

TIMELY ARTICLES

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Introduction

TIMELY ARTICLES

Timely Articles is an accumulation of articles that I have written over the past twenty-five years or more. *The Doctrine of Sin*, with a chapter on *The Origin of Sin* and another on *The Doctrine of the Sin*, provided essential information for my first book *The Two Sons of God*.

The information in *The Promise* was gained while doing a word study of the Greek word that was translated as *promise* in our King James Bible. This study revealed that the word *promise* is often accompanied by the definite article in the Greek text, but many of these articles were not translated by the translators. The conclusion derived from the use of the definite article, with *promise* in the singular, was that these references are to a singular promise even though, on the surface, the use of the word *promise* seems to be a reference to many different promises.

This article appeared in my book *The Gospel According to Paul* as the nineteenth chapter. I used the article again, with variations, in my book on *The Second Coming of Jesus Christ*. It appears in a chapter on *The Bride of Christ, with variations*, because it supplies essential information to identify the bride of Christ.

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Tongues and Other Spiritual Gifts was written at the request of my dear friend and associate in the ministry, Dr. Imaikop EnoAbasi. He is president of the Perfection Theological Seminary and Bible College in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The school accepts students of all denominations; therefore the information in the article is used to help the student body to understand, as the title suggests, *Tongues and Other Spiritual Gifts*.

The article *A Consideration of the Doctrine of Baptism* was written to aid new believers in their understanding of the doctrine of Baptism. It was one of the first articles I wrote for our church. Nevertheless I have rewritten it many times. These writings were not because of a change of position, but they were an effort on my part to supply answers to all of the questions that arise concerning Spirit baptism, baptism in water, the mode of baptism, the baptism of the first converts on the day of Pentecost and the baptism of the first Gentiles in the household of Cornelius. We trust that this latest revision has answered all of these questions adequately.

My God, My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me? was written for a dear lady in our church. Her youngest son and a lady she works for had both asked her about this cry of the Lord. Her son lives some distance from her, so she requested that I put the answer to her question in written form, rather than just telling her the answer so that she would not forget any of the parts of the answer.

The last article, *The Authority of the Man of God*, was written years ago and stored in my computer. A dear friend, Marvin Amayun, had asked me some questions by e-mail about the authority of the man of God. I gave him a quick answer in a response to his e-mail, and then I remembered the article I written so many years ago. I spent sometime editing the original article

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and that revision is the article that is found as the last of my *Timely Articles*.

Dale Andre, D.D.

Chapter I

THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

Part I: The Origin of Sin

A casual reading of the Scriptures by the uninstructed or by the unsaved might cause them to presume that sin originated with God. It is commonly assumed that since God created everything, then God must have created the devil, and it was the devil who empowered the serpent to introduce sin into the human family. Therefore it is assumed that sin originated with God. This assumption does not consider that Lucifer was created as one of God's angels and not as the destroyer, which is the meaning of the word devil. Thus he was perfect and without sin; nor does it consider God's revelation of Himself in the Scriptures, in His holiness and His righteousness; nor does it consider that man was warned of the consequences of eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: that such a disobedience would result in his spiritual death and physical death.

The fact is, there is only one verse of Scripture which seems to support the idea that God created evil. It is found in the King James translation of the book of Isaiah, which states: *I am the*

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LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things (Isaiah 45:5-7, emphasis mine).

This verse certainly seems to suggest that God creates evil. However if we examine the Hebrew text, the word translated evil is *Ra*. It can mean adversity, affliction or calamity. These are all products of God's judgments. So God does create this kind of evil, but the evil that is sin is contrary to His nature (I John 3:5). This points out one of the difficulties we find in translating one language into another: a word selected by the translator may not convey all of the nuances of the word being translated, or it may convey shades of meaning that are not conveyed by the original word. Thus the consideration of any doctrine in the Scriptures requires an understanding of God as He has revealed Himself to us in the Scriptures. It also requires an understanding of the doctrine itself as it is revealed throughout the whole of Scripture.

The Scriptures reveal that God is perfect. Therefore everything He created was created perfectly. When He created the universe, it was done perfectly. When He created the angels individually, they were created perfectly. And so it was with man:

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. (Genesis 1:26-27)

Our understanding of what man was in his original creation is clouded by the fact that in our personal experiences we have never known any man who is without personal sin. However

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we can gain a glimpse of what Adam was before the fall by the intelligence he displayed when God brought every living creature to Adam to see what he would call them: ... *and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof* (Genesis 2:19b). The magnitude of this is easily overlooked, because before the fall Adam had super intelligence as he operated in the image of God. It is important for us to recognize that, as a result of the fall, the image in which man was created was altered by his spiritual death and the commencement of his physical death.

While there are elements of the image of God that remain in man despite the fall, there are also additional elements which more closely resemble the one who caused man's fall. It is only through the redemption provided by the Lord Jesus Christ that man will be restored to the image in which he was created. Therefore, at the present time, the image of God cannot be seen in man with any degree of accuracy. This image will not be seen in man until the redeemed are raised, glorified and adopted. Consequently the apostle John wrote: *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is* (I John 3:2, emphasis mine).

