a subject matter is "controversial" does not mean it can't be rightly Biblically known and understood. David calls these men "good men." The only "good men" we have exposed are false teachers that ought to be exposed (Ephesians 5:11), for they destroy souls (2 Peter 2:18, see the book, *False Teachers*). David cannot distinguish between a "good" man and an impostor (2 Timothy 3:13). Who is really "dangerous and unscriptural"?

The kind of mentality that David Newell portrays is the kind of damning mentality that diverts people away from a zealous pursuit and love for the truth. You cannot be saved, if you do not love the truth (Christ, John 14:6). See 2 Thessalonians 2:10. The Lord condemns those who do **"not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved."**

Therefore, **"every thought"** IS important (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)! Not because we are saved because we have all of our theology perfected, but, we are saved because our trust is in God (in His Word, in Christ). Thus, we speak the truth, and we cannot only know the truth, but **"know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error"** by whether they "hear us" or not (1 John 4:6). And, by the grace of God, we are hereby also protected from being led away into the **"error of the wicked"** (2 Peter 3:17) via a zealous love for God and His Word (**"every word,"** Matthew 4:4).

By the way, if someone is led into the **"error of the wicked,"** which is simply being led away from the truth (note 2 Peter 3:16-17), which is simply being led away from Christ (Christ being the Truth), then such a one would be found to be among those who do not remain in Him (2 John 9). Those who do not remain in Christ will be burned (John 15:6). Knowing and loving the truth (all that can be known and loved) is important (Isaiah 66:1-2; Philippians 2:12)!

Now, Scripture does indeed depict some matters are more important than other matters. Jesus made this clear to the Pharisees when He said,

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. "Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!" (Matthew 23:23-24)

Here Jesus speaks of "weightier matters." He compares the gnat to paying "tithes of mint and anise and cummin" with the camel of neglecting "justice and mercy and faith." Though the gnat is light weight, and the camel is quite heavy, Jesus does not discard the gnat (paying tithes of mint and anise and cummin) as

unimportant. No, He actually says the justice and mercy and faith ought to have been done, "without leaving the others undone." In other words, the paying "tithe of mint and anise and cummin" (the gnat, the *much* lighter matter) was to be done as well.

Man is to live "by every word of God" (Matthew 4:4). It is all to be believed and obeyed. The Pharisees error was not that they strained out the gnat, but that they swallowed the camel.

With the above in mind, it should be seen that those who love God, those who love His people, do (and will) consider it a serious matter to contend for the faith and bring "**every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.**" Because they love His Word (Psalm 119:97), and they love His people (1 John 3:14), those who are the saints of God Most High (Genesis 14:20; Daniel 7:27) will not only have a true and blessed unity (doctrinal indeed), but will endeavor to keep this unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3).

The unity is there, because the Spirit is there. Without the Spirit, doctrinal unity would be impossible. But since He does reside in every true believer, there is unity. What muddies these waters are the false brethren who are devoid of the Spirit. But, nonetheless, the reality is there, just as Jesus prayed it would be.

I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. (John 17:20-21).

What the Bible does and does not call a "cult."

Marks of a Cult?

These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.
(Matthew 15:8-9)

Because [false Christians today worship God in vain and follow the doctrines of men](#), they foolishly set up standards that are not Biblical, and find fault where none is to be found (see below). It is indeed true that any religious organization that consistently and unrepentantly teaches and/or practices against the word of God should be identified as spurious, a "cult" if you will. But, some of the ways in which the modern "Christian" world judges and marks a cult is actually "cultic" itself (i.e. against the word of God).

I. Defining A Cult

In their very definition of a cult, false Christians often set a standard that is unbiblical and man-made. [Mike Oppenheimer of Let Us Reason Ministries](#) exemplifies this common error. In his "Eight Marks Of Organized Heresy" he writes,

A THEOLOGICAL DEFINITION OF "CULT" MUST BE BASED ON A STANDARD OF CHRISTIAN ORTHODOXY. USING THE BIBLE'S TEACHING AS A FOCAL POINT. A CULT IS ANY RELIGIOUS GROUP THAT CLAIMS TO BE CHRISTIAN (OR

MAY NOT BE) IS DISTINCT AND HAS DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES THAT CONTRADICT THOSE OF THE SCRIPTURES AS INTERPRETED BY ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY. THOSE THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN UPHELD IN HISTORIC CHRISTIANITY. (www.letusreason.org/Cults1.htm, hard copy on file, as it is for all references in this chapter)

Note Oppenheimer's qualifier, "AS INTERPRETED BY ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY." This is his standard. He should leave it to "THE BIBLE'S TEACHING" *period!* (Colossians 2:8-10; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 John 9) Instead he has placed his trust in "ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY." And how does he define "ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY"? He describes it as "HISTORIC CHRISTIANITY," which for the most part is [Catholic](#) (see our report on the [early church fathers](#)). Catholicism has a great deal of false doctrine in it. Historical Protestantism is likewise not without error (e.g. [Spurgeon](#)).

Paul warned against putting our faith in historical traditions in Colossians 2:8-9.

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the *tradition of men*, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

Paul warns here of the "tradition of men." Oppenheimer's "SCRIPTURES AS INTERPRETED BY ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY" is exactly that, the tradition of men. The Scriptures are of no "**private interpretation**" (2 Peter 1:20). The standard is not, "AS INTERPRETED BY." The standard is the Scriptures themselves as interpreted by no one. They say what they mean and they mean what they say (John 10:34-36; 2 Peter 1:20). Every single man, woman, and child will be judged, *not* by "orthodox Christianity," or by any certain historical interpretation, but rather by the living word of God (John 12:48; Hebrews 4:12-13).

In this same article, Oppenheimer describes what he considers to be true Christian churches with these words:

ALL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES WILL RECOGNIZE OTHERS THAT HOLD THE SAME **CORE TEACHINGS** THAT THEY DO, THAT WERE ALWAYS PART OF THE HISTORIC CHRISTIAN FAITH.

THE **CORE BELIEFS** UNITE ONE IN CHRIST AS THERE IS A CERTAIN CRITERIA FOR BIBLICAL DOCTRINE. THIS HAS BEEN HELD SINCE THE INCEPTION OF THE SCRIPTURES WRITTEN BY THE APOSTLES AND TAUGHT BY THE CHURCH. (bold added)

Not Taught!

You can not find this concept/doctrine in the apostles writings (Proverbs 30:5-6), but you can find it in today's writings.

In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; and in all things, charity.
(Hank Hanegraaff, *Christianity In Crisis*, copyright 1993, p. 47)

This "core beliefs" doctrine (i.e. essentials) is the very sandy foundation (Matthew 7:24-27) of *most*, if not all, of false Christianity today (e.g. see *False Teachers*, chapter on John MacArthur, under III. Fundamentals).

II. No Diversity

Common among false Christians is the white-washing of ecumenism. Some may not dare use the word, but they nonetheless propagate ecumenical thinking (which, by the way, leads to hell, 2 Thessalonians 2:10). David Breese is one example of this. In his book, *The Marks of a Cult, The Warning Signs of False Teachings*, Breese compares cult-like behavior with supposedly "true Christianity."

The contrast of true Christianity is marked. The Bible teaches that there is one Savior, Jesus Christ, and one way of salvation, faith in His finished work on the cross. Within that wonderful circle of faith, however, *the Scripture allows for a great diversity of views*. (p. 149, italics added)

Breese speaks in the context of doctrine, using Herbert Armstrong and Jehovah's Witnesses as examples (p. 150-151). Thus, when Breese speaks of "a great diversity of views" he is speaking of doctrinal or "religious points of view" (p. 151) claiming cults do not have this diversity, but true Christianity does. In this, Breese lies against the truth (John 14:6).

True Christianity does *not* allow for *any* diversity in doctrine (Matthew 4:4; 7:21, 24-27; John 8:47; Hebrews 4:12-13; 2 John 9; 1 John 4:6; Revelation 22:14-15). *True* Christians live and speak thus:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5; see also 1 Timothy 1:3; 6:3-5)

For all true Christians the war is over the truth of the word of God, all of it (Matthew 4:4; 2 Timothy 4:7). They contend (Jude 3) for the faith, which includes Genesis 1:1 and continues all the way through Revelation 22:21. "Captivity to the obedience of Christ" means obedience to Scripture (Hebrews 4:12-13), for Christ is Scripture (John 1:1; Galatians 3:8; Revelation 19:13).

The true Christian does not allow for a great diversity of views, but on the contrary he casts down every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). He casts down everything that is not in agreement with God's word, and hates it (Psalm 119:104, 120, 128, 163). Truly, the sons of Abraham (Galatians 3:7) are intolerant of other beliefs (2 Corinthians 10:3-5; 1 Timothy 1:3; 6:3-5).

III. "The Only True Church Syndrome"

Another common error within the false Christian world is the blasphemy of "The Only True Church" (2 Peter 2:2). [Rick Miesel of Biblical Discernment Ministries](#) follows this evil in his fourteen "Marks of a Cult." Miesel notes at the end of his article that he "adapted" his material from other sources. So, he admits he is not alone in this perspective. For number 6 he writes,

6. Exclusivity from/Denunciation of Other Groups: Each cult group, regardless of what other doctrines are taught, will all have this one common idea -- "The Only True Church Syndrome." The members of each specific organization have been taught that their church, organization, or community, is the only true group and that all other groups are false.
(www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/Cults/marksof.htm)

Miesel makes this statement in the context of cults like Mormonism. Therefore, he writes not of a specific physically located group, since Mormons have churches worldwide. Miesel is speaking of a group or organization that is specific in its doctrinal beliefs (as Mormons are), and in their specific doctrinal beliefs, they see "all other groups" (i.e. all who do not believe like them) as false.

This being the case, Miesel's "mark" flies in the face of Jesus Christ and His church. Why? Because there *is* only one true church and "The Only True Church" *does* have specific doctrinal beliefs, and it is the entirety (Psalm 119:160) of the word of God (Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21). Worldwide, anyone who is following Christ would have "The Only True Church Syndrome," because they would be a part of the only true church. For there *is* only one true church and it is Christ's church (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4-6).

Jesus said,

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. (John 14:6)

There is no other way, no other truth, no other life, no other body (i.e. church, 1 Corinthians 10:17; 12:12-13, 27; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:4; 5:30; Colossians 3:15) other than Jesus Christ. All who follow Christ follow "The Only Way" (Acts 4:12) and are in "The Only True Church." There is one faith (Ephesians 4:5) and this faith is in the living word of God (John 1:1, 14; 3:16,

Not Taught!

36; Hebrews 4:12-13; Revelation 19:13), as Jesus said,

He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. (John 14:21)

If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words. (John 14:23-24)

Those who love Christ, believe and obey His word (i.e. the Bible). Those who do not love Christ are cursed (Psalm 119:21; 1 Corinthians 16:22) and do not obey His word. This is "The Only True Church Syndrome," and it is the truth, the only truth that leads to heaven (Matthew 7:13-14, 24-27; John 3:16). Any other way or group is false (Isaiah 8:20; Acts 4:12). Yet, Miesel and others, like Al Dager, call this a mark or an "indicator" of a cult!

[Al Dager, of Media Spotlight](#), in his article, "Are You In A Cult?", writes in his questionnaire for one of the "indicators of cultic activity" that they,

Teach that all other Christian churches or denominations are under Satan's control? ("Are You In A Cult?" Media Spotlight, P. O. Box 290, Redmond, WA 98073)

If the church is not a part of "The Only True Church", they *are* under Satan's control (1 John 4:5-6; 5:18-19)! To teach otherwise is ecumenical and not believing the Word of God (Acts 4:12; Ephesians 4:4-5; 1 John 4:6; etc.).

In Miesel's faulty "mark" number 6 he also states (immediately after the above quote),

The group's leaders will explain that it is impossible to serve God without being a member of the specific group.

This is exactly what the word of God explains (John 15:5), and any leader in the true church would explain this. Yet, according to Miesel, this would mark him as a cult leader!

Yet, the word of God clearly teaches that anyone who is not a part of the body of Christ, "The Only True Church," will certainly go to hell (Acts 4:12), as Revelation 21:8 says the unbelieving, their part will be "**in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.**"

Miesel's mark #6 continues with these words:

Moreover, when the cult leader announces himself as the true "Messiah," all others are declared to be dishonest, deceitful, and deluded, and must be put down; alternative views are denounced as being satanic and corrupt.

The Lord Jesus Christ declared all others to be dishonest, deceitful, deluded,

and put them down and denounced any alternative views as satanic and corrupt. Jesus said to the Jews, "**You are of your father the devil**" (John 8:44), because they did not believe His teaching (John 8:45-47). As stated above (John 14:21, 23-24), Jesus drew the line between the pure and the corrupt simply on whether someone follows His words, or instead, has alternative views. Moreover, Jesus put down and declared all others to be dishonest, deceitful, and deluded, saying,

All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers. (John 10:8)

Miesel's mark #6 continues with,

Persecution is welcomed, and even glorified in, as "evidence" that they are being persecuted for righteousness sake.

This is *exactly* the perspective of those who are truly saved and know their Bible. Because Scripture tells all those who are in "The Only True Church" that the persecution they receive from their adversaries is "proof" of their enemies lost condition ("perdition") and, at the same time, it proves that they themselves are saved (Philippians 1:28). It is evidence that they are being persecuted for righteousness sake. Jesus said,

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:10-12; see also Luke 6:22-23)

It is a Biblical concept to welcome persecution (Philippians 3:10), glorify in it (Luke 6:23), and see it as evidence that you are being persecuted for righteousness sake (Philippians 1:27-28). It is *not* a mark of a cult (i.e. an organization that is against the word of God). But, for those who blaspheme the way of truth (2 Peter 2), it is (as evidenced here).

Miesel's folly continues:

Thus, if a member decides to leave the group, they have been told that they are not simply leaving an organization, but rather they are leaving God and His only true organization. Hence, for a member of a cult who has been in a group for any length of time, the action of leaving the group is much more difficult than what most Christians understand. To leave the group is, in the minds of the cult member, tantamount to leaving God.

This "leaving," of course, is not speaking of simply moving to another city or state. As already noted, Miesel speaks in the context of Mormonism as an

Not Taught!

example of a cult. Thus, this "leaving" has to do with "leaving" or departing from the particular faith, that is, the particular theological belief of the group. If the group (i.e. church) is in the truth (John 14:6), then this *is* tantamount to leaving the Truth (John 14:6). This *is* tantamount to leaving God.

To leave "The Only True Church," the body of Christ, *is* to leave God. "**For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones**" (Ephesians 5:30). You leave the members of His body, you leave His body and thus you leave Him (1 John 2:18-19). Therefore, Miesel marks the way of truth (2 Peter 2:2) as the way of evil (Isaiah 5:20).

IV. "The Only Ones Right"

John Morehead, editor of [The Watchman Expositor](#), in his article "What is a cult?" gives one characterization for a cult stating,

3. *Exclusivistic*: only the group has "the truth," . . .
(www.doubters.net/cult.htm)

Morehead writes in the context of cults like Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science and others. The "group" is a theological group not specific in locale. Thus, Morehead's "characteristic" blasphemes the way of truth (2 Peter 2:2), because this *is* the way of truth. Those who follow Christ *are* the only group that has the truth, because they follow *the* Truth (John 14:6). All who follow Christ, no matter where they are located, speak thus:

We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. (1 John 4:6)

This very emphatically describes the only group of people who have the truth. If you do not "hear" (i.e. agree with, e.g. 2 Timothy 2:24-26) true Christians as they speak the truth of the word of God, the spirit of error is upon you (1 John 4:6; Ephesians 2:2), and you do not have the truth, as Jesus said to the Jews,

He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God. (John 8:47)

On the "Recovering Jehovah's Witness" web site entitled "[Cult Awareness & Information Centre](#)" there is an article entitled, "Identifying A Cult." One identifying mark of a cult is,

The group will have an ELITIST view of itself in relation to others, and a UNIQUE CAUSE. e.i. THEY ARE THE ONLY ONES RIGHT - everyone else is wrong. THEY ARE THE ONLY ONES DOING GOD'S WILL - everyone else is in apostasy.
(<http://www.caicusa.org/general/idencult.htm>, emphasis in original)

People who believe the Bible do not believe such is an identifying mark of a cult. Instead, they believe *exactly* what this site marks as cultic. Followers of Christ have an "ELITIST" view of themselves in relation to others, as the Psalmist wrote,

You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Your precepts. (Psalm 119:98-100; see also Proverbs 16:32; 19:1; 28:6; Ecclesiastes 4:13; 7:8)

Indeed, true Christians know that their goodness is nothing apart from Him (Psalm 16:2), but they also know they have a unique cause, because they follow the unique One (Job 23:13) and are strangers on the earth (Psalm 39:12; 119:19; Hebrews 11:13). True Christians, as they speak the word of God, "ARE THE ONLY ONES RIGHT - everyone else is wrong" (1 John 4:6). "Everyone else" is caught in the snare of the devil (2 Timothy 2:24-26; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 5:19; Revelation 12:9). True Christians *are* "THE ONLY ONES DOING GOD'S WILL" (Matthew 7:21), because the only ones who go to heaven are those who do God's will, as Jesus said;

Not everyone who says to Me "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. (Matthew 7:21; see also John 6:29, 40)

Moreover, true Christians believe everyone else *is* "in apostasy" (1 Timothy 4:1-3; 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 4:3; 2 Peter 2:2; 1 John 4:6). 2 Timothy 3:15 calls the church of God, "**the pillar and ground of the truth.**" Being saved is coming to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4), and escaping the snare of the devil (Acts 26:18; 2 Timothy 2:26).

V. "Us against the world" attitude

Followers of Jesus Christ are following the only way, the only truth, and the only life (John 14:6) and say,

We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. (1 John 5:19)

But those under the sway of the wicked one speak like the Baptist minister [Stephen Shoemaker](#), who said,

Cult religion does not see the world as the good creation of God. The world is under the spell of the devil. It is unalterably corrupt. The world will always be against the true and righteous cult. Such a view aids and abets paranoid thinking. The cult sees itself as children of

Not Taught!

light living in the midst of children of darkness (everybody else).
(www.namb.net/helpink/TH-CULT.asp)

Indeed, the physical world is certainly the good creation of God, but it is not cultic to believe the world is under the spell of the devil. Actually, this is *exactly* what Scripture teaches (1 John 5:19). Revelation 12:9 says that Satan "**deceives the whole world**," and 2 Corinthians 4:4 says "**the god of this age**" has blinded the minds of the unbelieving. The world is certainly under the "spell" of the devil, and those who believe God's word believe this.

They also believe it *is* "unalterably corrupt" (Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Ecclesiastes 1:15; 7:13; Romans 8:20-21). "The world will always be against the true and righteous" people of God (Psalm 112:10; Proverbs 29:27; John 15:18-19; 1 John 3:13). Children of light do indeed live "in the midst of children of darkness (everybody else)" (Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:13).

That's why children of darkness, like Larry Ingram, who has an "Online Guide to the Major Cults," blaspheme (2 Peter 2:2) children of light by saying things like an,

"Us against the world" attitude (www.serve.com/larryi/charact.htm, web site no longer available, hard copy on file)

is a cultic characteristic. Cults may very well have this perspective, but those who are in Christ *rightly* have this attitude (Proverbs 29:27). The world hates Christ and it hates those who follow Him, as Jesus said,

If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. (John 15:18-19; see also 1 John 3:13)

John Morehead rebuffs such truth and writes for a "cultic characteristic,"

Oppositional: values, beliefs or practices at variance with the dominant culture or tradition. (www.doubters.net/cult.htm)

Morehead writes as cultic what God commands every believer to live.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. (Romans 12:2)

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1 John 2:15)

Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. (Colossians 3:2)

A true believer would not be at odds with *all* (e.g. work, 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12) that is valued, believed, or practiced in the world (the dominant culture). But, he would certainly be described as Morehead depicts one caught in a cult, because *much* that is in the dominant culture is in opposition to the values, beliefs, and practices of godliness (Romans 1:18-32; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17).

VI. Zeal

Reachout Trust, a "Christian" cult outreach ministry in England, writes as their second mark of a cult (in the context of "any given religious organisation"),

The group will place a tremendous emphasis on "doing good works". Members of the group may appear obsessed with doing whatever the group tells them to do, for instance always being at meetings. (www.reachouttrust.org/regulars/articles/cult/winbck.htm, web link no longer available, hard copy on file)

Submitting to one another in the fear of God (Ephesians 5:21), fervently loving each other (1 Peter 1:22), not forsaking the assembly, but rather zealously stirring up love and good deeds more and more (Hebrews 10:24-25), may all appear to the false Christian as an obsession. Scripture calls it wisdom (Job 28:28; Ephesians 5:15-17).

Reachout Trust blasphemes the way of truth (2 Peter 2:2), because the way of truth *does* "place a tremendous emphasis on 'doing good works'" (Acts 9:36; 1 Timothy 2:10; 5:10; 6:18; Titus 2:7; 3:14; 1 Peter 2:12) Jesus said,

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Believers have been *created* for good works (Ephesians 2:10). *Jesus died,*

gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. (Titus 2:14)

Zeal for the Lord places a tremendous emphasis on doing good works, and the awesome salvation of God and His saving grace are to be affirmed constantly (Titus 3:4-7), that,

those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men. (Titus 3:8)

Some think otherwise, those who walk in the wisdom of this age and according to the prince of the power of the air (1 Corinthians 3:19; Ephesians 2:2), as

Not Taught!

they mark as cultic that which is good.

VII. Leadership

The Lutheran site, thelutheran.org, gives "9 characteristics of cults or destructive religious groups." The ninth characteristic this Lutheran site gives for a characteristic of a cult is,

A cult's ultimate goal is to remake members in the image of its leader.
(www.thelutheran.org/9608/page42a.html)

That's one of God's ultimate goals.

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son. (Romans 8:29)

Christ is our leader and we "**are being transformed into the same image**" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Moreover, Hebrews 13:7 says,

Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow.

Why should we follow their faith? Because they are imitating Christ, as Paul wrote,

Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:1; see also Galatians 2:20)

It is not a cultic characteristic to have as an ultimate goal to remake members in the image of its leader. This is the goal and reality of those who follow Christ (Colossians 3:9-10), and any godly leader could say and should be able to say as Paul, "**Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.**"

VIII. Conclusion

If you walk in truth, you will be blasphemed, because you walk in the way that is blasphemed (2 Peter 2:2). You'll be seen as a deceiver, yet you'll be true (2 Corinthians 6:8). You will be a part of that sect that "**is spoken against everywhere**" (Acts 28:22; 24:14). You will be following Jesus Christ who heads up THE ONLY WAY (John 14:6; Acts 4:12), and for some, this marks a cult; thus they unwittingly (2 Timothy 3:13) mark the Lord Jesus Christ as a cult leader. Truly, the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelieving,

lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. (2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 12:9)

Hermeneutics

The Scripture cannot be broken. (John 10:35)

I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. (Acts 20:27)

You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it. (Deuteronomy 4:2; see also 12:32; Proverbs 30:5-6; Revelation 22:18-19)

On occasion we are asked, "What is your hermeneutical approach to Scripture?" That is, what is our "method or principle of interpretation,"¹ our "methodological principles"² when interpreting the Bible? It is the same approach as Christ's, Paul's, and Moses'. It is a literal approach ("**Scripture cannot be broken**") with the whole counsel of God considered (i.e. all of the Bible), and it is a limited approach, neither adding to nor taking away from the text of Scripture.

I. Literal

A. Scripture Cannot Be Broken.

When Christ is confronted by the Jews "**for blasphemy, and because you, being a man, make yourself God**"³ in John 10:33, Jesus' response is quite profound.

Is it not written in your law, "I said, 'You are gods'"? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, "You are blaspheming," because I said, "I am the Son of God"? (John 10:34-36)

What is Jesus' point when He says to them **"and the Scripture cannot be broken"**? What is He stressing? He is emphasizing that Scripture means what it says. In other words, when the Scripture **"called them gods"** it means what it says, **"You are gods,"** just as it says. This is a very literal approach to Scripture.

You can see what Jesus meant regarding **"the Scripture cannot be broken"** via His argument. He was combating their claim of blasphemy, that is, that He was claiming to be God, and He argues, **"Is it not written in your law, 'I said, 'You are gods'?"** So, Jesus' point in responding to the Jews is basically, "Your law calls men gods," as He continued, **"If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came . . ."**

So then, Jesus begins to take the air out of their ballooned blasphemy argument by pointing to the fact that Scripture calls men gods. He doesn't bother explaining this concept, or arguing that they aren't Gods as the one and only true God is God (Isaiah 31:3; 44:6-8).⁴ No, instead, He emphasizes the statement and dictates, when it says men are gods, it means they are gods,⁵ **"the Scripture cannot be broken"**.

This is the only honest approach to Scripture. It does not break (John 10:35) or destroy⁶ the text. Christ's **"Scripture cannot be broken"** statement, especially in the context in which He says it, reveals Christ's view of God's word. It is acutely⁷ literal, and this is the only perspective that saves.⁸

This is *not* to say that Scripture does not use figures of speech (e.g. Ruth 3:9), or allegory, etc. (e.g. see last paragraph in this article). But, the text itself dictates so, not the interpreter (2 Peter 1:20).

B. True Faith

Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. (James 1:21)

How does one receive the word? By believing it. True faith in the Bible (the word, John 1:1) mandates a literal approach to Scripture. It must be taken for exactly what it says. It must be received. There is no other way to heed God's word. If one is to be found among the believing and not cast to the lake of fire with the **"unbelieving"** (Revelation 21:8), one must **"obey the truth"** (Romans 2:8). We must heed exactly what He says. There is no freedom to interpret His

Not Taught!

truth in any other way. As it is written,

no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation. (2 Peter 1:20)⁹

It is not for tradition to interpret the word for us (Colossians 2:8). It is not for the "wise" to tell us what it means (1 Corinthians 3:19-20). It is not for us to make it mean what we please (Isaiah 65:2). The text itself holds the authority of interpretation, and the interpretation must be what it actually says. In other words, the Bible means what it says, and says what it means, as Jesus well pointed out (John 10:34-36); and we are doomed to eternal torment if we consistently take it any other way (Matthew 7:24-27; Hebrews 4:12-13; Revelation 21:8; 22:14-15). God's word must be heeded (Proverbs 13:13).

Nevertheless, this is impossible with men (Mark 10:27), but not with God (Luke 18:27). True faith, and thus true honest literal interpretation, is unattainable with men left to themselves (Jeremiah 13:23).

The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14)

True faith is a gift from God (Ephesians 2:1-9), and the only way anyone can understand and therefore interpret the Word properly (literally) is via the anointing of God. With this anointing, although there is time and place for a teacher (James 3:1), there is no need for one. As it is written to those who believe (1 John 5:13),

These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him. (1 John 2:26-27; see also John 7:38-39; 14:26)

II. Whole Counsel

I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. (Acts 20:27)

True faith is "**believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets**" (Acts 24:14). True faith is believing "**every word that proceeds from the mouth of God**" (Matthew 4:4). One definition of Webster for "literal" is "according with the letter of the Scriptures".¹⁰ Psalm 36:9 says,

In Your light we see light.

Since the authority of interpretation is in the text itself (in God Himself), then the text, the entire Bible, is its own interpreter. In other words, Scripture interprets Scripture. The light of one passage sheds light on another, with both standing true and meaning what they say, as Jesus said, "**the Scripture cannot be broken**". Obliterating ("breaking") one verse, in an attempt to hold to another verse, is destroying the text. In other words, when the truth of one passage is denied via the "truth" of another, the Scripture is thus broken (as in Matthew 5:19) and not rightly divided (2 Timothy 2:15).

A classic example of this is found within false Christianity when Romans 4 is pitted against James 2, and the truth of James 2 is denied (broken). For example, in his commentary on James 2:21-24 [John MacArthur](#) writes,

That seeming contradiction, which has frustrated and confused believers throughout the history of the church, is clarified by understanding that justification by faith pertains to a person's standing before God, whereas the justification **by works** that James speaks of in this verse pertains to a person's standing before other men.

Some have further imagined a contradiction between James's (sic) declaration that Abraham was **justified by works** and Paul's unequivocal teaching that he was justified solely by grace through faith (Rom. 4:1-25; Gal. 3:6-9). . . . James is teaching, then, that Abraham's willingness to offer Isaac vindicates his faith before men - . . . (*The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, James*, p. 137, copyright 1998, Moody Press, Chicago, bold in original, ellipsis added)

When MacArthur writes "the justification **by works** that James speaks of in this verse pertains to a person's standing before other men," and "James is teaching, then, that Abraham's willingness to offer Isaac vindicates his faith before men," he breaks James 2 in a perverted favor towards Romans 4. Note the verses of which MacArthur speaks.

Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. (James 2:21-24)

Please read the passage to which James refers, Genesis 22. The only one watching is God. Even Abraham's men are left behind (Genesis 22:5). The entire passage is about "**God tested Abraham**" (Genesis 22:1) and God seeing,

Not Taught!

"now I know that you fear God" (Genesis 22:12).

James says, **"faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect"** (James 2:22) in the very event of Genesis 22, not later as men contemplate the passage, but right then and there, **"faith was working together with his works"**. And note, **"the Scripture was fulfilled"**. What Scripture? The earlier Scripture of Genesis 15:6 (Romans 4:3). In other words, James puts them both together (Genesis 15 & 22) showing **"that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only"** and thus **"faith without works is dead"** (James 2:26). In other words, true faith has works. If there are no works, there is no faith, and thus no righteousness and no salvation.

Some stumble over this **"justified by works, and not by faith only,"** but it is a major theme in Scripture, as the Day of Judgment well testifies:

But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned. (Matthew 12:36-37)

Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth - those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. (John 5:28-29)

God, who will render to each one according to his deeds, eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness - indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good (Romans 2:6-10).

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. (Galatians 6:7-8; see also Psalm 15; 24:3-6; 50:22-23; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Revelation 22:14-15; etc.)

No true righteousness (right living) exists apart from faith in God's word (Romans 14:23), and no true faith in Christ (God's word) exists apart from true godly living (works, 1 John 2:4). Thus, on the Day of Judgment those who truly believe will be those who are justified by how they lived, and those who did not believe, though they may have claimed to, will be condemned by how

they lived (e.g. Matthew 7:21-23). This is well illustrated in the sheep and goats in Matthew 25:31-46. Both groups are judged entirely on how they lived. The sheep inherit the kingdom, and the goats eternal torment [For more on this, see our reports on [justification](#) and [not by works](#)].

Now, if James 2 truly means exactly what it says, "**that a man is justified by works**" (James 2:24), then what is Romans 4 talking about?

For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. (Romans 4:2)

What's the implication and meaning of the surrounding context? Abraham was *not* justified by works. Abraham was one who did "**not work**" (Romans 4:5) and was found righteous "**apart from works**" (Romans 4:6). What's the difference between James 2 and Romans 4? The difference is in the works. The works of James 2 are works of faith, which obviously please God (e.g. Genesis 22). But the works of Romans 4 are works of the flesh.

In Romans, both before and after Romans 4, Paul explicitly speaks of this distinction between works of faith and works of the flesh. At the beginning of Romans, Paul writes of the gospel in which,

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

Here are works of faith mentioned, as it says, "The just [i.e. the righteous] shall live by faith." In other words, godly people live, act, do, work, etc., all that they do by faith. These are those who are considered "just" before God.

In Romans Paul speaks of circumcision of the heart (faith) and circumcision in the flesh, in the Spirit (faith) and in the letter (flesh), inward (faith) and outward (flesh, Romans 2:25-29). He writes of "**the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus**" (faith) and "**the law of sin and death**" (flesh, Romans 8:2). He writes of the spiritual mind (faith) and the fleshly mind (Romans 8:5-7). Paul's distinction is between works of faith and works of flesh, as Romans chapter 4 begins with,

What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? (Romans 4:1)¹¹

Romans 8:8 says,

those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Works of the flesh are at enmity with God (Romans 8:7) and can never please Him (Hebrews 11:6). It doesn't matter what the work or deed is, if it is not of faith it is of the flesh and is sin (Romans 14:23; Proverbs 21:4). This is why "**our righteousnesses are like filthy rags**" (Isaiah 64:6), because they are

Not Taught!

not of faith. And, this is why "**by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified**" (Romans 3:20), because performing the requirements of the law without faith *will not please God* (Hebrews 11:6).

On the contrary, works of faith are works of the Spirit. They are the "**work of God**" (John 6:29; Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 5:22-23), and works of faith do please God (e.g. Hebrews 11:5). This is why Paul said he wanted to,

be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith (Philippians 3:9).

Our own righteousness is righteousness of the flesh, and produces nothing but death (Romans 8:6), because we cannot produce true godly righteousness (right living) on our own (Jeremiah 13:23). This is why we are saved "**not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us**" (Titus 3:5). Any and all who are saved are saved "**by grace through faith**" and that faith is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8-9). Therefore, in contrast to our own righteousness (our own good doing), which is righteousness of the flesh, God gives *His* righteousness to the believer, as it is written,

even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe (Romans 3:22).

So, it comes down to how one is found righteous before God. Or, in other words, how one is justified before God. There is no righteousness and no justification in man's own efforts. There *is* righteousness and there *is* justification in God given faith, as Paul wrote, consistent with James,

For not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified (Romans 2:13).

Who are these doers of the law who will be justified? They are people of faith, as it is written,

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:3-4)

The law was weak through the flesh, because even if a man were to obey the commands in the law, if he didn't do it in faith, it would be absolutely worthless (Isaiah 64:6). Thus, fleshly obedience to the law was weak and did not produce the righteousness God requires. This was the Jews problem. They thought "**to establish their own righteousness**" (Romans 10:3) by keeping the

law, but it was not by faith, but instead, by their own efforts in the flesh (Romans 9:30-32).¹² Saul, likewise, was under this same folly (Philippians 3:4-6; 1 Timothy 1:13).

But now, those who are of faith actually do fulfill "**the righteous requirement of the law**" as Romans 8 says. They truly do live a godly, holy, righteous life, because Christ lives in them (Galatians 2:20) and Christ (love) fulfills the law (Galatians 5:14).

Although "**all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**" (Romans 3:23), believers are,

**being justified freely by His grace through the redemption
that is in Christ Jesus** (Romans 3:24).

They do "**not work**" (Romans 4:5), as Abraham didn't work, to be found righteous before God. They rest and cease from such efforts (Hebrews 4:10). Instead, they set their "**hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to**" them "**at the revelation of Jesus Christ**" (1 Peter 1:13). Although they indeed are still in this sinful flesh (Romans 7:13-25; 1 John 1:8-10) and are not above stumbling (Psalm 37:24; Proverbs 24:16; James 3:2), they know "**to those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation**" (Hebrews 9:28).

Therefore, it can be seen that both James 2 and Romans 4 stand literally true as written, and when the whole counsel of God is considered, it is evident one speaks of works of faith, the other works of flesh. The one justifies, the other condemns (Romans 2:6-10).

III. No Additions

As Paul writes, "**not to think beyond what is written**" (1 Corinthians 4:6), Moses, Agur the son of Jakeh, and the apostle John, all agree that God's word is not to be added to. Moses speaks of it in Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32, Agur in Proverbs 30:5-6, and John in Revelation 22:18-19. The latter two passages reveal adding to God's word brings with it a serious curse.

This is why we do not follow what is typically understood as the "grammatical-historical" approach. It is not the "grammatical" part that is a problem. Obviously, proper grammar is important to any text and the original language indeed authoritative (for more on that, see our report on the [KJV controversy](#)). But, when extra-biblical history is brought to bear upon the passage, the history is simply the writings of men. It is not a reliable source of information (Ecclesiastes 1:11). Men have been known to lie (Psalm 53:1-3).

Charles Strong of bibleone.net gives us an example of this perverted "historical" approach to the Word.

Before the Bible student can effectively understand the

Not Taught!

contextual interpretation of several passages in the Gospel of John, Colossians, Acts, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, 1 & 2 & 3 John; he must understand something of the heresy of Gnosticism (nos'ti-siz-em) against which was partially the purpose for the writing of these epistles. (www.bibleone.net/print_tbs61.html)

So, according to Charles, you can't understand "several passages" without this extra-biblical information. Not only is this antichrist (see below), but it is entirely the creation and addition of man to the text of Scripture. None of those books teach anything about "Gnosticism" or that being "the purpose for the writing of these epistles." 1 John 2:26 indeed states,

These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. (1 John 2:26)

But, those who were trying to deceive them are never specifically identified. This claim to know who they are is an addition to the Word, which is exactly what Scripture warns against.

Charles continues,

The books of Colossians and 1 John are particularly strong in their refutation of the errors of the Gnostic heresy. A couple of illustrations of the need to understand this heresy to interpret scripture will be dealt with later in this study.

This will not be an exhaustive handling of the subject, but it will cover the salient provisions of the aberrant theology of Gnosticism so that the Bible student may arrive at the intended meaning of various scriptural passages within the above listed books of the Bible.

Although Scripture says nothing of gnosticism, Charles adds this "needed" information for interpreting the text. He says he gleaned this info from,

Wycliffe Bible Dictionary
Believer's Bible Commentary by William MacDonald
Thru the Bible by J. Vernon McGee
The Wycliffe Bible Commentary
Clark's Commentary by Adam Clarke, LL.D., F.S.A.
NIV Bible Commentary
The King James Study Bible
Ryrie Study Bible
Thompson Chain Reference Bible
The New Scofield Reference Bible
Life Application Bible

So how is this information so valuable? Here is one of his two examples. Charles quotes 1 John 4:1-3 and writes,

Why is John in this epistle stressing that the admission that Christ has come in the flesh is evident that a spirit (and in this case one may interpret spirit as a person's spirit) is either of (representing) or not of God? It is because of the Gnostics and their incessant teaching that God could not have come in the flesh, which is a key element of Christian doctrine.