The Scriptures tell us, *As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him;* and the Scriptures say of the Lord Jesus Christ (Who is God): *Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls* (I Peter 2:22-25).

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Further the Scriptures tell us of the immutability of God: *For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed* (Malachi 3:6); and they tell us of the immutability of the Lord Jesus Christ: *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever* (Hebrews 13:8). If Christ in His public ministry was without sin, as the Scriptures testify, and Christ is God, as the Scriptures also testify, then by virtue of the immutability of the Father and the Son it is impossible for sin to have originated with God.

So where did sin originate? We have seen that God creates perfectly. Consequently every being created by God, whether angelic or human, was created perfectly and without sin. Nevertheless one of God's perfectly created beings did sin and thus introduced sin into the universe. This is possible because God did not create the angels or man without the power of choice. Man's power of choice is an essential part of his ability to love and to fellowship with God. Angels have a similar power to love and to serve God. Thus it is the power of choice in angels and in man which lends itself to the possibility of sin but not the necessity of sin.

In this regard, contrary to a common assumption, God did not create the devil. God created Lucifer, *son of the morning*. He was perfect in his ways from the day of his creation (Ezekiel 28:15); but he became the devil, after an unknown period of time, when he was lifted up in pride because of his great beauty (Ezekiel 28:17). The description of his fall in the prophecy of Ezekiel is couched in the dual reference and prophetic language of a description of the king of Tyre, and the portrayal of the fall of Lucifer in Isaiah is couched in a description of the king of Babylon. We know this description speaks of Lucifer, as well as the kings of Tyre and Babylon, because Isaiah calls him by name, and Ezekiel's description goes beyond the king of Tyre's

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experiences to one who was in Eden:

The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God: behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee: with thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures: by thy great wisdom and by thy traffick hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches: therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness. They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas. Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God? but thou shalt be a man, and no God, in the hand of him that slayeth thee. Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.

Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou was upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou was perfect in thy ways from the day that thou was created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more. (Ezekiel 28:1-19, emphasis mine)

Thus the *anointed cherub that covereth* was lifted up because of his great beauty to the

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extent that he was not satisfied with the position for which he was created. He usurped the authority of God. Apparently he was sufficiently convincing to one-third of the angels (Rev. 12:4), so that they followed him and became subject to him. Isaiah provides us with additional details of his personality and fall in the fourteenth chapter of his prophecy:

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? (Isaiah 14:12-17, emphasis mine)

Lucifer's desire to be like the most High (in Isaiah), coupled with his statement *I am God* (in Ezekiel), shows us that the sin of Lucifer was paralleled by the kings of Babylon and of Tyre. It appears, though not directly stated, that Lucifer's sin resulted in an immediate judgment. This judgment affected the earth as it was originally created: *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep* (Genesis 1:1-2, emphasis mine). No explanation is provided in Scripture for this change in the earth, but Lucifer's sin seems to be the reason. Isaiah tells us Lucifer made the world *as a wilderness*, and we know that God creates perfectly; so there had to be something of a cataclysmic nature between verse one and verse two in Genesis to produce the conditions of verse two. In Isaiah 45:18 we learn that the Lord does not create *in vain*. This is the same language that is used in Genesis 1:2. A closer examination of the grammar of verse two reveals: *And the earth [became] without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.* The fact that the

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earth became without form and void, after being created perfectly, agrees with the testimony of Jeremiah:

I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, and by his fierce anger. For thus hath the LORD said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end. (Jeremiah 4:23-27, emphasis mine)

This portion of Jeremiah is a double reference. It refers to the original creation, and it refers to the Babylonian captivity of Israel. Further, Paul used the conditions of darkness and chaos that had come upon the earth (because of the fall of Lucifer) to describe the condition of fallen man and how God effects salvation:

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world [i.e., the devil] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. (II Corinthians 4:3-7, emphasis mine)

Thus the fall of Lucifer caused darkness and chaos to be upon the original creation of the world, just as his introduction of sin into the garden of Eden has caused darkness and chaos in the human family. In the recreation of the earth, as described in Genesis, we have a portrayal of the regeneration (recreation) of man. To the earth, darkened by the judgment of Lucifer's sin, God said: *Let there be light, and there was light;* and to those ensnared in the darkness of sin, through the preaching of the gospel, God says: *Let there be light, and there is light.*

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This brings us back to the introduction of sin into the human family. A casual reading of the Scriptures could produce a false assumption, an assumption that God placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Eden. Such an assumption has been made by some because God allowed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to grow in the garden alongside of the tree of life (Genesis 2:9). Nevertheless if one follows the admonition of the apostle Paul to Timothy: *Study to shew yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth* (II Timothy 2:15), he will discover information in the Scriptures which will clarify who placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Eden and who the originator of sin really was. In this regard James wrote:

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. (James 1:13-15, emphasis mine)

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a temptation to Eve. The Scriptures declare that God cannot lie (Numbers 23:19; Titus 1:2). Therefore, in the light of this verse in James's epistle, it is impossible for God to have placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Eden. This can be seen by progressive revelation in our Lord's parable of the tares among the wheat. The Sower had sown good seed in His field, but while men slept an enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat. Our Lord interpreted the enemy to be the wicked one. Thus, by implication and the nature of God, it was the wicked one who put the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Eden.

Consequently a closer examination of Eve's deception and sin is necessary: *And the serpent*

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said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for [Elohim] doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as [Elohim], knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons (Genesis 3:4-7, emphasis mine).

Thus the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, like the tares among the wheat, was a counterfeit of the tree of life. Eve was tempted by the lust of the flesh, in that the tree was good for food; the lust of the eyes, in that the tree was pleasant to the eyes; and by the pride of life, in that the tree was a tree to be desired to make one wise. The importance of this threefold temptation and the origin of sin becomes more evident when we read: *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world* (I John 2:15-16).

This reveals that the threefold temptation of Eve was identical in its parts to the temptation of the Lord Jesus Christ in the wilderness. Thus according to Hebrews 4:15, Jesus was tempted in all point like as we are, yet He was without sin. It is evident then that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil presented the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life to Eve. It is also evident from the statement in I John that the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life IS NOT OF THE FATHER.

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Therefore God could not have placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden. God did not tempt Adam or Eve. God did not create sin in Lucifer. Sin originated with the fall of Lucifer by his own free will. Thus Lucifer, who was created for God's glory, became the enemy of God by the iniquity that was found in him. His fall was generated by his pride, a pride that made him think he could be God, a pride that convinced one-third of the angels that he could be God. He was judged immediately, but the execution of his sentence will not take place until the end of the millennium. At that time he will be cast into the lake of fire with the antichrist and the false prophet (Revelation 20:10). Even so the consequences of his immediate judgment can be seen by comparing the first verse in Genesis with the second verse.

Since the fall of Lucifer, the devil has been dedicated to the concept that he can overthrow God's plan and purpose and ultimately rule the universe. This is of course impossible. Nevertheless he has continued to manifest his enmity against God. He did this in the deception of Eve and the wilful sin of Adam. It was again manifested when Cain slew Abel. Then, in the days of Noah, certain of the fallen angels came to the earth to cohabit with the daughters of men. This was an attempt to produce an unredeemable race. Thus the battle between the forces of the wicked one and the forces of God continues, and believers in Jesus Christ are a part of that battle on a daily basis.

A closer examination of the temptation of Eve will reveal that everything that the serpent promised Eve, if she would eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, is the believer's by faith in Jesus Christ. Thus the lie of the devil is a counterfeit of the believer's inheritance in Christ. This is the reason Solomon referred to it as *a way which seemeth right unto a man, but*

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the end thereof are the ways of death (Proverbs 14:12).

Thus the serpent promised Eve she would live and not die if she ate of the tree, and the believer has eternal life by faith in Christ. He promised her she would be as God if she ate of the tree, and the believer lives in the hope that *When we see Him, we shall be like Him*, because he is a child of God by faith in Jesus Christ. He promised Eve she would be like God, knowing good and evil, and the believer knows the difference between God, Who is the only One that is Good, and the devil, who is the evil one.

It can be seen then that the knowledge of good and evil (gained by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil) has produced a morality that has no absolutes. Therefore the mores of the world change from one system to another. In John 8:44b, Jesus said of the devil, *When he speaketh [the] lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it*. Thus the lie of the devil (in the serpent) produced the sin of Eve; which subsequently produced the sin of Adam; which produced, as we have already seen, ... *a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*.

If we break down the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil into its constituent parts, we will find that the first two parts, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, produce all of the overt sins of mankind; while the third part, the pride of life, produces everything that man calls good. Thus it is this third part that has produced *a way which seemeth right unto a man*. It is this third part that has established every religious system in the world, except Biblical Christianity. It is this third part that has produced everything that man expects will make him fit for the kingdom of God, whether he is religious or irreligious. It is this third part that has

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produced the tares among the wheat. Remember, when the servants discovered the tares among the wheat, they were told to let both grow together until the time of harvest. Then the angels will come and separate the tares from among the wheat. The wisdom which allows the tares to grow among the wheat is the wisdom that allowed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to grow alongside of the tree of life.

God's ways are not our ways. The fall of Lucifer and the subsequent fall of Adam and Eve have allowed the expression of God's wrath towards the devil, his angels and those who fail to believe on the Lord. It has also allowed the expression of His mercy and grace to those who are believers. These attributes of God require an object for expression, and though shrouded in mystery, the plan and purpose of God has allowed this expression. Therefore our Lord said:

Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. (Matthew 12:33-37, emphasis mine)

In the first epistle of John, John gives clear instructions concerning false prophets and their identification: *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is in the world. Ye*

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are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of [the] truth, and the spirit of [the] error (I John 4:1-6, emphasis mine).