Really? "It is because of the Gnostics and their incessant teaching"? That conclusion certainly does not come from the Word. It's an addition.

What comes from the Word? What is *not* an addition? What is found when the whole counsel of God is considered? Is it because *any* deceit against Scripture is a denial of Jesus Christ come in the flesh? Left to let Scripture interpret Scripture, 1 John 4 addresses the same thing Paul addresses in Colossians 2:8-10.

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

Philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, well covers any deceit that would come our way. So, why does Paul warn us not to be cheated with these things? Because, **"in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily"** (Colossians 2:9). Or, in other words, **"Jesus Christ [God] has come in the flesh"** (1 John 4:2). Believers **"are complete in Him"** (Colossians 2:9). In other words, the Word in the flesh (John 1:14) is all we need. Philosophy and empty deceit denies this.

2 Peter, the book that warns for a whole chapter about false teachers, begins the book declaring,

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

Colossians and 2 Peter confirm we need no addition to the Bible (see also 2 Timothy 3:16-17).¹³ **"The knowledge of Him"** gives us **"all things that pertain to life and godliness"**. Is this the significance of **"Jesus Christ [God] has come in the flesh"** (1 John 4:2)? Indeed it is, as 1 John 4 continues,

They ["every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh"] are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. (1 John 4:5)

Not Taught!

They speak as of the world. In other words, they speak "**philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world**". Such is a denial of "**Jesus Christ coming in the flesh**" (2 John 7), and such is antichrist (1 John 4:3), anti-word (John 1:1), anti-scripture (Psalm 119:21, 118), anti-God (Proverbs 1:24-29).¹⁴

So, in Charles' Gnostic addition to the Word he diverts people away from the message of Scripture off onto a man-made insertion of Gnosticism into the text.

IV. No Subtractions

As nothing is to be added, nothing is to be taken away (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32, Revelation 22:18-19). Nevertheless, as ungodly people seek only rebellion (Proverbs 17:11), they rebel against this as well.

The debate between Calvinism and Arminianism is a good example of both sides subtracting from the Word (and adding). Calvinists subtract from the atonement (limited atonement) and from the Biblical teaching of lost grace (e.g. Galatians 5:4). Arminians take away from the Biblical teaching of election, which takes away from the sovereignty of God and the true perseverance of the saints, and they add free will. Both sides are blind to the whole counsel of God, and so they add and take away truth from the truth of the Bible to their own destruction.

One main problem is men think too highly of their own thoughts and overtly disobey Proverbs 3:5 which says,

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.

There are many things in the Word which seem contradictory to the human mind (e.g. see our report on [eternal security](#)), but the human mind is not the standard. The Word is the standard, no matter what it says (Hebrews 4:12-13). One passage cannot subtract from another. It all stands true. Someone may argue, "But that doesn't make sense." It doesn't have to make sense (Proverbs 3:5-6). It has to be Biblical. "**His ways are past finding out**" (Romans 11:33). Do you think, perhaps, there may be some things that are past understanding and don't make sense? "**His understanding is infinite**" (Psalm 147:5). Ours is finite and vastly unlike His.

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9)

Since His thoughts and ways are infinitely beyond our own, what folly it is to demand that something needs to make sense to our puny minds. In fact, later

in Isaiah the Lord condemns those,

who walk in a way that is not good, according to their own thoughts (Isaiah 65:2).

Some may argue logic is a rule of interpretation. The problem with this is, whose logic? "**Persuasive words of human wisdom**" (1 Corinthians 2:4), man's wisdom, man's logic, God calls foolishness (1 Corinthians 3:19-20). God indeed says, "**let us reason together**" (Isaiah 1:18), but whose reason are we going to follow? This very same passage of "**let us reason**" continues with,

Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken. (Isaiah 1:18-20)

In this reasoning, God calls people to repent and submit to His word. That is the only true logic in existence, for God, who alone is wise (Romans 16:27; 1 Timothy 1:17; Jude 25), is the only source of truth, understanding, wisdom, and knowledge. There is no good, no understanding, no true good logic apart from Him. If the logic contradicts His truth, if it takes away from His truth, it is against Logos (λογος John 1:1);¹⁵ and it is to be rejected.

Some people may appeal to "common sense." This also is an unbiblical standard (Matthew 7:1-2). For what is common is non-sense (Ecclesiastes 9:3; 1 Corinthians 1:20), and what is sense is not common (Matthew 7:13-14).

So, the standard is the Word Himself (the Scriptures) and how a passage is to be understood comes from the Bible itself, no additions and no subtractions. Whether it is to be understood as a parable or symbolic, the text itself dictates the interpretation, because there is no other authority than God on His Word. If Scripture itself dictates neither a proverb,¹⁶ parable,¹⁷ riddle,¹⁸ sarcastic,¹⁹ symbolic, spiritual, antitype,²⁰ or allegorical²¹ understanding (as in Galatians 4:24; Revelation 11:8; 13:17; etc.), then it should not be understood in those ways, but taken as is. In fact, this is the literal approach. The text holds all the authority of interpretation. This is the only honest approach to Scripture. Anything else comes from the mind of man, and he is fallen, "**deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked**" (Jeremiah 17:9).

Endnotes:

1. www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hermeneutic

2. *ibid.*

3. NKJV does not do well at translating John 8:33. NKJV reads, "**The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for**

Not Taught!

blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God." The Jews were obviously dead set against Christ's claim to be God. There is no way they meant it the way the NKJV has it, with capitalization for "You" (twice), "Man" and "Yourself". This capitalization dictates deity, and the Jews were in no way acknowledging Christ as God.

4. See also Genesis 30:2; Deuteronomy 4:39; 1 Kings 8:60; 2 Kings 19:15 (Isaiah 37:16); Job 9:8 (Isaiah 44:24); Psalm 83:18; 86:8-10; 136:4; 148:13; Isaiah 45:5-6, 14, 18, 21-22; 46:9; **Ezekiel 28:2**; 1 Timothy 6:16; Revelation 15:4.

5. Scripture calls men gods in Psalm 82, and it calls angels gods in Psalm 8:5 ("angels" in the Hebrew is **אֱלֹהִים** ['elohiyim], "gods." Compare w/Hebrews 2:7). Note also Psalm 97:7; 138:1; 132:2; Deuteronomy 10:17. See also in the Hebrew text Exodus 21:6; 22:7-8 (English vs. 8-9) in which **אֱלֹהִים** ('elohiyim) is typically translated "judges".

6. The Greek word for "broken" in John 10:35, **λυθῆναι** (luthênai), can also be translated "loosed" (e.g. **λυθῆναι**, Luke 13:16; Revelation 20:3) or "destroyed" (e.g. John 2:19, **λυσάτε** [lusate]). It is translated "break" elsewhere as well (e.g. Matthew 5:19, **λυσῆ** [lusê]).

7. acutely - "marked by keen discernment or intellectual perception"
(www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/acutely)

8. Jesus was a man of faith (Hebrews 12:2), and even He was saved. He didn't have any sin of His own to be saved from (Hebrews 4:15), but became sin itself (2 Corinthians 5:21). Even though "**it was not possible that He should be held by**" the pains of death (Acts 2:23), and He had the power to take back His life (John 10:18), He nonetheless was saved from death. As it is written of Him,

who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear (Hebrews 5:7).

9. 2 Peter 1:20 more literally reads, "knowing this first, that all prophecy of Scripture is not of one's own interpretation." **τοῦτο πρῶτον γινώσκοντες, ὅτι πᾶσα προφητεία γραφῆς ἰδίας ἐπιλωσεως οὐ γίνεται.**

10. www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/literal

11. This is how Romans 4:1 reads in the Received and Majority Texts. The New American Standard Version translates the Critical Text of Romans 4:1 with,

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? (NAS)

Not Taught!

(antitupos) "antitype" is a compound word. Αντι (anti) means "in stead of" (e.g. Matthew 2:22; Luke 11:11; James 4:15) or "for" (e.g. Matthew 5:38 [2x]; 17:27; 20:28; Mark 10:45) or "because" (e.g. Luke 1:20; 19:44; Acts 12:23), and τυπος (tipos) means "print" (e.g. John 20:25 [2x]); "image" (e.g. Acts 7:43); "pattern" (Acts 7:44; Philippians 3:17; Titus 2:7; Hebrews 8:5); "type" (e.g. Romans 5:14); "form" (e.g. Romans 6:17; Acts 23:25 more literally, "containing this form" - περιεχουσαν τον τυπον τουτον); "examples" (1 Corinthians 10:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:7; 1 Peter 5:3); "example" (2 Thessalonians 3:9; 1 Timothy 4:12).

21. Allegory is mentioned in Galatians 4:24 using the Greek participle αλληγορουμενα (allêgoroumena) for "allegory" (KJV).

Holidays

As western society well illustrates, being against Christmas is not the norm. Yet, when Scripture is applied, this *is* the Biblical conclusion.



Introduction

Like a cage is full of birds (Jeremiah 5:27), so the “Christian” community is full of deceit (2 Timothy 4:3), and the Christmas celebration is just one small sampling of the deception of this age (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

Christmas is a “holy” day for the ungodly Catholic church and a holiday for much of the world. It should be obvious that Santa Claus is a false god. “He sees you when you’re sleeping. He knows when you’re awake. He knows if you’ve been bad or good.” Proverbs 15:3 says,

The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.

Yet, they attribute such things to Santa.

Nevertheless, for the vast majority of those who claim to be Christians, Christmas is supposed to be a day set aside to worship Christ in remembrance of His birth. But, is this worship accepted by God? No.

Not Taught!

I. A False Christ

The celebration of Christmas is supposed to be the celebration of Christ's birth, but this is a lie. The world is deceived (Revelation 12:9), "Christians" included. The world is "**undiscerning**" (Romans 1:31), "Christians" included. They do not know the times (Luke 18:8; 2 Timothy 3:1-5), nor the reality of the prevailing false Christianity around them (2 Timothy 4:3-4; 2 Peter 2:2) and the false Jesuses espoused therein (Romans 1:18-23). The Jesus of Christmas is just one of the many false Christ's and false gods that prevail in the hearts of men (Romans 1:18-23).

The Christ of Christmas is loved by the world. It's quite evident as the world celebrates Christmas. You can hear about it as they sing about him at Christmas time. The Christmas songs are in their churches, in the speakers at the grocery stores (e.g. "Away in a Manger"), and in various public venues. They worship him with manger scenes, Christmas trees, give gifts to one another ("Merry Christmas"), and engulf themselves in the "spirit of Christmas." The cities light up with great decorations, have Christmas parades, and people adorn their homes with lights and decor and statues. They say, "He is the reason for the season." He is indeed, because he is of the world.

Jesus said to his disciples,

If you were of the world, the world would love its own. (John 15:19)

When you see a "Christ" that is celebrated *by* the world, you are looking at a Christ that is *of* the world. The world loves its own. And, when we say "world" we include the so-called "Christian" world, for they are of the world. And, if it is a "Christ" of the world, it is a "Christ" of the Devil, the ruler of the world (John 14:30; 1 John 5:19). The real Christ is *not* of the world (John 17:14). The Christ of Christmas is.

The world hates the true Christ (John 3:19-20), especially those in the correct religion (e.g. Luke 6:7). The world crucified Him when He was here last time (John 18-19), and they will war against Him when He returns (Revelation 19:11-21). They do not like Him or His ways. They are "**haters of God**" (Romans 1:30). That's one reason why they seek only rebellion (Proverbs 17:11). Christmas is just one small example of their deceptive rebellious ways.

So many are lead astray, deceived, and simple-minded (Proverbs 14:15) because the term "Christ" is used, and because the claim is made they are celebrating the virgin birth. But, just because the name "Jesus" or "Christ" is used, that doesn't mean it truly refers to the God of Scripture (the real Christ).

Paul spoke of "**another Jesus**" in 2 Corinthians 11:4. Jesus warned about false Christs in Matthew 24:24. There's a "**Jesus**" who was called "**Justus**" in Colossians 4:11 who is not the Savior. False preachers prophesy in the name of

Jesus (Matthew 7:21-23). In the OT the golden calf was called “**the Lord**” or “**Yahweh**” (יהוה Exodus 32:5). False prophets prophesied in the name of the real God, Yehvah (or Yahweh, יהוה; e.g. 2 Chronicles 18:10-11). Just because a claim is made or a term is used, and it appears to be Biblical; that doesn't mean it's true.

Christmas is about a false Christ. The spirit of Christmas (or the Yuletide spirit) is about a false spirit. It is not the *Holy* Spirit of the real Biblical Christ. If it was, it would be holy (Revelation 3:7), “**separate**” from the world (Hebrews 7:26). But, it is not separate (holy) from the world, but engulfed in it, as the world, be it pagans, Catholics, different denominations, and “Christians” all over (who are of the devil, as in John 8:44), celebrate what is called the birth of Christ.

Thus, the Christ of Christmas is a demon. Although the claim is made that they are celebrating the birth of Christ, that is a lie. In the Word of God, when there is a false god, it is identified as a demon (see e.g. 1 Corinthians 10:20). The celebration of Christmas is, in truth, idolatry, the worship of a false god/christ. It is the celebration of a “Jesus” that was never born Savior of the world, never died on the cross for the sins of mankind, and never rose from the dead to live forevermore. He is an impostor that the world has gone after, and not surprisingly. Satan deceives the whole world (Revelation 12:9). He has done a good job via Christmas.

Christmas is traditionally Catholic, which is a religion 1 Timothy 4 identifies as “**giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons**” (1 Timothy 4:1-3). No surprise then, Christmas is a demonic celebration. It is no wonder the world is so into Christmas, as they are all, “Christians” and non-Christians alike, under “**the power of Satan**” (Acts 26:18).

II. Idolatry

O Christmas Tree! O Christmas Tree!
Thy leaves are so unchanging;

O Christmas Tree! O Christmas Tree!
Much pleasure thou can'st give me;

For the customs of the peoples are futile; for one cuts a tree from the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. They decorate it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and hammers so that it will not topple. (Jeremiah 10:3-4)

Do you see any similarity to the idolatry of the past and the idolatry of today?

Psalm 24 asks,

Not Taught!

Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? (Psalm 24:3)

The answer?

He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully. (Psalm 24:4)

Most people don't realize how subtle and deceptive idolatry can be. For example, simply being covetous is idolatry (Colossians 3:5). A man who is not content with what he has, but wants more, is a covetous man (according to Hebrews 13:5) and is thus an idolator. That simple equation in the heart damns the soul. As it is written,

For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. (Ephesians 5:5)

When idolatry can be so deceptive and subtle, people ought to think a little more about what they are doing.

Though the Christ that is exalted at Christmas time appears to be the Christ of the Bible, he is actually an idol (a demon). Christmas is nothing God's children should be participating in. Paul wrote to the Corinthians,

You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. (1 Corinthians 10:21)

Foolish men think they can (e.g. Zephaniah 1:5), but God says they *cannot*. He takes no rivals.⁸ Idolatry is to be fled (1 Corinthians 10:14), as the last verse in the book of first John says,

Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen. (1 John 5:21)

Idolaters go to the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). It is no small matter.

Just as the Lord destroyed Nadab and Abihu, so He will burn forever any and all who heed not His warning and do not live a holy life (1 Peter 1:15-16). It's a matter of holy living before God and not following after the world in the worship of God (Romans 12:1-2). The world will lead you to hell. That's where they are going (Revelation 20:11-15).

God has called His people to "**abhor what is evil**" (Romans 12:9) "**and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them**" (Ephesians 5:8-11).

Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of

the Lord is. (Ephesians 5:17)

John MacArthur wrote in his booklet, *Six Ways Satan Is Stealing Christmas*,

If you've been missing the reality of Christmas in your life, know that if you receive the Lord Jesus Christ and believe in His name, Christmas will become real to you. (p. 20)

No doubt unwittingly (2 Timothy 3:13), MacArthur wants a demon to become real to people.

It is fascinating how Satan works and how crafty he is (Genesis 3:1). MacArthur's book is titled, *Six Ways Satan Is Stealing Christmas*, but it is not stealing to take what is already yours. But, that is what the enemy of your soul would have you believe. That is, that Christmas is somehow sanctified, but the commercialism and materialism (or whatever the argument might be) has corrupted the sanctity of this holiday. But the reality is, it is simply corruption piled upon corruption. There is no godliness in it.

For the discerning eye (Proverbs 14:15b), when a false teacher like MacArthur (and so *many* others) argue for the “goodness” of Christmas, that, by itself, should cause a moment of pause and serious consideration that there might be poison in the Kool-Aid.

III. Not Commanded But Forbidden

Jesus said in John 4:24,

God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

"**The Lord of all the earth**" (Joshua 3:11)¹ *requires*, even *demand*s ("must")² that we worship Him "**in . . . truth**." He does not accept, He even rejects, those who do not do so, as it is written,

I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.*³(Revelation 22:13-15)

Christmas is a lie.

Foolish men, those who heed not Jesus' serious warning here in John 4:24; Revelation 22:13-15; and elsewhere (see below), think it no big deal to worship in the way they please (as in Isaiah 65:2 "**according to their own thoughts,**"

Not Taught!

and Matthew 15:8-9). But, God is not pleased with worship that is according to the thoughts of men (see below). Our thoughts are not His thoughts (Isaiah 55:6-9). And, if the Lord is not pleased, He becomes furious (e.g. Nahum 1:2)⁴ and serious trouble comes from the Almighty, as it is written:

Therefore I will number you for the sword, and you shall all bow down to the slaughter; because, when I called, you did not answer; when I spoke, you did not hear, but did evil before My eyes, and chose *that* in which I do not delight." (Isaiah 65:12)

So will I choose their delusions,⁵ and bring their fears on them; because, when I called, no one answered, when I spoke they did not hear; but they did evil before My eyes, and chose *that* in which I do not delight." (Isaiah 66:4)

As Isaiah makes clear, it is “evil” in God's eyes to do that ”in which” He does “not delight.” As should be evident, the “**God of heaven and the God of the earth**” (Genesis 24:3) does not delight in Christmas.

The Lord has not given us the freedom to worship Him any way we choose. Nadab and Abihu learned this the hard way, that God does not accept worship that is the invention of man.

Leviticus 10 records for us the utter destruction that can come from the Almighty when men worship Him in a way in “**which He had not commanded them.**”

Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying: `By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified.'" So Aaron held his peace. (Leviticus 10:1-3)

Notice again the word “must.” As Jesus said,

those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.
(John 4:24)

What's the problem here in Leviticus 10? Why is this worship rejected by the Almighty, and why did Nadab and Abihu get roasted? Because they worshiped Him in a manner in “**which He had not commanded them.**”

The “**profane fire**” in Leviticus 10:1 is more literally, “**strange fire**” (e.g.

KJV).6 It was foreign to what God had commanded.

God does not change (Malachi 3:6). These things “**were written for our learning**” (Romans 15:4), and He explicitly commands,

Do not turn to the right or the left; remove your foot from evil. (Proverbs 4:27)

This is how we “**remove [our] foot from evil.**” We follow His Word and go neither to the right or the left of what He says. He has commanded that we don't even ***think*** beyond what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6). He takes His worship very seriously. Jesus meant what He said (John 4:24).

Hebrews 13:9 says,

Do not be carried about with various and strange7 doctrines.

The celebration of Christmas is “**strange**” to the Word of God. It is foreign to holy writ. Paul warned,

Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. (Colossians 2:8)

Christmas is a tradition of men. There is no Christmas celebration in the Bible, nor a holy day for the birth of Christ. God has explicitly warned us not to follow men and their ways (Colossians 2:8). He has specifically warned us not to follow after the world.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1-2)

How do we “**prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God**”? By not being “**conformed to this world**” and living a holy life according to His Word.

Remember what the Lord said in Leviticus 10?

By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy.

1 Chronicles 16:29; Psalm 29:2; 96:9 all command,

worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

Not Taught!

It is not holy to follow after the practices of the world in the worship of God.

The Lord warned the Israelites in Deuteronomy 12 of this very thing.

These are the statutes and judgments which you shall be careful to observe in the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth. You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations which you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. And you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and burn their wooden images with fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods and destroy their names from that place. You shall not worship the LORD your God with such things. (Deuteronomy 12:1-4)

It's quite obvious the Lord did not want Israel to have anything to do with false gods or anything connected to them. He wanted such things destroyed. And, He specifically says, "**You shall not worship the LORD your God with such things.**" Or, as the KJV has it (more literally),

Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God (Deuteronomy 12:4 KJV).

Do what? Worship God the way the pagans worship their gods, as Deuteronomy 12 ends with,

When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, "How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise." You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it. (Deuteronomy 12:29-32)

The Lord says, "**You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way.**" In what way? Like the "**nations serve their gods.**" In other words, God does not want to be worshiped like the false religions do their worship. He wants to be worshiped in accordance to His Word (Proverbs 13:13; 30:5-6; John 4:23).

Catholicism is a false religion. And, although historically Christmas comes from the Catholics, and historically the Catholics followed after the pagan idolatrous customs of their times in the celebration of Christmas, nevertheless,

today this is one of the ways the Catholics worship their false Christ, via Christmas. It does not please God.

Likewise, [Protestantism is a false religion](#). Historically, it's an offshoot of Catholicism, and even today Catholics and Protestants often reference the same false teachers of the past (e.g. Augustine, early church fathers, etc.). Christmas is just one example of the many false doctrines they have in common.

True worship, worship "in . . . truth," comes from the dictates of His Holy Word, the Bible. Christmas is worship that follows the dictates of man in his false religion. It is the "**tradition of men**" (Colossians 2:8).

IV. Evil In and Of Itself?

December 25th is no more evil than any other day of the year. All the days are evil (Ephesians 5:16). Moreover, a pine tree is not an evil thing (Romans 14:14), nor decorative lights, the colors red and green, or a red and white suit with a long red and white beanie with a white ball on the end. There is nothing evil in and of itself (Romans 14:14).

In 1 Corinthians 8 Paul even goes so far as to say that an idol is nothing (1 Corinthians 8:4) and rhetorically says the same for what is sacrificed to idols in 1 Corinthians 10:19. It is not that a wooden statue is evil in and of itself, or that meat that was sacrificed to an idol is evil in and of itself. The problem is the spiritual reality behind it. It is what it stands for, what it is about, that is the problem, as Paul wrote to the Corinthians,

What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. (1Corinthians 10:19-20)

In 1 Corinthians 8 Paul says a believer with knowledge could actually sit down and eat in an idolatrous temple (1 Corinthians 8:4-10). Because, after all, an idol is nothing and what is sacrificed to it is nothing. It's just meat, and the idol is just wood (or stone, etc.). But, Paul doesn't stop there. In his mentioning of this "**liberty**," he warns against it.

But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. (1Corinthians 8:9-12)

Not Taught!

Thus, Paul argues twice over against association with idolatry. First, even though the items themselves, in and of themselves, are not evil, if it appears you do associate with them, others might be emboldened to actually be *involved* with them and actually participate in idolatry (1 Corinthians 8:4-12). Second, Paul finally concludes to "**flee from idolatry**" (1 Corinthians 10:14), because of the spiritual reality behind it (demons, 1 Corinthians 10:21).

In and of themselves, there is nothing wrong with giving gifts or having a feast, but when it is done in the name of a false christ (idolatry), it is to be opposed (Romans 12:9). As the true Christ condemned the "Christians" of Pergamos and Thyatira for eating things in the name of an idol (Revelation 2:14, 20), so should we oppose that which is done in the name of this modern, yet deceptive, practice of idolatry called Christmas.

For more on the truth of God's Word and the utter corruption in the world, especially what is called "Christianity" today, please take a serious look (in the Spirit of Proverbs 2:1-6 & Acts 17:11) at our [Statement of Faith](#), particularly the intro and first three points.

May the Lord direct you into His truth.

Endnotes

1"**Lord of all the earth**" in the Hebrew is אֲדוֹן כּוֹל-הָאָרֶץ ('adon kol-hâ'ârets). This same phrase in reference to the one and only true God is also found in Joshua 3:13 & Zechariah 6:5.

2The Greek word for "**must**" is δεῖ (dei) and it means exactly that, *must*. In other words, it means "**It is necessary**," as the NKJV translates this same word in Acts 15:5.

3"**a lie**" ψεῦδος (pseudos), KJV; NKJV. It can also be translated "falsehood" (e.g. ESV)

4**God is jealous, and the LORD avenges; the LORD avenges and is furious. The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies;** (Nahum 1:2). What is translated "**furious**" in this verse is in the Hebrew בַּעַל חַמָּה (ba'al ch'êmâh), more literally, "Lord" or "owner of fury."

5"**So will I choose their delusions**" - As in Isaiah, God has indeed chosen for the world to be deluded and deceived about Christmas, just as He will chose their demise and deception in the future (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12).

6"**strange fire**" עֵשׂ זָרָה ('esh zârâh) – In Exodus 30:9 the Lord forbids "**strange incense**" קֶטֶר זָרָה (qetoret zârâh), but in Leviticus 10:1 (see also Numbers 3:4; 26:61) it is "**strange fire**."

7"**strange**" ξέναις (xenais) feminine plural – used elsewhere in the masculine form for "**stranger**" (e.g. Matthew 25:32 ξένος) or "**foreigners**" (e.g. Acts

17:21 ξένοι) or in the neuter for “**strange**” (e.g. 1 Peter 4:12 ξένου).

[8](#) Exodus 20:3; Isaiah 44:6; Hosea 13:4

Email Exchange On Christmas

From: [DJ Mankiewicz](#)

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2014 8:14 PM

To: feedback@atruechurch.info

Subject: Questions about Christmas

Atruechurch,

Hello again. Forgive me if I've missed something, but I have a few questions about your teaching on Christmas if you don't mind.

1. You wrote, "**People celebrate Christmas, because they have been influenced by the wicked world around them.**" All people? How do you know this? (Catholicism notwithstanding of course).
2. You also wrote, "**The world loves the Christ of Christmas.**" This has not been my observation. Most people I've observed in my life are made very uncomfortable at the very mention of the word "Christ" or "Jesus" or manger scenes or songs with the word "Christ" in them, and so forth, even at a Christmas celebrations (I don't celebrate Christmas, but most of my family and friends do). I've observed that people generally love the tradition of exchanging gifts, but the vast majority of them do not seem to love the Christ of Christmas. Am I wrong?
3. If one rejects Catholic doctrines and simply decides to "celebrate the birth of Christ" and decides to do so on the 25th of December, (as most Americans have that day off of work) with the name Christmas on the day, is that wicked?
4. Citing Col. 2:8, are the "traditions of men" (Christmas) inherently wicked if in being observed they do not interfere with God's commands? Like the tradition of saying "bless you" when someone sneezes? Or saying "merry Christmas" on Dec. 25th?
5. If someone arbitrarily picked a day to celebrate Pentecost and did so every year, would that be a wicked "tradition of men?"
6. Are all Easter celebrations wicked?
7. Is wearing green, Irish symbols on St. Patrick's day wicked if that person rejected Catholicism and its claims about "St. Patrick?"
8. Would one putting up a Christmas tree and decorating it be wicked if he did

Not Taught!

not worship said tree by singing to it and so forth?

9. I don't understand how one can universally declare Christmas celebrations wicked without judging someone based on a "religious festival" (Col. 2:16). If that specific festival had inherently immoral practices therein (which I'm sure a lot do), then I believe the judgment should be on that particular practice rather than the holiday. Am I wrong about this?

Thanks again for listening (James 1:19) and replying to so many of my questions. Your previous replies helped a lot.

-Brian

From: [Darwin Fish](#)

Sent: Sunday, May 4, 2014 8:03 AM

To: [DJ Mankiewicz](#)

Subject: Re: Questions about Christmas

Thank you for the email.

Your questions remind me of a young teenage girl who once asked, "Is it wrong for me and my boyfriend to lie innocently naked together in bed?" In substance she was asking, "How close to sin can we get and still be ok?" You're not ok, if you want to get close to sin (yet, supposedly not sin).

The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; (Proverbs 8:13)

not to cozy up next to it. As the Proverb exhorts the young man,

Remove your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house (Proverbs 5:8).

The young man could argue that he is just wanting to talk to her and see what she is like, etc.. There's nothing wrong with talking with her is there?

Just as youthful lusts are to be fled (2 Timothy 2:22 "**flee**"), so idolatry is to be fled (1 Corinthians 10:14 "**flee**"). Christmas is idolatry (both with Santa Claus and "Christ").

1. Thank you for this question. It provoked me to change the wording in that paragraph. Here is what I changed it too.

The people in the world are wicked, every last one of them (Psalm 14), including "Christians." The "**prince of the power of the air**" is working in every one of them (Ephesians 2:2), and when you see a religious holiday, a religious tradition of men, and form of worship that is not in the Word of God, "**not according to Christ**" (Colossians 2:8), it is Satanic (1 John

5:19; Revelation 12:9). It is that simple.

2. The “world” includes the “Christian” world, which is false and massive. They say there’s about a billion Catholics and about another billion Protestants (term loosely used), and Mormons (about 15 million) and other “Christian” sects. Moreover, the world is filled with hypocrites (“Christians” and non-Christians alike). They’ll celebrate a holiday which is about the birth of “Christ,” but then some will say they don’t believe in “Christ” (even though they celebrate the holiday). They celebrate a holiday (Christmas) about the coming of a false god (Santa Claus), but then say they don’t believe in Santa Claus. Therein is an example of Satan’s deception (Revelation 12:9), as they do his will (2 Timothy 2:26). Don’t be deceived by what’s coming out of their mouths (Romans 3:13) or even their actions. Ecclesiastes says,

People know neither love nor hatred by anything they see before them. (Ecclesiastes 9:1)

Such things are only discernable via the Word of God (Psalm 119:97-100).

A graphic illustration of this and the intense deceptive nature of man (which is more deceptive than anything else in existence, and desperately wicked, Jeremiah 17:9), is found in Jesus’ condemnation of the more Biblically minded (from what is written, e.g. Acts 23:8) religious leaders of His day, the Pharisees, and the condemnation of the scholars of His day, the scribes. He said to them,

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, “If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.” Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. (Matthew 23:29-31)

Jesus unmasks the wickedness of their actions and exposes their evil murderous hearts, which, of course, was the exact opposite of their claim. How were they witnesses against themselves? Because they built the tombs and adorned the monuments of the godly. To men, their words and actions depict they loved the prophets and didn’t like that they were murdered. Jesus points out their actions actually condemn them and reveal the exact opposite of what they were saying. They too were murderers. They were into the deaths of godly men. [By the way, these Pharisees and scribes of yesterday are equivalent to the “Christian” leaders and scholars (theologians) of today. “Jewish” = “Christian” (Biblically) in the substance of the correct religion. Salvation is of the Jews (John 4:22; Romans 2:28-29; 11; Galatians 3:8). There has always been, and ever will be, only one way (e.g. Romans 4:3; Hebrews 11:4;

Not Taught!

Revelation 22:14). And historically (Biblical history that is) within that one way there have been false believers from the beginning, beginning with the first recorded murderer, Cain (Genesis 4:3; 1 John 3:12; see also e.g. Psalm 78:34-37; Jeremiah 2:8; Matthew 7:21-23; etc.).]

Jesus likewise said to the lawyers,

Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. In fact, you bear witness that you approve the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs. (Luke 11:47-48)

Again, what would appear to men as sympathetic of the deaths of the prophets, Christ reveals the reality was just the opposite. They actually hated the prophets and liked the fact that they were murdered. The building of the tombs proved it. Who would have such discernment apart from the Word of God (Psalm 119:104)?

As Christ condemned the actions of these men, Christ will condemn those who involve themselves with Christmas, whatever their claim and whatever they appear to believe, as He condemns those who “**eat things sacrificed to idols**” (Revelation 2:14, 20). Being involved with idolatry damns the soul (1 Corinthians 6:9-10 “idolaters”). People can claim whatever they want, say whatever they want, and even act however they want. It doesn’t make it so. So, Paul says, “**flee**” (1 Corinthians 10:14). Fleeing does not equate to playing footsies with it.

3. Why would you do so? Because you are following after the ways of the world (whether you realize it or not), not because the Word of God has so compelled you.

4. a. With Christmas we are dealing with the *religious* “traditions of men.” Yes, those are inherently wicked, as they exist and are practiced in the suppression of truth (Romans 1:18). The very reason they exist is because they know about the real God, but hate Him, and have turned to idols, false gods (Romans 1:18-23), which includes religious traditions of men (Mark 7:6-7; John 8:44). Both Santa Claus and the “Christ” of Christmas are false gods, idols. They exist because they have turned their ears away from truth (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

b. If it was some religious tradition or old wives’ tale (1 Timothy 4:7), then it should be rejected. But, simply to bless is a Biblical concept (Matthew 5:44).

c. David said,

Their sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten after another god; their drink offerings of blood I will not offer, nor take up their names on my lips. (Psalm 16:4)

5. Yes. Pentecost was a holiday in which they worshiped God, and with it came
444

specific commands, especially on the timing thereof. Pentecost is a transliteration of the Greek word πεντηκοστής (pentêkostês) found in Acts 2:1 (also only in Acts 20:16; 1 Corinthians 16:8). Πεντηκοστής (pentêkostês) is the feminine form of the word for “fifty.” In the Greek translation of the OT, the Septuagint (LXX), in Leviticus 25:10-11 it has πεντηκοστόν (pentêkostov) for the “fiftieth” year. See Leviticus 23:16 LXX where πενήκοντα (pentêkosta) is “fifty.” In Leviticus 23:15f fifty days (seven Sabbaths, seven weeks) were to be counted from the day the firstfruits were offered, and then a new grain offering was to be made. Deuteronomy 16:9-10 likewise notes seven weeks were to be counted “**from the time you begin to put the sickle to the grain.**” This same event is noted as the Feast of Weeks in Exodus 34:22; Numbers 28:26; Deuteronomy 16:16; and 2 Chronicles 8:13.

It clearly would have been sin for the Israelites to arbitrarily pick a day to celebrate Pentecost, for God specifically told them,

Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it. (Deuteronomy 12:32)

We are likewise commanded (Proverbs 4:27; Colossians 2:8). “**Not according to Christ**” in Colossians 2:8 equals, “**not according to the Word of God.**” Christ is the Word of God (Revelation 19:13). The Scripture (Galatians 3:8) and Jesus are One and the same (John 1:1, 14; 5:22; Hebrews 4:12-13). The Word of God (Scripture) was crucified on the cross (Colossians 2:14).

6. Yes, Easter is no different than Christmas when it comes to the worship of God (Proverbs 4:27; John 4:24; Colossians 2:8). Yet, *everything* the lost do is wicked (Proverbs 21:4c), because it is not in faith; “**for whatever is not from faith is sin**” (Romans 14:23c). They seek *only* rebellion (Proverbs 17:11). They do not seek God (Romans 3:11).

7. Green is not an evil color on any day (Romans 14:14). But, the “saints” of Catholicism are false gods. They pray to their saints. If the celebration is a celebration of this nature, then it would be involving idolatry (demonic).

8. Would one putting up a statue of Satan and decorating it be wicked if he did not worship said statue by singing to it and so forth?

I suggest you take a good look at how idols were dealt with by some godly men of the past. Moses burned the calf and ground it to powder (Exodus 32:20). That calf represented the true God (Exodus 32:1-5), but Moses destroyed it. Gideon destroyed his fathers altar of Baal and destroyed the wooden image via the command of God (Judges 6:25-27). Josiah went on a rampage destroying the idolatrous images and the things connected to them (2 Kings 23). Jehu, though yet a wicked man (2 Kings 10:29, 31), pleased God, in part, because he destroyed items connected to the worship of Baal (2 Kings

Not Taught!

10:26-28). All of this reveals a hatred for such things. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil (Proverbs 8:13).

9. The things mentioned in Colossians 2:16 are identified in the next verse (vs. 17) as “**a shadow of things to come.**” It is a reference to the old covenant law, which Hebrews likewise says,

For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. (Hebrews 10:1)

Therefore, the “**festival**” being spoken of in Colossians 2:16 is a reference to an OT festival. We have the freedom to celebrate those if we would like to (or not celebrate). Many of the early believers did celebrate them, as they were “**zealous for the law**” (Acts 21:20).

From: [DJ Mankiewicz](#)

Sent: Sunday, May 4, 2014 10:14 PM

To: [Darwin Fish](#)

Subject: Re: Questions about Christmas

Thank you very much for your reply. I've been meditating on the verses you mentioned (Psalm 1:2). I'm not sure I completely understand the Lev. 10 concept; so if you' don't mind, I have a some follow-up questions with a qualifying anecdote.

My email reminded you of a teenage girl asking about lying naked with her boyfriend, but your reply reminded me of when I was told drinking alcohol was immoral because it is "closer to sin" than having no alcohol (I was told going into a bar was sinful for the same reason). I fully agree that it is good to warn of the danger in any of these three examples and to encourage believers to "flee" (1 Tim 6:11) from "foolish and harmful desires" (6:9), but we're talking about something you claim God condemns as a sin **in and of itself**. So I'm trying to determine exactly where "what is written" (1 Cor 4:6) ends and where "human rules" (Mark 7:7) begin. That said:

1. We know Nadab & Abihu approached God in a way that did not regard him as holy. Are you sure Nadab and Abihu's strange fire didn't violate some other command / precedent God had already given or command / precedent God would reveal further along in scripture? Perhaps something having to do with fire or incense or specifically pertaining to the priesthood?