Our Lord Jesus warned His disciples: *Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.* So, obviously, false prophets are going to come to us claiming to be believers. How do we reconcile this with the above text? The answer lies in the meaning of the Greek word translated *confesseth*. The English word confess means to admit, and the false prophet in sheep's clothing may readily admit that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh; otherwise he could not deceive anyone. Even so the Greek word translated confess is *homologeo*. *Homologeo* is a compound word formed from two Greek words: *homo* and *logeo*. *Homo* means the same. *Logeo* is the verb form of the word *logos*. *Logos* means word. *Logeo* means to speak or to say. Therefore *homologeo* means to say the same thing as another. Thus to confess Christ is to be in agreement with the Word of God about the Lord Jesus Christ in His Person and in His work.

The false prophets, who enter the churches unawares, will ultimately deny some aspect of either the Person of Jesus Christ or the work of Jesus Christ. Therefore they will bring forth fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This means that they will insist upon their corrupted sense of right and wrong as the basis for entrance into the presence of God. However, by way of contrast, the genuine believer knows there is not a just man upon the earth that doeth

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good and sinneth not. He knows no vain attempts at morality can make him accepted of God. He knows that no flesh can be justified before God by the deeds of the law. He knows that without the shedding of blood there is no remission. Therefore he knows that he is saved by grace through faith, apart from the deeds of the law. He knows that it is the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, that cleanses him from all sin; because at a point in time, through the preaching of the gospel, the Spirit of God made him a new creation in Christ Jesus by faith.

Our Lord told His disciples that the false prophet is known by his fruits just as a tree is known by its fruit. Since we have been dealing with two trees in the garden of Eden which have distinctive fruits, and since the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil has produced *a way which seemeth right unto a man*, it is this fruit that identifies the false prophet, because it is this aspect of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which seems to be good:

And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. (Luke 18:9-14, emphasis mine)

The religious world is puzzled by the condemnation of the Pharisee in this parable. He seems to be everything that man perceives is right. He is religious; he is moral; he is a role model to the world, his community, his family, his children and his grandchildren, but he is lost, and he fails to acknowledge this before God. Whereas the publican may have been all of the things the Pharisee was not, yet he acknowledged his sin before God and prayed for the merciful covering

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of the atoning blood to be applied to him. Consequently he went down to his house justified. The distinction between these two men is the distinction between the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The spirit that spoke to the Pharisee was *the spirit of [the] error* John spoke of in I John 4:6; whereas the Spirit that spoke to the publican was *the Spirit of [the] Truth*. The Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the error (as seen in the Greek text of I John 4:6) tell us there is but one source for truth in this world and one source for error. It is the mixing of these two sources that Jesus told the Jews would put them in danger of blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Thus it is the recognition of the difference between these two sources which enables the believer to identify false prophets:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out [demons]? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work [the] iniquity. (Matthew 7:13-23, emphasis mine)

The *strait gate* is, of course, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is *the way, the truth and the life*, while the *broad way* is *a way which seemeth right unto a man*. This way came into the world through the deceitful lie of the wicked one, which produced the sin of Eve and the sin of

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Adam. Thus the sin, according to a literal translation of the Greek text of I John 3:4, is the iniquity. This is the singular lawlessness of eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the expectation of being like God.

The religious activities of the false prophets in the above text manifested that their fruits were from the evil tree. So even though they claimed they had cast out demons in the name of Jesus, preached in the name of Jesus, and performed miracles in the name of Jesus, Jesus will say to them, *I never knew you, depart from me ye that work [the] iniquity.*

So *the sin* which was introduced by the devil in the garden of Eden continues to manifest itself as a counterfeit of the truth. Because this counterfeit is *a way which seemeth right unto a man*, the world hears the voice of these false prophets who cast out demons in the name of Jesus, preach in the name of Jesus, and perform miracles in the name of Jesus, not recognizing, as Eve did not recognize, *that the end thereof are the ways of death.* Thus it is the mixing of human morality (*a way which seemeth right unto a man*) into the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ, either to gain salvation or to maintain salvation, which is a manifestation of the lie of the devil in the realm of the truth.

Chapter II

THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

Part II: The Doctrine of the Sin

There are one hundred seventy-four uses of the noun sin (*hamartia*) in the New Testament.

(*Greek-English Concordance to the New Testament*, J.B. Smith, Herald Press, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, 1955, 1965, page 16) Forty-seven of these are singular and are used with the definite article in the Greek text of the New Testament. Even so only two of these, John 1:29 and Hebrews 12:1, have the definite article translated into English in our King James Bible.

I became aware of this when I was prompted to do a word study of the Greek word *hamartia* while studying the book of Romans. I found that when I translated the article before sin rather than ignoring it, as the translators had done, the text came alive and many difficulties and spurious doctrines, such as sinless perfection, disappeared. Oddly, with all of the English translations of the Bible available, I have never found a single English translation that has translated this construction when it should have been translated (I trust there is one somewhere). This has obscured a very important doctrinal truth, a truth I call, *The Doctrine of the Sin*.

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Because of the failure to translate the article, there are few English-speaking people who have ever heard of the doctrine of *the sin*. This is true despite the fact that the apostle Paul used this construction thirty times in four consecutive chapters in the book of Romans, from Romans 5:12 to Romans 8:3. This proliferation might be attributed to the writing style of the apostle except for the fact that he used this particular construction only three other times in just two of his remaining twelve epistles.

Nevertheless, in defense of the translators, there certainly are cases in the translation of any language when a word-for-word translation is not possible. It is certainly allowable not to translate word-for-word when the meaning of the text is not altered by doing so. However the number of uses of this construction in these four chapters suggests something more than Greek usage or writing style. The translators should have recognized this construction to be significant, but they did not. Why they did not remains a mystery. Therefore it has become our responsibility as diligent students of the Word of God to find a plausible explanation for this construction. This can be done by comparing Scripture with Scripture to determine what is or is not lost by the failure to translate the definite article.

As long as we are considering translators and translations, there is another problem that can arise in translation. This is the problem of definitions. Almost every language has words which have more than one definition. This is quite common. Therefore the context in which a word is found is often the determining factor of which definition is the correct definition for that particular word. This means that as we study the Word of God, there may be occasions when the English word the translator selected to stand for a particular Greek word may not be the best

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choice of words. This in no wise impugns the integrity of our English Bible or its translators. It merely emphasizes that we are to study to show ourselves approved unto God.

Returning to the matter of the untranslated definite articles in the King James Bible, as we have suggested, the use of the definite article in thirty-five of these forty-seven references cannot be passed off as the writing style of the apostle Paul, because thirty of these occur in four chapters in the book of Romans, two more in the fifteenth chapter of I Corinthians, one in II Thessalonians chapter two and none at all in the other ten books authored by Paul. It could hardly be said, then, that the use of the definite article (with sin in the singular) can be attributed to normal Greek usage or to Paul's writing style. In addition to Paul's use of this construction, the apostle John used it five times in his Gospel, three times in his first epistle and not at all in his other two epistles and in the Revelation. It was used once by James in his epistle and once by Luke in the book of Acts, and it is found four times in the book of Hebrews.

Consequently a better explanation of the use of the definite article with sin in the singular is that this construction denotes a specific sin as it would in English. It then becomes incumbent upon us to identify this specific sin. What exactly was it? The spiritually logical answer to this question is that it was the sin of Adam, the federal head of the human race. His singular sin was the sin that plunged the entire human family into sin and gave it its sin nature. It is rather ironic that when the definite article is translated in Romans 6:23, this truth is made evident: *For the wages of [the] sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* If we compare the first part of this verse (as we have given it with the definite article in brackets) with God's instructions to Adam, there is an interesting parallel:

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And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof [dying thou shalt die]. (Genesis 2:15-17, emphasis mine)

It should be obvious that these two portions of Scripture, one in the New Testament and one in the Old Testament, promise death for the only sin Adam could commit. He was under the legal responsibility not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Scriptures tell us: ... *the law worketh wrath; for where no law is, there is no transgression* (Romans 4:15). Consequently we could paraphrase Romans 6:23 to say, *The wages of [the sin of Adam] is death [for him and his posterity], but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*. This paraphrase gains authority when we compare it to Paul's statement to the Corinthians: *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive* (I Corinthians 15:22, emphasis mine).

We have already observed that there were three separate causes for Eve's deception. She saw that the tree was *good for food*, which produced the lust of the flesh; *it was pleasant to the eyes*, which produced the lust of the eyes; *and it was a tree to be desired to make one wise*, which produced the pride of life. Further we have observed that all of the overt sins of mankind are produced by the first two aspects of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and all of the things which man calls good are produced from the third aspect of the tree. Hence the singular sin of Adam has produced in his posterity a knowledge of good and evil (a morality) which is independent of God and in rebellion against God. It is this ill-gotten morality that has produced *a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death* (Proverbs 14:12). Thus all of the moralistic systems of man, which include all of man's religions, have been

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produced by this singular way (which seems right to the natural way of thinking); but the results of what seems right always produces the many ways of death, which, ultimately, is eternal separation from God.

It was this third aspect of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that Paul fought against as he proclaimed salvation by the grace of God throughout the Mediterranean world. It was this third aspect of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that produced the *other gospel*, which was preached at Galatia, and which influence Paul fought against in all of the churches of Asia. Notice carefully the language Paul used in his epistle to the Corinthians:

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present ... a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well [resist] him. (II Corinthians 11:2-4, emphasis mine)

Paul drew a comparison between the work of the Judaizers in Corinth and the manner in which the serpent had beguiled Eve. The reason for this comparison is the use of the same tactics. The *other gospel* of the Judaizers added the corruption of man's works into the gospel of the saving grace of Jesus Christ. In essence this is what the serpent did with Eve. He promised her life (from a tree that could only produce death) when he said, *Ye shall not surely die*. Thus he promised her life by a knowledge of good and evil, which could only be obtained in disobedience to and without regard to what God had said. Even so he did not speak to her of disobedience to God, he simply told her that if she ate of the tree she would be like God.