2. Are you sure that this is God's reaction to *any* form of worship he did not specifically command? Or could it pertain specifically to sacrifices / offerings (ex. Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:5)?

3. It's been my understanding that believers are commanded to worship God every minute of the day in every action (1 Cor. 10:31). If this is so, then how can someone do anything whatsoever God did not specifically command him to do without worshipping him in a "strange" (Lev. 10:1) way? For example, God never commanded anyone to gamble, but you maintain that gambling is not a wicked practice. How is gambling different than throwing a party on December 25th in recognition of *the real Christ's* birth (I haven't noticed you claiming birthday parties are wicked) if one were to do so *in truth* (if that is possible)? Christmas tree, Santa Clause and antichrist worship notwithstanding of course.

"Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20).

From: [Darwin Fish](#)

Sent: Thursday, May 8, 2014 12:06 PM

To: [DJ Mankiewicz](#)

Subject: Re: Questions about Christmas

Thank you for the email. Because of your questions, I edited the article some and added a section at the end of the article addressing the "in and of itself" concern. So, thank you for the questions. You might want to see that section.

The timing of your questions is fascinating to me, and I am thankful to the Lord for them. Not long before you wrote, I had completely rewrote the Christmas article. I had originally written the article over twenty years ago, and had for quite some time wanted to rewrite it; and I finally did. Then moments later you wrote. I am always open to criticism (Proverbs 12:1) or pressing questions, so thanks.

"My email reminded you of a teenage girl asking about lying naked with her boyfriend, but your reply reminded me of when I was told drinking alcohol was immoral because it is "closer to sin" than having no alcohol (I was told going into a bar was sinful for the same reason)."

That advice was obviously against the Word. Jesus made and drank alcohol (John 2; Luke 7:33-34). Drinking alcohol is not sinful, and we are not told to flee it. We are actually encouraged to drink it (Deuteronomy 14:26; Ecclesiastes 9:7; 1 Timothy 5:23). Conversely, we are told to flee both sexual immorality and idolatry. That's why the parallel is Biblical, as opposed to the unbiblical advice you were given.

"you claim God condemns as a sin **in and of itself**."

Not Taught!

Sexual immorality and idolatry God does indeed condemn as sin. It's a matter of discerning the idolatry of Christmas. Most don't see the false Christ of Catholicism or the false Christs in the churches, so they are no doubt blind to the false Jesus of Christmas. Nevertheless, you may want to see the section on idolatry again. I added some more to that touching on the deceptive nature of idolatry.

1. The closest thing to it I gave in a footnote mentioning the strange incense commanded against in Exodus 30:6. I don't know how "**which He had not commanded them**" (Leviticus 10:1) and "**you shall not add to it nor take away from it**" (Deuteronomy 12:32) could be any clearer, especially in that context where things were so specific; and Moses repeatedly told them to "**be careful**" to follow them (Deuteronomy 4:5-6; 5:1, 32 "**right or left**"; 6:2-3; 8:1; 11:32; 12:1, 32; 17:19; 26:16; 32:46).

2. In this context (worship in particular, see #3), for worship in the tabernacle and temple, yes, that couldn't be clearer (Deuteronomy 12:32). For us today, it must be according to the Word (Proverbs 4:27; Colossians 2:8). Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit, that was their error (Acts 5:3).

3. As with [gambling](#) and other issues the Bible does not specifically address, if the Word does not condemn it, neither can we. As it is written, immediately after Paul's warning about idolatry and demons,

All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. (1 Corinthians 10:23; see also 1 Corinthians 6:12; Titus 1:15)

On the other hand, the worship of God is specifically addressed time and again, and indeed, for a true believer, their entire life is to the worship of God (Romans 14:7-8; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Hebrews 13:15); which was and is true both in the OT and NT (e.g. Deuteronomy 6:5; Mark 12:30). But, just as there was specific commandments on worship in particular in the OT (like in the tabernacle and temple), so the NT has commandments specific to worship in particular. The issue of gambling is not particular to the worship of God. The Bible doesn't even address it. Whereas, for example, prayer is particular to worship (Isaiah 44:17; 45:20; Psalm 17).

And with prayer, we are instructed to "**pray without ceasing**" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Yet, Jesus, who is our perfect example to follow (1 Corinthians 11:1), ceased praying (Luke 11:1). And, we have times where the specific focus is prayer (e.g. Daniel 6:10). For example, the instructions in 1 Corinthians 11:4-16 are not at all times, but rather, when a man or a woman is praying (or prophesying). Likewise, there is worship that is all the time (Romans 12:1), and there is worship that is specifically focused (e.g. Psalm 95:6; 99:9).

For example, there is baptism (Mark 16:16), communion (1 Corinthians 11:23-26), and certain practices “**in the house of God**” (1 Timothy 3:15; 1 Corinthians 14:26-40). These are matters that are specific to the worship of God. The problem comes when we follow after the world in such things, when the particular focus is the worship of God, as in Deuteronomy 12:1-4, 29-32.

To rejoice that the Savior was born in the world is obviously not wrong (Psalm 119:162; Luke 2:13-14). Nevertheless, knowing the deceptive nature of man’s heart (Jeremiah 17:9), the easily influenced nature of man’s heart (Proverbs 13:20; 1 Corinthians 15:33), and the utter lack of Scriptural compulsion to do so, how you would not be lying to yourself and others, claiming your party on December 25th was not following after the ways of the world (Romans 12:1-2), not imitating evil (3 John 11), and still consistent with fleeing (1 Corinthians 10:14), is beyond me. But, who am I. God knows “**the thoughts and intents of the heart**” (Hebrews 4:12-13) and he will reveal them to all, sooner or later (1 Timothy 5:24; Matthew 10:26). Those who go to heaven speak the truth in their heart (Psalm 15:2), and it’s never just one issue (Matthew 6:22-23; 2 Peter 3:16).

According to man’s history, that is the very kind of thing that gave birth to Christmas (Easter, etc.). The birthday of Mithra (the sun god) was December 25. The church took pagan idolatrous practices (Mithra the sun god, etc.) and attempted to sanctify them, gave them new names, etc.. That does not please God. Paul told the idolaters of his day to “**turn from these useless things**” (Acts 14:15; see also 1 Thessalonians 1:9). He didn’t tell them to revamp, give them new names, change a few things, and then continue in their celebrations and worship. That’s the opposite of the message of Scripture.

Finally, with your December 25th party you would also risk breaching Paul’s concern in 1 Corinthians 8:10-12, giving the appearance of celebrating Christmas, and emboldening others to actually participate in the idolatry of Christmas, which would lead to hell (“**perish**” 1 Corinthians 8:11; Revelation 22:15 “**practices a lie**”).

Not Taught!

On Neither Side

Two very common theological camps are not what the Bible teaches. They are strange to Scripture (Hebrews 13:9), and so are those who follow them (as in Matthew 7:21-23).

Calvinism & Arminianism, Neither Are In The Truth

Calvinism is named after the French man John Calvin (1509-1564), and Arminianism is named after the Dutch man James (or Jacob) Arminius (1560-1609). There may be varying forms of Calvinism and Arminianism, and the differences between these two camps can become quite involved, depending on the advocates, but there are basically five points in which these systems of thought do not agree. Following the common Calvinistic acrostic "TULIP," the first point of contention is:

I. Total Depravity (or Free Will)

Calvinists contend,

. . . that man's natural state is a state of *total depravity* and therefore, there [is] a total inability on the part of man to gain, or contribute to, his own salvation. (*The Five Points Of Calvinism*, by W. J. Seaton, second printing, 1972, The Banner Of Truth Trust)

The classic Arminian position on this would concur with this statement (e.g.

Not Taught!

The Works of James Arminius, Vol. II, p. 192, VII), but would add that God, through his prevenient grace, has also given man the free will to choose to turn to God. Dr. Chris Jakway argues this from an Arminian perspective on the tape, *Scriptural Response To Calvinism*.

In book two, three five [of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*], Calvin says, "Yet, so depraved in his nature that he can be moved or impelled only to evil." So Calvin says we can only do evil. Again, making it very clear, God has not enabled us with the free will to accept or reject him.

Contemporary Calvinists say the same thing often times. Dewayne Spencer in a book called *TULIP* makes this statement. "Point one, the Arminian says that man's will is free to choose either the word of God or the word of Satan. The Calvinist's response: that unregenerate man is in absolute bondage to Satan" (as if we don't believe that, as if we don't believe sinful by nature) "and wholly incapable of exercising free will to trust in Christ."

So the first thing we need to see from Scripture is that God has indeed enabled us, through this prevenient grace, to have free will. (side 1, from Evangelical Outreach, Box 265, Washington, PA 15301; www.evangelicaloutreach.org)

The Calvinist's idea of total depravity *excludes* the idea of God giving men the free will to accept or reject Him. The Arminian's idea of total depravity *includes* this free will choice and ability, understanding that it exists *only* by the grace of God. Now, what does the Lord say?

The Lord says explicitly in regards to salvation that "**it is not of him who wills**" (Romans 9:16) nor "**of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God**" (John 1:13).

The Word teaches that man, in his lost state, seeks only rebellion (Proverbs 17:11) and does not seek God (Romans 3:11). That he is dead in his trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1-3), does evil continually (Genesis 6:5, "only"; Psalm 53:1-3; Romans 3:10-18), and is unable to do good on his own, especially any good that would lead to his salvation (Psalm 58:3; Jeremiah 13:23; Isaiah 64:5:b; Romans 11:36). But, when someone is saved, this lost state is broken, and they have the freedom to live in righteousness, by the power of God (Romans 6:2, 7, 14, 17-18, 20, 22; Ephesians 2:8-10).

Yet, it should also be noted for clarity, that a lost man could, if and when God so determined (Psalm 16:2; Romans 11:36), perform that which is truly good, yet the man may never come to salvation. For example, Ahab, in response to the Word of God, believed the prophecy concerning him and humbled himself before God (1 Kings 21:20-29).

Jehu is another example of a lost man doing good. Read 2 Kings 9:1-10:28 and you will see Jehu's "zeal for the Lord" (2 Kings 9:25-26; 36-37; 10:9-10; 10:16). At the end of this zeal, 2 Kings records,

However Jehu did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin, that is, from the golden calves that were at Bethel and Dan. And the Lord said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in doing what is right in My sight, and have done to the house of Ahab all that was in My heart, your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation." But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart; for he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, who had made Israel sin. (2 Kings 10:29-31)

The Lord says Jehu did "well in doing what is right in My sight." This is *not* the same perspective as, "all our righteousnesses are like a garment of menstruations" (Isaiah 64:6). Jehu did "all that was in [God's] heart" and what was right, so much so, that the Lord blesses him saying, "your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation."

Moreover, we know Jehu did all this in yet a lost state, because verse 29 above says, "Jehu did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam . . . from the golden calves that were at Bethel and Dan." Jehu did good, truly good, but was still lost. This righteousness which he performed gave him nothing in regards to salvation.

Now, when it comes to free will, Scripture does teach that there is such a thing as free will (e.g. Exodus 35:29; 36:3; Leviticus 22:18, 21, 23; 23:38; Psalm 119:108). But, free will is under the same umbrella as the rest of the entire creation, that is, the umbrella of Romans 11:36.

For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Nothing happens apart from God causing it to happen (Isaiah 45:7; Lamentations 3:37-38; Amos 3:6).

In fact, this is where Arminians (and some Calvinists)¹ typically have trouble. They stumble over the reality of God being the cause of sin. Randolph Foster (an Arminian, 1820-1903) in objection to "God decreed whatsoever comes to pass" argues,

And, first, I object: it renders the conclusion inevitable that God is the *author* of sin. I employ the term author in the sense of *originator* or *cause*. (*Objections to Calvinism as it is*, p. 23, copyright 1998, Schmul Publishing Co., Salem, Ohio)

Foster objects to God being the cause of sin. If all things are "of Him through Him and to Him" (Romans 11:36), then indeed, God, who is nonetheless holy and righteous in all His ways (Psalm 99:3, 5, 9; 145:17), is the cause of all things, even sin.

God Himself declares,

Not Taught!

I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things. (Isaiah 45:7, KJV)¹

Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not? Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good? (Lamentations 3:37-38, KJV)

Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it? (Amos 3:6, KJV)

Some may argue against the KJV translation of these verses, but the translation is legitimate. The Hebrew words translated "evil," רָעָה (râ'), רָעוֹת (râ'ot), and רָעוּתָהּ (râ'âh), respectively, can all be translated this way, as the KJV illustrates (note also the same Hebrew root in Exodus 32:12-14; Psalm 78:49; Jeremiah 18:8-11; 24:3, 8; 36:3; Ezekiel 6:10; and Micah 1:12 in the KJV). But, not to "strive about words" (2 Timothy 2:14), what does Isaiah ask?

O Lord, why have You made us stray from Your ways, and hardened our heart from Your fear? (Isaiah 63:17; see also 2 Samuel 12:11-12; Psalm 105:25)

Obviously, Isaiah, the prophet of God, the holy man of God who was moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21), believed that God caused the Israelites to sin ("You made us stray from Your ways"). Isaiah confirms this earlier in his book in Isaiah 30:28.

Behold, the name of the Lord comes from afar, burning with His anger, and His burden is heavy; His lips are full of indignation, and His tongue like a devouring fire. His breath is like an overflowing stream, which reaches up to the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of futility; and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err. (Isaiah 30:27-28)

Who will make sure that bridle will be there to cause the people to sin? In the context, it is the Lord.

Likewise, Isaiah 13:16 says,

Their children also will be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses will be plundered and their wives ravished.

Who, in the context, is causing these children to be dashed to pieces and these women to be raped (ravished)? It is the Lord, as it is written,

I will punish the world for its evil. (Isaiah 13:11)

Part of God's punishment toward Israel was to cause them to do something horrifically evil - eat their own children!

And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and everyone shall eat the flesh of his friend in the siege . . ." (Jeremiah 19:9; see also Lamentations 2:20; Ezekiel 5:9-10)

Note David's prayer in Psalm 141.

Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men who work iniquity; and do not let me eat of their delicacies. (Psalm 141:4)

David's words are not idle. David knew the Lord could incline his heart to do evil and "**to practice wicked works.**" In fact, even though David prayed this, the Lord nevertheless *did* incline his heart to do evil.

Again the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah." (2 Samuel 24:1)

2 Samuel 24:10-17 records that David sinned by giving this order. David indeed sinned. Who caused David to sin? The Lord "**moved David.**"²

Similarly, Peter writes,

Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone." *They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.* (1 Peter 2:7-8)

They were appointed to sin (i.e. disobedience to the word). Appointed by whom? They were appointed by God (Romans 11:36). In fact, this is the case for all mankind before salvation. God "**has committed them all to disobedience**" (Romans 11:32), and "**the Scripture has confined all under sin**" (Galatians 3:22).

The Word says, "**the wicked are estranged from the womb**" (Psalm 58:3). Who has created them that way? Is it not the Lord (Colossians 1:16)? Yes, it is. Even though Scripture says, "**that God made man upright**" (Ecclesiastes 7:29), it also says,

The Lord has made all for Himself, yes, even the wicked for the day of doom. (Proverbs 16:4; see also e.g. Revelation 17:16-17)

Thus, the God who cannot Himself lie (Titus 1:2), but sends lies (e.g. 2 Chronicles 18:18-22; 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12), is the cause of all, even lies.

Not Taught!

The God who does not Himself tempt (James 1:13), but does cause people to be tempted, both via the Devil (e.g. Matthew 4:1; 1 Corinthians 7:5) and their own evil hearts (James 1:14) that He gave them (Jeremiah 17:9; Psalm 33:15), is the cause of all, even temptation and sin.

So, when it comes to free will, there is no free will apart from God *causing* the decision to either accept or reject Him. As it is written,

O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps. (Jeremiah 10:23; see also Jeremiah 17:9/Proverbs 16:4)

A man's steps are of the Lord; how then can a man understand his own way? (Proverbs 20:24; see also Proverbs 16:9; Isaiah 26:12)

All things *are* of Him through Him and to Him (Romans 11:36). Therefore, this being understood, then there *is* free will under this canopy of God's control. His ways are past finding out (Romans 11:33), and this is one of His ways that is manifestly past finding out!

God deals with man as if he did have free will, and he does (e.g. Numbers 15:3; 29:39; Deuteronomy 12:6, 17; 16:10; 2 Chronicles 31:14; Ezra 1:4; 3:5; 7:16; 8:28), that is, with the above truth still standing. God rightly holds man responsible for his actions.

Do not be deceived. God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. (Galatians 6:7-8)

The judgment of God will be according to each one's work - "**those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation**" (John 5:29). People do indeed choose good (e.g. Joshua 24:22; Psalm 119:30; Isaiah 7:15-16; Luke 10:42) and evil (e.g. Judges 5:8; 10:14; Proverbs 1:29; Isaiah 56:4; 66:3), and the Lord will judge them accordingly (Romans 2:6-16).

For example, even though Baasha fulfilled God's word by killing Nadab and all the house of Jeroboam (1 Kings 15:25-29), the Lord nonetheless condemned Baasha for doing so (1 Kings 16:7).

Ecclesiastes 9:11 says,

The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor favor to men of skill; but time and chance happen to them all.

Given different circumstances, there are people who would have chosen good rather than evil, and would have gone to heaven, rather than hell, *because the influences in their lives would have encouraged them toward good rather than*

evil (e.g. 1 Corinthians 15:33). In other words, given a different time, or a different chance (set of circumstances), they would have chosen differently, and the result of this choosing would have eternal consequences.

For example, the Lord told Jeremiah concerning the false prophets of his day,

I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in My counsel, and had caused My people to hear My words, then they would have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doings. (Jeremiah 23:21-22)

The Lord tells Jeremiah a profound truth. If the prophets had spoken the truth, rather than lies, the people would have repented and not perished! But, instead, the prophets tried to make the people forget His name (Jeremiah 23:27), and it worked; and the people perished (Jeremiah 27:9-10).

For another example, read Luke 10:13.

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

The people of Tyre and Sidon would have repented, had they had the same circumstances (mighty works) Chorazin and Bethsaida had. But, the Lord didn't give them such a privilege, and they perished.

Knowing that certain circumstances can cause people to either accept or reject God, Jesus spoke in parables to ensure people would *not* accept Him. Jesus said to His disciples,

To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, so that "Seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand; lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them." (Mark 4:11-12)

Jesus lets his disciples know why he speaks to the people in parables, and the reason he gives is astounding! It is to prevent people from understanding His message and being saved ("lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them").

In another place we read how God made it *impossible* for people to accept Him. John 12:37-40 displays *no* free will, but rather, the exact opposite, a locked will incapable of faith. In other words, they *could not* accept God.

But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report?"

Not Taught!

And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, lest they should see with their eyes, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them."

The Lord made it so that these people *could not* believe. In other words, it was impossible for them to believe. And how did He do this? He blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts. And Why? To make sure they did not understand, repent ("turn"), and receive forgiveness ("heal them"). To make sure they did not get saved!

This way of God is certainly unsearchable (Romans 11:33). He "**desires all men to be saved**" (1 Timothy 2:4), and "**has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all**" (Romans 11:32), but He acts in ways that make sure people do not get saved! Deuteronomy beautifully illustrates this. In Deuteronomy 5:29 the Lord says,

Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever! (see also Deuteronomy 32:29)

The Lord clearly desires that they would have "**a heart in them that they would fear**" Him. Yet, Moses later points out that God did not give them "**such a heart**" so they could.

Yet the Lord has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this very day. (Deuteronomy 29:4)

So, to that very day, God had not given them the very thing they needed in order for them to do what He longed for.

Similarly, God commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30), and desires that they do (1 Timothy 2:4), yet they cannot repent unless God grants them repentance (2 Timothy 2:26; Romans 11:36); and this He only grants to a few (Matthew 7:13-14; 20:16; 22:14; Romans 9:27-29; 11:5).

So, in conclusion, it is evident, that Scripture teaches total depravity, free will, and no free will. Arminians are in error when they reject the absolute control that God has over His creation; that is, that all things are of Him through Him and to Him (Romans 11:36). Nothing happens but by God causing it to happen (e.g. Psalm 104; Proverbs 16:33), and this includes sin (e.g. Romans 1:28-31). Therefore, when Arminians maintain that God is not the cause of sin, and that man has the capability of either accepting or rejecting God *apart* from God causing the acceptance or rejection (Jeremiah 10:23; Romans 11:36), then they describe a god not of the Bible and a gospel not of holy writ.

II. Unconditional Election (or Conditional Election)

John Calvin wrote,

Predestination we call the eternal decree of God, by which he has determined in himself, what he would have to become of every individual of mankind. For they are not all created with a similar destiny; but eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. Every man, therefore, being created for one or the other of these ends, we say, he is predestinated either to life or to death. (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, book III, 21.5, p.176)

Arminians have a serious problem with this.

The Arminian Randolph Foster wrote,

All, therefore, who hold to the unconditional election of a part of mankind to eternal life must, to be consistent with themselves, take into their creed the "horrible decree of reprobation." They must believe that in the ages of eternity, God determined to create men and angels for the express purpose to damn them eternally! - that he determined to introduce sin and harden them in it that they might be fit subjects of his wrath! - that for doing as they are impelled to do by the irresistible decree of Jehovah, they must lie down forever under the scalding vials of his vengeance in the pit of hell!

To state this doctrine in its true character is enough to chill one's blood; and we are drawn by all that is rational within us to turn away from such a God with horror as from the presence of an almighty Tyrant. (*Objections to Calvinism as it is*, p. 62)

Indeed, Randolph did turn away from such a God. The problem is, he turned away from the true God.

God has certainly chosen, before time began (2 Timothy 1:9), many to eternal torment and few to eternal life (Matthew 7:13-14; Romans 9:6-28). But, the real problem between Calvinists and Arminians lies within *how* God made this choice. Calvinists contend that God's choice was not based upon whether a person would believe or not. Arminians contend it was.

In the context of predestination Calvin wrote,

. . . God is excited to mercy by no other motive than his own will to be merciful. The observation of Augustine therefore remains true, "that the grace of God does not find men fit to be elected, but makes them so." (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, book III, 22.8, p. 193)

Whom God passes by, therefore, he reprobates, and from no other cause than his determination to exclude them from the inheritance

Not Taught!

which he predestines for his children. (ibid., 23.1, p. 199)

In the context of rejecting a predestination that decrees "certain individuals to everlasting life, and others to eternal destruction, without any regard whatever to righteousness or sin, obedience or disobedience" (Vol. I, p. 614), James Arminius wrote concerning his version of predestination:

To these succeeds the Fourth decree, by which God decreed to save and damn certain particular persons. This decree has its foundation in the foreknowledge of God, by which he knew from all eternity those individuals who *would*, through his preventing grace, *believe*, and, through his subsequent grace *would persevere*, - according to the before-described administration of those means which are suitable and proper for conversion and faith; and, by which foreknowledge, he likewise knew those who *would not believe and persevere*. (*The Works of James Arminius*, Vol. I, p. 653-654, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, italics *not* added)

For even clearer words, the Arminian Dale Yocum writes in *Creeds In Contrast*,

Election unto salvation occurs as the sinner believes in Jesus Christ as his Savior. Calvin taught unconditional election from eternity, as has already been shown (Chapter 4). Individual election is from eternity in the sense that God foresees who shall believe and comply with the terms of salvation; it is actualized at the moment of saving faith in Jesus Christ. (*Creeds In Contrast, A Study in Calvinism and Arminianism*, p. 99, Schmull Publishing)

The Arminian idea of foreknowledge displays God as knowing who *would* believe and who *would not* believe, and based upon this knowledge, God therefore chose those who would believe to eternal life, and those who would not believe unto eternal destruction. The problem with this is twofold.

One, this is not God choosing man, but rather man choosing God. Jesus said to His disciples,

You did not choose Me, but I chose you (John 15:16)

They *did not* choose Christ, but rather Christ chose them. Romans 9:16 likewise declares,

It is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. (see also John 1:12-13)

Secondly, foreknowledge is nowhere described or pictured in this manner in Scripture (Proverbs 30:5-6). On the contrary, Romans 9:6-28 speaks directly

against this idea of foreknowledge. But first, note the Lord's use of "foreknowledge."

Romans 8:29 says,

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. [For every use of the Greek noun προγνωσις (prognōsis), foreknowledge, in the NT see Acts 2:23 and 1 Peter 1:2. For every use of the Greek verb προγνωσκω (prognōskō), foreknow, in the NT see Acts 26:5; Romans 8:29; 11:2; 1 Peter 1:20; and 2 Peter 3:17.]

Similarly, 1 Peter 1:2 says, "**elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.**"

Indeed, election is "**according to the foreknowledge of God,**" but does Scripture *ever* describe this foreknowledge as something that has to do with what a person "*would*" do, or rather, does it have to do with something God has predetermined to be? Jeremiah reveals the latter.

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.
(Jeremiah 1:5)

God knew Jeremiah before he was in the womb. This is a way of saying Jeremiah was destined to be saved before he was born. Because, those not known by God are condemned (see Matthew 7:23; 25:12; Luke 13:25 & 27). Those known by God are saved (e.g. Genesis 18:19; 1 Corinthians 8:3; 2 Corinthians 5:11; Galatians 4:9). Thus, God knowing, foreknowing (knowing them beforehand), equals salvation. God not knowing someone equals condemnation.

It is true that God knew what Jeremiah would do. The Lord knows all things (John 21:17; 1 John 3:20). But, all that He knows, He has decreed to be (Isaiah 46:10; Romans 11:36).

So, the significance of God knowing Jeremiah before he was in the womb has to do with the fact that God set Jeremiah apart ("sanctified") and appointed ("ordained") him to be a prophet before he was ever born. It is not that God knew what Jeremiah *would* do, whether he *would* believe, or whether he *would* obey God, and therefore God chose him to be what He knew he would be. No, God knew Jeremiah and sanctified Jeremiah and ordained Jeremiah to be a prophet. In other words, Jeremiah's life was pre-ordained and sanctified unto God before Jeremiah even existed. He was saved before he was born (as in 2 Timothy 1:9). As David wrote of his life,

Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them. (Psalm 139:16)

Not Taught!

This predestination on the life of men is illustrated in Romans 9.

For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son." 10 And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac 11 (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), 12 it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." 13 As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."

Notice verse 11 says, "**the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil.**" God's choice regarding Jacob and Esau was *not* based on *anything* they might do. It was not even based on whether they *would* believe or not, because believing is "good" (Lamentations 3:26), and verse 11 says before they had "**done any good.**" This is why the Lord gave the declaration of verse 12 *before* they were born. It was to illustrate that God's purpose according to election is not based upon any actions of the recipient, faith included. Truly, *all things are* of Him and through Him and to Him (Romans 11:36).

Again, this is where Arminians have difficulty. Dale Yocum argues,

How can a God of sincere love and faithful justice arbitrarily cause some to be saved eternally while others are condemned to hell eternally, without regard to anything in those individuals which would distinguish the one from the other? (*Creeds In Contrast*, p. 63)

The answer is found in Psalm 115:3.

Our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases. (Psalm 115:3)

James Arminius, arguing against reprobation (God's eternal decree to make people vessels of wrath) wrote,

Reprobation is an act of hatred, and from hatred derives its origin. (*The Works of James Arminius*, Vol. I, p. 627)

He was correct in this, but it is no argument to use *against* reprobation, because God Himself said,

Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated. (Romans 9:13)

This is one of the clearest statements in the Bible, but people stumble over it time and again. God has indeed loved the minority of mankind unto salvation, and has indeed hated the rest of mankind unto eternal hatred, eternal torment (Luke 13:24; 1 Peter 4:17-18; Romans 9:6-23). This does not mean that the

Lord has not and does not also love all mankind (Matthew 5:44-45; John 3:16). But, when it comes to His predestination to either mercy or wrath, God loves and hates, according to His own purpose (Romans 9:11).

Earlier we noted Randolph Foster's accusation against God as "an almighty Tyrant." Later in his book Randolph writes,

Do you shudder at this? Is your whole soul filled with just horror at the blasphemous intimation? Who, let me ask, is guilty of the enormous blasphemy? Who is it that thus charges God foolishly, nay, wickedly? Reflect, ye that hold to *unconditional election and reprobation!* How can you escape? In the sight of heaven and earth, are you not guilty? (*Objections to Calvinism as it is*, p. 73, italics in original)

Actually, Randolph is the guilty one. Paul answers such accusations in Romans 9.

What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. (Romans 9:14-18)

It all comes down to God's will. "**He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens**" (Romans 9:18).

Another argument against this is, "It destroys human accountability" (Randolph, *ibid.*, p. 75). Arminius, in arguing against reprobation stated,

From the same position we might also infer, that *God is the only sinner*. For man, who is impelled by an irresistible force to commit sin, (that is, to perpetrate some deed that has been prohibited,) cannot be said to sin himself (*The Works of James Arminius*, Vol. I, p. 630, italics in original).

Paul answers this with,

You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" (Romans 9:19)

Paul's answer?

But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? (Romans

Not Taught!

9:20)

Even though Scripture teaches that God rightly holds men accountable for their actions (Galatians 6:7-8; Psalm 96:13; Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 20:11-15), Paul gets right to the point with, "**Who are you to reply against God?**"

Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?" Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? (Romans 9:20-21)

The answer to this question is an emphatic, "Yes!"

The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein. (Psalm 24:1)

Woe to him who strives with his Maker! (Isaiah 45:9)

Everything and everybody belongs to the Lord and He can do whatever He so chooses to do with whatever or whomever He so chooses. He can, and has, made vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath, the former to display His immense love and kindness forever (Ephesians 2:7; 1 Peter 2:9), the latter to display His intense hatred for sin and sinners forever (Psalm 92:5-7; Isaiah 66:24). As Paul rhetorically asks,

What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

Some may stumble at Paul's words because his statement about vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy is put forth as a question. But note, his question is rhetorical. Moreover, if the second part (vessels of mercy) is true, so is the first (vessels of wrath).

Furthermore, Paul's words immediately after this question confirm that he speaks rhetorically.

As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, and her beloved, who was not beloved." "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' there they shall be called sons of the living God." Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved. For He will finish the work and cut it short in

righteousness, because the Lord will make a short work upon the earth." (Romans 9:22-28)

Salvation is the work of God (Ephesians 2:10), and He has decided to do "**a short work upon the earth.**" If salvation is *His* work, then so is damnation. As Psalm 92:5-7 says,

O Lord, how great are Your works! Your thoughts are very deep. A senseless man does not know, nor does a fool understand this. When the wicked spring up like grass, and when all the workers of iniquity flourish, it is that they may be destroyed forever.

This has been God's plan from the beginning (Acts 13:48; 2 Timothy 1:9; Revelation 13:8); that the wicked would flourish, and that He would destroy them forever (Revelation 21:8). Senseless people and fools do not understand this (Psalm 92:6). Arminians (i.e. those who reject this truth) are fools.

Actually, it should be no surprise that God controls the eternal destiny of every individual. He controls *every* other aspect of life, and the human experience knows this, at least in part. Did we choose the time in history in which we would be born and live? Obviously not, yet God obviously did (Acts 17:26). Did we choose to be able to speak, or hear, or see?

Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? (Exodus 4:11)

Did we choose the color of our hair, the color of our eyes, the form and beauty of our bodies (or lack thereof, e.g. Genesis 29:17), our ability to walk, or run, or do anything that we can do? No, we did not. For "**it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves**" (Psalm 100:3). Even in regards to the rich or the poor, "**The Lord is the maker of them all**" (Proverbs 22:2). "**A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps**" (Proverbs 16:9). Truly, it is *all* by the hand of God, and so it is no less with man's eternal destiny (Ephesians 1:3-5; Romans 9:6-28), as Job said,

For He performs what is appointed for me, and many such things are with Him. Therefore I am terrified at His presence; when I consider this, I am afraid of Him. (Job 23:14-15)

So, Psalm 65:4 declares,

Blessed is the man You choose, and cause to approach you, that he may dwell in Your courts.

III. Limited Atonement (or Unlimited Atonement)³

Thus far we have seen mainly the error of Arminianism. Now, in this third

Not Taught!

point, some of Calvinism's folly appears. The issue here lies with the fact that Calvinism teaches that Christ died only for the elect (i.e. limited atonement). Arminians contend Christ died for all mankind, elect and non-elect (i.e. unlimited atonement). The Arminian Dale Yocum sums it up by saying,

There is no area in which the contrast between Calvinism and Arminianism is any more definite than in consideration of the extent of the atonement. Calvinists have insisted that Christ in His death provided atonement only for the elect, as has already been illustrated. Arminius strongly opposed such a view and insisted that the atonement was provided for all men. (*Creeds In Contrast*, p. 80)

The Scriptures that Calvinists use to support their position are Scriptures that address for *whom* Christ died and the purpose for His death. For example, note the following verses.

And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21)

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. (John 10:11)

And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish." Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad. (John 11:49-52)

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. (Acts 20:28)

. . . who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, . . . (Galatians 1:4)

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, . . . (Ephesians 5:25-26)

. . . who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people,

zealous for good works. (Titus 2:14)

And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation," (Revelation 5:9)

These verses indeed reveal that Christ died for the elect, and that He died to save them; but they do *not* reveal for whom Christ did *not* die.

Other verses used by Calvinists are verses that say Christ died for many (e.g. Matthew 20:28; 26:28; Mark 10:45; Hebrews 9:28). But, again, this says nothing about for whom Christ did *not* die, and "many" is a very general term.

Actually, the arguments used to support particularly the Calvinist position can become quite involved, but the bottom line is, for whom did Christ die? Scripture is *not* unclear on this.

For 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 between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle - I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying - a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. (1 Timothy 2:3-7)

Calvinists make Paul a liar (1 John 1:10), because they reject his words. Paul says Christ "**gave Himself a ransom for all.**" Calvinists contend that he did not. They argue that this "all" does not mean "all men," but this is the very context in which it is said ("**who desires all men to be saved**"). Of course, they have to reject this "all men" also and redefine it, so that it doesn't mean what it says and thus deceive the hearts of the simple (Romans 16:17-18).

For an example of a Calvinists argument, John Owen, a puritan of old, writes,

That is not to be asserted and affirmed which the Scripture doth not anywhere go before us in; but the Scripture nowhere saith Christ died *for all men*, much less for all and every man (between which two there is a wide difference, as shall be declared): therefore, this is not to be asserted. It is true, Christ is said to give his life "a ransom for all," but nowhere for all men. (*The Works of John Owen*, Vol. 10, p. 245, in "The Death of Death")

The exact wording Owen uses, "all men," is the exact context in which 1 Timothy 2:6 proclaims, "**who gave Himself a ransom for all,**" i.e. "all men" (1 Timothy 2:4). Yet, Owen distorts the Word and continues working deceit against 1 Timothy 2:4 & 6 by saying,

Not Taught!

. . . he expressly intimates that by *all men* he understandeth men of all sorts, ranks, conditions, and orders, by distributing those *all* into several kinds, expressly mentioning some of them, as "kings and all in authority." (ibid., p. 346)

and in another place,

For our parts, by *all men* we understand some of all sorts throughout the world, . . . (ibid., p. 381)

The problem with this is, the text does not say "all sorts of men," but rather, "all men." Indeed, 1 Timothy 2:2 focuses on "**kings and all who are in authority**" after mentioning "**all men**" in verse one. But 1 Timothy 2:4 and 6 do not have any such statement in them, after them, or any qualifying statement whatsoever. The "**all men**" means exactly that, "**all men**."

If some might stumble at Mr. Owen's deceit, 1 John 2:2 should help.

And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

Here, the propitiation of Christ (the death of Christ) is stated to be not only for us, believers (e.g. 1 John 1:7; 5:13), but also for the whole world, unbelievers (e.g. 1 John 3:1, 13; 4:5; 5:19). 1 John uses this same term "**whole world**" one other time, and in this instance it is clear it means literally the whole world of the ungodly **in contrast** to believers, just as it is used in 1 John 2:2.

We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. (1 John 5:19)

"**We know that we are of God**" equals believers, "**and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one**" equals *all* unbelievers.

The typical argument against 1 John 2:2 is that the "world" is used "in a restricted, limited sense." But, it is only "restricted" when it goes through the "limited" atonement Calvinist mind. For example, Palmer writes,

The answer to this objection is that often the Bible uses the words *world* or *all* in a restricted, limited sense. They must always be interpreted in their context and in the light of the rest of Scripture. (*the five points of calvinism*, by Edwin Palmer, p. 52, copyright 1972, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI)

The Calvinists' problem here lies in that they believe in limited atonement, therefore, "in the light of the rest of Scripture" equals "through the delusion of a limited atonement theology." When stuck on the limited atonement lie, *several* passages must be restricted and limited even though the context does

not dictate such a qualification. Indeed, words should be interpreted in their context, but the context in which the pertinent verses lie do not restrict them to only the elect.

For example, John 1:29 says,

**The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said,
"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"**

Nothing in the text indicates a need to understand any limitation on the term *world* here, unless, of course, you believe in limited atonement. If you believe in limited atonement, then you can't simply take it for what it says. You must find another meaning. But, when you come to this text as a little child (Matthew 18:3), the truth is awesome!

Another example can be found in Hebrews 2:9.