Few people would be fooled into believing they could be like God through the lust of the

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flesh and the lust of the eyes, but the whole religious and ethical world has been fooled into believing it can be like God through the pride of life. This equates to man's knowledge of good. Solomon spoke of it in his Proverbs as *a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*. So, like the serpent with Eve, the false prophet speaks of good to promote the doctrines of the evil one:

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. (II Corinthians 11:13-15, emphasis mine)

These *ministers of righteousness* (then and now) cannot understand that the flesh is not just the overt sins that a man commits; it is also the very best that he can do dependent upon himself and independent of God. Thus it is man trying to be like God by endless, imperfect attempts at righteousness. All of these attempts are proven to be imperfect attempts by the Lord's interpretation of the law to the nation of Israel. The law cannot be satisfied with outward show. The scribes and the Pharisees were full of outward show. Consequently our Lord said: *That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven* (Matthew 5:20). The law demands perfection (Matthew 5:48). Therefore it condemns all who try to measure themselves by its perfect standard. No man can be justified by that which condemns him. Thus Paul asked the Galatians:

This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? (Galatians 3:2-3, emphasis mine)

There are only two possible answers to this question: either the Spirit was received by the

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hearing of faith, or the Spirit was received by the works of the law. The truth is, the Spirit was received by the hearing of faith, but we cannot stop there. For if we do we will fail to see what many a moralistic preacher has failed to see. Paul equated the works of the flesh in Galatians 3:3 with the works of the law in Galatians 3:2. Thus the flesh is not always the overt sins that a man commits, but it can be the very best that man can do in an attempt to establish his own righteousness before God by the works of the law.

With this understanding of the flesh, we shall now begin to look at the forty-five uses of sin in the singular with the definite article in the Greek text, which articles were not translated into English in our King James translation of the New Testament. We will add the definite articles in brackets to our quotations so that we may see where they exist in the Greek text. The logical place to begin our study is in Romans chapter five. This was the place where I first noticed this construction in the Greek New Testament; and this was the place where my spiritual curiosity was incited to do a New Testament word search for this particular construction.

Wherefore, as by one man [the] sin entered into the world, and death by [the] sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all ... sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. (Romans 5:12-14, emphasis mine)

In this text we see the basis for the federal headship of Adam. When he committed the sin, it was not only charged to him, it was charged to his entire race. In fact it was the only sin that was charged to mankind until the introduction of the law of Moses to the nation of Israel. The reason for this is stated in our text: *but sin is not imputed when there is no law.* This means that

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the men who lived during these twenty-five hundred years needed a Savior because of Adam's sin, and even though they committed all kinds of sins which had their roots in the sin of Adam, the sins they committed were not charged against them because there was no law against them. Even so, they were still condemned by Adam's sin.

In the first two chapters of the book of Romans, Paul carefully established the guilt of both the Jews and the Gentiles. Then in chapter three he asked the question, *What then, are we better than they?* That is, are Christians better than unsaved Jews and Gentiles? Paul then supplied the answer: *No, in no wise, for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.* At this point in his argument, Paul changed the pronoun from *we* to *they*. The reason for this is that unsaved Jews and Gentiles are still under sin, but genuine Christians are no longer charged with sin. We have been justified freely by God's grace through faith.

If there ever could have been a man who could be declared righteous before God on the basis of his life and works, God would be obligated to reward that man and condemn all others. But there never could be such a man, because all men are related to Adam by blood (except Jesus Christ, Who was virgin born). Thus there is Scriptural evidence to suggest that Adam's sin nature has been transmitted to all men (from father to son) throughout all generations through the life of the flesh that is in the blood. This is suggested by Paul in his argument to the Gentiles in Athens: *And [God] hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation* (Acts 17:26). Since the Scriptures declare that the life of the flesh is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11), the corruption of Adam's sin has been passed from father to son throughout all generations.

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Therefore we are all born into this world dead in trespasses and in sin (Ephesians 2:5). In this regard, the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians about the resurrection of believers into the presence of God: *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption* (I Corinthians 15:50). When our Lord showed Himself alive in the upper room, He said: *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have* (Luke 24:39). Finally, at the first resurrection we know that when we see the Lord, we shall be like the Lord (I John 3:2). This suggests that the corruption of our blood will be gone.

Paul continued in the book of Romans to enlarge upon the doctrine of justification by faith in the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ. The reason men can be justified by the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ is because all men are under sin because of the federal headship of Adam. Contrary to the way men think, the law cannot help man in his dilemma, because ... *by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin*. Consequently if there is *none righteous, no, not one*, it is not possible for man to have a proper relationship with God on the basis of law and human effort. This is where the Federal headship of Christ comes in. If one man could plunge the world into sin, then One Man could pay the ransom for man's sins. Therefore God became a man through the virgin birth so that He could be both God and Man; so that He could fulfill all righteousness and every jot and tittle of the law; so that He could die the Just for the unjust, so that man could be redeemed by His one sacrifice for sin forever.

For as by one man's [Adam's] disobedience many were made sinners, so by the

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obedience of one [Christ] shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where [the] sin abounded, [the] grace did much more abound: that as [the] sin hath reigned unto death, even so might [the] grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 5:19-21, emphasis mine)

As the apostle Paul revealed the doctrine of justification by faith apart from the deeds of the law, it was incumbent upon him to show that the law never justified anyone. It was added because of transgressions till Christ should come (Galatians 3:19). Thus it pointed out the failures that were not specifically named by the singular sin of Adam, but were produced by the singular sin of Adam. This means that the law could never be a means of life but of death. The law simply added to the condemnation of the Jews, who had said: *All that the LORD hath spoken we will do.* They should have recognized that they could not keep the law because of their relationship to Adam, but they did not. They should have recognized that they could not keep the law because of their conduct in Egypt before they were delivered by the blood of the Passover lamb, but they did not.

So as the apostle Paul arrived at the beginning of chapter six in Romans, it was his purpose to show the relationship between a believer in Jesus Christ and the sin which had separated him from a proper relationship with the Lord prior to his salvation. So he wrote: *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in [the] sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to [the] sin, live any longer therein?* (Romans 6:1-2)

Now if the sin is *a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*, it should be obvious that a genuine believer cannot continue trying to establish his own righteousness before God by law works once he has been judicially declared dead to the law and

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alive unto God through faith in Christ. This is the reason Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans, to establish justification by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Further, in his epistle to the Corinthians, Paul declared:

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is [the] sin; and the strength of [the] sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. (I Corinthians 15:51-58)

It can be seen then that the definite article before sin in the singular in the Romans' text changes the meaning of the text and enables us to know we cannot improve our status with God by law works. However, without the definite article before sin in the singular, certain denominations have sought to prove a believer can live a sinlessly perfect life. This is absolutely false because of the sin nature of man and by the fact that the strength of the sin is the law. So this brings us to the text in the book of I Corinthians (cited above) where it can be seen that no matter how a believer lives his life, he dies in corruption to later be raised in incorruption. It also shows that the sin exerts power over man to make him believe he can have a right relationship with God by the works of the law.

In Romans chapter six, Paul continues with the theme of a co-death, co-burial and co-resurrection of the believer with Christ. This shows the judicial relationship in which the believer resides by the baptism of the Holy Spirit:

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Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we [were] buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man [was] crucified with him, that the body of [the] sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve [the] sin. For he that is dead is freed from [the] sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto [the] sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. (Romans 6:3-10, emphasis mine)

This extended portion of Scripture describes a judicial relationship which is the believer's from the moment of his salvation when he is baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. Some have argued that this portion of Scripture speaks of water baptism, but, like the thief on the cross, all believers are not baptized in water. They are, however, all baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ. Even so there is a connection between water baptism and this portion of Scripture, because the believer's baptism in water portrays his baptism by the Spirit of God into the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ: to walk in newness of life. The newness of life is a walk of faith, because the just shall live by faith, and the law is not of faith. So the believer's life is not a life of law works, according to *a way which seemeth right unto a man*, but a walk in the Spirit. Since the Spirit of God caused all of the Word of God to be written, a walk in the Spirit is a walk in the light of the truth of the Word of God.

As Paul progressed through the book of Romans, he added additional information to the believer's knowledge of the sin. Since God views the believer through the blood of Christ and thus in perfect righteousness, Paul admonished the Romans to also do some judicial reckoning: *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto [the] sin, but alive unto God through*

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Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not [the] sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto [the] sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God (Romans 6:11-13).

If the believer will erase from his memory any concept that he can perfect himself in his relationship with God by the works of his own hands, then he will have overthrown the reign of the sin in his life. He can then allow the love of God and the grace of God to motivate him to ask the question Saul of Tarsus asked on the road to Damascus, *Lord, what would you have me to do?* There is a vast difference in doing the right things out of reciprocal love and thanksgiving than allowing the sin to continue to dominate the mind through self-righteous acts. Thus the believer operates in faith by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit and not through a sense of obligation.