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

Christ tasted death *for everyone* (or *for all*, Greek - παντος, pantos). The immediate context is man (i.e. mankind, Hebrews 2:5-8) and "all things" (Hebrews 2:10). Yes, the elect are in the context also (Hebrews 2:10), but this does not take away the fact that "for everyone" is sandwiched between mankind and all things. Thus, everyone means *everyone*. Unless darkened by the Calvinist's lie, Hebrews 2:9 should remove all doubt.

In John 4:42 and 1 John 4:14 Scripture proclaims that Christ is the Savior of the world. Nothing in these texts dictates a limitation or restriction upon the term "world." Moreover, when considering "the light of the rest of Scripture," if there was any question as to what the "world" means in these texts, 1 Timothy 4:10 answers it.

For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.

It should be obvious, that "all men" includes unbelievers, because it says that Christ is the Savior of all men, *especially of those who believe*. Thus, Christ is the Savior of all men, believers and unbeliever as well. Christ is indeed literally the Savior of the world. But, some may say, "How is He the Savior of all? Not all will be saved!" The answer is simple. Just as He is Lord of all (Acts 10:36), so He is Savior of all (John 4:42; 1 John 4:14; 1 Timothy 4:10).

Calvinists David Steele and Curtis Thomas write,

One reason for the use of these expressions was to correct the false notion that salvation was for the Jews alone. Such phrases as "the world," "all men," "all nations," and "every creature" were used by the

Not Taught!

New Testament writers to emphatically correct this mistake. These expressions are intended to show that Christ died for all men without *distinction* (i.e. He died for Jews and Gentiles alike) but they are not intended to indicate that Christ died for all men without *exception* (i.e. He did not die for the purpose of saving each and every lost sinner). (*The Five Points Of Calvinism, Defined, Defended, Documented*, p. 46, copyright 1963, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Philadelphia, PA)

Steele and Thomas limit the scope of these words with a Jew and Gentile concern. The problem is, none of the texts we have seen thus far support this interpretation. In fact, when Scripture was concerned about a Jew and Gentile distinction, He would say so (e.g. Romans 1:16; 2:9-10; 3:29; 9:24; 11:11-13).

Moreover, Steele and Thomas say that Christ "did not die for the purpose of saving each and every lost sinner." This is completely the opposite of the words of Jesus. In John 3:17 Christ said,

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (See also John 6:51)

In John 12:47 Jesus said,

And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.

Here, "the world" whom Christ came to save is in the context of unbelievers, and clearly the non-elect are at least in part included, because He speaks of those who do not believe His words. That most certainly defines vessels of wrath prepared for destruction (Romans 9:22; Revelation 21:8 "unbelieving"). Yet, Christ says He came to save them.

Someone might argue, "What! God sent His Son to save the world? To save everybody, even vessels of wrath?" Yes, as Romans 11:32 says,

For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

Here, Romans 11:32 is indeed in the context of Jew and Gentile, but this makes the statement no less potent. The reason God committed all, Jew and Gentile (in other words *everybody*) to disobedience was that He might have mercy on all, Jew and Gentile (in other words *everybody*). 2 Corinthians 5:19 says,

that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them,

The Lord was on a mercy mission when He came (Mark 2:17), and He was reconciling the world to Himself. Of course, many refused, on their part, to be reconciled to God (John 1:10-11), but nonetheless God's call and effort went out (Mark 1:15); and Christ took away the sins of the world (John 1:29; John 19:30).

Probably the hardest tenet for Calvinists to swallow is that Christ could actually pay the price for someone's sin, and yet that person could still end up in hell. The Calvinist [Charles Spurgeon](#) illustrates this well.

To think that my Savior died for men who were or are in hell, seems a supposition too horrible for me to entertain. To imagine for a moment that He was the Substitute, for all the sons of men, and that God, having first punished the Substitute, afterwards punished the sinners themselves, seems to conflict with all my ideas of Divine justice. That Christ should offer an atonement and satisfaction for the sins of all men, and that afterwards some of those very men should be punished for the sins for which Christ had already atoned, appears to me to be the most monstrous iniquity that could ever have been imputed to Saturn, to Janus, to the goddess of the Thugs, or to the most diabolical heathen deities. God forbid that we should ever think thus of Jehovah, the just and wise and good! (*C. H. Spurgeon's Autobiography*, Vol. 1, p. 172, in "A Defense Of Calvinism," The Banner Of Truth Trust edition)

Spurgeon failed to take heed to Proverbs 3:5-6. Contrary to Spurgeon's harsh words against the only Lord God (Jude 4, 14-15), the Word teaches the very thing Spurgeon abhorred.

Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not *destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.* (Romans 14:15)

Destroying in this context is destroying "the work of God" (Romans 14:20). Is this destruction unto perdition? Yes, note Paul's similar words in 1 Corinthians 8:10-13.

For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? And because of your knowledge *shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?* But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

Paul is here concerned about a brother being caused to stumble unto

Not Taught!

perdition ("perish"), and this is a brother for whom Christ died. It *should* be obvious that Paul is speaking in truth and reality, not fantasy, and it is *certain* that he is concerned about perishing eternally; because Jesus said,

But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched - where "Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark 9:42-44)

It is no wonder Paul said, "if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat!" (1 Corinthians 8:13)

Note further Hebrews 6:6.

. . . if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

This text speaks of those who will certainly go to hell, yet they are those for whom Christ died. How do we know this? Christ was crucified once for them, and this text says, "**they crucify *again* for themselves the Son of God.**"

Hebrews 10:29 similarly says,

Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

For this person, there *no longer* remains a sacrifice for sins (Hebrews 10:26), which means there *was* a sacrifice for sins for them at one time. This former believer was sanctified "by the blood of the covenant." In other words, they were made holy by the death of Christ and His shed blood in the past, but now they are without hope (Hebrews 10:26-27). This certainly describes one for whom Christ died, but ends up in hell nonetheless.

2 Peter 2:1 is quite graphic.

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.

This speaks of false teachers who are doomed to eternal destruction (2 Peter 2:3, 9, 12, 14, 17) and it says here the Lord bought them. If 1 John 2:2 is true (and it is), we can know what He bought them with - His own blood. In fact,

for those who want to play word games (2 Timothy 2:14), the term here "bought" is the Greek word αγορασαντα (agorasanta) from αγοραζω (agorazō) and it is used in 1 Corinthians 6:20 (bought); 7:23 (bought); Revelation 5:9 (redeemed) and 14:3 (redeemed). In Matthew 13:44, 46; 15:46; 25:9; Luke 14:18; Revelation 3:18; 18:11; etc. it is used for buying in a material way. The Greek word for "Lord" is δεσποτην (despotên) and this is used elsewhere for the Lord God in Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24; 2 Timothy 2:21; Jude 4 and Revelation 6:10. Jesus *is* the Lord God, and thus 2 Peter 2:1 is speaking of Jesus, who paid the price for the sin of these false teachers.

Now, someone may ask, "How could this be? How could Christ pay for the sins of false teachers and for all mankind, and yet these false teachers and the majority of mankind still end up in hell?" Because, they did not access this grace by faith (Romans 5:2), but continued in unbelief. The grace of God has appeared to all men (Titus 2:11), but not all have faith (2 Thessalonians 3:2). The price for every man's sin has been paid, but only those who believe have access into this grace (Romans 5:2).

Finally, as we noted the erroneous gospel of Arminians (a faulty free will and conditional election), so the Calvinistic gospel is grossly in error. This is illustrated by John 3:16.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

As it is, Calvinists reject these words. Instead of believing them as they stand, the Calvinistic gospel is,

For God so loved the elect (He did not love the world) that He gave His only begotten Son, that the elect (not whoever) will (not should) believe in Him and will (not should) not perish but have everlasting life.

Truly, Calvinists preach another gospel (Galatians 1:8-9) as they reject the truth of John 3:16 and the host of passages above.

IV. Irresistible Grace (or Resistible Grace)

[For this point and the next, see also the chapter on [Eternal Security](#).]

The Calvinist W. J. Seaton wrote,

God not only elected men and women to salvation; He also *called* those whom it pleased Him to elect. (*The Five Points Of Calvinism*, p. 14, italics in original)

And when the Holy Spirit calls a man, or woman, or a young person by His grace, that call is *irresistible*: it cannot be frustrated; it is manifestation of God's irresistible grace. (ibid., italics in original)

Not Taught!

The Calvinist contends that God's call and His grace upon the elect is *effectual*. In other words, the person elect by God *will* succumb to His call and will not ultimately resist God's grace upon his life, but will take heed and be saved. Therefore, God's grace, His saving grace upon the elect, is irresistible. Arminians do not agree with this.

The Arminian John Wesley wrote,

8. The Calvinists hold, secondly, that the saving grace of God is absolutely irresistible; that no man is any more able to resist it, than to resist the stroke of lightning. The Arminians hold, that although there may be some moments wherein the grace of God acts irresistibly, yet, in general, any man may resist, and that to his eternal ruin, the grace whereby it was the will of God he should have been eternally saved. (*The Works of John Wesley*, "What Is An Arminian?"; see also *The Works of James Arminius*, Vol. I, p. 664)

In this, Calvinists and Arminians fail to acknowledge "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).

Scripture nowhere says that God's grace is irresistible. There is no verse that comes right out and uses these words. But, Scripture does reveal that salvation is so much the work of God that those who are saved are the recipients of an act of God that had nothing to do with them (John 1:13; Romans 9:16).

For example, Ephesians 2 says,

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, . . . and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), . . . For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (see Ephesians 2:1-10)

We were dead, and God made us alive. Titus puts it like this,

For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, . . . (see Titus 3:3-7)

God saved us. This is *His* doing, *His* work, and *His* power.

Now, look at the extent of His power upon those whom He has saved.

Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. (1 John 3:9)

1 John 3:9 says that the one who has been born of God "**cannot sin.**" In the context of 1 John and in the context of the rest of Scripture, "**cannot sin**" equals "**practicing sin**" (1 John 3:7-8), i.e. continual unrepentant sinning (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:8). Therefore, if the one who is born of God (saved) "**cannot sin,**" what does this mean in regards to resisting God's grace? He "**cannot.**" To resist God's grace unto perdition would be to sin continually and unrepentantly, but those born of God *cannot* and *will not* do this. As Hebrews 10:39 says,

We are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

God's grace is so complete in God's elect (Colossians 2:10) that God makes it so that those saved by Him, those born of God, cannot resist His grace. They "**cannot sin**" (1 John 3:9). Can this be called irresistible grace? Yes, it may.

Now, even though this is all true, Scripture warns the elect *not* to resist His grace by either sinning (Hebrews 10:26-39) or being led astray (2 Peter 3:17-18; Jude 20-21). The elect are exhorted to continue in the faith (Acts 13:43), abide in Christ (John 15:1-6), not neglect so great a salvation (Hebrews 2:1-3), to beware (Hebrews 3:12), to fear (Romans 11:20-22; Hebrews 4:1; 1 Peter 1:17), to be diligent (Hebrews 4:11), to look carefully (Hebrews 12:15), and to not refuse Him (Hebrews 12:25). In other words, the elect are exhorted *over and again* to *not* resist His grace. Even though 1 John 3:9 says that those born of God cannot sin, Scripture warns them nonetheless not to sin.

Moreover, the Word also teaches that God's grace *can* be resisted. The grace of God can be received in vain (2 Corinthians 6:1), and a believer can even fall from grace (Galatians 5:4). Paul said to the Galatians,

I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, (Galatians 1:6)

These were "**called**" "**in the grace of Christ,**" and yet they were found to be "**turning away**" from Him. In other words, they were resisting His grace.

For those who continued in such a path, Paul said,

You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. (Galatians 5:4)

These are those who were in the grace of God, but then were estranged from

Not Taught!

Christ, no longer gaining access into this grace (Romans 5:2). Paul told the Romans that they stood by faith (Romans 11:20). If a believer stops believing, and dies in such a state, they go where all unbelievers go, the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). This is why Paul said,

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. (1 Corinthians 10:12)

V. Perseverance Of The Saints (or Conditional Security)

The Calvinistic *Westminster Confession of Faith* (chap. 17, sec. 1) states,

They whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved. (*Dictionary of Theological Terms*, by Alan Cairns, p. 266, copyright 1998, Emerald House, Greenville, SC)

The Calvinist Alan Cairns elaborates on this confession with,

1. God's elect will certainly be eternally saved.
2. Those who have once been regenerated by the Holy Spirit can never completely fall from that state and be lost. (*ibid.*, p. 267)

The Arminian Dan Corner quoting John Wesley gives the Arminian position:

On this authority I believe a saint may fall away; that one who is holy or righteous in the judgment of God Himself may never-the-less so fall from God as to perish everlastingly. (*The Believer's Conditional Security*, copyright 1997, p. 655)

John Wesley sums up the controversy with these words.

9. The Calvinists hold, Thirdly, that a true believer in Christ cannot possibly fall from grace. The Arminians hold, that a true believer may "make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience;" that he may fall, not only foully, but finally, so as to perish for ever. (*The Works of John Wesley*, "What Is An Arminian?")

Here again, both the Arminians and the Calvinists do not believe "**the whole counsel of God**" (Acts 20:27).

On the one hand, it is true that God's elect will certainly be eternally saved (Psalm 33:11). Paul wrote,

Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:30-39)

Paul's words depict a certainty that *nothing* ("**any other created thing**") will keep God's elect from ever perishing (i.e. being separated from God's love).

Dan Corner argues against these verses by writing,

OSAS defenders equate the love of God to the life of God by using Rom. 8:38, 39. Since unsaved people are loved by God (Mk. 10:21), yet are without the life of God (Eph. 4:18) to equate the two is definite fallacy. (*The Believer's Conditional Security*, p. 618)

Mr. Corner displays his own fallacy.

The term "**love of God**" has very much to do with salvation and the life of God. In John 5:42 Jesus used this phrase ("**the love of God**") to tell the Jews they were not saved, and in Romans 5:5 the love of God has been poured out in our hearts as it is part and parcel of our salvation. Those who do not know God may indeed be loved *by* Him (e.g. Mark 10:21; John 3:16), but this does not mean they are *in* the love of God, or that the love of God is *in* them. Also, a good question to ask would be, "What do those in hell have to do with the love of God?" They are experiencing God's hate and wrath, not His love (e.g. Psalm 5:5-6; Revelation 14: 9-11; 20:10; 21:8).

Finally, note 2 John 6 and 1 John 5:3.

This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. (2 John 6)

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. (1 John 5:3)

Not Taught!

Based upon 2 John 6 and 1 John 5:3, being separated from the love of God (Romans 8:35-39) is equal to being separated from keeping His commandments and walking according to His commandments, because the love of God is that we keep His commandments. If nothing then can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:35-39), then nothing can separate us from keeping (and walking according to) His commandments; because they are one and the same. If nothing can keep us from living a life of keeping His commandments, then nothing can bring us to eternal perdition (1 John 3:9). Yet, as nothing can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:35-39), we are nonetheless exhorted to keep ourselves in His love (Jude 21).

Another passage that reveals that God's elect will endure to the end (Matthew 10:22) is found in John 10.

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. (John 10:27-28)

Dan Corner writes regarding John 10:27-28,

Verse 27 clearly describes the type of person who will *never perish*, as mentioned in the next verse! He said his **sheep are listeners of his voice, whom he knows and who follow him.**

The word translated *follow* is present indicative active in the Greek, which means that it expresses continuous action. In other words, as long as we remain faithful and continue to follow Jesus, he will, indeed, assure us that we will *never perish*, verse 28. **To disregard verse 27 is to twist Jn. 10:28 out of context and distort Jesus' teaching.**

The promise of *never perishing*, as cited in verse 28, does not exist anywhere in the entire Bible for one who would turn away from a dedication to Christ. (*The Believer's Conditional Security*, p. 359)

Mr. Corner's last sentence is indeed true, but what he fails to realize is that Christ's sheep will never "turn away from a dedication to Christ." In verse 27 Jesus is describing the character of His sheep. He is not speaking conditionally. Jesus does not say, "As long as [my sheep] remain faithful and **continue** to *follow* they will never perish," but rather, "**My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me . . . and they shall never perish.**" Jesus is telling us facts about His sheep. He is not speaking conditionally, but rather factually.

Likewise, Jesus says,

My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. (John 10:29)

On this accord, the Arminian position is quite strange. Chris Jakway writes,

In other words, no one can snatch us out of the Father's hand against our will. We are indeed safe because we "through faith are shielded by God's power" (1 Peter 1:5, NIV). Thus, we are not told that it is impossible to *voluntarily* leave God's protection. Rather, we are assured that no one can take us by force from God's hand as we sit helplessly. (*The Believer's Conditional Security*, p. iii)

Jakway's words reveal that he does not understand the schemes of men (e.g. Isaiah 32:7), nor "**the wiles of the devil**" (Ephesians 6:11). Typically, it is through "**cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting**" (Ephesians 4:14) that men get swayed away from following Christ, for Satan "**deceives the whole world**" (Revelation 12:9; 2 Corinthians 4:4). Deception plays a big part in someone's decision "**to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them**" (2 Peter 2:21). Therefore, it is foolish to speak of "voluntarily" leaving God's protection, or being taken "by force from God's hand as we sit helplessly." Everyone who stops following Christ does so "voluntarily," be it through deceit or overt wickedness, and they typically get devoured by the devil (1 Peter 5:8).

This is why Jesus' words in John 10:27-29 are so awesome. Jesus is stating some awesome facts about His sheep. They hear His voice; i.e. they believe the Word of God (John 8:47). They are known by Him; i.e. they are saved (Galatians 4:9). They follow Him; i.e. they obey the Word of God (1 Peter 1:22). They shall never perish; i.e. they will endure to the end (Matthew 10:22). And, *they* cannot be removed from God's hand, because God has made it so not even they will decide to remove themselves (1 John 3:9; Romans 8:35-39; 1 John 5:3-4). Indeed, Christ's sheep will never perish (John 10:27-29). They *will* persevere to the end.

Now, on the other hand, even though Scripture does dictate that God's elect (His sheep) will endure to the end (John 10:27-29; Romans 8:30-39), the Word also teaches about the reality of people who are temporarily in the faith, and then fall away to perdition.

For example, Paul writes,

You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. (Romans 11:19-22)

What will these believers be cut off from if they do not continue in His goodness? The context is the salvation of God that comes through the Jews

Not Taught!

(Romans 11:11, 26; John 4:22). In other words, here is described the possibility and reality of believers who are in God's goodness, in His salvation, and then get cut off!

John 15 describes a similar scene.

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, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. (John 15:1-6)

In these words, Jesus describes a believer who is in Him, but does not remain (abide) in Him; and such a one ends up in hell, being burned (John 15:6; see also Luke 13:6-9).

The typical argument against these verses (Romans 11:19-22 and John 15:1-6) is that these verses (and verses like them) are not speaking of genuine believers, but rather those who "profess to believe." John MacArthur makes this argument. In reference to John 15, MacArthur writes,

The branches that bear fruit are genuine believers. Though in immediate context the focus is upon the 11 faithful disciples, the imagery also encompasses all believers down through the ages. The branches that do not bear fruit are those who profess to believe, but their lack of fruit indicates genuine salvation has never taken place and they have no life from the vine. (*The MacArthur Study Bible*, p. 1615)

Scripture does teach the reality of false believers, i.e. those who profess to believe, but in reality do not (Matthew 7:15, 21-23; 2 Corinthians 11:13, 26; Galatians 2:4; 2 Peter 2:1-2). But, this is not what Christ is talking about in John 15:1-6. Christ is talking about genuine believers. Those that are *in Him*. To be in Christ is to be sanctified (1 Corinthians 1:2; Hebrews 10:29). To be in Christ is to experience the wisdom, righteousness, and redemption of God (1 Corinthians 1:30; Hebrews 6:4-6). To be in Christ, is to be a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17; e.g. 1 Samuel 10:6-7, 9; 16:14).

If this is so, how then could such a one fall away? The same way,

the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 8:12).

It is through unbelief (Revelation 21:8).

Hebrews 10:29 describes a believer who was actually sanctified by the blood of the covenant, yet he ends up in hell (Hebrews 10:26, 31; Revelation 21:8). Yet, as MacArthur twisted John 15, he likewise twists Hebrews 10:29. Referring to the statement, "**the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified**" (Hebrews 10:29), MacArthur writes,

This refers to Christ, in that He was set apart unto God (cf. John 17:19). It cannot refer to the apostate, because only true believers are sanctified. (ibid., p. 1915)

Right in the face of the truth, because it doesn't fit with MacArthur's theology, MacArthur denies the plain text. The text is clearly speaking of the apostate all the way through the whole of verse 29. Sandwiched between trampling underfoot the Son of God and insulting the Spirit of grace, we have, "**counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing.**" This believer was set apart, made holy, by the blood of the covenant, that is, the covenant of salvation which comes through faith in Christ. Yet, this believer ends up perishing (Hebrews 10:26-31).

Likewise, Matthew 18:21-35 clearly describes a servant being forgiven (salvation), and yet because he bears no fruit; i.e. he is not forgiving toward others, he ends up perishing (Matthew 18:34-35; see also Matthew 6:14-15; Mark 11:25-26; Luke 17:1-4). Sadly, MacArthur perverts this passage as well (ibid., p. 1427; see also p. 1403).

Now, the appropriate question would be, "How can this be? How can there be people in the salvation of God, and yet they end up perishing (John 15:1-6; Hebrews 10:26-31); and at the same time, there are others who are in the salvation of God and it is impossible for them to perish (Romans 8:30-39; John 10:27-29)?" The answer is found in Matthew 22:14.

For many are called, but few are chosen.

So we say with Christ,

Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. (Luke 13:24)

Endnotes:

1. John Calvin Himself rejected the truth of Isaiah 45:7 and the reality of God as the cause of evil. Calvin wrote in his commentary on Isaiah regarding Isaiah 45:7,

Fanatics torture this word *evil*, as if God were the author of evil, that

Not Taught!

is, of sin; but it is very obvious how ridiculously they abuse this passage of the Prophet. This is sufficiently explained by the contrast, the parts of which must agree with each other; for he contrasts "peace" with "evil," that is, with afflictions, wars, and other adverse occurrences. If he contrasted "righteousness" with "evil," there would be some plausibility in their reasonings, but this is a manifest contrast of things that are opposite to each other. Consequently, we ought not to reject the ordinary distinction, that God is the author of the "evil" of punishment, but not of the "evil" of guilt. (Commentary of Isaiah, Vol. 3)

"Afflictions, wars, and other adverse occurrences" can all come via the evil actions of evil guilt ridden people. Thus, if they come, God created it (Isaiah 45:7), all of it (Romans 11:36), not parts thereof. Calvin continues,

But the Sophists are wrong in their exposition; for, while they acknowledge that famine, barrenness, war, pestilence, and other scourges, come from God, they deny that God is the author of calamities, when they befall us **through the agency of men**. This is false and altogether contrary to the present doctrine; **for the Lord raises up wicked men** to chastise us by their hand, as it evident from various passages of Scripture. (1 Kings 11:14, 23.) **The Lord does not indeed inspire them with malice**, but he uses it for the purpose of chastising us, and exercises the office of a judge, in the same manner as he made use of the malice of Pharaoh and others, in order to punish his people. (Exodus 1:11 and 2:23.) We ought therefore to hold this doctrine, that **God alone is the author of all events**; that is, that adverse and prosperous events are sent by him, even though he makes use of the agency of men, that none may attribute it to fortune, or to any other cause. (bold added)

In hypocrisy, Calvin himself attributes it to fortune, since in his scheme it is by mere fortune the men God sends do any evil deeds that would bring what He sent them for, since "The Lord does not indeed inspire them with malice." Moreover, in hypocrisy Calvin claims, "God alone is the author of all events," when many events would not even exist (e.g. 9-11-01) without the evil deeds done by men. So, according to Calvin, "God alone is the author of all events," yet "The Lord does not indeed inspire them with malice." That will be true when the fire is quenched and the worm dies (Mark 9:48).

2. Speaking of the same event as in 2 Samuel 24:1, 1 Chronicles 21:1 records,

Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to

number Israel.

The Hebrew in this verse is quite interesting. Every other time in the Hebrew Bible when referring to Satan the person, the Hebrew word שָׂטָן (sâtân) is used with the definite article, הַשָּׂטָן (hasâtân). This is found in Job 1:6-9, 12; 2:1-4, 6-7; Zechariah 3:1-2 (vs. 1 also has the verb form, לְשַׂטֵּן [leshitno] "to oppose him"). Here in 1 Chronicles 21:1 it is simply שָׂטָן (sâtân) without the definite article. This same exact word, שָׂטָן (sâtân), is used of the Angel of the Lord in Numbers 22:22 ("adversary"), 32 ("to stand against you"; יָצָאתִי לְשַׂטָּן [yâtsâ'tiy lesâtân] more literally, "I came out for an adversary"). שָׂטָן (sâtân) is used everywhere else as an "adversary" (1 Samuel 29:4; 2 Samuel 19:22 [H23]; 1 Kings 5:4 [H18]; 11:14, 23, 25; Psalm 109:6).

In the New Testament σατανας (satanas) "satan" is used with the definite article referring to Satan the person most of the time (Matthew 12:26 [2x]; Mark 1:13; 3:26; 4:15; Luke 10:18; 11:18; 13:16; 22:31; John 13:27; Acts 5:3; 26:18; Romans 16:20; 1 Corinthians 5:5; 7:5; 2 Corinthians 2:11; 11:14; 1 Thessalonians 2:18; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; 1 Timothy 1:20; 5:15; Revelation 2:9, 13 [2x], 24; 3:9; 12:9; 20:2, 7). Yet, it is found without the definite article where it is clearly speaking of the person Satan in Luke 22:3 (compare with John 13:27) and 2 Corinthians 12:7. Compare Mark 3:23 (without the definite article) with Matthew 12:26 (with the definite article). Σατανας (Satanas) is also found without the article in Matthew 4:10; 16:23; Mark 8:33 where all three are υπαγε οπισω μου, σατανας (hupage opisô mou, satana) "Get behind me, Satan" (or adversary). In Matthew 4:10 Jesus is speaking to Satan. In Matthew 16:23 & Mark 8:33 He is talking to Peter.

Moreover, the verb for "moved" in both 2 Samuel 24:1 and 1 Chronicles 21:1 is the same exact Hebrew word, וַיַּיָּאֶסֶת (vayyâset) found also only in Deuteronomy 13:6 (H7, "entices"); Joshua 15:18 ("persuaded"); Judges 1:14 ("urged"); 1 Samuel 26:19 ("stirred up"); 1 Kings 21:25 ("stirred up"); 2 Kings 18:32 ("persuade"); 2 Chronicles 18:2 ("persuade"), 31 (God "diverted"); 32:11, 15 ("persuade"); Job 2:3 ("incited"); 36:16 ("would have brought . . . out"); Isaiah 36:18 ("persuade"); Jeremiah 38:22; 43:3 ("set").

3. It is debated as to whether Calvin actually adhered to the tenets of what today is called "Calvinism," particularly in regards to limited atonement. For example, in Calvin's commentary on 1 John 2:2 he writes,

Here a question may be raised, how have the sins of the world been expiated? I pass by the dotages of the fanatics, who under this pretense extend salvation to all reprobate, and therefore to Satan himself. Such a monstrous thing deserves no refutation. They who seek to avoid this absurdity, have said Christ suffered sufficiently for the whole world, but efficiently only for the elect. This solution has

Not Taught!

commonly prevailed in the schools. Though then I allow that what has been said is true, yet I deny that it is suitable to this passage; for the design of John was no other than to make this benefit common to the whole church. Then under the word all or whole, he does not include the reprobate, but designates those who should believe as well as those who were then scattered through various parts of the world. (www.biblestudyguide.org/comment/calvin/comm_vol45/htm/v.iii.htm)

Here Calvin sounds like a good limited atoner. Yet, in his commentary on Romans 5:18 he writes this:

He makes this favor common to all, because it is propounded to all, and not because it is in reality extended to all; for though Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world, and is offered through God's benignity indiscriminately to all, yet all do not receive him. (www.ccel.org/print/calvin/calcom38/ix.x)

And in his commentary on Acts 20:28 regarding "which he hath purchased" Calvin speaks of the possibility of "the redemption gotten by him [Christ] to be of none effect," a concept typically rejected by Calvinists today.

Whereby it appeareth how precious it is to him; and surely there is nothing which ought more vehemently to urge pastors to do their duty joyfully, than if they consider that the price of the blood of Christ is committed to them. For hereupon it followeth, that unless they take pains in the Church, the lost souls are not only imputed to them, but they be also guilty of sacrilege, because they have profaned the holy blood of the Son of God, and have made the redemption gotten by him to be of none effect, so much as in them lieth. And this is a most cruel offense, if, through our sluggishness, the death of Christ do not only become vile or base, but the fruit thereof be also abolished and perish; . . . (www.ccel.org/print/calvin/calcom37/viii.v)

Not KJV Only

In some circles, "KJV Onlyism" is often taught, and the following is not.

The KJV Controversy (an Overview)

Thou shalt not revile the Gods, . . . (Exodus 22:28, 1611 KJV)¹

Key Question To Ask A KJV Only Proponent

By what Biblical standard are the KJV translators and their translation (1611) exalted above the English translators and their translations before them (e.g. Great 1539, Geneva 1560, Bishops' 1568)? By what Biblical standard (Matthew 7:2?) are the KJV translators and their translation exalted above the English translators and their translations after them? By what Biblical standard are the KJV translators and their translation exalted above any individual translator and his translation at any time, in the past, now, or in the future (e.g. Wycliffe 1394, Tyndale 1531, Coverdale 1535, Matthew 1537, Webster 1833, Robert Young [YLT] 1862, Jay P. Green 1985, or you or I)?

I. Introduction

The KJV controversy is a massive subject, in which, literally thousands of arguments may be used by advocates of the KJV translation to "prove" their point. D. A. Waite, in his book, *Defending The King James Bible* (copyright 1992), has at the end of his book (on pages 284-307) a list of "**OVER 900 TITLES DEFENDING THE KING JAMES BIBLE**" (including a "suggested gift" for each title). The reason this arsenal of "evidence" exists is

Not Taught!

because, not only are they arguing over the entire text of Scripture, that is, any word(s) or verse that may not have been translated the way they believe they should have been, but they are also contending over several different English translations and different Greek manuscripts. This provides for them an enormous amount of words to contend over. They are among those who are "doting about questions and strifes of words" (1 Timothy 6:4 KJV; NKJV "obsessed with disputes and arguments over words").

Typically, the KJV is set up as the standard, and therefore, anything that doesn't line up with the KJV is consequently erroneous. Peter S. Ruckman (Bible Baptist Bookstore, P. O. Box 7135, Pensacola, FL 32514, ph. # 904-477-8812), who is on the far right of this controversy, wrote in his booklet entitled *About the "New" King James Bible* (copyright 1983, revised 1987),

Now the *New "King James" Bible*, like every English translation since 1884, had to compare itself with the original *Authorized Version* of 1611, for this is the STANDARD that God set up whereby to judge all translations. (p. 15, italics and capitals in the original)

Contrary to Ruckman's claim (which is a lie), God sets up no such standard. Scripture (Hebrews 4:12-13) sets no such standard. Yet, men do (Colossians 2:8), and they judge according to their own measure.

In Matthew 7:1-2 Christ said,

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. (KJV)

Typically, KJV advocates acclaim the original 1611 KJV. And, they impugn all other English translations, including the NKJV. In their rejection of the NKJV, their folly is more easily manifested.

Not only are verse comparisons given, which are dealt with, in part, below, but fault is found by some (e.g. Terry Watkins, *New King James Counterfeit*, tract) based on the triquetra symbol (found on many, not all, NKJV Bibles) claiming that this symbol is a Satanic symbol. Using this same kind of measure (Matthew 7:1-2), these KJV advocates should reject their own 1611 KJV.

In the 1611 KJV there are two Suns each having a face on the very front cover, and on the first page of the New Testament. Since when does the Sun have a face? Is not this imagery consistent with the worship of the Sun? Would this not then be a Satanic idolatrous symbol or picture?

Also, following Catholic tradition (which is demonic, 1 Timothy 4:1-3; Colossians 2:8), the 1611 KJV has an Easter calendar (28 pages from the page with "To The Most High and Mightie Prince, Iames . . ."). In the pages following this calendar, there are several "Holy days" listed, some of which

include Christmas (a Catholic/pagan "Holy day"), different saints, "Epiphinie," "the purification of the blessed Virgin," and "the Annunciation of the blessed Virgin." Five pages from the Easter Calendar, at the bottom of the page are two naked Cupid (Roman god of love) looking beings with wings. Also, at the beginning of the New Testament, at the bottom of the pictorial page there is a Cupid looking head with wings. Using the same kind of measure some use, the 1611 KJV should also be rejected.

In fact, the 1611 KJV is worse. Because, between the Old and New Testaments lies the Apocrypha. This group of books has false doctrine in it. Please see our report on the [Apocrypha](#). Right smack in the middle of the 1611 KJV is a group of books that teach contrary to God's Word. KJV advocates, who praise the original 1611 KJV Bible (with its Apocryphal writings) and condemn the NKJV because of its triquetra symbol, are hypocrites, especially when they set the 1611 KJV up as the standard.

II. Verse Comparisons

Another sample of faulty measuring (Matthew 7:2) can be seen in some of the examples KJV advocates give as they compare the KJV with the NKJV. Now, at times, the KJV does do a better job at giving a more literal translation (e.g. "**pisseth against the wall**" 1 Samuel 25:22, 34; 1 Kings 14:10; 16:11; 21:21; 2 Kings 9:8; "**eat their own dung and drink their own piss**" 2 Kings 18:27; Isaiah 36:12; "**effeminate**" 1 Corinthians 6:9). But, the NKJV also has its share of more literal translations. For example, in John 4:24 the KJV reads, "**God is a Spirit.**" The NKJV reads, "**God is Spirit.**" Since there is no indefinite article ("a") in the Greek, and there is no reason to insert it, the NKJV is more literal (following the Greek in a more exacting way).

Moreover, in several passages (Luke 20:16; Romans 3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11; 1 Corinthians 6:15; Galatians 2:17; 3:21; 6:14) the KJV translates the Greek phrase "μή γένοιτο" as "God forbid!" The Greek word for "God" is not even there.² The first word (μή) means "no". The second Greek word (γένοιτο) means "may be" (in this context). The NKJV translates it, "**Certainly not!**" The NASV translates this, "**May it never be!**".

In Hebrews 10:23 the KJV translates "**faith**," but the actual Greek word is "**hope**" (ἐλπίδος) as the NKJV has it. In Acts 19:37 the KJV has "**robbers of churches**" where the Greek word is actually "**robbers of temples**" (ιεροσόλους).³ In Amos 4:4 the KJV has "**three years**," but the Hebrew reads "**three days**" (שָׁלֹשׁ יָמִים); which is what the NKJV has. Both the KJV and the NKJV have their share of better or more literal translations when compared one with the other.

Finally, for some reason, there is no "**Holy Ghost**" in the KJV Old Testament. There is only a "**Holy Spirit**" in Psalm 51:11 and Isaiah 63:10-11. Yet, both "**Holy Ghost**" and "**Holy Spirit**" are found in the New Testament, even though the Greek is the same for both (e.g. Luke 1:35/11:13; Ephesians 4:30/Hebrews

Not Taught!

3:7).

A. Terry Watkins (Dial-The-Truth Ministries, 5990 Willow Ridge Road, Pinson, AL 35126, ph. # 205-680-9206)

But, some comparisons fall before the KJV itself when compared to itself. For example, Terry Watkins gives on his web site (www.av1611.org; and in tract form) under the title, "The New King James Counterfeit" several verse comparisons comparing the KJV with the NKJV (and other translations). One comparison reads as follows:

In 2 Timothy 2:15, the NKJV (like the NIV, NASV, RSV, NRSV) remove that "obsolete" word - "study"! The only time you're told to "study" your Bible. AND THEY ZAP IT! Why don't they want you to "study" your Bible? [Here lies an "evil surmising," 1 Timothy 6:4 KJV; NKJV "evil suspicion"] Maybe they don't want you to look too close - you might find out what they've ACTUALLY done to your Bible! The "real" KJV is the only English Bible in the world that instructs you to "study" your Bible! (emphasis in original)

The Greek word in question here is σπουδασον (spoudason). Please note every other time the KJV translates this word. In Galatians 2:10 it's "forward," Ephesians 4:3 "Endeavoring," 1 Thessalonians 2:17 "endeavored," 2 Timothy 4:9 & 21 "diligence," Titus 3:12 "be diligent," Hebrews 4:11 "labor," 2 Peter 1:10 "diligence," 1:15 "endeavor," 3:14 "be diligent." The KJV itself testifies that the word can be translated exactly as the NKJV translates it in 2 Timothy 2:15 ("Be diligent"). In fact, nowhere else does the KJV translate this word "study." It is only translated "study" in 2 Timothy 2:15.

Another faulty measure (Matthew 7:2) by Terry Watkins can be found in his contention over the word "virtue."

That "obsolete" word "virtue" is replaced with "power" in Mark 5:30, Luke 6:19, 8:46! How does anybody confuse "virtue" with "power"? Simple - by being "bosom-buddies" with the NIV, NASV, RSV, NRSV!

The Greek word in question here is δύναμιν (dunamin). The KJV translates this same word as "power" 71 times (e.g. Luke 5:17; 24:49; Acts 4:7)! The KJV itself testifies that it can well be translated "power."

Another example given by Terry Watkins is that Revelation 2:13 says "Satan's seat" in the KJV, but the NKJV (and NIV, NASV, RSV, NRSV) reads, "Satan's throne." Here again, the KJV bears witness that this is a legitimate translation. The KJV translates the same Greek word, θρονοϋς (thronos), as "throne" 50 times (e.g. Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 1:4; 3:21; 4:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10; 20:4; etc.)!

Another argument used by Watkins is that the NKJV [and NIV, NASV, NRSV, RSV] translates Acts 4:27 & 30 as "holy servant" (speaking of Christ) rather than "holy child" (KJV). Again, the KJV testifies that this is a legitimate translation in Matthew 8:6, 8, 13; 14:2; Luke 1:54, 69; 7:7; 12:45; 15:26 in which the same Greek word, *παῖς* (*pais*), is translated "servant." In fact, in Matthew 12:18 it is translated "servant" (KJV) and it is speaking of Christ.

1 Timothy 6:20 is also cited by Watkins, in that, the KJV gives the translation "science" where as the NKJV [and NIV, NASV, RSV, NRSV] gives "knowledge." Yet, the KJV translates the same Greek word, *γνῶσις* (*gnōsis*), as "knowledge" 28 times (e.g. Colossians 2:3; 1 Peter 3:7; 2 Peter 1:5, 6; 3:18) never again translating it "science." Once more, the KJV testifies that the NKJV translation is quite appropriate.

B. Mr. D. A. Waite (The Bible For Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108; ph. # 609-854-4452)

A few really pitiful examples of verse comparisons from a formidable KJV advocate can be found in D. A. Waite's book entitled, *Defending The King James Bible* (copyright 1992). On page 150-151 Waite claims the NIV denies a literal fire in hell.

The Denial of Literal Fire in Hell.

"Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."
(Mark 9:44) *"Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."* (Mark 9:46)

. . . both of these verses are omitted in their entirety. Both verses teach clearly that hell is a place of unquenchable, literal fire.

This is certainly a matter of doctrine and theology. (bold in original)

It is true that the NIV omits these two verses, because it follows here the Greek texts B and Aleph. But, it is not true (i.e. it is a lie) that the NIV "denies a literal fire in hell." In this very same context, in Mark 9:48 the NIV reads, **"where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched."** And, for what it's worth, the KJV itself "omits" "hell" from Ezekiel 31:15 (see Ezekiel 31:15 NKJV "hell"; KJV "grave").

On page 157 and 158 of this same book, under the subtitle **"The Denial of Redemption by Divinely Provided Blood"** Waite writes,

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus *Christ* his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (1 John 1:7)

Not Taught!

English Versions: (-3) -NIV, -NASV, -NB

The *italicized* portion is ELIMINATED in the Greek texts and English versions specified above. Since Christian Science and liberals make a distinction (as in early church times) between the human "Jesus" and the Divine "Christ," the cleansing "Blood" might be considered as merely human blood rather than having its source in God Himself. It's the "**Blood of Jesus Christ**" not merely the "**blood of Jesus**" that "cleanseth us from all sin"! **This is certainly a matter of doctrine and theology.** (bold in original)

It appears that the Greek texts and English translations cited here are deficient in this case, but to say what Waite says beyond this is foolishness and using a measure the Scriptures do not use. Hebrews 10:19 reads, "**Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,**" (KJV). There is no "Christ" mentioned in this verse. To use the same measure Waite uses (Matthew 7:2), in Hebrews 10:19 God Himself is leaving room for the error of "Christian Science and liberals."

Also on page 157-158 under the subtitle, "**The Denial of Salvation and Redemption Only in Christ,**" Waite writes,

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth *on Me* hath everlasting life." (John 6:47)

Greek Texts: -B/ALEPH

English Versions: (-3) -NIV, -NASV, -NKJV-FN

The *italicized* portion is ELIMINATED in the Greek texts and English versions specified above. This is, perhaps, one of the **CLEAREST** theological errors in these three versions. To make salvation only a matter of "**believing**" rather than solely, as Christ said in this verse, "**believing on Me,**" is truly "**ANOTHER GOSPEL**"! If you were trying to lead someone to Christ with the NIV or NASV, using this verse, they could "believe" in anything and still have "everlasting life" --whether in Santa Claus, in the Easter Bunny, in the Tooth Fairy, in Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer, or in any of the false world religions! This is **SERIOUS THEOLOGICAL PERVERSION!** **This is certainly a matter of doctrine and theology.** (bold in original, FN = footnote)

The above is a graphic example of a "perverse disputing" (1 Timothy 6:5 KJV; NKJV "useless wrangling"). To use the same measure (Matthew 7:2) Waite

uses here, then he must also accuse God for the same error ("serious theological perversion" and "another gospel"), because in the gospel of Mark Christ says (without saying "on Me"), "**He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.**" (Mark 16:16 KJV)

C. How about the "Easter" passage in Acts 12:4?

In Acts 12:4 the KJV translates the Greek word *πασχα* (*pascha*) as "Easter." *Πασχα* (*pascha*) is the Greek word for "Passover." The KJV bears witness to this fact 28 times (e.g. Matthew 26:2; John 2:13; Hebrews 11:28; etc.). In fact, the only time the KJV translates this word "Easter" (and not "Passover") is in Acts 12:4. Why? The answer to that question is gone with the KJV translators themselves (Ecclesiastes 1:11). But, for whatever reason they may have given, it is not Biblically justified.

Some argue that the holiday mentioned was pagan in this context, thus we have "Easter" (e.g. www.av1611.org/kjv/easter.html). The problem is, the text (Scripture) says no such thing, and in fact, Acts 12:3, the verse just prior to Acts 12:4, declares plainly that it was during "the days of unleavened bread." This identifies the time as the time of the Passover. The days of unleavened bread and the Passover go hand in hand, as Luke 22:1 exemplifies.

Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. (KJV, see also, Exodus 23:15; 34:18; Leviticus 23:5-6; Numbers 28:16-17; 2 Chronicles 30:21; 35:17; Ezra 6:22; Matthew 26:17; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7; 1 Corinthians 5:7-8).

The Works of Josephus (the Jewish historian) likewise testifies to this fact.

As this happened at the time when the feast of unleavened bread was celebrated, which we call the Passover, (*The Works of Josephus*, The Antiquities of the Jews, book 14, chapter 2, section 1)

Now, upon the approach of that feast of unleavened bread which the law of their fathers had appointed for the Jews at this time, which feast is called the Passover, (*The Works of Josephus*, The Antiquities of the Jews, book 17, chapter 9, section 3)

D. The 1611 KJV Compared To The Present KJV

It might be expected that the present KJV would have, perhaps, more modern English than the 1611 KJV, since the 1611 is older. On the contrary, at least in the use of the term "ye" or "you," the 1611 is more contemporary. In John 18:29; 1 Corinthians 7:5, 35; 14:8; 2 Corinthians 9:4; 11:1; Galatians 3:10; and

Not Taught!

1 John 2:13, the 1611 KJV uses the common "you" whereas the present day KJV uses "ye."

In addition, in the New Testament alone, the KJV of today does not follow the 1611 several times over. For example, in Matthew 6:3 the present KJV has "hand" where there is no "hand" in the 1611. In Acts 5:34 the 1611 has "the" where there is no "the" in the present KJV. In Acts 8:32 the 1611 has "**the** shearer," where the present KJV has "**his** shearer." In Acts 15:23 the present KJV has "they" where the 1611 has no "they." In 2 Corinthians 5:1 the 1611 has "hand," singular, while the present KJV has "hands," plural. In 2 Corinthians 11:26 the 1611 has "journeying" while the present KJV has "journeys."

Moreover, in the New Testament, in a few instances, in comparison to today's KJV, the 1611 follows more exactly the Greek (the Received Text and other Texts). For example, in Matthew 9:33 the 1611 has the article ("the") in keeping with the Greek, whereas the present KJV does not. In John 16:25 the present KJV adds "but," where the 1611 and the Greek have no "but." In Romans 7:2 the present KJV has "**her** husband" whereas the 1611 has "**the** husband" following the Greek. In Ephesians 6:24 the present KJV has "Amen" following the Majority Greek Text whereas the 1611 has no "Amen" following the Received Text, which also agrees, in this case, with the Critical Text. In 1 Timothy 1:4 the present KJV adds "godly" whereas the 1611 has no "godly" in keeping with the Greek. And, in 2 Peter 2:5 the present KJV has "sacrifices," plural, whereas the 1611 has "sacrifice," singular, in keeping with the Greek.

Although the 1611 KJV is acclaimed as the "STANDARD" (e.g. Ruckman), the 1611, several times over, does not follow the Greek Text (Received Text and other Texts) as closely as the present KJV. For example, in Matthew 16:16 the 1611 leaves out the definite article, whereas the present KJV follows the Greek leaving it in with "**the** Christ." In Mark 5:6 the 1611 translates the Greek word εδραμε (edrame) as "came" whereas the present KJV translates it more literally "ran." In Mark 10:18 the 1611 reads, "no man good," whereas the present KJV more literally reads, "none good." There is no "man" in the Greek. In Luke 1:3; 2 Timothy 4:8; and 2 Peter 2:1 the present KJV translates the Greek word "all" where the 1611 leaves it out. In John 7:16 the 1611 likewise leaves out "and said," where the present KJV includes a translation of these two Greek words, και ειπεν (kai eipen). In John 15:20 the 1611 has "**the** Lord" where the present KJV has "**his** Lord" in keeping with the Greek. In 2 Timothy 2:19 the 1611 has "**the** seal" where the present KJV has the demonstrative "**this** seal" which follows the Greek more literally. In 1 John 3:22 the 1611 has the singular "commandment" whereas the present KJV has the plural "commandments" in keeping with the Greek. In Acts 10:9 the 1611 translates the Greek word δωμα (doma) as "house" where the present KJV translates it more literally as "housetop." Elsewhere, the 1611 translates this same Greek word as "house top" or "house tops," and never again as house (Matthew 10:27; 24:17; Mark 13:15; Luke 5:19; 12:3; 17:31).

In 1 Corinthians 12:28 the 1611 has "helpes **in** governmets" where the present KJV follows the Greek accusative with "helps, governments." In 1 Corinthians 15:6 (printed as verse 5) the 1611 has "And that" where the present KJV has more literally "After that." Yet, the 1611 translates this same Greek word, *επειτα* (*epeita*), as "After" in verse 7 of the same chapter.

In 1 Corinthians 8:12; 9:6 (twice); and 2 Peter 2:6 (Received Text) the 1611 leaves out the word "also" because it does not translate the Greek word *και* (*kai*) whereas the present KJV follows the Greek and includes "also" in the translation. Likewise, in 1 Corinthians 9:5, at the end of the verse, and in Revelation 5:13 (twice) the 1611 is lacking the word "and" because it does not translate the Greek word *και* (*kai*). The present KJV includes "and" in these passages as it follows the Greek in a more exacting way. Also, this same kind of thing is found in Jude 25 where the 1611 again does not translate the Greek word *και* (*kai*), therefore there is no "both" where the present KJV has "both" in its translation of *και* (*kai*). Depending on the context, the Greek word *και* (*kai*) can be translated as "also," "and," or "both."

The worst omissions found in the 1611 New Testament can be found in 2 Corinthians 11:32; 2 Timothy 4:13; and 1 John 5:12. In 2 Corinthians 11:32 the 1611 does not translate the Greek word *δαμασκηνων* (*damaskēnōn*), thus leaving out the phrase "of the Damascenes," whereas the present KJV follows the Greek and includes these words. In 2 Timothy 4:13 the 1611 does not translate the Greek words *και τα βιβλια* (*kai ta biblia*), thus leaving out the phrase, "and the books," whereas the present KJV follows the Greek and translates these words. And, finally, in 1 John 5:12 the 1611 does not translate *του θεου* (*tu theou*), thus leaving out the phrase "of God," whereas the present KJV follows the Greek and includes these words.

III. Manuscripts and Translations

A main part of this controversy involves "textual criticism" which is an effort in establishing a proper view of discerning between variant readings among the many Greek manuscripts (New Testament books and passages). There are three main camps in this field, and it is in no way an exacting science. The three main camps are the Critical Text approach (Westcott and Hort), the Received Text (*Textus Receptus*) approach, which KJV advocates acclaim, and the Majority Text approach (Hodges and Farstad).

The Critical Text approach places much weight on two main manuscripts that they espouse to be supposedly "older", and there are several differently reasoned out arguments for picking any particular passage or reading in any particular situation. Most modern English translations (e.g. NIV, NASV, RSV, NRSV) follow the Critical Text approach (at least, in general). The Received Text approach places authority on the Greek text from which the KJV (and NKJV) was translated, and at least in part, it is argued that time itself bears witness that this is the text to follow; because it was used by so many for so long (about 400 years). The Majority Text approach simply places authority on

Not Taught!

the text that has the most Greek manuscripts that read the same for that particular passage.

Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:5-6; and Revelation 22:18-19 all strongly imply that someone could add to or take away from God's word. Yet, at the same time, the Lord maintains that He will (and does) preserve His Word (Deuteronomy 29:29; Psalm 12:6-7; Isaiah 30:8-9; Matthew 24:35; Luke 21:33). Christ goes so far as to say,

Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all is fulfilled. (Matthew 5:18 KJV)

There may be questions in the mind of man regarding a particular passage whether or not a word, phrase, or verse should be regarded as Scripture (when considering the different manuscripts available), but the truth of the matter is, this does not change the fact that God *has* preserved His Word. It is man's responsibility to fear God (Proverbs 2:1-12; 9:10; Job 28:28) and attempt to discern what is correct.

KJV advocates maintain they have this all figured out, because they set the KJV up as the standard. Therefore, the Greek manuscripts that the KJV followed (The Received Text)⁴ and the subsequent translation thereof, sets an exacting standard down to the very last word. This kind of thing would be nice if Scripture itself bore out such a standard, but the truth is, it does not.

IV. Scripture's Standard?

Based on the texts we have today, there is testimony to a "not-so-exacting" standard when it comes to either following the original language, or "exactness" in translation. For example, in the Greek Luke 3:36 has "**of Cainan**" (τοῦ Καϊνάν) which is not found in the Hebrew text (Genesis 11:12) regarding the same genealogy, but it is in the Greek OT text (LXX).

Similarly, Luke records Jesus reading a passage out of Isaiah that does not exactly follow what we find in the Hebrew text.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19 KJV)

Now, compare this with the Old Testament passage in Isaiah.

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim

liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,
(Isaiah 61:1-2a KJV)

As can be seen, the wording is not the same. Luke adds "recovering of sight to the blind." This phrase is not in the Hebrew, but it *is* in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (called the Septuagint, abbreviated LXX). Yet, this passage in Luke does not agree totally with the Greek (LXX) either. The phrase "to set at liberty them that are bruised" does not exist in the LXX. Moreover, instead of the phrase "to set at liberty them that are bruised," the Hebrew has, "the opening of the prison to them that are bound." The wording is not the same. So, Luke 4:18-19 follows neither the Hebrew nor the Greek in any kind of an exacting way.

If you believe the Word of God, you know that "**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God**" (2 Timothy 3:16 KJV), and therefore, what Luke recorded was accurate and correct. Yet, both the Hebrew *and* Greek texts differ from what Luke records. In fact, Luke does not have "God" at the beginning of the passage, and adds an entire phrase that is not even found in the Hebrew, but *is* in the Greek. So, we have differences in the two passages. Yet, despite these differences, the words in Isaiah *and* in Luke are all the inerrant Words of God. This may blow the brain circuits of some, but nonetheless, this *is* what is found in holy writ.

Another example of variance can be found in Luke 3:4-6.

As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. (KJV)

Now compare this with the passage in Isaiah (Esaias, KJV).

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together:
(Isaiah 40:3-5 KJV)

As can be seen, the wording is not the same. Luke follows the Septuagint closer than the Hebrew with "make his paths straight" ("make straight the paths of our God" LXX), as opposed to "make straight in the desert a highway for

Not Taught!

our God" (the Hebrew), and with "valley shall be filled" (LXX), as opposed to "valley shall be exalted" (the Hebrew). Luke also has "all flesh shall see the salvation of God" which is consistent with the Greek (LXX), whereas the Hebrew reads, "all flesh shall see it together." Yet, when the LXX is compared with the Greek in Luke, it can be seen that Luke 3:4-6 does not follow the LXX exactly either. So, Luke again, concurs with neither the Hebrew or the Greek (LXX) in every word. And, unlike Luke 4:18-19 where Luke adds a phrase that is in the LXX but not in the Hebrew, here Luke completely leaves out "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed" which is found in both the Greek *and* Hebrew. As can be seen, there is no exacting standard in quoting the Old Testament.

Another example can be found in Acts 8:32-33.

The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. (KJV)

Compare this with the passage in Isaiah (which has been translated from the Hebrew text).

he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: (Isaiah 53:7-8 KJV)

Note Acts records, "In his humiliation his judgment was taken away," whereas we have recorded in Isaiah, "He was taken from prison and from judgment." In this phrase, Acts follows the LXX and not the Hebrew. In fact, the wording in Acts is very nearly identical with the LXX. Yet, even in this, Acts does not follow the LXX word for word. Acts adds two to four Greek words (depending on the Greek manuscript) that are non-existent in the LXX (αυτον [auton], αυτου [autou] 2x, and δε [de], all four are in the Majority and Received Texts). Therefore, as we saw in Luke, Acts 8:32-33 is not completely consistent (i.e. word for word) with either the Hebrew or the Greek (LXX).

Finally, the above three examples (Luke 4:18-19, Luke 3:4-6, and Acts 8:32-33) are only three of many other examples in which variation can be found when comparing New Testament quotations of the Old Testament. The above three are the clearest examples, because in these passages, the book is identified, and it is clearly referring to a specific *written* passage.

Other examples could be given, but they may not be so specifically and clearly identifiable (in the text itself) with a particular passage. Typically, with a small amount of research (perhaps simply a cross reference) the Old Testament

passage can be found. And, when it is, it very often does not follow the Old Testament passage word for word. This could be due to the same reason the above three examples manifest variations (a reason God knows, and we do not). Or, it could be because the New Testament author simply chose not to quote the entire passage. Or, it could be that the quote is not meant to be a word for word exact quote. Or, it could be because the New Testament author is quoting something *verbally spoken*, similar to what is written, but nonetheless spoken (not written), therefore, the wording may not be exactly the same.

In fact, the New Testament *does* quote "Old Testament" statements of which we have no written record (e.g. Matthew 2:23; Matthew 27:9-10). Nevertheless, for whatever reason, the New Testament provides many statements that do not match verbatim Old Testament passages (e.g. Matthew 2:6/Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:18/Jeremiah 31:15; Matthew 3:3/Isaiah 40:3; Matthew 4:4/Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 12:18/Isaiah 42:1-4; Matthew 13:14-15/Isaiah 6:9-10; Matthew 13:35/Psalm 78:2; Matthew 15:8-9/Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 21:5/Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 26:31/Zechariah 13:7; Romans 9:27-28/Isaiah 10:22-23; Romans 9:29/Isaiah 1:9; Romans 11:9-10/Psalm 69:22-23; 1 Corinthians 14:21/Isaiah 28:11-12; etc.). This is not to say that the New Testament does not also exemplify a word for word quotation. It does (e.g. Matthew 2:15/Hosea 11:1; Matthew 27:35/Psalm 22:18; Matthew 27:46 & Mark 15:34/Psalm 22:1; Hebrews 1:5/Psalm 2:7; etc.). But, much of the time, the wording is *not* identical to what is found in the Hebrew Old Testament.

V. Conclusion

As the above illustrates, based on the texts we have, Scripture itself is not so exacting when it comes to quoting, or perhaps translating, Scripture. Even when it comes to having the same wording that exists in either the Hebrew or the LXX (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), even in this, there is a lack of word for word sameness. The kind of stringent exactness that KJV advocates place upon other translations, and the standard of one translation above all, is a standard unparalleled in the Word of God.

So, how is this variance properly understood? First of all, anyone familiar with linguistics, or who knows more than one language, should understand that translation (going from one language to another) is not an exacting science. Secondly, if and when there is a question, it is our responsibility to cry out for wisdom and understanding (Proverbs 2:1-7; James 1:5) that we might discern and find the answer to the question at hand. In specific, the Lord does not give an answer to this present dilemma. So, does this mean we have no stronghold? No, **"In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence"** (Proverbs 14:26 KJV; 18:10). We can stand on the solid Rock (Matthew 7:24-25; 1 Corinthians 10:4; 1 Peter 2:8; Psalm 18:2; 28:1; 62:2; 71:3; 92:15) of the Word of God that we *do* know.

When it comes to variant manuscripts, for the large majority of the Scriptures,

Not Taught!

there is no variant reading whatsoever in the original languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek). Thus, most of the time, no question arises. If and when there is a question at hand, it can be studied out (Proverbs 2, even if you do not know the original languages) and usually be safely discerned. When it comes to a particular translation, the safest approach (that we have seen) is to find a translation that follows a more word for word literal bent toward translating (like the KJV, NKJV, NASV) as opposed to a concept to concept translation approach (like the NIV or NLT). A more literal approach keeps the interpretation of the translators down to a minimum. Usually, the preface of a particular version reveals the translation theory behind it.

In conclusion, the above may be quite difficult for some to accept, because, like Scripture, it does not set in cement a solid standard in dealing with this issue. Indeed, God has preserved His Word. But, what that means to some, is not what God means in His truth. Certainly, there may be some ambiguity regarding variant manuscripts, and even some ambiguity regarding some particular translation, but the bottom line to this whole issue is found in Psalm 119:89. "**For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven**" (KJV). Down here, "**we know in part**" (1 Corinthians 13:9 KJV).

Endnotes:

1. In the Hebrew text this is found in Exodus 22:27, and for "**Thou shalt not revile the Gods**" (1611 KJV, Exodus 22:28) it reads, אֱלֹהִים לֹא תִקְלָל (‘elohiym lo’ teqallâl). For more on the true Gods, see [He Is Holy Gods](#).

Also, elsewhere the 1611 translates lower case "**gods**," e.g. in Genesis 31:30, 32; 35:2, 4; Exodus 12:12; etc., but in Exodus 22:28 they translate "**Gods**" with a capital "G," as they do also in Genesis 3:5; 1 Samuel 4:8 [current KJV also]; Daniel 4:8-9, 18; which all refer to the true Gods.

1611 also has "**God**" [capital "G"] for a god other than the true God. This can be found in Deuteronomy 3:24 [current KJV also]; 32:12; Psalm 81:9 [2x]; Isaiah 44:10, 15, 17 [2x]; Daniel 4:8 [compare to Daniel 1:2]; 11:38 ["**a God whom his fathers knew not**"]; Habakkuk 1:11; Malachi 2:11; Acts 7:43; 2 Corinthians 4:4 ["**God of this world**"]; Philippians 3:19 [current KJV also].)

2. KJV likewise adds "God" in the phrase "God save the king" in 1 Samuel 10:24; 2 Samuel 16:16; and "God save king Adonijah" in 1 Kings 1:25. The word for God is not there. What is there is יְחִי הַמֶּלֶךְ (yechiy hamelekh), more literally, "May the king live."

3. ἱεροσόλους (ierosulous) is a compound word. The first part = "temple" (KJV) as in Acts 3:8, ἱερόν (ieron). The second part = "robbers" as in 2 Corinthians 11:8 where the verb form is found in which Paul wrote, "I robbed" (KJV), ἐσύλησα (esulêsa).

4. The KJV does not actually follow the Received Text in Luke 23:34 on the word "**lots**." It follows the Critical Text. The Received Text has the singular

"**lot**" (κληρον [klêron]). The Critical Text has the plural "**lots**" (κληρους [klêrous]). The KJV translates "**lots**."

The KJV and NKJV do not follow the Received Text in 2 Peter 1:1. They both leave out an "**our**." The KJV reads, "**righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ.**" The NKJV reads, "**righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.**" The Received Text reads, "**righteousness of our God and our Savior Jesus Christ**" (δικαιοσύνη τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). The Critical and Majority Texts read, "**righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ**" (δικαιοσύνη τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). Notice, the KJV doesn't actually follow any of the three Greek texts. The NKJV follows the Critical and Majority.

Likewise, neither the KJV nor the NKJV follow the Received Text in Luke 24:19. Both translate "of Nazareth" which is what the Critical Text reads, τοῦ Ναζαρηνοῦ (tou Nazarênou). The Received Text reads, "the Nazarene," τοῦ Ναζωραίου (tou Nazôraiou).

Likewise, the NKJV does not follow the Received Text in 2 John 7. The NKJV reads, "**have gone out**," which follows the Critical Text ἐξῆλθον (exêlthon), more literally, "**went out**." The Received Text has εἰσηλθον (eisêlthon) "**came into**" (KJV "**are entered into**").

Likewise, neither the KJV nor NKJV follow the Received Text in Revelation 1:4. The Received reads, "καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐπτὰ πνευμάτων, ἃ ἔστιν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ" that is, "**from the seven Spirits who is before His throne.**" The Received Text has "ἔστιν" which is the singular "is," whereas the Critical and Majority Texts do not have "ἔστιν" nor any verb. The KJV; NKJV, NAS; etc. have the plural "are."

Email Exchange:

From: blandreneau1@charter.net
Sent: Saturday, August 9, 2014 9:47 AM
To: feedback@atruechurch.info
Subject: Nice site.. only one thing bothered me...

<http://www.sound-doctrine.net/KJB-Vs-NKJB.html>

You sure put in a lot of time and work on your site.. you must have great compassion for Souls.. may the Lord bless His work...

Y. Landreneau

From: [Darwin Fish](#)
Sent: Saturday, August 9, 2014 12:55 PM
To: blandreneau1@charter.net
Subject: Re: Nice site.. only one thing bothered me...

Not Taught!

Thank you for the email.

I looked at the web page you gave. Could I ask you a few questions regarding it?

How do you know “**whales**” (KJV) is the proper translation in Genesis 1:21, since the KJV translates this same Hebrew word elsewhere as “serpent/s” (Exodus 7:9-10, 12) and “dragon/s” (Deuteronomy 32:33; Psalm 74:13; 91:13; 148:7; Isaiah 27:1; 51:9; Jeremiah 51:34; Ezekiel 29:3)?

The web page claims the NKJV has “major blasphemy!” because it says, “you will be like God knowing good and evil”. Doesn’t God know good and evil (Romans 11:36)? The web page claims this statement equals “God (with a big G) is not evil!” How does “God knowing good and evil” = “God is evil”?

Regarding Genesis 22:8 the NKJV is actually more accurate than the KJV. The Hebrew more literally reads,

God will provide for Himself the lamb

Why would you think the KJV is to be preferred here, when it is not as accurate as the NKJV in this verse?

Regarding Daniel 3:25, the KJV has “God”. The NKJV has in a footnote “gods”. Yet, the Aramaic word here is indeed in the plural, and the KJV translates it as “gods” everywhere else in Daniel (see Daniel 2:11, 47; 3:12, 14, 18; 4:8-9, 18; 5:4, 11, 14, 23). Daniel 3:25 is the only place the KJV translates this plural noun as a singular noun. Why then do you think it is wrong to translate this plural noun as a plural noun in Daniel 3:25?

The web page faults the NKJV for translating a Hebrew word “worthless” in Zechariah 11:17, but the KJV translates this Hebrew word as “**of no value**” in Job 13:4. Is the KJV to be faulted for translating it this way in Job 13:4 as well? If not, what justifies the condemnation of the NKJV in Zechariah 11:17, but no condemnation for the KJV in Job 13:4 for doing the same thing (in meaning and principle)?

The web page faults the NKJV for translating a Greek word “inquired” in Matthew 2:4, but the KJV translates this Greek word as “enquired” in John 4:52, “enquire” in Acts 23:20 and “asked” in Luke 15:26; 18:36; Acts 4:7; 10:18; 23:19. Why is the NKJV condemned for doing what the KJV does (just in different verses)?

The web page faults the NKJV for translating a past tense verb (aorist indicative verb, Matthew 18:11) in the present perfect (“has come”) as opposed

to the KJV's present tense ("is come"). It is actually in the Greek, "**came**" (past tense). By what standard is the NKJV faulted here and the KJV exalted, since neither are totally accurate?

The web page faults the NKJV in John 1:3 for translating the Greek preposition $\delta\iota'$ (di) as "**through**" instead of "**by**" (KJV). Yet, the KJV translates this same exact Greek word as "**through**" just a few verses later in John 1:7 and even with the same exact concept as in John 1:3 in John 1:10. John 1:3 (KJV) says, "All things were made **by** Him". John 1:10 (KJV) says, "the world was made **through** Him". Don't you think this is a bit hypocritical to condemn the NKJV for doing the exact same thing the KJV does?

The web page faults the NKJV in John 4:24 for not having the indefinite article "a". There is no indefinite article ("a") in John 4:24 in the Greek nor in the entire Greek New Testament. So, how can the NKJV be faulted for not putting something there that is not there?

I could ask more questions, but I will leave it to that for now. Since you wrote, could you please address these things?

From: blandreneau1@charter.net
Sent: Saturday, August 9, 2014 1:27 PM
To: [Darwin Fish](#)
Subject: Re: Nice site.. only one thing bothered me...

but ... it is all academic.. some are statements and not questions.. and they all are mute when it comes down to..
It's a matter of trusting in the Lord... plain and simple...
Do you believe the Lord God is sovereign and all powerful and knew what He was doing when He gave those men the job of printing His word?
Do you believe that the Lord God did it correctly the first time or needed help in correcting it later..
Do you believe that He preserved and protected it?..
It's either all true the first time.. or not true at all
or we can all start making changes where we want.. Did you know that the other versions are copyrighted.. and that every new version has to be 30% different than the others by law.. so it's changed to meet legal requirements..

From: [Darwin Fish](#)
Sent: Wednesday, August 13, 2014 8:02 AM
To: blandreneau1@charter.net
Subject: Re: Nice site.. only one thing bothered me...

I was really hoping that you would answer my previous questions specifically.

Not Taught!

Nevertheless, would you answer these?

“It's a matter of trusting in the Lord... plain and simple...”

How am I not trusting in the Lord, if I decide to read the Hebrew or Aramaic or Greek and see the KJV translation is not accurate in any particular passage?

“Do you believe the Lord God is sovereign and all powerful and knew what He was doing when He gave those men the job of printing His word?”

Yes, as He is likewise with any translation of His Word.

“Do you believe that the Lord God did it correctly the first time”

What is “the first time”? If you refer to the 1611 KJV as the “first time,” the KJV is not the first English translation. So what do you mean by “first time”?

“or needed help in correcting it later”

Does this question apply to the Great 1539, or Geneva 1560, or Bishops' 1568? How do you answer your question with these in mind? Isn't this what the KJV translators did, since these other Bibles existed already?

“Do you believe that He preserved and protected it?”

The Bible teaches He both preserves (Psalm 12:7) and people can pervert (Proverbs 30:5-6; 2 Peter 3:16; Revelation 22:18-19). How do you know when it has been preserved and when it has been perverted?

“It's either all true the first time.. or not true at all”

Where is this concept found in the Bible in regards to translation (the subject at hand)? That it's either all or none?

“or we can all start making changes where we want”

Changing what? Isn't that what the KJV translators did in light of the other English translations before them? What passage in the Bible gave them the right to do so, but we can not?

“Did you know that the other versions are copyrighted”

Some are, some are not (e.g. Webster 1833, Young 1862, mine).

Finally, may I ask by what Biblical standard are the KJV translators and their translation (1611) exalted above the English translators and their translations

before them (e.g. Great 1539, Geneva 1560, Bishops' 1568)? By what Biblical standard (Matthew 7:2?) are the KJV translators and their translation exalted above the English translators and their translations after them? By what Biblical standard are the KJV translators and their translation exalted above any individual translator and his translation at any time, in the past, now, or in the future (e.g. Wycliffe 1394, Tyndale 1531, Coverdale 1535, Matthew 1537, Webster 1833, Robert Young [YLT] 1862, Jay P. Green 1985, or you or I)?

Not Taught!

Heard about Dragons lately?

Dragons

Leviathan Is A Dragon

Myths indeed abound (Psalm 58:3), but Leviathan is no myth. He is one of the great sea creatures God created (Genesis 1:21) that is massive, breathes fire and smoke (Job 41), and lives in the sea (Isaiah 27:1). Just because you haven't seen one, doesn't mean he does not exist. God does not lie, and He says he does.

I. His Existence

The term "Leviathan" is not a translation, but rather a *transliteration* of the Hebrew word לִיְיָתָן (livyâthân). לִיְיָתָן (livyâthân) is only found in Job 3:8, 41:1; Psalm 74:14; 104:26; and Isaiah 27:1. It is translated in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (LXX) as δρακων (drakôn), "dragon," in every instance with one exception, Job 3:8, where it is translated as κητος (kêtos), "whale" or "monster" (found also in Matthew 12:40, NKJV "great fish," NAS "sea monster").

Leviathan is one of the creatures God created on the fifth day of creation. Genesis 1:21 records this using the same Hebrew plural term תַּנִּינִים (tanniynim) for "sea creatures" (NKJV; "sea monsters" NAS) as is used in Isaiah 27:1 in the singular, תַּנִּינָה (tanniyn). There it describes Leviathan as a "reptile" (NKJV) or "dragon" (KJV, NAS).

Not Taught!

Some argue that Leviathan is a mythical creature, "merely poetic imagery."

All five occurrences (Job 3:8; 41:1; Pss. 74:14; 104:26; Isaiah 27:1) are in poetic passages and belong to "dead mythology," i.e., old mythological concepts are employed without suggestion that they are still believed. (*The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, copyright 1976, p. 912)

This is contrary to the Biblical text. For example, Job knows of this creature (Job 3:8), and God uses this creature Job knows about to rebuke him and to illustrate to Job His awesome power.

In His rebuke, the Lord speaks of things in His creation and He does not diverge off this discourse of reality, but continues in it to illustrate to Job that he is no match for what God has created, let alone, for God Himself (Job 38-41).

God begins by asking Job where he was when He created the world (Job 38:4-7). He asks Job who set the limits for the sea (Job 38:8-11), and if he has ever commanded the morning to dawn (Job 38:12). He points to the ocean depths and asks Job if he has been to the springs that are there, or walked about in the depths of the sea (Job 38:16). He speaks of the gates of death (Job 38:17), the breadth of the earth (Job 38:18), light and darkness (Job 38:19-20), snow and hail (Job 38:22-23), the east wind (Job 38:24), water, the thunderbolt, rain, dew, ice and frost (Job 38:25-30, 34-35), and the constellations (Job 38:31-33). He asks Job who gives wisdom to the mind (Job 38:36), and who feeds the animals (Job 38:39-41). He points out that Job does not even know when wild animals give birth (Job 39:1-4), and He asks him about the wild donkey (Job 39:5-8). In His humiliation of Job, He reminds him that he can't even use a wild ox to serve him (Job 39:9-12). He continues and speaks to Job of the ostrich (Job 39:13-18), the horse (Job 39:19-25), the hawk, and the eagle (Job 39:26-30), and even of man (Job 40:11-13), stating,

Look on everyone who is proud, and bring him low; tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together, bind their faces in hidden darkness. Then I will also confess to you that your own right hand can save you. (Job 40:12-14)

Then finally, as a kind of grand finale, the Lord describes two massive creatures He has made.

The first is behemoth (בְּהֵמוֹת, vehêmot), an animal with a tail the size of a cedar. Behemoth is so massive a raging river is like nothing to it, even though it flows right into its mouth. And the animal is so huge and strong, God says He is the only one who could bring a sword against it (Job 40:15-24).

The second is Leviathan, which is such a giant awesome frightful creature the Lord says,

Shall one not be overwhelmed at the sight of him? No one is so

fierce that he would dare stir him up. Who then is able to stand against Me? (Job 41:9-10)

Those who claim Leviathan is a mythical nonexistent creature make God's point to Job meaningless. But in truth, it is not meaningless. It is very substantive, and Job gets the point (Job 42:1-6).

Leviathan is a certain kind of sea creature that still exists on the planet. He is not a single creature, but a certain kind, that still roams the sea. We know these things for several reasons:

1. Sometime in the past, God killed one and gave him as food for people to eat (Psalm 74:14), yet the creature still exists (Isaiah 27:1), even after one was killed. Therefore, there was not only one.
2. Even though it appears he is capable of coming upon land (Job 41:30), the Lord explicitly states that He made Leviathan for the express purpose of playing in the sea, and far from telling us Leviathan is not still in the sea, Psalm 104 indicates he's still having a good time there.

This great and wide sea, in which are innumerable teeming things, living things both small and great. There the ships sail about; there is that Leviathan which You have made to play there. (Psalm 104:25-26)

Scripture says that Leviathan is in the sea, and the Lord made him to play in it. This is written in the context of the natural course of events on the planet, which all continue to this present day. Psalm 104 speaks of the boundary God has made for the sea, the springs He causes to flow in the valleys, the rain He brings upon the hills, the grass and vegetation He causes to grow, the cedars of Lebanon which He planted, the sun and moon that He has set in order, the day and the night, the feeding of the lions, the labor of man, etc. (verses 10-24). It is all noted as the manifold work of God (verse 24), and part of this work is Leviathan that He has made to play in the sea.

Psalm 104 further reveals that Leviathan is like the other creatures God has made. It is not exempt from the cycle of death and new life (Ecclesiastes 3:19-20). Immediately after speaking of Leviathan, it says,

These all wait for You, that You may give them their food in due season. What You give them they gather in; You open Your hand, they are filled with good. You hide Your face, they are troubled; You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. You send forth Your Spirit, they are created. (Psalm 104:27-30)

"**These all wait for You**" includes Leviathan. God feeds Leviathan, takes away his breath, and creates new ones (verse 29-30, "they are created"). So we see

Not Taught!

Leviathan is in the same lot as the other creatures on this planet. He is under the curse (Romans 8:20-22) and dies, but yet lives on.

3. Isaiah's prophecy of the future confirms the continued existence of Leviathan, because it foretells the slaying of Leviathan by the Lord; and it again affirms that he presently "**is in the sea.**"

In that day the Lord with His severe sword, great and strong, will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent; and He will slay the reptile that is in the sea. (Isaiah 27:1)

This prophecy is made in the context of the yet future coming judgment of God. The verse just prior says,

For behold, the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain. (Isaiah 26:21)

Also in this context, "**in that day**" (Isaiah 27:2-6), is the yet future blessing upon Israel in which it says,

Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit. (Isaiah 27:6)

Clearly, none of this has been fulfilled and so it is yet future. This lets us know Leviathan is still in the sea.

II. His Size

Leviathan is so massive that "**sorrow dances before him**" (Job 41:22). When strong men encounter one, they become so fearful the men are beside themselves with terror (Job 41:25). Leviathan is so massive he leaves a large shining wake behind him as he moves through the sea (Job 41:32), and his eyes are so large God likens them to the breaking of day (Job 41:18).

Leviathan is a *very* large serpent. In God's rebuke towards Job, the Lord quite sarcastically speaks of Leviathan with these words:

Can you draw out Leviathan with a hook, or snare his tongue with a line which you lower? Can you put a reed through his nose, or pierce his jaw with a hook? Will he make many supplications to you? Will he speak softly to you? Will he make a covenant with you? Will you take him as a servant forever? Will you play with him as with a bird, or will you leash him for your maidens? Will your companions make a banquet of him? Will they apportion him among the merchants? (Job 41:1-6)

These are all rhetorical questions. In other words, you can't draw out Leviathan with a hook. He will not speak softly to you. And you will not make a banquet of him. In other words, he is not a fish that can be caught! Large whales can be caught, but not this puppy. He's beyond harpooning. As the Lord says,

Can you fill his skin with harpoons, or his head with fishing spears?

In other words, no! If someone were to attempt to do so, the Lord sarcastically says,

**Lay your hand on him; remember the battle - Never do it again!
Indeed, any hope of overcoming him is false. (Job 41:7-9)**

III. His Strength

Part of Leviathan's fierceness, along with his size, is his immense strength. Besides having more than one head (Psalm 74:14), God says he has "**mighty power**" and "**terrible teeth**" (Job 41:12, 14), and "**strength dwells in his neck**" (Job 41:22). He has a "**heart as hard as stone**" (Job 41:24), and his outer covering literally has "**shields**."

Even though the KJV, NKJV, and NAS translate Job 41:15 as "scales" in reference to Leviathan's exterior, it is not the Hebrew word for scales (קַשְׂקֶשֶׁת, *qasqeset*, e.g. Leviticus 11:9) that is used in Job 41:15 (NIV "shields"). It is the Hebrew word מַגְּנִיּוֹת (*mâghinniym*, in Hebrew text, Job 41:7) which is the word for "**shields**" as used in 2 Chronicles 9:16 and 26:14 for shields of war. Shields is a very accurate word, because no sword, spear, dart, or javelin can penetrate Leviathan's protective covering, as it is written,

Though the sword reaches him, it cannot avail; nor does spear, dart, or javelin. (Job 41:26)

This explains why his skin cannot be filled with harpoons nor his head with fishing spears (Job 41:7). Leviathan's outer covering is extremely strong, so strong that his "scales" (if you will) "**cannot be parted**" (Job 41:17). They are so tightly sealed together that "**no air can come between them**" (Job 41:16). God clearly has clothed this guy with some serious armor, with impenetrable shields.

Along with this strong armor, is strength that is almost incomprehensible. For Leviathan, iron is like straw, and bronze is as rotten wood (Job 41:27). That describes amazing strength. If iron is as straw to him, and bronze is as rotten wood, then he could bend iron as if it was a piece of straw, in other words, with little effort; and he could break or crush bronze as if it was a piece of rotten wood.

Also part of Leviathan's arsenal is his belly.

Not Taught!

His undersides are like sharp potsherds; he spreads pointed marks in the mire. (Job 41:30)

From the statement about the "**pointed marks**" it is evident they are facing outward away from his body. Thus, anything coming in contact with that stomach is going to get cut up and possibly even shredded.

IV. His Fire

Some foolishly claim Leviathan is a crocodile (*The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, p. 912), but the crocodile is nowhere near what is described in Job 41; and it does not breathe fire. Leviathan is clearly called a serpent (נָחָשׁ, nâchâsh) in Isaiah 27:1, a fleeing, twisted serpent, but he is no ordinary serpent. This one literally breathes fire.

His breath kindles coals, and a flame goes out of his mouth. (Job 41:21)

The dragon is no mythical creature. There may be mythical dragons, and myths surrounding dragons, but this dragon is no myth. Dragon is a term that well describes Leviathan. He is a massive fire breathing terrifying serpent that not only breathes fire, but smoke as well, as it is written,

Smoke goes out of his nostrils, as from a boiling pot and burning rushes. (Job 41:20)

This characteristic of fire within Leviathan is so prevalent that when he sneezes, light flashes forth (Job 41:18), and,

Out of his mouth go burning lights; sparks of fire shoot out. (Job 41:19)

He even makes the water around him boil as he abides in the sea (Job 41:31). Fire is very much a part of Leviathan's make up. He is clearly a dragon. It is no wonder different cultures have different myths about dragons. The existence of the dragon is no myth. The Bible calls him Leviathan.

So, when was the last time you were told you are responsible for your,

Dreams?

Are we really responsible for what we do in our dreams? Yes, we are. Can we control what we do in our dreams? Yes we can. Can Satan have any kind of influence in our dreams? It appears it is quite possible. Can we support this all Biblically? Yes indeed.

What is a dream? Webster (*Webster's Third New International Dictionary*) describes a dream in this way,

"1a: a series of thoughts, images, or emotions occurring during sleep. . . . having ideas or images in the mind while asleep."

Dreams are thoughts and images occurring during sleep.

In Scripture, dreams are not only called "dreams", but also "visions of the night" (Job 33:15), "thoughts on my bed", "visions of my head" (Daniel 4:5; 7:15), "visions of his head while on his bed" (Daniel 7:1), and "night visions" (Daniel 7:7, 13). Now granted, the above references out of Daniel are in reference to dreams given miraculously by God, but even when the Word speaks of a "normal" type of a dream, it is still called a "night vision" (e.g. Isaiah 29:7-8). In fact, Job 33:15 clearly describes a dream as a "vision of the night" ("In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men,"). So, Scripture defines dreams as "night visions". Where do these night visions come from?

Not Taught!

I. From God

This is found several times over in the Word (Genesis 28:10-17; 31:11-13; 37:5-11; 40:1-22; 41:1-32; Numbers 12:6; Judges 7:9-15; Daniel chapters 1, 2, 4, and 7; Matthew 1:20; 2:12-22). In Matthew 27:19, Pilate's wife suffered in a dream that appears to have been from God as a warning to Pilate (via his wife).

Does God still give "night visions" (dreams)? Well, God can do as He pleases (Psalm 115:3). If He wants to, He can (and will). Yet, the dreams mentioned in the paragraph above are of a special and peculiar nature (out of the norm). There is a type of dream, not so abnormal, that God definitely still gives to men. Elihu speaks of it in Job 33:14-18,

For God may speak in one way, or in another, yet man does not perceive it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, while slumbering on their beds, then He opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction. In order to turn man from his deed, and conceal pride from man, He keeps back his soul from the Pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.

Here, Elihu speaks of the work of God upon men in their sleep (in their night visions). It is a way in which the Lord speaks to men in their dreams in an effort to turn them away from evil. Yet, men are unaware of this work of God upon them ("yet man does not perceive it").

Remember the old saying, "Sleep on it."? What do people mean when they say this? Typically, they mean that if you sleep on some decision or course of action to be taken, you might feel differently about the situation in the morning (after you've slept). There's a reason for this. God instructs men in the night, upon their beds, in their dreams. As He says,

For God may speak in one way, or in another, yet man does not perceive it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, while slumbering on their beds, then He opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction. (Job 33:14-16)

Why? "**In order to turn man from his deed . . .**" (Job 33:17)

Isn't it true, that after a good night's sleep, a person (typically) is more sober and clear headed? Indeed, and this is because of the work of God upon the sons of men while on their beds dreaming. Of course, a wicked man may wake up and discard the instruction God has given him that night. But, nonetheless, God gives it. So, dreams (visions of the night) can be from the Lord, or they can also come...

II. From Satan

Can the realm of darkness have any hand in these visions of the night? Yes, indeed. In Ephesians 6:12 we read,

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Are our dreams excluded from this warfare? No.

In Job 4:13-19, we have an example of a dream in which a demon is involved. Eliphaz the Temanite declares,

In disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair on my body stood up. It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance. A form was before my eyes; there was silence; then I heard a voice saying: "Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can a man be more pure than his Maker? If He puts no trust in His servants, if He charges His angels with error, how much more those who dwell in houses of clay, . . ."

Eliphaz describes a dream in which he saw a demon ("a spirit"). How do we know this was a demon? By his message. His message is extremely deceitful. He says that God "puts no trust in His servants", as if to imply or state that God doesn't trust any of His angels -- which is a lie. God certainly charged SOME of "His angels with error" (verse 18), and rightly so, because they sinned (Revelation 12:4; Jude 6). But, God does put trust in His angels, as Hebrews 1:14 exemplifies,

Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

God sent Gabriel to announce to Mary the coming of the Messiah through her body (Luke 1:26f; quite an important announcement!). In the future, God will entrust Michael and the host of holy angels to wage a radically important war against the Devil and his angels (Revelation 12:7-8). God most certainly trusts His angels. Yet, this demon says otherwise, this demon who was involved in Eliphaz's dream.

Now Eliphaz was not a man speaking truth. Note what is said of him in Job 42:7,

. . . the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as my servant Job has."

Eliphaz was speaking lies, but Job was speaking the truth. Now someone might

Not Taught!

argue, "That's why there was a demon in Eliphaz's dream!" Maybe so. But, even Job, who was a righteous man (Job 1:1,8; 2:3), experienced the power of darkness upon his dreams. Note Job's complaint about this in Job 7:13-14,

When I say, "My bed will comfort me, my couch will ease my complaint, then You scare me with dreams and terrify me with visions,"

Here, Job attributes these tormenting dreams to God. In fact, all of his troubles he attributed to being from the hand of God (see Job 6:4; 7:20; 16:11-14, etc.). And, he was right in this (Job 42:7-8). Yet, it is only attributed to being from God because God is the Sovereign Lord who controls ALL things (Psalm 103:19). Job's troubles did come from the Lord (as God recognizes in Job 2:3), yet it was via Satan's hand (Job 1:8-12; 2:3-6).

Therefore, these tormenting dreams were from God, yet via the hand of Satan. Thus, we have here an example of Satan having influence upon the dreams of a righteous man. So, dreams can come from God, and even the enemy of our soul. Where else do our "visions of the night" come from?

III. Our Own Hearts

In Jeremiah 23:16, the Lord says,

Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; they speak a vision of their own heart.

What was he speaking of ("vision of their own heart")? Jeremiah 23:25 explains further,

I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in My name, saying, "I have dreamed, I have dreamed!"

Their dreams were the "deceit of their own heart" (Jeremiah 23:26). These false prophet's dreams were coming from their own deceitful hearts. Note further Isaiah 29:7-8,

The multitude of all the nations who fight against Ariel, even all who fight against her and her fortress, and distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision. It shall even be as when a hungry man dreams, and look - he eats; but he awakes, and his soul is still empty; or as when a thirsty man dreams, and look - he drinks; but he awakes, and indeed he is faint, and his soul still craves: so the multitude of all the nations shall be, who fight against Mount Zion.

As illustrated above, a hungry man or a thirsty man, because he is hungry or thirsty, has it in his heart to dream about food or drink. His dreams come from his desires (from his heart).

In Daniel 4:5, Nebuchadnezzar calls the dream he received from God, "thoughts on my bed". This is simply what a dream is -- thoughts in your mind while you sleep. They may be from God, maybe even from the enemy of your soul, or maybe simply from your own heart.

Being that Jeremiah 17:9 is true, men will have evil dreams. And, just as Jesus said that evil thoughts come from the heart of man (Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21), so do evil dreams come from the heart of man. They are evil thoughts in his sleep. So,

IV. Are We Responsible?

Are we responsible for our dreams? Clearly, Job gives us an example where he had no control over what he dreamed. His dreams tormented him (Job 7:13-15). If Satan or some demon might have the power to have influence upon what we dream, how then could we be responsible for what we dream? Maybe Satan is causing the dream!

The bottom line is this: We are responsible for anything we might do, be it while we are awake, or be it while we are asleep. If we sinfully lust after something or someone in our dream, it is sin, and we are responsible before God. If we carry out an ungodly act in a dream, it is sin, and we are responsible before God.

We cannot blame Satan (or some demon) for any sinful behavior we do in a dream. Even if the Devil did influence us to do some wrong (awake or asleep), we are still responsible before God for our actions (note 1 Chronicles 21 where Satan moved David to number Israel, yet David was still guilty before God).

How do we know that we can control what we do in our dreams and that we are responsible for our actions in our dreams? Because we see this exemplified in holy writ.

In Genesis 20:1-8, we see God come to Abimelech in a dream. Abimelech responds to the Lord quite coherently, and the Lord responds to Abimelech (just as if it was not a dream). Abimelech displays sober thinking and a wise response to the Lord in his dream.

If this was not enough evidence, 1 Kings chapter three should solidify the verdict.

At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask! What shall I give you?" And Solomon said: "You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. Now, O Lord my God, You have made Your servant King instead of my father David, but I am a little

Not Taught!

child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" The speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. (1 Kings 3:5-10)

The speech pleased the Lord! The speech Solomon made *in his dream!*

Solomon is no passive puppet here. Solomon responds in a good way, as opposed to a sinful or self-centered way, and God is pleased. Note, God commends Solomon for responding wisely in his dream.

Then God said to him: "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days. So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days." Then Solomon awoke; and indeed it had been a dream. (1 Kings 3:11-15).

Tremendous blessing came upon Solomon, because he acted wisely *in his dream*. Yes indeed, we are responsible for what we do in our dreams, be it good or bad.

If this is so, then those of us who have sinned grievously in our dreams have all the more reason to fear and trembling before a holy God (which is good, Isaiah 57:15; 66:2; Philippians 2:12; 1 Peter 1:17).

But why is this? Why would we do something in a dream we would never dare do while awake? In a dream, we can be placed in a situation of serious compromise and temptation, that, in normal living, we would never allow ourselves to be in. Note Psalm 11:5,

The Lord tests the righteous.

Do you think it is possible that God might even test us in our dreams? Yes indeed. He did so with Solomon (1 Kings 3:5-15), and Solomon past the test with flying colors. For those of us who have not done so well, Hebrews 4:15-16 should be ever on our hearts and minds (be it awake or asleep).

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

This all places an interesting light on the prayer of Matthew 6:13, "**do not lead us into temptation**".

So then, how do we fight off and stay away from sin, and possibly even find that "throne of grace" in the midst of our dreams? By zealously seeking, knowing and taking heed to the Word of God.

Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against you. (Psalm 119:11)

This does not only have to do with our waking hours, but also the hours of the night, as Proverbs promises,

My son, let them not depart from your eyes - keep sound wisdom and discretion; so they will be life to your soul and grace to your neck. Then you will walk safely in your way, and your foot will not stumble. When you lie down, you will not be afraid; yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet. (Proverbs 3:21-24)

And,

My son, keep your father's command, and do not forsake the law of your mother. Bind them continually upon your heart; tie them around your neck. When you roam, they will lead you; when you sleep, they will keep you. (Proverbs 6:20-22).

The more Biblically minded we are, the more we love the Word and have Scripture running through our hearts and minds, then the more righteous, godly, and holy we will live, awake or asleep.

One last Scripture to consider is found in Ecclesiastes 5:7,

For in the multitude of dreams and many words there is also vanity. But fear God.

People can get carried away with, or be preoccupied with, dreams and attempting to understand them. The writer of Ecclesiastes exhorts otherwise. Don't get caught up in dreams. Get caught up in fearing God, and loving Him, and your sleep will be sweet (Proverbs 3:24).

Not Taught!

What does the Bible say about how many saved people there has been through history?

Believers Of The Past

What Should We Expect To Find?

To the Chief Musician. On an eight-stringed harp. A Psalm of David. Help, Lord, for the godly man ceases! For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men. (Psalm 12:1)

Even in David's day, in the midst of those who had the oracles of God (Psalm 147:19-20; Romans 3:2), who had the Word of the living God in the correct religion, there were few godly men. There were few who were saved (Matthew 7:13-14), few who knew God and were on their way to heaven, few who would not end up in hell. Solomon wrote,

Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, but who can find a faithful man? (Proverbs 20:6)

Not Taught!

With few exceptions, faithful men, men who are saved (Psalm 31:23; 78:8, 37; 101:6; Proverbs 28:18; Matthew 24:45-51; 25:21-23; Luke 12:42-48; 16:10-12; 19:17; Revelation 2:10; 17:14) have always been hard to find.

I. Before The Flood

For the first approximately 1650 years of life on the earth, up until the flood, there is not a single woman clearly noted as righteous, and the only godly men clearly identified as such are Abel, Enoch, and Noah (Genesis 4:4; 5:22-24; 6:8-9; Hebrews 11:4-7). This makes a grand total of three! No one else is specifically identified as a follower of Christ, except perhaps for Seth. Although, Seth's godliness is only by implication via Eve's statement, "**God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel.**" (Genesis 4:25).

Now, this does not mean there were not other godly people on the planet during this time. Genesis 4:26 says,

And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh. Then men began to call on the name of the Lord.

Near the time of Enosh's arrival, 235 years from the beginning (Genesis 5:3, 6), men began to call upon God. How many and who they were and how many were actually saved, it does not divulge. But, one fact becomes quite clear. By the time Noah enters the ark and the flood comes upon the world, there are only 8 people, out of the entire population of the planet, spared from the wrath of God via the flood (Genesis 6:5-8, 11-13, 17-18; 1 Peter 3:20). And, out of these eight, only one is clearly identified as righteous before God (Genesis 6:8-9).

Therefore, for the first approximately 1650 years, all we can find for certain, by name, are three godly men, and the reason we know about them, is because God has recorded this information for us in His holy Word. Without the written documentation of holy writ, we would have no certain information of any godly man for this entire 1600 year period of history.

Interesting to note, it was during this time that Enoch prophesied about those "**for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness,**" i.e. false teachers (2 Peter 2:1, 17; Jude 4, 13) and said,

Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. (Jude 14-15)

Enoch knew of the coming judgment of God upon those who lead people astray. The issue of false teachers goes way back to the beginning, around 700 years from the beginning ("**the seventh from Adam,**" Jude 14).

II. After The Flood To Abram

For the next approximately 350 years, the only men pictured in Scripture after the flood as godly men are Noah and two of his sons. Ham is depicted as an ungodly man in Genesis 9:22 as he saw his father naked and told his two brothers about it. But, Ham's brothers, Shem and Japheth, didn't dare look upon their father's nakedness (Genesis 9:23), but instead covered Noah with a garment as they had their backs and faces turned away. When Noah woke up, he knew what Ham had done to him (Genesis 9:24), so he cursed Ham's son (Genesis 9:25), and blessed Shem and Japheth saying,

"Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brethren." And he said: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem, and may Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and may he dwell in the tents of Shem; and may Canaan be his servant." (Genesis 9:25-27)

Therefore, for another 350 years, we again only have a total of three godly men recorded in the annals of history (some may include Job in this time, but see below, IV. The Time of Moses). This brings a grand total of only five godly men, and no women, identified in Scripture by name as people of faith for the first approximately 2000 years of history. And, these five are known because of the revelation God has given us in His Word. Take away the record of Scripture, and we would have no certain knowledge of a single saved person who ever walked the earth for the first 2000 years of human history.

III. From Abram To Moses

When Abram was seventy five years old, the Lord told him to depart from Haran (Genesis 12:4). This is the earliest record of God's dealings with Abram. Abram was obedient to the Lord at this time, so, even though Genesis 15 records God's accounting of him as righteous (Genesis 15:6), Abram was a follower of the Lord at least by the age of 75.

Moving from this point in history, finally, after 2000 years, we have a woman recorded as a woman of faith, Sarah (Hebrews 11:11). Actually, moving from Abraham to Moses there is not only Sarah, but Hagar (Genesis 16:7-13; 21:16-19), Rebekah (Genesis 25:22-23), Rachel (Genesis 30:22-24), Leah (Genesis 29:32-33, 35), and the midwives, Puah and Shiphrah (Exodus 1:15-21).

As for godly men we have the prophet Abraham (Genesis 15:6; 20:7), Abraham's servant (Genesis 24), Lot (Genesis 19:29; 2 Peter 2:7-8), Ishmael (Genesis 21:17-20), Isaac (Genesis 25:21; 26:2-5, 24-25, 27-29; Hebrews 11:20), Jacob (Genesis 28:10-22; 32:22-30; Hebrews 11:21), Joseph (Genesis 39:2-3, 9, 23, Hebrews 11:22), and Jabez (1 Chronicles 4:9-10). This gives us a grand total of only eight righteous men and seven godly women that are

Not Taught!

identified. This does not mean there were not others (Genesis 18:19), but as far as any documentation of godly people, Scripture records only a few for a period of about 400 years (Galatians 3:17). And again, if we were without the Biblical record, we would have no certain information on even these.

IV. The Time Of Moses

It is difficult to give any exact time for when the righteous men Job, Elihu, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar (Job 1:1; 32:1f; 34:2) were on the earth, but the book of Job indicates it was sometime during and/or after the Exodus. This can be seen via the term "**Rahab**" רַהַב (rahav) found in the book of Job.

In Isaiah 30:7; 51:9; Psalm 87:4; and 89:10 Egypt is called "**Rahab**." The only other places this same Hebrew word, Rahab, is found is in Job 9:13 (NKJV "the proud") and 26:12 (NKJV "the storm").¹ In Job 26:12 Job speaks of God breaking up "**Rahab**" (NKJV "the storm"), which is the same kind of language found in Psalm 89:10, "**broken Rahab in pieces**" (NKJV). In the next verse (verse 13) Job speaks of "**His hand pierced the fleeing serpent**," which is the same kind of thing mentioned in Psalm 74:13-14 and Isaiah 51:9-10 in which both speak in the context of the Exodus when God "**divided the sea**" (Psalm 74:13) and "**dried up the sea**" (Isaiah 51:10).

Therefore, it appears Job knew of the Exodus and speaks of it in Job 9:13 & 26:12-13. Moreover, it should be noted that after the Israelites left Egypt, the entire world knew about it (see Exodus 9:16; Deuteronomy 2:25; Psalm 98:1-3; Romans 9:17).

Now with the amazing work of God in the Exodus from Egypt and the awesome miracles God did in the wilderness, would it not be expected that a great work of the salvation of God would have taken place during this time? Surely masses of people were saved? No, actually, just the opposite took place. An amazing work of the wrath of God was wrought upon the Israelites, time and again (e.g. Psalm 78 & 106), because they refused to believe in God and obey Him. Paul wrote of this time saying,

Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. (1 Corinthians 10:1-5)

Not being well pleasing to God resulted in the death and subsequent eternal destruction of most of the Israelites. The writer of Hebrews says,

For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty

years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. (Hebrews 3:16-19)

What was the "rest" they did not enter? It was the gospel rest of salvation.

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. (Hebrews 4:1-2)

Even though they were under the law, they nonetheless had the gospel preached to them (Hebrews 4:1-2). Yet, most of them went to hell (1 Corinthians 10:5).

Those indicated as believers during this time are Moses (Matthew 17:3), Aaron (Psalm 106:16), Joshua (Numbers 14:30; Joshua 24:15), Caleb (Numbers 14:24), Phinehas (Numbers 25:10-13), Moses' parents (Hebrews 11:23), probably Jethro (Exodus 18:1, 9-24), and probably Miriam (Exodus 15:20; Numbers 12:1-15; Micah 6:4).

Therefore, of the well over 603,550 people (Numbers 2:32, this number does not count those under the age of 20, all the women, and the entire tribe of Levi, Numbers 1:2; 2:33), we have the names of only 7 godly people. This does not mean there were not more than this (e.g. the sons of Korah? Numbers 26:11), but rather, these are the only ones identified as righteous.

Therefore, from the creation of the world up to and through the time of Moses, there are 24 men (including Job and his friends) and 9 women who are marked as those who walked in the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). Yet, if the Biblical record did not exist, neither would this knowledge of those who walked with God exist.

V. The Time of Joshua

This is a unique time of history. As should be evident already, it is not the norm for the masses of humanity to follow the Lord. But in Joshua's day, and during the lives of the elders who outlived Joshua, the Israelites believed in the Lord.

Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the Lord which He had done for Israel. (Joshua 24:31; see also Judges 2:7)

No one in particular is named and noted as godly other than Caleb and Phinehas (from the prior period), Rahab (Hebrews 11:31) and Joshua (Exodus 33:11; Joshua 24:15), but the text is clear that the masses of Israel "served the Lord." Yet, again, without the Biblical account, we would have no evidence of an entire country that served God for years. Besides this, what about the rest of

Not Taught!

the world? Are there any people saved outside of Israel? God knows, but we don't.

VI. The Time Of The Judges

Judges names several godly people. Although, unlike the time of Joshua, the time of Judges brings Israel back to their old sinful ways. This time is characterized in Judges 17:6 and 21:25 as a time when "**there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**"

Those depicted as godly men and women during this time are, Othniel (Judges 3:9-10), Ehud (Judges 3:15-30), probably Shamgar (Judges 3:31), Deborah and Barak (Judges 4 & 5), an unnamed prophet (Judges 6:8-10), Gideon (Judges 6:11-8:32), probably Jotham (Judges 9:7-21, 57), probably Tola (Judges 10:1-2), probably Jair (Judges 10:3-5), Jephthah and his daughter (Judges 11:36-39; Hebrews 11:32), Manoah and his wife (Judges 13:2-23), Samson (Hebrews 11:32), Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz (Ruth), probably Elkanah (1 Samuel 1:3), Hannah (1 Samuel 1:10-18; 2:1-10), an unnamed man of God (1 Samuel 2:27), and Samuel, the last judge (1 Samuel 7:15). Here we have at the most 19 people identified as people of faith, for a period of approximately 300 years. Yet, again, without this Biblical record, we would have no evidence of their existence, as there is no evidence of any other godly people, from within or without Israel, outside of these mentioned.

VII. The Time Of David

David is the one who wrote, "**Help, Lord, for the godly man ceases! For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men**" (Psalm 12:1). Who is marked as righteous before God in his time? There are not many. Besides Samuel, there is David's mother (Psalm 86:16), Jonathan (1 Samuel 14; 2 Samuel 1:26), the prophet Gad (1 Samuel 22:5), apparently Ishbosheth (2 Samuel 4:11), the prophet Nathan (2 Samuel 7:2), Abigail (1 Samuel 25:3-35; Proverbs 9:10), the wise woman from Tekoa (2 Samuel 14:1-20), probably Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 19:24-30), the wise woman in Abel (2 Samuel 20:15-22), Asaph (1 Chronicles 16:37; and maybe his sons, 1 Chronicles 25:2; Psalm 50), Heman (and maybe his sons, 1 Chronicles 25:5), and Jeduthun (and maybe his sons, 1 Chronicles 25:1, 3; 2 Chronicles 35:15), apparently some of the mighty men like, Josheb-Basshebeth the Tachmonite (2 Samuel 23:8; Hebrews 11:34), Eleazer the son of Dodo (2 Samuel 23:9-10), Shammah the Hararite (2 Samuel 23:11-12), and possibly others (2 Samuel 23:18-39). Also, in 1 Samuel 19:20 there is a group of prophets.

Twelve men, four women, and possibly a few others can be identified as people of faith during David's time, and, again, without the Biblical record, even these, including David himself, would not be known.

VIII. From Solomon To Babylon

Solomon was a man of faith for much of his life (1 Kings 3:3), but when he

was old he turned away from the Lord and went after other gods (1 Kings 11:1-40). His father had warned him before he died with these words:

As for you, my son, Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. (1 Chronicles 28:9)

David's words were fulfilled. Solomon forsook the Lord (1 Kings 11:33), thus God cast him off forever in hell (Ezekiel 33:12-13; Revelation 21:8). So, indeed, Solomon can be named as a godly man for most of his life, but as for him being one who endured to the end (Matthew 10:22), Scripture marks him as one who did not, but turned into an idolater at the end of his life (1 Kings 11:4-9; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

During Solomon's reign the only believers who can be clearly identified as such, other than those mentioned above, are Hiram the king of Tyre (2 Chronicles 2:3-16), the prophet Ahijah (1 Kings 11:29-40; 14:1-18) and apparently the Queen of the South (Matthew 12:42; 1 Kings 10:1-10). After Solomon we have the prophet Shemaiah (1 Kings 12:22; 2 Chronicles 12:5, 15), the man of God who rebuked Jeroboam (1 Kings 13:1-10; 2 Kings 23:18), the old prophet of Bethel (1 Kings 13:11-32), Abijah the son of Jeroboam (1 Kings 14:1, 13), the prophet Iddo (2 Chronicles 9:29; 12:15; 13:22), the prophet Iddo, father of Berechiah (Zechariah 1:1, 7), King Asa, although he did not endure (1 Kings 15:9-11; 2 Chronicles 16:7-14), the prophet Amos (Amos 1:1), Azariah the son of Obed (2 Chronicles 15:1-17), Hanani the seer (2 Chronicles 16:1-10), the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani (1 Kings 16:1-7; 2 Chronicles 19:2), Elijah (1 Kings 17:1; James 5:17-18), the widow in Zarephath (1 Kings 17:8-24), Obadiah, the 100 prophets he hid, and the unnamed prophets Jezebel killed (1 Kings 18:3-16), the 7000 who had not bowed their knee to Baal (1 Kings 19:18), an unnamed prophet (1 Kings 20:13), an unnamed man of God (1 Kings 20:28), "**a certain man of the sons of the prophets**" (1 Kings 20:35), the prophet Micaiah (1 Kings 22:8), King Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 17:3-13), Amasiah (2 Chronicles 17:16); Elisha (2 Kings 2:14-15), the widow and her husband who feared the Lord (2 Kings 4:1), the Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4:8-37), Naaman (2 Kings 5:15-19), Jehoiada the priest and his son Zechariah (2 Kings 12:2; 2 Chronicles 24:15-22), the unnamed man of God who came to King Amaziah (2 Chronicles 25:7), the unnamed prophet who was sent to King Amaziah (2 Chronicles 25:15), the prophet Jonah (2 Kings 14:25), the men of Nineveh (Jonah 3; Matthew 12:41), Hosea the prophet (Hosea 1:1), King Uzziah who did not endure (2 Chronicles 26:3-5; 16-21), King Jotham (2 Chronicles 27:1-6), Obed the prophet (2 Chronicles 28:9), King Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:3), Micah of Moresheth (Jeremiah 26:18; Micah 1:1), the prophet Nahum (Nahum 1:1), Isaiah the prophet, who walked naked for three years (2 Kings 19:2; Isaiah 20:2-4), King Josiah (2 Kings 22:1-2), Huldah the prophetess (2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chronicles

Not Taught!

34:22), the prophet Zephaniah (Zephaniah 1:1), Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah (Isaiah 8:2), the prophet Habakkuk (Habakkuk 1:1), Jeremiah the prophet (Jeremiah 1:3), Urijah the son of Shemaiah (Jeremiah 26:20-23), the Rechabites (Jeremiah 35:1-19), Igdaliah (Jeremiah 35:4), Ebed-Melech (Jeremiah 38:7-13; 39:15-18), Baruch (Jeremiah 32; 36; 43:1-6; 45), Ezekiel, whose wife dies for a sign (Ezekiel 1-3; 24:15-24), Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (Daniel 1:6), Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4), and probably sometime within this time, the prophet Joel (Joel 1:1), the prophet Obadiah (Obadiah 1:1), Heman the Ezrahite (Psalm 88), Ethan the Ezrahite (1 Kings 4:31?; Psalm 89), Agur the son of Jakeh (Proverbs 30:1), and King Lemuel (Proverbs 31:1). These individuals are noted for this time, and there are others not so specifically identified (e.g. 2 Kings 21:10).

This period from Solomon to the captivity in Babylon is approximately 400 years, and even though several (60) may be specifically identified as people of faith, overall, most people during this time forsook the Lord (e.g. 2 Chronicles 36:15-16). Micah wrote for his time,

The faithful man has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among men. They all lie in wait for blood; every man hunts his brother with a net. (Micah 7:2)

Isaiah wrote,

Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away backward. (Isaiah 1:4)

Unless the Lord of hosts had left to us a very small remnant, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been made like Gomorrah. (Isaiah 1:9)

Someone may be fooled by the 49 names and over 7011 other believers mentioned, thinking this was a time of great spiritual revival. On the contrary, it was not. What we have is simply more detail for this time period than what we've seen so far. Yet, again, without the Biblical record, we would have no certain knowledge of a single righteous man or woman, not only for these 400 years, but for all of human history up until this time.

IX. From Babylon To King Herod (Luke 1:5)

In this time frame, which is approximately 500 years, we have 11 godly people named. They are Darius (Daniel 6:25-27), Cyrus (Ezra 1:1-4; Isaiah 44:28; 45:1-6), the prophets Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 5:1), Ezra (Ezra 7:8-9), Sherebiah (Ezra 8:18), Hananiah (Nehemiah 7:2; not the Hananiah of Jeremiah 28), Nehemiah (Nehemiah 13:22), Esther and Mordecai (Esther 2:7; 5:26)

3:3-4; 4:15-16; etc.), the prophet Malachi (Malachi 1:1), some unnamed who feared the Lord, for whom a book of remembrance was written (Malachi 3:16), and those **"who know their God"** and **"those of understanding"** (Daniel 11:32-35, given this passage in Daniel refers to this time period). It appears there were others as well, just unnamed (Ezra 6:21).

Someone might appeal to the Apocrypha as recording believers for this time, but this is spurious and cannot be trusted (see our report on the Apocrypha). Therefore, once again, we are completely dependent on the Biblical account for any sure information regarding the redeemed.

X. From John the Baptist To The Death Of Christ

The New Testament covers the history of mankind from the time just prior to the birth of Christ (e.g. Luke 1) to eternity (Revelation 21-22). It records many godly people both by name and in general. Those people of God who are specifically mentioned before the cross are, Zacharias and Elizabeth (Luke 1:5-6), Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26-27), Joseph (Matthew 1:19), the wise men from the East (Matthew 2:1-12), the unnamed shepherds (Luke 2:8-20), Simeon (Luke 2:25), the prophetess Anna (Luke 2:36), John the Baptist (Luke 3:3), Nathanael (John 1:47-49; John 21:2), the Samaritan woman and other Samaritans (John 4:39-42), **"a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum"** along with **"his whole household"** (John 4:46-53), the eleven apostles, Peter, Andrew, James the son of Zebedee, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Cananite, and Judas the son of James, who was also called Lebbaeus or Thaddaeus (Luke 6:13-16; Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:14-18; Acts 1:13), **"Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias"** (Acts 1:21-23), the centurion at Capernaum (Luke 7:1-9), the paralytic (Matthew 9:1-2), the woman **"who was a sinner"** (Luke 7:36-50), Mary Magdalene and Joanna (Luke 8:3; 24:10), Susanna (Luke 8:3), Mary the mother of James and Joses (Matthew 27:55-56; Mark 15:47-16:8; Luke 24:10), the mother of James and John (Zebedee's sons, Matthew 20:20-21; 27:56), the man who had a Legion of demons in him (Luke 8:26-39), the woman with a flow of blood (Luke 8:43-48), the **"someone casting out demons"** who did not physically follow Christ (Mark 9:38-41; Luke 9:49-50), the woman of Canaan (Matthew 15:22-28), the seventy (Luke 10:1-21), the man who was born blind (John 9:35-38), Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha (John 11:1-44; 12:1-11), the woman with the spirit of infirmity (Luke 13:11-16), the Samaritan leper (Luke 17:11-19), the blind man near Jericho (as Christ came near to Jericho, Luke 18:35-43), Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-9), blind Bartimaeus (as Christ left Jericho, Mark 10:46-52), the poor widow who gave two mites (Luke 21:1-4), the woman who poured fragrant oil upon Christ's head (Matthew 26:6-13), the thief on the cross (Luke 23:39-43), the centurion and those guarding Christ (Matthew 27:54), Joseph of Arimathea (Luke 23:50-51), and Salome and **"many other women"** (Mark 15:40-41; 16:1). Over 130 people are marked as followers of the Lord, but only 32 are specifically named.

Not Taught!

Yet, again, take away the written revelation, and there is no certain record of any of these people. How would we know these people existed and that they were in the truth without the New Testament? We wouldn't. Even the record of the early church fathers is dependent on the Biblical account. Take away the Biblical account, and you've taken away the only sure record that exists.

Someone may argue that Josephus, a writer in the later part of the first century, testifies to the followers of Christ, therefore we have a sure testimony of believers outside of the Bible. It is true that Christ, and some who followed Him, are cited in what we now have as *The Works Of Josephus*, but in this, only James the brother of Jesus and John the Baptist are noted by name. The other followers of Christ are only mentioned in general. The passage which cites John the Baptist reads as follows:

Now, some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called the Baptist; for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away, [or the remission] of some sins [only,] but for the purification of the body: supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. Now, when [many] others came to crowd about him, for they were greatly moved [or pleased] by hearing his words, **Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion,** (for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise,) **thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties,** by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it should be too late. Accordingly he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death. (*Antiquities Of The Jews*, book 18, chapter v, 2, bold added)

How accurate is Josephus' account? Josephus writes lies about Herod's dealings with John the Baptist.

Josephus says Herod put John in prison and killed him because he feared "the great influence John had" and he feared a possible "rebellion" by John and the people. This is not why Herod put John into prison, nor is it why Herod put him to death. Scripture gives us the truth.

For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. For John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." Therefore Herodias held it

against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee. And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you." He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom." So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!" Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." And the king was exceedingly sorry; yet, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. (Mark 6:17-28)

As should be seen, Josephus propagates lies regarding Herod's actions with John the Baptist. Josephus says John was put in prison because Herod feared a rebellion. God says John was put in prison because John rebuked Herod for having his brother's wife (Luke 3:19). Josephus says Herod killed John "to prevent any mischief he might cause." Scripture says Herod killed John **"because of his oaths and because of those who sat with him"** (Mark 6:26). Knowing this, why would we be inclined to believe his statement that John the Baptist was "a good man" and "commanded the Jews to exercise" "piety towards God"? The only reason we know this is true is because Scripture bears witness to John's character (e.g. Matthew 11:7-14), and that he did indeed preach to the Jews (Luke 3:1-18). Apart from the Word, we would not know when Josephus lies and when he tells the truth.

The passage that records Jesus and his disciples, and is probably the most well known passage, says,

Now, there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works,- a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principle men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day. (*Antiquities Of The Jews*, book 18, chapter 3, 3)

Not Taught!

Josephus errs in this text as well. Josephus says, in the context of Christ being condemned to the cross, that His disciples "did not forsake him." The truth is, they did forsake Him (Matthew 26:56; Mark 14:27, 50). Moreover, Josephus puts in question a serious truth by saying, "if it be lawful to call him a man." It is lawful to call Christ a man (1 Timothy 2:5). Those who do not are antichrist and deceivers (2 John 7).

Furthermore, Origen, an "early church father," who is reported to have lived from 185 to 254 A.D. writes concerning Josephus:

For in the 18th book of his Antiquities of the Jews, Josephus bears witness to John as having been a Baptist, and as promising purification to those who underwent the rite. Now this writer, although not believing in Jesus as the Christ, in seeking after the cause of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, whereas he ought to have said that the conspiracy against Jesus was the cause of these calamities befalling the people, since they put to death Christ, who was a prophet, says nevertheless - being, although against his will, not far from the truth - that these disasters happened to the Jews as a punishment for the death of James the Just, who was a brother of Jesus (called Christ), - (*The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. IV, p. 416; Origen Against Celsus, book I, chapter XLVII, bold added)

This puts in question the authenticity of the Josephus passage. Did Josephus actually write this? Why did Origen say that Josephus was one who did not believe "in Jesus as the Christ," if Josephus had written in the very same book Origen mentions, "He was [the] Christ"? Is Origen right or wrong?

Moreover, if the paragraph mentioned above is taken out of Josephus, it reads quite well with no loss of any train of thought. The paragraph has the appearance of being a later insertion.

The final excerpt from Josephus is the one which mentions Jesus' brother, James.

Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the sanhedrim of the judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, [or some of his companions;] and when he had formed an accusation against as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned: but as for those who seemed the most equitable of the citizens, and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done; they also sent to the king [Agrippa] desiring him to send to Ananus that he should act so no more, for that what he had already done was not to be justified: nay, some of them went also to meet Albinus, as he was upon his journey from Alexandria, and informed him that it was not lawful for Ananus to assemble a

sanhedrim without his consent: . . . (*Antiquities Of The Jews*, book 20, chapter 9, 1)

This account does not fit well with the Biblical account of the Jews or believers in Christ. The Jews found it quite pleasing to have a believer put to death (e.g. Acts 12:1-3; 21:30-31; 22:22). In Josephus' account he records "the most equitable of the citizens" "uneasy" with how James was killed. If these "citizens" were Jews, this appears to be pure fantasy. If these "citizens" were suppose to be believers, the New Testament records no such like behavior by Christians in the entire book of Acts, or anywhere in the New Testament, even with all the persecution and injustices that took place (e.g. Acts 4:1-31; 5:22-42; 6:8-7:60; 8:1-3; etc.). This account in Josephus, when compared to the Biblical text, does not appear to be true.

Yet, despite Josephus' lack of integrity, or the integrity of those who may have added to Josephus' writings, the bottom line remains; the Biblical text is the only certain document we have regarding the existence of true believers in the past.

XI. From The Resurrection To The Revelation

After Christ physically came back to life, it is recorded that there were approximately 120 disciples (Acts 1:15), most of whom were people we have already mentioned, the exceptions being, at least those recorded, Jesus' brothers. Jesus' brothers were unbelievers before the crucifixion (John 7:1-5), but after Christ rose from the dead, we find them numbered among the disciples (Acts 1:14). Jesus had four brothers, James, Joses, Judas, and Simon (Mark 6:3; Matthew 13:55). Others who are named among the saints are, "**Joses who was also named Barnabas**" (Acts 4:36), probably Theophilus (Luke 1:3-4; Acts 1:1), Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas (Acts 6:5), Paul (Acts 9:1-19), Ananias (Acts 9:10), probably Aeneas (Acts 9:32-35), "**Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas**" (Acts 9:36), Simon the tanner (Acts 9:43; Matthew 10:40-42), Cornelius (Acts 10:1-2), the prophet Agabus (Acts 11:27-28; 21:10), "**Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark**" (Acts 12:12), Rhoda (Acts 12:13-14), "**John whose surname was Mark**," the cousin of Barnabas (Acts 12:25; 13:5, 13; 15:37-39; Colossians 4:10; 2 Timothy 4:11; 1 Peter 5:13), "**Simeon who was called Niger**" (Acts 13:1), "**Lucius of Cyrene**" (Acts 13:1; Romans 16:21?), and "**Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch**" (Acts 13:1), the proconsul Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:7-12), the prophets Judas, who was also called Barsabas, and Silas (Acts 15:22, 32), the apostle Timothy (Acts 16:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2:6), Lydia in Philippi (Acts 16:12-15), Jason (Acts 17:5-9; Romans 16:21), Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris (Acts 17:34), Aquilla and Priscilla (Acts 18:1-3, 18, 26; Romans 16:3-4), Justus (Acts 18:7), Crispus (Acts 18:8; 1 Corinthians 1:14), Sosthenes (Acts 18:17?; 1 Corinthians 1:1), Apollos (Acts 18:24-28), Erastus (Acts 19:22; Romans 16:23; 2 Timothy 4:20), Gaius (Acts 19:29; 20:4; Romans 16:23; 1 Corinthians 1:14;

Not Taught!

3 John 1), Aristarchus (Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2; Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24), Sopater, Secundus, (Acts 20:4), Tychicus (Acts 20:4; Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7; 2 Timothy 4:12; Titus 3:12), Trophimus (Acts 20:4; 21:29; 2 Timothy 4:20), Eutychus (Acts 20:9-12), Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple (Acts 21:16), Phoebe (Romans 16:1), Epaphroditus (Romans 16:5), another Mary? (Romans 16:6), the apostles Andronicus and Junia (Romans 16:7), Amplias, Urbanus, Stachys, Apelles, Herodion, Tryphena and Tryphosa, Persis, Rufus, Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, Philologus and Julia, Nereus, Olympus, (Romans 16:8-15), Sosipater (Romans 16:21), Tertius (16:22), Quartus (Romans 16:23), Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (1 Corinthians 16:17-18), Silvanus (1 Peter 5:12), Titus (2 Corinthians 2:13; Titus 1:4), Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25-30), Euodia, Syntyche, and Clement (Philippians 4:1-3), Epaphras (Colossians 1:7; 4:12; Philemon 23), Onesimus (Colossians 4:9; Philemon 10), **"Jesus who is called Justus"** (Colossians 4:11), Luke the beloved physician (Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24), Nymphas (Colossians 4:15), Archippus (Colossians 4:17; Philemon 2), Onesiphorus (2 Timothy 1:16-18), Crescens (2 Timothy 4:10), Carpus (2 Timothy 4:13), Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia (2 Timothy 4:21), Artemas (Titus 3:12), Zenas the lawyer (Titus 3:13), Philemon, Apphia (Philemon 1:1-2), and Demetrius (3 John 12).

This period is a unique time of history, as Joshua, in which a large number of people come to salvation in Christ. Besides those specifically mentioned above, we also have the 500 to whom Christ appeared after his resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:6), the approximate 3000 who believed on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1, 41), the people who were added daily (Acts 2:47; 16:5), the man lame from his mother's womb (Acts 3:1-12; 4:1-3, 5-7, 10, 14, 16-22), the approximate 5000 (Acts 4:4), the multitudes in Samaria (Acts 8:6, 14), the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39), the disciples in Damascus (Acts 9:25), the churches in Galilee (Acts 9:31), all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon (Acts 9:35), the many who believed in Joppa (Acts 9:42), Cornelius' friends and relatives (Acts 10:24, 44), a great number in Antioch (Acts 11:20-21, 24, 26), Jews and Gentiles in Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:14, 43, 48), a great multitude in Iconium (Acts 14:1), the lame man crippled from his mother's womb and others in Lystra (Acts 14:8-10, 20, 21-23), many in Derbe (Acts 14:20-21), Timothy's mother (Acts 16:1), the keeper of the prison in Philippi with all his house (Acts 16:27-34), probably others in Philippi (Philippians 1:1), some Jews and a great multitude of devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-4), many in Berea (Acts 17:10-12), some in Athens (Acts 17:16, 34), all of the household of Crispus (Acts 18:8), many Corinthians (Acts 18:8-11), many in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7, 18-19), apparently disciples at Troas (Acts 20:6-12), disciples at Tyre (Acts 21:3-4), brethren at Ptolemais (Acts 21:7), Philip's four virgin daughters (Acts 21:8-9), Paul's sister's son (Acts 23:16; Mark 9:40), brethren at Puteoli (Acts 28:13-14), the brethren on the way to Rome (Acts 28:15), believers in Rome (Romans 1:7), those of household of Aristobulus and Narcissus (Romans 16:10-11), the mother of Rufus (Acts 16:13), the brethren who were with Asyncritus,

Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, and Hermes (Romans 16:14), Nereus' sister (Romans 16:15), all the saints who were with Philologus and Julia, Nereus, and Olympus (Romans 16:15), the one who was caught up to Paradise, who was not Paul (2 Corinthians 12:2-5), those in Galatia who did not follow another gospel (Galatians 3:26; 5:1-4), "**those of Caesar's household**" (Philippians 4:22), those in Colosse (Colossians 1:2), the brethren in Laodicea and in the house of Nymphas (Colossians 4:13, 15), those in Hierapolis (Colossians 4:13), the household of Onesiphorus (2 Timothy 1:19; 4:19), some among the twelve tribes which were scattered (James 1:1), those of the Dispersion (1 Peter 1:1), "**she who is in Babylon**" (1 Peter 5:13), "**the elect lady and her children**" (2 John 1), "**the elect sister**" and her children (2 John 13), the churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia (Revelation 2:8-11; 3:7-13), and any who may have overcome in Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7), Thyatira (Revelation 2:18-29), Sardis (Revelation 3:1-6), and Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22).

As can be seen, great numbers came to Christ during this time. 102 can be named and masses more are noted. Yet, again, as many individuals named and people there were who were saved, without the Biblical account, we would have no certain record of any of these people. Even documents like the letter Pliny wrote to the Emperor Trajan (Pliny Letters with an English translation by William Melmoth, Vol. 2, p. 401-405) which speaks of his persecution of "Christians," does not give us any sure account of the godly. We can only assume this historical document is true, and those mentioned are true Christians. Just as Josephus' writings mixed truth with fable, so it may be with Pliny's, or any other historical document of this time. We cannot know, for certain, apart from the Biblical record, what is fictitious and what is not.

Yet, someone still might argue, "Without the Biblical record, we would know about some of these people of faith via the writings of the early church fathers." In other words, "we could believe the writings of the early Catholics." Those known as "the early church fathers" are actually "fathers" of the Catholic Church (see the chapter "Early Church Fathers" in the book, *False Teachers*).

The problem is this: Catholics are not trustworthy (see our report on Catholicism). God has warned us that they speak lies in hypocrisy (1 Timothy 4:1-3). With this kind of warning, are we going to believe their testimony about those they claim are people who have been in the truth (Proverbs 14:15)? The truth to them is not the truth (John 14:6)! [See "A False Christ" on the Catholic report.]

XII. From Then To Now

From the beginning of time to near the end of the first century A.D., we have about 256 godly people specifically named, and thousands of others mentioned. After the last book of the Bible, Revelation, we have no more revelation. We have no more sure prophetic word (2 Peter 1:19) that gives us any information on any true believers of the past 1900 years. Does this mean there were none? No (Psalm 145:4), it just means we cannot name anyone, and the truth of Ecclesiastes stands true.

Not Taught!

There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of things that are to come by those who will come after. (Ecclesiastes 1:11)

Not only do the godly become forgotten memories of the past, but the ungodly as well.

For there is no more remembrance of the wise than of the fool forever, since all that now is will be forgotten in the days to come. (Ecclesiastes 2:16)

Likewise, Psalm 103:15-16 says,

As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.

One generation of people come and go and another generation arises, and soon, truly, it is all forgotten; and the only reason anything is ever historically known, is because it has been written down. God's writing of the past is certain and accurate. Men's writings are as reliable as cardboard in a rain storm. Newspapers illustrate this quite well. How many times has this "news" been found to be inaccurate, bias, or insufficient in giving a true account? Typically, what is written is only a few hours old, and the veracity of it is already in question. How much more then when it comes to historical documents! We might get a glimpse from the past, but what is solid truth and what is mixed with fantasy cannot be known; unless it is compared to the revelation of God, if any be available; and then, it would not be needed information if it covers what is already revealed in holy writ. Yet, for this 1900 year period of time we have no written revelation. There is no divine statement on a single godly man or woman. We have no sure Word letting us know about the redeemed of the past.

Even if we were to look at the annals of history in searching for a record of true believers, the likelihood of any true record of them would be slim. Those who walked in truth would be slandered (as we are today, 1 John 3:13), because of false teachers, as 2 Peter 2:2 says,

And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. (2 Peter 2:2)

Those in the truth would be in "the way of truth" and they would be blasphemed; i.e. evil would be spoken of them. Therefore, they would most likely be recorded in history, if recorded at all, as evil people who did not walk in truth; even though, in reality, they did follow Christ (John 14:6; Ephesians 4:21).

At this point someone may cry, "What about the great men of the past like Martin Luther, or Jonathan Edwards, or John Wesley, or Charles Spurgeon?" If what we have of their preaching and writing is actually what they preached and wrote, then they were among those who secretly brought in destructive heresies (2 Peter 2:1). Even though these men are touted as great godly men of the past, their teaching, when compared to the Word (Hebrews 4:12-13), exposes them (Ephesians 5:11) as those who do "**not abide in the doctrine of Christ**" (2 John 9). See, for example, our report on [Charles Spurgeon](#). He taught the **exact opposite** of Christ's teaching (Matthew 7:13-27), and we document this in our article.

As we have a heap of false teachers today who "**appear righteous to men**" but are "**full of hypocrisy and lawlessness**" (Matthew 23:28; 2 Corinthians 11:15), so have the prior generations had their share of "**evil men and impostors**" who were "**deceiving and being deceived**" (2 Timothy 3:13). "**There is nothing new under the sun**" (Ecclesiastes 1:9). As they are presently prevalent (Matthew 7:13-14, 21-23; 2 Peter 2:2), so they have been ever present in the past (Psalm 118:22-24; Jeremiah 2:8), just as the word predicted (2 Timothy 4:3; 2 Peter 2:1-2).

XIII. What Should We Expect To Find?

Although Scripture gives no record of any godly people of the past 1900 years, the Word does give us a general description of this time. The general description is bad.

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. (1 Timothy 4:1-3)

1 Timothy 4:1-3 describes much of "historical Christianity," because 1 Timothy 4:1-3 describes, at the very least, the Catholic Church. The majority of what is commonly called "Church History" is Catholic. For proof of this, take a good look at the 38 volumes of *The Early Church Fathers* edited by Philip Schaff and Alexander Roberts. This covers "the first 800 years of the church" (Christian Book Distributors, January/February 2001 catalog, p. 42), that is, the Catholic Church. Much of "church history" is Catholic (see report on the [Early Church Fathers](#)). In other words, although acclaimed as a record of the godly, when compared to the doctrine of the Word (2 John 9), much of "church" history (provided the documents are accurate) is about those who departed from the faith, gave heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, and spoke lies in hypocrisy (1 Timothy 4:1-3).

God's description continues:

Not Taught!

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

These are the Lord's words regarding "Christianity" in the last days. How do we know it is "Christianity" to which He refers? He says they have "**a form of godliness,**" and this passage is within a "Christian" context (2 Timothy 2 & 4). How soon did these "**perilous times**" come? Paul warned Timothy they would come in his days.

I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. (2 Timothy 4:1-4)

Who are the "**they**"? Who are the ones who "**will not endure sound doctrine . . .**"? The only people in the context are those to whom Timothy was to preach. The reason Paul said, "**Preach the word,**" "**convince, rebuke,**" etc., is because Paul was warning Timothy that he had better do this while he can. "**For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables**" (2 Timothy 4:1-4). It's been bad since Timothy's time!

Actually, things began to go awry quite early on in that early church. The Galatians were fed a false gospel (Galatians 1:6), and Paul wrote them saying,

I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel. (Galatians 1:6)

The Corinthians had several problems (read 1 Corinthians), and questioned Paul's apostleship being heavily influenced by false apostles (2 Corinthians 11:1-15). Thus, Paul wrote them saying they should examine themselves to see whether they were even in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5).

In Philippians Paul mourns over "Christians" that had already turned away

from Christ.

Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame - who set their mind on earthly things. (Philippians 3:17-19)

While Paul was still on this earth there were "**many**" who had turned from heavenly mindedness to earthly mindedness, having set their minds on the things of the flesh (Romans 8:5). Likewise, during Paul's days there were already "**so many, peddling the word of God**" (2 Corinthians 2:17). These are those false Christians "**who suppose that godliness is a means of gain**" (1 Timothy 6:5). Paul said, even in his time, there were "**so many.**"

The writer of 3 John wrote about a false teacher who had actually taken over the church.

I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church. (3 John 9-10)

Jude writes,

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. (Jude 3-4)

Even though Jude says they actually "**deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ,**" he most profoundly points out that these ungodly men had "**crept in unnoticed.**" How could they be "**unnoticed**" if they deny the Lord? Surely, believers would immediately notice anyone who denied the Lord. The problem is, they deny Him deceitfully, as Titus dictates,

They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work. (Titus 1:16)

Not Taught!

When we come near to the end of that first century, what do we find in those seven churches mentioned in the book of Revelation? Only two out of the seven, Smyrna and Philadelphia, do not get rebuked. Ephesus had lost their first love (Revelation 2:1-7). Pergamos had a problem with idolatry, immorality, and "**the doctrine of the Nicolaitans**" (Revelation 2:12-17). Thyatira had a false prophetess teaching immorality and idolatry (Revelation 2:18-29). Sardis was dead (Revelation 3:1-6), and Laodicea was lukewarm (Revelation 3:14-22). Other than the churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia, the churches were either in serious trouble, as in Ephesus, or they were downright wretched, as in Laodicea. Overall, things were not going well.

When Paul met with the elders of Ephesus in Acts 20, what was his warning to them? Basically, that things were going to get bad!

For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. (Acts 20:27-31)

Paul knew that trouble was coming and that false spiritual leaders would arise, even from among those to whom he spoke. So Paul warned them, day and night with tears.

Likewise, the New Testament warns over and over again about being deceived and led astray and the importance of sound doctrine (e.g. Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Ephesians 5:6; Colossians 2:4-10; 1 Thessalonians 5:20-22; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 1 Timothy 1:3-6; 4:16; 6:20-21; 2 Timothy 1:13; Titus 1:9-16; 2:6-8; 3:9-11; 2 Peter 3:17-18; 1 John 4:1-6; 2 John 7-11; etc.). The early church was not oblivious to the kinds of perils we see in our day. They were repeatedly warned, and yet still, many fell (e.g. Philippians 2:19-21; 3:17-19; 1 Timothy 1:5-7, 18-20; 5:11-15; 6:10, 20-21; 2 Timothy 1:15; 2:17-18; 4:10; Titus 1:10-11).

In 2 Peter, Peter came right out and said, "**there will be false teachers among you,**" and that "**many will follow their destructive ways**" (2 Peter 2:1-2). False teachers are nothing new, and the reality of "**many**" following them is also not peculiar to our times. False Christianity has been active since that first century, just as false Judaism has prevailed throughout history (e.g. Exodus 32:5; Psalm 78:34-37; Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:8-9; Romans 10:1-3; Revelation 2:9; 3:9). **True** Judaism and **true** Christianity are one and the same (Romans 2:27-28; Galatians 3:6-9; Philippians 3:3; Colossians 2:11). And, as Scripture repeatedly testifies most of the time, the false prevail, even as far back as Cain and Abel. Cain worshipped Yahweh (Genesis 4:3), and even

spoke with Him (Genesis 4:5-15). Yet, Cain was a child of the Devil (1 John 3:10-12).

So, what should we expect to find when it comes to real Christianity? Given the above, particularly the reality of 2 Timothy 3:1-5 and 4:3-4, what should we Biblically expect in these last days? Does Scripture describe an abundance of real, true, Spirit-filled believers? No, on the contrary, just the opposite is depicted (2 Timothy 3:1-5; 4:3-4; 2 Peter 2:1-2). In fact, Jesus asked a similar question, and by it, indicated the possibility of little to no believers on the planet in the last days.

I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?
(Luke 18:8)

Literally, in the Greek, Christ says, "**will He really find the faith on the earth?**" The question here is not whether or not Christ will find people of great faith when He returns, but rather, will He find anyone who truly believes in Him when He comes back! Will He find the faith on the earth? Will the faith even be on the planet? The fact that Christ even asks this question implies perilous times for the last days, particularly those last days immediately before His return.

To press this point home even further, when was the last time you heard of a Christian praying for justice and vengeance? This is the context in which Christ spoke (Luke 18:1-8), and this is the kind of faith that describes the faith of the elect. As Christ said in this same text,

And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find the faith on the earth? (Luke 18:7-8, NKJV with "the" added before "faith" in keeping with the Greek)

Therefore, in keeping with the Word of God, what should we expect to find in these last days? Should we expect to find many believers, or very few? Actually, with the Words of Christ in mind, we might even expect to find none! Yet, 1 Thessalonians 4:15 & 17, indicate that there will be, at the very least, two or more.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:15 Paul writes, "**we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord,**" and in verse 17 "**Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds.**" These, "**we who are alive and remain**" dictate that there will be true believers who are alive on the planet when Christ returns. How many? Paul doesn't say. But, nonetheless, there will be some, at least two, because he says "**we.**"

XIV. What About The Future?

Not Taught!

From 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 4:3-4, 2 Peter 2:1-2, and Luke 18:8, it is apparent that few indeed (Matthew 7:13-14), even among the "Christian" population, will be true believers up until the time of Christ's return. Sometime in the near future (Revelation 1:1-3), Elijah will come back (Malachi 4:5; Matthew 17:11; Mark 9:12), and Romans 11:5 describes our time as yet still having a "**remnant**" of believers who are physical descendants of Jacob.

Furthermore, once the day of the Lord hits (1 Thessalonians 4:15-5:3), things will be astronomically *very* different and unlike anything ever recorded. When Christ comes back, "**every eye will see Him**" (Revelation 1:7). He will be "**revealed**" (Luke 17:26-30) to all. This is a strong hint as to the nature of the time and the sudden change in the salvation of men.

Before this, Scripture is quite clear the Lord will be saving *very* few, right up to the point of His return (e.g. Luke 18:8). Deception will overwhelmingly prevail (2 Timothy 3 & 4; etc.). Yet, after He is revealed, we see things drastically change into a *massive* salvation of men (Revelation 7), which dictates a *massive* enlightening of men, who "**come to the knowledge of the truth**" (1 Timothy 2:4). The Truth (John 14:6) will be revealed to all (Revelation 1:7). Yet, amazingly not all will believe (Revelation 13:8).

In this time, called "**the great tribulation**" (Matthew 24:21; Revelation 7:14), the Word reveals there will be specifically 144,000 Jews who will be saved (Revelation 7:1-8; 14:1-5). Romans 11:25-27 and Revelation 12:6, 13-16 indicate this is when "**all Israel will be saved**" (Romans 11:26). Also, Revelation 7:9-17 records a mass number of people "**of all nations**" who are saved. They are "**the ones who come out of the great tribulation**" (Revelation 7:14, or "**the ones coming out**" present participle). This number is so great the Lord calls it "**a great multitude which no one could number**" (Revelation 7:9-17). From what we have recorded in Scripture, this time is a time unlike any in the history of mankind in which untold thousands, if not millions, are redeemed. God does a great work of salvation in the final days. Praise the Lord!

Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. (Psalm 136:1)

Endnote:

1. The meaning of Rahab appears to be "tumultuously proud one". The related verb, רָהַב (râhav), is found only in Psalm 138:3 ("made . . . bold"); Proverbs 6:3 ("plead"); Song of Solomon ("overcome"); Isaiah 3:5 ("insolent"). The related adjective is found only in Psalm 40:4 ("the proud", רִהְבִּימִי [rehâviyim], more literally, "proud ones"). The related noun, רִהְבָּם (râhbâm), is only found in Psalm 90:10 ("their boast").

Appendix

Not Taught!

Words For The Fear of God

I. Terms In The Old Testament

A. יָרֵא (yârê')

There are several different words used in regards to the fear of God in the original languages. The most common is the Hebrew word יָרֵא (yârê'). This verb is used over 330 times and it means actual "fear." Besides being used to be afraid of God (e.g. Genesis 20:8; Exodus 3:6; 2 Samuel 6:9; Psalm 33:8a; 76:7-8; Proverbs 13:13; Ecclesiastes 12:13; Malachi 3:16 [2x]; 4:2), it is also the fear Jacob had of his brother (Genesis 32:7), the fear Jacob's sons had of their brother Joseph (Genesis 43:18), the fear the Israelites had of the Egyptians (Exodus 14:10), the fear due parents (Leviticus 19:3, see below, point III), the fear of a soldier before a battle (Deuteronomy 20:8), the fear Saul and the Israelites had of Goliath (1 Samuel 17:11, 24), the fear David's men had of the Philistine armies (1 Samuel 23:3), the fear Saul had of the Philistine army (1 Samuel 28:5), the fear Saul's armorbearer had when Saul commanded him to take his sword and kill Saul (1 Samuel 31:4), the fear the rulers of Jezreel had of Jehu (2 Kings 10:4), the fear Jehoshaphat had of the massive army that came against him (2 Chronicles 20:3), the fear Nehemiah had of king Artaxerxes (Nehemiah 2:2), the fear David determined not to have (Psalm 27:1a, 3; see also 56:3-4, 11; 118:6), the fear the sons of Korah determined not to have even though world wide cataclysmic chaos broke out (Psalm 46:2), the fear Urijah had when King Jehoiakim sought to kill him (Jeremiah 26:21), the fear appropriately had at the roaring of a lion (Amos 3:8), the fear the mariners had in the midst of the storm (Jonah 1:5, 10), etc.. This word undeniably means "fear," i.e. to be afraid.

Not Taught!

The noun form of אָרֵץ (yârê') is יִרְאָה (yir'âh) and it is used far less, only about 44 times. It is mostly used for the fear of God (Genesis 20:11; Psalm 2:11; 90:11; Proverbs 9:10; Jonah 1:16), but it is also used for the fear of briars and thorns (Isaiah 7:23), the fear the mariners had (Jonah 1:10), fear of the Israelites (Deuteronomy 2:25), and fear in dangerous circumstances (Psalm 55:5).

These words (אָרֵץ [yârê'] and יִרְאָה [yir'âh]) are on some occasions translated "awe" or "awesome" (e.g. Exodus 15:11 [NAS "awesome in praises]; Nehemiah 1:5; 4:14; 9:32), but, as the above illustrates, this "awe" is not without fear; and even Webster's definition of "awe" is not without dread.

an emotion variously combining dread, veneration, and wonder that is inspired by authority or by the sacred or sublime
(www.merriamwebster.com/cgi-bin/dictionary)

Genesis 28:17 illustrates how this "awe" is not without fear.

And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place!"

In this sentence "afraid" and "awesome" are from the same root word אָרֵץ (yârê'). Likewise, Deuteronomy 28:58 declares,

If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, the LORD your God . . .

In this verse the word for "fear" and the word for "awesome" are from the same root word אָרֵץ (yârê'). When dealing with God, be it His awesome works (Deuteronomy 10:21; Psalm 65:5; 66:3, 5; 106:22; 145:6; Isaiah 64:3), His awesome name (Psalm 99:3; 111:9), or the awesome majesty around Him (Job 37:22; Ezekiel 1:18, 22), it is fearfully awesome (e.g. Ezekiel 1:28).

B. פָּחַד (pâchad)

Another Hebrew word used for the fear of God is פָּחַד (pâchad). This is the Hebrew word for "dread." It is used both in its verb and noun forms about 75 times. It is used for dreading God, for example, in 1 Samuel 11:7; 2 Chronicles 14:14; 17:10; 19:7; 20:29; 23:15b; 31:23; Psalm 36:1; 119:120, 161 (NKJV, NAS, "awe"); Proverbs 28:14 (see NAS); Isaiah 2:10, 19, 21; Jeremiah 2:19; Hosea 3:5; and Micah 7:17. It is also used for the dread God put upon the enemies of Israel (Exodus 15:16; Deuteronomy 2:25; 11:25), the dread of losing one's life (Deuteronomy 28:66-67; Psalm 31:13), the horror Job dreaded that happened to him (Job 3:25), the fear in a scary dream (Job 4:14a) which caused Eliphaz' bones to "shake" (NKJV, more literally to "dread," Job 4:14:b), dreadful sounds (Job 15:21), the lack of fear the ostrich has for her young (Job 39:16, NKJV "concern" with footnote, "Lit. fear"), the lack of fear the godly have and will have (Psalm 27:1b; Proverbs 3:24; Isaiah 12:2), fear

from the judgment of God (Psalm 53:5; 14:5; Isaiah 24:17; Jeremiah 49:5; Lamentations 3:47), the fear in the night (Song of Solomon 3:8), the "thrill" (NAS with footnote Lit., tremble) of future blessing (Isaiah 60:5), the fear of the Jews (Esther 8:17; 9:2), the fear of Mordecai (Esther 9:3), the fear the princes had upon hearing the words of the Lord against the people (Jeremiah 36:16, see also in verse 24), the woman-like fear Egypt will have (Isaiah 19:16-17), and the fear of man and the oppressor (Isaiah 51:12-13).

C. חָטַח (chat)

חָטַח (chat, e.g. Jeremiah 50:2) is found approximately 57 times, and it means to be shattered (Isaiah 8:9; 30:31 NKJV "beaten down"), broken (Jeremiah 48:20, 39; 51:56; 14:4 "parched" NKJV, i.e. broken ground), dismayed (Joshua 1:9; 8:1; 1 Samuel 17:11; Jeremiah 8:9; 17:18; 30:10; 46:27; 48:1, 39; 46:5; 50:36; Ezekiel 2:6; 3:9) and fearful (Job 7:14 NKJV "scare;" 31:34 NKJV "dreaded;" Isaiah 20:5; 31:4, 9; Habakkuk 2:17). It is only once used for the fear of God (Malachi 2:5). NKJV translates it here "reverent." The verse reads:

My covenant was with him, one of life and peace, and I gave them to him that he might fear Me; so he feared Me and was reverent before My name. (Malachi 2:5)

In light of the usage of this word elsewhere, this "reverence" carries with it, shattered, broken, dismayed, and fear. This is a loaded word.

D. חָרַד (chârad)

This verb is found approximately 45 times and is used for trembling at God's word (Job 37:1; Ezra 9:4; 10:3; Isaiah 66:2, 5). It is also used of the trembling of Isaac (Genesis 27:33), the intense fear Joseph's brothers had of what God was doing to them (Genesis 42:28), the trembling of the Israelites before Mount Sinai and the trembling (quaking) of the mountain itself (Exodus 19:16, 18), Boaz being "startled" by Ruth (Ruth 3:8), Eli's trembling for the ark of God (1 Samuel 4:13), the trembling of the people who followed Saul (1 Samuel 13:7), the trembling of the elders of Bethlehem at the coming of Samuel (1 Samuel 16:4), the trembling of Saul when he saw the Philistine army (1 Samuel 28:5), woman-like fear (Isaiah 19:16), the trembling of women (Isaiah 32:11), trembling at the judgment of God (Ezekiel 26:16, 18; 32:10), the fear when a trumpet is blown in a city (Amos 3:6), being made afraid (Nahum 2:11; Zephaniah 3:13), etc..

E. בָּהַל (bâhal)

This word is found about 39 times in the Old Testament. This is the word used twice by Job to describe how he was terrified of God (Job 23:15a-16). It is also the word used by Moses saying, "by Your wrath we are terrified" (Psalm 90:7). It is also used for the dismayed fear Joseph's brothers had (Genesis 45:3), Saul's fearful state (1 Samuel 28:21), Israel's fearful troublesome condition (2 Samuel 4:1), the fear Sennacherib's servants

Not Taught!

attempted to instill (2 Chronicles 32:18), the terror of Job's condition (Job 4:5 NKJV "troubled;" 22:10 NKJV "troubles;" 21:6), troubled bones and soul (Psalm 6:2-3; see also verse 10 and Psalm 30:7; 104:29), fear taking hold (Psalm 48:6), and men of war being terrified (Jeremiah 51:32). It is also used in the sense of hastening something (e.g. 2 Chronicles 26:20; 35:21; Proverbs 20:21; 28:22; Ecclesiastes 7:9; 8:3; Zephaniah 1:18).

F. עָרַץ (ʿârats)

Another Hebrew form used for the fear of God are the Hebrew words עָרַץ (ʿarats), the verb form, and עָרִיץ (ʿariyts), the adjective form. It is found about 35 times in the Old Testament, and it means "tremble" with the sense of "terror." The adjective form is only used once in reference to the fear of God (Jeremiah 20:11 NKJV "awesome," NAS "dread"). The verb form is found in three places for the fear of God (Psalm 89:7; Isaiah 8:13; 29:23). Elsewhere they are used for the fear of man (Deuteronomy 7:21; Joshua 1:9; Job 31:34; Isaiah 8:12), terror because of the enemy (Deuteronomy 1:29; 20:3; 31:6), frightening a leaf (Job 13:25), shaking the earth (Isaiah 2:19, 21), terror (NKJV "oppress") caused by wicked men (Psalm 10:18), and wicked men described as terrifying or terrible (Job 15:20 NKJV "oppressor;" Psalm 37:35 more literally, "the terrible wicked;" Isaiah 13:11; 25:3-5; 29:5, 20; 49:25; Jeremiah 15:21).

G. מוֹרָא (morâ')

There is also מוֹרָא (morâ') which is found 12 times. It is used for the fear of God (Psalm 76:11; Isaiah 8:13; Malachi 1:6 ["respect" NAS with footnote "Lit., fear"; 2:5) and the great "terror" which the Lord and Moses performed (Deuteronomy 4:34; 26:8; 34:12; Jeremiah 32:21). It is also used for the fear God put upon the land (Deuteronomy 11:25), for being afraid of men, their "threats" (NKJV, Isaiah 8:12), and the fear God put on the animals toward mankind (Genesis 9:2). There is also מוֹרָה (morâh) found in Psalm 9:21 which says,

Put them in fear, O Lord, that the nations may know themselves to be but men.

H. גִּיר (gur)

Another Hebrew word used for the fear of God is גִּיר (gur). It is found in the Old Testament 10 times and is used for fearing God in two Psalms (Psalm 22:23; 33:8 NKJV "awe"). It is also used of Moab being afraid of the children of Israel (Numbers 22:3), the fear of man (Deuteronomy 1:17), not being afraid of a false prophet (Deuteronomy 18:22), God's fear of man (Deuteronomy 32:27), Saul's fear of David (1 Samuel 18:15), the fear the mighty have of Leviathan (Job 41:25, Hebrew vs 17), being afraid of the sword (Job 19:29), and the fear idolaters had (Hosea 10:5).

I. זֹנֵעַ (zu'a) and דִּיחַל (dechal)

These words are Aramaic words and are only used in the book of Daniel. זוע (zu'a) is used twice. דחל (dechal) is used 6 times. They are both used in Daniel 6:26 (Hebrew vs 27) for trembling (זוע [zu'a]) and fearing (דחל [dechal]) before the God of Daniel. They are also both used in Daniel 5:19 for trembling (זוע [zu'a]) and fearing (דחל [dechal]) Nebuchadnezzar. דחל (dechal) is also used for the "awesome" image Nebuchadnezzar saw (Daniel 2:31), the fearful dream (Daniel 4:5, Hebrew vs 2), and the terrible beast (Daniel 7:7, 19).

J. יגור (yâgor)

There is also the verb יגור (yâgor) which is found 5 times in the Old Testament, but it is only used once for the fear of God (Deuteronomy 9:19). It is also used for the fear of the diseases of Egypt (Deuteronomy 28:60), the calamity and suffering Job feared (Job 3:25; 9:28), and the reproach the Psalmist dreaded (Psalm 119:39).

K. סָמַר (sâmar)

This Hebrew word is only found 3 times in the Old Testament and it means to bristle. It is used for the bristling locusts in Jeremiah 51:27, for Eliphaz' hair that "stood up" (NKJV) on his body in fear of a spirit, and in Psalm 119:120 where the Psalmists writes (more literally),

**My flesh bristles [סָמַר, sâmar] from dread [פָּחַד, pâchad] of You,
and I am afraid [יָרֵא, yârê'] of your judgments.**

II. Terms In The New Testament

A. φοβέομαι (phobeomai)

The most common word used in the New Testament is the Greek verb φοβέομαι (phobeomai). It is found approximately 95 times in the New Testament and most definitely means to be afraid. Besides being used for being afraid of God (e.g. Matthew 10:28; 17:6; Luke 1:50; 12:4-5; 23:40; Acts 10:2, 22, 35; 1 Peter 2:17; Revelation 14:7; 15:4), it is also used for the command "do not be afraid" (e.g. Matthew 1:20; 10:26, 31; 14:27; 17:7; 28:5, 10), the fear Joseph had of Archelaus (Matthew 2:22), Herod's fear of the multitude (Matthew 14:5), Peter's fear of the wind (Matthew 14:30), the chief priests' and elders' fear of the multitude (Matthew 21:26, 46), Herod's fear of John (Mark 6:20), the fear to ask Jesus a question (Mark 9:32), the fear the people had as Christ was headed toward Jerusalem (Mark 10:32), the fear the scribes and chief priests had of Christ (Mark 11:18), the fear both Marys had after seeing the empty tomb (Mark 16:8), the ungodly judge who did not fear God (Luke 18:2), the disciples fear when they saw Jesus walking on water (John 6:19), the parents of the blind man who feared the Jews (John 9:22), Pilate being more afraid (John 19:8), the disciples fear of Saul after his conversion (Acts 9:26), the fear of running aground on the rocks (Acts 27:29), the fear of being cut off (Romans 11:20), fear of the authorities when doing evil (Romans 13:3-4),

Not Taught!

Paul's fear of the Corinthians being deceived (2 Corinthians 11:3; see also Galatians 4:11), Peter's fear of the Jews (Galatians 2:12), the fear a wife should have toward her husband (Ephesians 5:33, see below), fear of any coming short of God's rest (Hebrews 4:1), Moses' parents who were not afraid of the king's command (Hebrews 11:23), etc..

B. φοβος (phobos)

The noun form of φοβεομαι (phobeomai) is φοβος (phobos) and it is found about 45 times in the New Testament. It is used for the fear of God (2 Corinthians 5:11; 7:1; Ephesians 5:21; Philippians 2:12; 1 Peter 1:17; 3:15), and also for the fear the disciples had when they thought they saw a ghost (Matthew 14:26), the fear the guards had when they saw the angel (Matthew 28:4), the fear the disciples had when Christ calmed the sea (Mark 4:41), the fear Zacharias had when he saw the angel (Luke 1:12), the fear that came upon those who saw Christ raise up a dead man out of a coffin (Luke 7:16), the fear that seized the Gadarenes (Luke 8:37), men's hearts failing them from fear (Luke 21:26), fear of the Jews (John 7:13; 19:38; 20:19), the fear the wicked do not have of God (Romans 3:8), the fear God-fearing people do not have (Romans 8:15), fear that is due to authorities (Romans 13:7), the fear Paul had while with the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 2:3; see also 2 Corinthians 7:5), the fear the Corinthians had while receiving Titus (2 Corinthians 7:15), the resultant fear at the rebuke of a sinning elder (1 Timothy 5:20), fear of death (Hebrews 2:15), saving some with fear (Jude 23), fear of Babylon's torment (Revelation 18:10, 15), etc..

C. τρομος (tromos)

This word is found 5 times in the New Testament. It is used for the trembling of working out one's salvation (Philippians 2:12), the trembling of Paul before the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 2:3), the trembling of the Corinthians when they received Titus (2 Corinthians 7:15), the trembling servants are to have in service to their masters (Ephesians 6:5), and the trembling of the two Marys as they fled from the tomb (Mark 16:8).

D. εκφοβος (ekphobos)

This Greek word is only found twice in the New Testament. Once when the disciples were greatly afraid when Christ was transfigured (Mark 9:6), and the other time is when Moses describes his fear of the presence of God saying, "I am exceedingly afraid . . ." (Hebrews 12:21).

E. εντρομος (entromos)

This Greek word is only found three times in the New Testament. It goes along with the word above in Hebrews 12:21 in the second part of Moses' statement, ". . . and trembling." Also, this is used for Moses' trembling before God at another time in Acts 7:32, and for the trembling of the Philippian jailer in Acts 16:29.

F. εὐλαβείας (eulabeias)

This Greek word is only found twice in the New Testament and both times it means "godly fear." It is used of Christ being heard because of His godly fear (Hebrews 5:7), and believers are instructed to serve God with godly fear (Hebrews 12:28), because "our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29).

G. εὐλαβήθεις (eulabêtheis)

This Greek word is akin to the one above and is only used once in the New Testament. It is used for Noah who was "moved with godly fear" (Hebrews 11:7 NKJV), because he was warned of things not yet seen (i.e. the coming judgment of God, Genesis 6:13-14).

III. Arguments Over Words (1 Timothy 6:4)

For those who would argue over words (1 Timothy 6:4; 2 Timothy 2:14), they might point out, for example, that the Hebrew word יָרֵא (yârê') is used to "revere" (NKJV) parents in Leviticus 19:3, and therefore conclude that יָרֵא (yârê') must mean to "revere" God as well, excluding actual fear. The problem with this is, not only does it deny the overwhelming evidence of the usage of the word (as the above illustrates), but it denies the actual teaching of the Bible and turns it upside down.

Parents not only ought to be honored (Exodus 20:12), but actually feared (Leviticus 19:3), especially in the context in which Leviticus 19:3 was written! Leviticus 20:9 decrees the death penalty upon anyone who curses his father or his mother (see also Exodus 21:17; Proverbs 20:20). Exodus 21:15 also puts the death penalty upon anyone who strikes his father or his mother. Deuteronomy 21:18-21 also reveals a rebellious son is to be put to death via the initiative of his parents, and Deuteronomy 27:16 places a curse upon anyone who treats his father or his mother with contempt. Also, Proverbs 30:17 warns the disrespectful child that ravens and eagles will pick out and eat their eyes! Parents are indeed to be feared in the fear of God. God's usage of יָרֵא (yârê') is very apropos.

Another argument that might be used is with the Greek word φοβεομαι (phobeomai). Since Ephesians 5:33 tells wives to "respect" (NKJV; φοβηται [phobêtai] from φοβεομαι [phobeomai]) their husbands, it might be argued that this respect excludes fear. The erroneous conclusion would then be, φοβεομαι (phobeomai) means to respect God, but no need to fear Him, since this is the same word used for the wives where they are told to "respect" their husbands. The problem with this is, it again denies the overwhelming usage of the word, and the massive Scriptural evidence to the contrary (see the chapter on The True Fear of God). It also aborts God's revelation about the "respect" a wife is to have towards her husband. It is to be one of fear, as Ephesians 5:33 literally says.

Women are to obey their husbands as they would obey God (Ephesians 5:22), and obeying God certainly includes fear (1 Peter 1:17); thus obeying a husband certainly includes fear (Ephesians 5:33). The husband is head of the wife (Ephesians 5:23), and the wife is subject to her husband, just as the church

Not Taught!

is subject to Christ (Ephesians 5:23). The church is subject to Christ in fear (Psalm 2:11-12), so are wives to be to their husbands (Ephesians 5:33). They are to be in serious submission, as Sarah was, who called her husband lord (1 Peter 3:6). [For more, see the chapter on women.]

Alphabetical Index

- 4
 4000 years.....166
 6
 603,550 people.....523
A
 a unique time.....523, 532
 A. R. Millard.....23
 abhorred.....88, 164, 471
 abomination.....142, 143, 144, 177, 262, 264, 312
 abominations.....96, 261
 Abraham...167, 171, 194, 203, 205, 206, 225, 308, 333, 387, 388, 393, 407
 Abraham Lincoln.....387
 abuse.....337, 338
 abusive.....136, 137
 abyss.....165
 accidents.....131, 337
 acquit.....88, 392
 Adam.....18, 215, 307, 310
 Adonai.....27, 29, 30
 adversary.....7, 242
 Agnostics.....168
 agree to disagree.....193, 194
 Ahab.....131, 453
 Alexander the coppersmith.....385
 all things...138, 192, 193, 204, 214, 216, 226, 227, 228, 231, 232, 240, 242, 243, 245, 309, 336, 364, 368, 399, 406, 453, 456, 457, 458, 461, 462, 469, 477
 ancient.....11, 12, 332
 Angel of the Lord.30, 145, 393, 483
 angels 22, 23, 96, 97, 164, 165, 179, 180, 222, 223, 226, 229, 240, 309, 459, 469, 477
 anger15, 20, 87, 88, 92, 94, 96, 163, 169, 174, 195, 454, 455
 animals.....87, 506
 annals of history.....521, 534
 Antichrist.....16, 82, 165
 antichrists.....17
 Antiquities.....528, 529, 530, 531
 apostasy.....410, 411
 Aramaic.....327, 547
 archives.....7
 argue 14, 16, 43, 148, 169, 170, 199, 231, 236, 241, 328, 363, 365, 383, 389, 401, 454, 467, 470, 506
 arguments...22, 194, 196, 328, 398, 406, 467
 armies.....11, 227
 Arminian. 239, 242, 451, 452, 453, 459, 460, 466, 474, 476, 479
 Arminians.192, 221, 453, 458, 459, 462, 465, 466, 473, 474, 476
 arms of flesh.....20
 arrows.....86, 174
 Atheism.....204
 atheists.....168, 218, 387
 atonement.401, 465, 466, 468, 469, 471
 Augustine.....193, 459
 authority.....14, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 400, 466, 468, 476
 awe.....135, 137, 544, 546
 awesome39, 87, 140, 141, 177, 413, 469, 479, 506, 522, 544, 546, 547
B
 Babylonian.....96
 Baha'is.....168
 Balaam.....200
 beforehand.205, 231, 400, 464, 474
 belch.....133
 bêma.....224
 Benny Hinn.....167, 191
 betrothed.....263, 390
 bias.....534
 Bildad.....138
 Billy Graham.....167, 191, 199
 birds.....12, 86, 169, 382
 blind.....43, 199, 465
 blood...22, 97, 136, 144, 171, 207, 214, 218, 225, 230, 234, 237, 261, 262, 459, 466, 467, 472, 481, 508

Not Taught!

boast.....89, 200, 207, 474
bodily parts.....20
body..137, 143, 144, 166, 167, 180,
193, 203, 205, 207, 217, 219, 223,
224, 226, 228, 262, 310, 363, 364,
389, 398, 407, 408, 410, 510
boldness.....144, 145
bones.....16, 19, 410
Book of Life.....238
born again...52, 207, 215, 216, 217,
224
born of God.....206, 207, 238, 239,
240, 242, 475
bowels.....19
brag.....89
brimstone.....166, 168, 408
broad way.192, 193, 195, 197, 198,
202, 379, 385
brute.....131, 200, 382
Buddhism.....204
burning...11, 34, 37, 164, 166, 167,
169, 454, 510
C
C. S. Lewis.....167, 191, 193
Cain.....306
Caleb.....95
Calvin.....5, 18, 192, 221, 451, 452,
453, 459, 460, 463, 466, 467, 468,
469, 470, 471, 473, 474, 476
Calvinists..192, 221, 451, 452, 453,
459, 466, 467, 468, 469, 471, 473,
474, 476
camel.....402, 403
cardboard.....534
Catholic.....39, 193, 198, 405
Catholic church.....39, 198
Catholicism.....204, 405
Catholics.....168, 379
cattle.....12, 86, 140, 176, 227, 391
cement.....131
Champion.....93
Charles Blake.....167, 191
Charles Caldwell Ryrie.....38
Charles Spurgeon.....167, 191, 192,
471
Charles Stanley. .167, 191, 202, 232

chief joy.....43, 44
choice.....180, 333, 452, 459, 462
Christian Scientists.....168
Christianity7, 8, 191, 193, 196, 197,
198, 204, 396, 397, 400, 405, 406
Chuck Colson.....167, 191, 193
Chuck Smith.....167, 191, 193, 379,
385
Chuck Swindoll.....167, 191
church167, 191, 198, 220, 221, 310,
312, 323, 324, 329, 365, 385, 388,
397, 405, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411,
466
Church of Christ167, 191, 198, 329,
397
cloud.....18, 167, 191, 199
clouds.....11, 140, 199, 200
commandment of men.....136
commandments.....87, 93, 94, 146,
171, 193, 195, 196, 197, 211, 212,
241, 404, 408, 411, 458, 477, 478
Commentary.....36, 37, 38, 39, 137,
228, 229, 230, 324
complacency.....193, 210, 327
complain.....95, 169
complained.....95
Concubinage.....390
concubine.....390
condescension.....20
confidence.....144, 145, 146, 212
constellations.....506
consuming fire.....21, 22, 138
Contemporary.....452
content.....146, 323, 327
contentious woman.....306
Cooper Abrams.....364
Cornelius.....388
corruptible.....9, 12, 15, 21
counsel 38, 133, 163, 240, 380, 457,
474, 476
counsel of God...52, 380, 474, 476,
538
cowards.....144, 164, 168, 313, 314
creeds.....8, 193, 460, 462, 466
crimson.....93
Critical Text.....224

cruel.....86, 169
 crushed.....86
 cumulative.....36
 curse.....43, 44, 200, 306, 307, 333,
 380, 389, 393, 508
 Cursed.....164, 179, 181, 194, 195,
 223, 236, 408, 521
 custom.....44, 309, 390
 cut off. 139, 174, 234, 331, 479, 480
 D
 D. Guthrie.....23
 D. J. Wisemen.....23
 daily survival.....316
 Dale Yocum.....460, 462, 466
 damnation.....379, 459, 465
 Dan Corner. 239, 242, 476, 477, 478
 danger.....164, 329
 dangerous.....136, 401, 402, 544
 Daniel D. Corner.....239
 darlings.....83
 dashed to pieces.....454
 Dave Hunt.....167, 191
 David Breese.....406
 David Jeremiah.....167, 191, 218
 David New.....136
 David W. Cloud.....167, 191
 death of death.....467
 death penalty.....549
 deceit 18, 21, 22, 36, 137, 194, 199,
 207, 210, 214, 224, 230, 242, 308,
 325, 383, 401, 405, 467, 468, 479
 deceitful.....93, 129, 209, 212, 229,
 312, 390, 408, 409, 479
 deceiver.....16, 17, 414
 deceivers.....16, 17, 400
 Deception.....132, 239, 479
 deep counsels.....319
 defiant.....141
 delusion.....132, 193, 230, 468
 denominations.....397, 400, 408
 desires of the flesh.....215
 desperately wicked.....93, 133
 despised....81, 95, 96, 164, 209, 384
 devil. 7, 8, 179, 180, 199, 206, 223,
 242, 367, 409, 411, 412, 479
 different paths.....192, 196

diligent.....146, 220, 398, 475
 Diotrephes.....537
 dismayed.....545
 distillation.....327, 328
 DISTINCT.....37, 39, 405
 distinction...14, 195, 307, 383, 392,
 470
 distrust.....23
 diversity.....406, 407
 dogs.....168, 197, 212, 379, 382
 Donald Grey Barnhouse.....37
 Dr. Chris Jakway.....242, 452
 Dr. Norman Geisler.....332
 Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi.....326
 dread.....142, 544, 546, 547
 E
 Early Church Fathers 405, 528, 533,
 535
 eat their eyes.....549
 eat their own children.....90, 455
 ecumenical.....397, 406, 408
 Edwards.....535
 Edwin Palmer.....468
 effeminate.....314
 election....130, 225, 244, 401, 459,
 460, 461, 462, 463, 473
 Elihu.....140
 Eliphaz.....96, 97
 enjoyment.....87
 epileptic.....96
 equal.....91, 204, 389, 478
 Er.....81
 Esau.....130, 175, 462
 escape...8, 146, 180, 229, 230, 245,
 306, 380, 463
 escapes.....8, 139
 especially...98, 138, 379, 380, 452,
 469
 essentials....193, 195, 196, 197, 406
 estranged.....179, 235, 455, 475
 eternal destiny.....97, 240, 465
 everlasting burnings.....34, 166
 exhortations.....227, 229, 230, 231,
 238, 242
 extra-biblical.....39
 F

Not Taught!

- F. F. Bruce.....23
faithful men.....313, 520
faithfulness.....88, 97, 175
fall 95, 98, 131, 174, 195, 199, 201,
217, 224, 229, 230, 231, 236, 237,
238, 239, 242, 245, 307, 395, 472,
475, 476, 479, 480
false impression.....199
false religion.....197, 204
False Teachers....37, 131, 136, 167,
168, 192, 193, 197, 198, 199, 200,
229, 379, 380, 382, 383, 384, 400,
402, 406, 472, 473, 563
false teachers199, 384, 400
Father 167, 196, 203, 205, 208, 211,
220, 223, 225, 235, 236, 242, 261,
309, 310, 330, 384, 398, 403, 407,
408, 409, 411, 412, 413, 461, 462,
466, 478, 479, 480
fear of death.....146
feet....14, 16, 19, 23, 144, 214, 225,
235, 366
female.305, 307, 388, 390, 391, 392
feminine.....43
fetters.....306, 307
First and the Last.....16
fish.....12, 86, 169, 401, 505, 509
flame.....11, 16, 166, 171, 510
flood.....81
food. 86, 87, 88, 91, 140, 203, 223,
226, 244, 311, 333, 336, 390, 471,
472, 507
fool....81, 130, 135, 139, 164, 175,
199, 219, 231, 388, 391, 465
foolish 95, 164, 168, 195, 203, 206,
221, 237, 243, 244, 245, 311, 368,
401, 404, 463, 474, 479, 510
fools.....88, 95, 135, 136, 142, 169,
193, 210, 219, 465
foot.....10, 145, 225, 227
force.....7, 12, 22, 263, 463, 479
forget.....43, 333, 334, 338, 457
forgive.....211, 218, 235, 236
forgiveness. 93, 139, 145, 195, 218,
225, 236, 237, 307, 458
form of the Lord.....19
fountain.....19, 143
Fred Price.....191
free will....207, 397, 451, 452, 453,
456, 457, 458, 473
frightening a leaf.....546
Fundamental.....364, 397
Fundamentals.....193, 406
furious.....88, 227
furnace.....16, 41, 166, 226, 365
G
gangrene.....193
garment....11, 16, 19, 214, 227, 383
glory of the Lord.....18
gluttonous.....336
gnat.....402, 403
God sends people.....179
God's name 175, 176, 177, 195, 196,
197, 203, 206, 207, 213, 214, 219,
221, 229, 231, 235, 237, 238, 239,
240, 242, 243, 244, 260, 263, 264,
306, 307, 312, 363, 365, 389, 390,
400, 407, 410, 411, 412, 414, 453,
456, 459, 462, 463, 465, 471, 473,
474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480,
507, 508
Godhead.....11, 12, 16, 17, 33, 39
godly fear.....143, 549
gold.....34, 312
golden.....16, 453
goodness 87, 88, 138, 147, 202, 216,
234, 239, 411, 479, 480
grace of God....146, 206, 214, 234,
235, 236, 237, 239, 307, 337, 402,
452, 459, 469, 473, 474, 475
grass.....44, 86, 130, 175, 465, 507
great swelling words....36, 198, 199
Greg Laurie.....167, 179, 191
H
H. A. Ironside.....38
Hades.....16, 165, 166, 167, 170
handiwork.....20
hands. 19, 140, 143, 144, 209, 224,
225, 230, 235, 306, 307, 311, 472
Hank Hanegraaff 167, 191, 193, 406
harden.....130, 229, 459
harlot.....203

harp.....44
 hate...44, 81, 92, 94, 129, 130, 135,
 143, 144, 147, 169, 174, 193, 198,
 208, 217, 380, 381, 384, 477
 haters.....95, 168, 330
 haters of God.....95, 168
 hates...23, 86, 91, 92, 94, 129, 130,
 133, 143, 144, 261, 264, 384, 407,
 412, 463
 hatred.....93, 144, 263, 462, 464
 head...11, 14, 16, 19, 20, 307, 308,
 309, 312, 509
 head covered.....308, 309
 Henry Allan Ironside.....37
 hidden...94, 204, 210, 239, 312, 506
 hide.....86, 89, 395, 506, 507
 high esteem.....321
 Hinduism.....204
 Hindus.....168
 history.....7, 87, 328, 465
 holiness.....211, 212
 holy writ.....39, 129, 194, 196, 458
 homemaker.....310, 312
 homemakers.....307
 homosexual.....314
 homosexuals.....168
 hook.....508, 509
 host of heaven.....131
 hosts.....11, 35, 142, 174, 175, 234,
 333, 366, 389
 howling.....98
 human.16, 18, 20, 22, 81, 144, 173,
 221, 241, 244, 305, 387, 388, 390,
 391, 394, 463, 465
 hundred.....143, 205, 235
 hunger.....87, 167, 195, 233
 husband submits.....320
I
 idolaters.....168, 197, 212
 idolatry.....44, 368, 384
 idols.....141, 261, 471
 ignored.....7, 33
 image.....12, 18, 308, 414, 461
 impossible.....8, 20, 164, 206, 209,
 214, 217, 236, 239, 242, 243, 245,
 332, 381, 382, 403, 408, 457, 458,

479, 481
 in and of itself .364, 365, 367, 368,
 387, 394
 incapable....85, 214, 215, 216, 239,
 452, 457
 incarnation.....10
 incline my heart.....132, 455
 indignation 171, 174, 175, 211, 213,
 222, 230, 233, 235, 454
 instruments of death.....86
 interpretation.....36, 38, 405, 470
 invisible.....17, 18
 irresistible grace.....473, 475
J
 J. D. Douglas.....23
 J. I. Packer.....23
 J. Vernon McGee.....191
 Jack Daniels.....338
 Jack Hayford.....167, 191, 337
 jackals.....20, 175
 James Dobson.....167, 191
 Jehovah's Witness.....198, 204
 Jehovah's Witnesses...168, 406, 410
 Jehu.....452, 453
 Jews...11, 141, 168, 365, 398, 409,
 410, 464, 469, 470, 477, 479
 Job...138, 146, 310, 326, 333, 388,
 395, 411, 413, 465, 505, 506, 507,
 508, 509, 510
 Job's complaint.....514
 Joel Osteen.....191
 John MacArthur 137, 167, 179, 191,
 228, 229, 406, 480
 John Owen.....467
 John Wesley.....390, 474, 476
 joking.....227
 Jonah.....87, 88
 Josephus.....528, 529, 530, 531, 533
 Joshua.....10, 95, 393
 Judging.....4, 195, 247
 judgment seat.....223, 224
 juice.....324, 325, 326, 327
 juice.....328
 Justin T. Alfred.....379, 385
K
 kidnappers.....95, 164, 168, 394

Not Taught!

kidnapping.....394
King of Kings.....89, 140, 210
L
lake of fire 165, 168, 170, 177, 201,
225, 232, 264, 382, 476
Lamb 35, 36, 39, 139, 389, 395, 469
lamps.....34, 35, 36, 37
Languages.....11, 140, 563
Larry Ingram.....412
laugh.....133
laughed.....164
lead people to.....200
legacy.....136
Lehman Strauss.....37
lengthy.....20, 379
leopard.....21
lifestyle.....239
limited atonement....401, 465, 466,
468, 469
liquor.....327, 330, 337
literal .21, 22, 36, 39, 140, 164, 263
literally.....19, 22, 37, 93, 135, 140,
214, 309, 326, 327, 381, 468, 469,
509, 510
living creatures.....35
loaf.....21
loathsome.....91, 394
logic.....244
logical.....221, 243
Logos.....204
lovers of pleasure.....164, 168
luminance.....164
Luther.....535
lying spirit.....132
M
MacArthur 137, 138, 167, 179, 191,
223, 224, 228, 229, 230, 406, 480,
481
madness.....136, 138
magic.....168
Majority Text.....39, 224, 238
male....305, 307, 388, 390, 391, 392
man-made.....34, 364, 404
man's dominion.....317
manhood.....12
manuscripts.....39, 383

masculine.....316
masculinity.....313, 315, 317
massive.93, 164, 505, 506, 508, 510
Medical.....363
Melchizedek.....332, 333
metaphor.....21
metaphorical.....21
Micaiah.....131
Mick.....146
Mick Jagger.....146
Mike Oppenheimer.....404
Miles McPherson.....167, 191
mind of man.....221, 243
miserable.....135, 216
mocked.96, 98, 134, 137, 164, 223,
456
mockers.....164
Modern.....22, 23, 328, 404, 563
monster.....21, 505
moon.....148, 336, 507
more important.....402
Mormon.....198
Mormonism....9, 204, 407, 409, 410
Mormons.....9, 168, 407
mortal.....15, 21, 22
Moses.....230, 241, 381, 458, 463
motivated.....146
Mount Sinai.....365, 545
mouth of the Lord.....93
mush.....36
Muslim.....198
Muslims.....168
mythical.....506, 507, 510
N
N. Hillyer.....23
nailed.....98
naked.....20, 98, 203, 204, 223
nakedness. 233, 240, 259, 260, 330,
477, 521
Nebuchadnezzar...48, 49, 140, 515,
547
neck.....145, 196, 454, 472, 509
neglected.....33
Neil Anderson.....167, 191
nephesh.....23
night visions.....11, 511, 512

Ninevah.....88
 nirvana.....215
 no pleasure.....98, 177
 non-essential.....193
 nonessentials.....193, 406
 nostrils.....19, 140, 366, 510
 O
 obey God.....308, 461
 olive trees.....34, 35
 Onan.....81
 oneness.....34
 Onesimus.....394
 opinion.....9, 363
 Oral E. Fisher.....81
 Origen.....17, 18, 530
 original languages.....543
 orthodox.....193, 405
 ostriches.....20
 P
 pagans.....197, 332
 parable.....171, 227, 236
 parabolic.....21
 Paradise.....240, 246
 Parents.....168, 313, 523, 536, 543,
 547, 548, 549
 Pat Robertson.....180, 191
 Paul Chappell.....167, 191
 pay.....235, 390, 392, 471, 473
 peace....33, 44, 131, 132, 145, 195,
 203, 208, 210, 211, 213, 214, 219,
 222, 329, 403, 454
 perdition...197, 228, 244, 385, 409,
 471, 472, 475, 478, 479
 perfect...37, 92, 96, 144, 145, 203,
 220, 245, 399, 402
 peripheral.....193
 permanent.....390, 391
 perpetual.....141, 164, 388
 Perry F Rockwood.....180, 191
 Perry F. Rockwood.....367
 persecution.....195, 240, 409, 477
 Perseverance.....476
 perverse.....96, 142, 143, 232, 331
 phenomena.....97
 phenomenal.....81
 phenomenon.....396

physical.....12, 16, 22, 23, 42, 166,
 215, 262, 412
 pisseth.....90
 pit.....164, 165, 459
 pit;.....165
 plain.....36, 37, 481
 pluck.....167, 225
 plumb line.....35
 Pope John Paul.....167
 popular.....9, 332, 563
 Potentate.....140, 210
 potsherd.....20, 510
 prayers.....174, 210, 380, 381
 predestination...175, 459, 460, 462,
 463
 predominate.....7
 preeminence.....307
 pregnancy.....306
 present tense.....17
 propitiation.....468
 Psychiatrists.....168
 Psychologists.....168
 pure spirit.....23
 puritan.....20, 467
 Q
 qualities.....35
 R
 rag.....214, 263
 Rahab.....203
 rain....86, 140, 141, 166, 195, 200,
 236, 506, 507
 Randy Peterson.....136
 raped.....263, 454
 rarely.....201
 Ray C. Stedman.....37
 Ray Comfort.....167, 191
 Reachout Trust.....413
 rebel.....93, 312, 392
 rebellion....87, 211, 229, 312, 383,
 394, 452
 rebellious son.....549
 rebuke sharply.....321
 Received Text.....224
 rehabilitation.....338
 relax.....242
 relent.....15

Not Taught!

reprobates.....459
reprobation.....459, 462, 463
Resistible Grace.....473
reverence.....318, 545
reverent.....318, 545
revival.....526
rhetorical.....464, 509
Rick Miesel.....407
Rick Warren.....167, 191
robbery.....91
Robert L. Thomas.....36
Robert Morey.....22
Robert Schuller.....167, 191
rubbish.....216, 245
rude.....90
rugged man.....315
S
sanctification.....238
sandal.....10
Sandwiched.....33, 469, 481
sapphire stone.....18
Satan.....7, 132, 165, 180, 199, 206,
207, 233, 240, 242, 383, 400, 408,
409, 412, 452, 479
satisfaction.....146, 147, 471
scoffers.....164
scroll.....19, 467
self-control.....168, 329, 337, 363
sell.....390
semen.....262
send fire.....86
Senseless.....130, 175, 465
Septuagint.....38
Serpents.....380
settled.....327
seven literal Spirits.....36, 39
seven stars.....16
sevenfold.....37, 38
Seventh-Day Adventist.....326
Seventh-day Adventists.....81
sexual intercourse.....262
shadow.....34, 143
Shallum.....318
shame.....44, 95, 98, 136, 146, 164,
169, 236, 307, 308, 310, 472
sharpen.....86

shattered.....545
shepherd.....147, 223, 466
shocking.....19
Shout.....90
simultaneously.....221, 245
sin willfully.....230, 239, 244, 381
sleep.....145, 170, 262
sleeping.....171
Smoke.....164, 166, 167, 363, 364,
365, 366, 505, 510
snakes.....316, 379
snare.....8, 86, 169, 411, 508
sneak.....145
Sodom.....41, 81, 166, 170
soft.....314, 315
Son of God 201, 204, 206, 207, 212,
220, 230, 234, 236, 237, 238, 472,
481
sons of Korah.....41, 42, 523
sorcerers.....168, 197, 212
sound doctrine.....168, 229, 400
spectrum.....193
Spurgeon .167, 191, 192, 193, 196,
405, 471, 535
stabbing.....167
stars.....16, 205, 244, 382
startled.....545
stealthy.....202
Stephen Charnock.....20
Stephen Shoemaker.....411
steps.....98, 133, 308, 456, 465
strangers.....179, 198, 391, 399, 411
stray.....132, 194, 195, 241, 454
Strive....20, 23, 197, 200, 202, 454,
481
strong drink.....324, 327, 328, 329,
330, 332, 337, 338
stumble.....145, 225, 233, 234, 335,
382, 453, 455, 462, 464, 468, 471,
472
stupid.....21, 81, 136
submission..14, 210, 307, 308, 309,
310, 312
Suicide.....81, 337
sulfur.....166
sun....16, 21, 86, 136, 148, 244, 507

swear.....47, 48, 209, 523
 sword....10, 16, 43, 82, 86, 93, 204,
 240, 263, 382, 477, 506, 508, 509
 symbolic.....36, 38
 symbolism.....37
 sympathize.....220
 sympathy.....15
 symptomatic.....316
 synagogue.....94
 Syndrome.....407, 408
 synonyms.....147
T
 T. D. Jakes.....167, 191
 tabernacle.....34, 37, 146, 192, 208,
 333
 temporary faith...231, 232, 234, 236
 temptation. .231, 242, 456, 516, 517
 terrified.....135, 138, 146, 465
 terror...15, 133, 137, 138, 145, 146,
 163, 164, 191, 224, 508
 Terry Watkins.....330, 337
 testimony.....11, 147, 212, 230, 324
 the city of Truth.....42
 the glory of God 164, 201, 217, 224,
 305, 364, 366
 Theological 41, 192, 193, 404, 410,
 451, 476
 theology.....7, 22, 23, 402, 468, 481
 thieves.....168, 198, 199, 409
 thoughts....143, 175, 204, 209, 221,
 225, 338, 391, 465
 Three Men.....3, 27, 28, 29
 thrill.....545
 throne. 3, 11, 12, 18, 19, 33, 34, 35,
 36, 37, 39, 42, 45, 46, 47, 50, 131,
 174, 220, 222, 366, 389, 395, 453,
 515, 517
 thrones.....11
 Tim LaHaye.....37
 tithe.....402, 403
 to and fro.....35, 141, 399
 tobacco.....363, 365
 tongue.43, 143, 144, 167, 208, 210,
 211, 311, 454, 467, 508
 Tony Evans.....167, 191
 Tony Warren.....363

torment.....130, 137, 138, 145, 164,
 165, 166, 167, 169, 170, 171, 175,
 181, 197, 201, 226, 240, 264, 380,
 459, 462
 tormenting dreams.....514
 torture.....130, 163, 166, 167
 traditions of men.....39
 trampled.....230, 237, 472
 transliterated.....165
 tree of life.....196, 197, 212, 238
 tremble.....140, 141, 142, 143, 203
 Trinity.....22, 39
 true faith....202, 203, 206, 208, 212
 two....181, 204, 225, 226, 230, 263,
 305, 324, 366, 391, 451, 452, 467,
 472, 477, 506
 two-edged sword.....16, 204
U
 unconditional.....459, 460, 463
 understanding 17, 21, 37, 38, 85, 90,
 96, 163, 169, 200, 210, 319, 320,
 330, 385, 396, 400, 401, 411, 452,
 456, 457, 516, 527
 unlimited atonement.....465, 466
 unsearchable.....90, 141, 221, 458
 unwilling.....263
 unwittingly.....414
 Uriah the Hititite.....97
V
 vain...220, 232, 233, 234, 235, 239,
 244, 395, 404, 475
 vengeance...88, 166, 170, 230, 232,
 384, 385, 459
 vessels 98, 138, 164, 240, 462, 464,
 470
 virgin.....309
 visible.....17, 20
 visions.....11, 511, 512, 513, 514
W
 W. J. Seaton.....451, 473
 war...9, 10, 11, 196, 208, 217, 219,
 390, 394, 398, 401, 406, 509
 way of life.....143, 148, 194, 195
 weak brother.....471
 weapons.....196, 398, 406
 weightier matters.....402

Not Taught!

Wesley.....390, 391, 474, 476, 535
wheels.....11, 46, 47
whiskey.....328, 331
white.....11, 16, 93, 171, 406
whole earth.....35, 366
wings.....21, 22, 366
witchcraft.....168, 312
Witness. 11, 36, 144, 198, 204, 212,
410
Woe.....20, 23, 131, 330, 331, 336,
385, 457, 464
woman-like.....545

wool.....11, 16, 93, 311
worm. .164, 167, 170, 225, 380, 472
wrath....21, 88, 92, 95, 96, 98, 131,
137, 138, 146, 163, 164, 169, 171,
174, 176, 196, 211, 213, 215, 222,
225, 227, 229, 235, 240, 395, 459,
462, 463, 464, 470, 474, 477
Y
Yahweh.....10, 11, 19, 167, 328
yarns.....146
your own choice.....180



About The Author

Darwin Fish graduated from The Master's College in 1986 with a BA in Biblical Languages. He was a probation officer for L.A. County Probation for several years, during which time he took a leave of absence and spent 9 months in Israel in 1988-89 studying Modern and Biblical Hebrew and the Geography of the Holy Land. In 1992 he was asked to come and teach the Bible in his sister's home. This gathering soon developed into a small home church. In late 1993 Darwin quit his job as a probation officer and gave himself entirely to the task of teaching the Bible and caring for those few who were involved in this new home church, which as of June 2009 consisted of about 50 people (Matthew 7:13-14).

As Darwin began to study and teach intensively (full-time), he took note of things in the word of God that were not typically taught by others, but were clearly in the Bible. This book is the result of years of studying and teaching the Bible, and proclaiming truth that is often not taught in pulpits today.

Darwin is *not* popular. He is hated by many in the "Christian" community (Matthew 5:11-12), called by some a "cult leader," and is much lied about, largely, because he exposes their leaders as hypocrites who claim to teach the Bible, but do not (e.g. see *False Teachers*, by Darwin Fish). Darwin is committed to the truth of God's word, no matter who stumbles or who is offended (1 Peter 2:8-9).

Other titles written by Darwin are:

Not Taught!

False Teachers – Not only is there instruction on how to Biblically identify false teachers, but several examples are given, with supporting documentation, exposing popular preachers within “Christianity” (Ephesians 5:11).

God's Holy Word, A Translation with Footnotes – This book is the result of a verse by verse, word by word, study through the Word of God. Books covered, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.

For more info:

**a true church
P. O. Box 130
Moody, OK 74444, USA**

1-800-HOW-TRUE

**www.800howtrue.com
www.atriuechurch.info**

**The information in this book and more can be found
at the above websites.**