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith[,] and the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3:10-14, emphasis mine)

Consequently there should be no occasion in the life of a believer which should cause him (in a right understanding of his relationship with the Lord) to revert to his former manner of thinking (*a way which seemeth right unto a man*). The believer should ever understand that he is to reckon himself dead indeed unto the sin. Seeing himself in this judicial position, he is to recognize that: *The just shall live by faith, and the law is not of faith.*

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Returning to the sixth chapter of Romans, Paul drew a comparison between the believer's former manner of life and his present life:

Being then made free from [the] sin, ye became the servants of [the] righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to [the] uncleanness and to [the] iniquity unto [the] iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to [the] righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of [the] sin, ye were free from [the] righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from [the] sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of [the] sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:18-23, emphasis mine)

In other words, when we were lost, we served the concept of the sin (*a way which seemeth right unto a man*) without giving it a thought. It was our mode of living. Now that we are saved, we have been freed by the ransom paid by the Lord Jesus Christ to walk in newness of life. So as we served the sin before salvation, now we should serve the righteousness (the truth of the gospel of the saving grace of Jesus Christ) after salvation. As Paul closes this chapter, he reminds the believer that death was introduced into the world by the sin of Adam, but the gift of God (eternal life by God's grace through faith) is through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In the first part of the seventh chapter of the book of Romans, Paul describes a woman in two different sets of circumstances. The reason for the use of this woman is to illustrate the difference that death makes. If a woman is married to a man and she leaves him and marries another man, according to the law, she is reckoned an adulteress because her first husband is still alive; but if her husband dies and she marries another man, she is not an adulteress even though she has taken a second husband:

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ;

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that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. (Romans 7:4-6)

Paul wrote all of this so that the believer might recognize his relationship to the law. He is dead to it. Since he is dead to the law, he cannot be charged with a violation of the law even if he does something that when he was alive to the law would have condemned him. This is not a license to sin. It is God's judicial reckoning because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in the believer's stead. Thus the believer is henceforth counted dead to the law (Colossians 3:1-4).

Even though a believer is dead to the law, he may not always view himself that way. So after the account of the woman, Paul related a personal experience of his. It must have occurred shortly after his salvation when he through ignorance put himself back under the law:

... now we are delivered from the law [through salvation in Christ], that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known [the] sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But [the] sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, [the] sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For [the] sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But [the] sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that [the] sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under [the] sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but [the] sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would

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not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but [the] sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. (Romans 7:6-21, emphasis mine)

This was not only Paul's experience, it has been the experience of every believer in Jesus Christ who has erroneously thought: *Now that I am saved, I can live a holy life and keep the law.* This erroneous concept, according to Paul's testimony, came from *the sin that dwelleth in me,* which is *a way that seemeth right unto a man.* So every believer (through a similar experience to Paul's experience when he placed himself again under the law) must come to recognize *that [the] sin by the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.*

Finally, spiritually battered and bruised by his experience, Paul began to put the truth of the saving grace of Jesus Christ together with the fact that as a redeemed Jew he was no longer under the law. He knew the law was good and right and holy, but it took his post-salvation experience with the law for him to fully understand his judicial relationship with the Lord:

For I delight in the law of God after 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 [the] sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. (Romans 7:22-25, emphasis mine)

Paul has shown us that the relationship of the believer to the sin is a judicial relationship. When the believer reckons the sin to be dead, it is dead; but if the believer loses his perspective of a relationship of grace and faith, the sin will arise to torment him as it tormented Paul: *For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.* Even so we must remember the fault is not in the law but in *the sin that dwelleth in me.*

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As we come into the eighth chapter of the book of Romans, Paul makes a statement that has been misunderstood by some very great theologians of the past, so that when a perverted text of the Greek New Testament was found, they believed they had a more accurate Greek text, because the last half of Romans 8:1 was not present. Exactly why this portion of the verse had been removed is not known, but the theologians thought it was a more accurate text because they did not know how to explain it. Because of this, they thought the latter part of the verse put forth the false idea that the condemnation of a believer is conditional:

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for [the] sin, condemned [the] sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (Romans 8:1-4, my emphasis is upon the removed text)

At this point it is important for us to understand that the condemnation Paul felt from his experiences in the seventh chapter of Romans was not condemnation from God. It was self-condemnation because of his inability to perform the deeds of the law. The innate feeling that he could perform the deeds of the law because of the pseudo-morality received from the sin of Adam was the motivating factor, even though his standing before God had not changed. He was still justified freely by God's grace through the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless he had felt obligated to try to perform the deeds of the law, but his failed attempts overwhelmed and frustrated him.

So with regard to Romans 8:1, at some point in the transcription of Scripture, there is a good possibility that a scribe (who must have sincerely believed in the security of a believer) took

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it upon himself to remove *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit* from the text. Many years later, when a Greek New Testament (with this corrupted text) was discovered in a monastery in Alexandria and a second copy in a monastery at Sinai, theologians were convinced, due to the age of the documents, that they had a more accurate text of the Greek New Testament. What the theologians and the scribe who first deleted these ten words from this text failed to grasp was the argument Paul had been building from chapters five through eight in the book of Romans. They completely ignored Paul's self-condemnation in chapter seven, and all of this was born of their failure to acknowledge the significance of the thirty occurrences of sin in the singular with the definite article in these four chapters.

Once Paul understood that he could serve the law with his mind, but with the flesh the law of sin, he had the answer to his mournful wail, *Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Then came the full realization: *I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord.* He was already dead to the sin if he would just reckon it to be so, because God had reckoned it so from the moment of his salvation. Thus in chapter eight, a free translation based upon what we have learned about the flesh and the law in Galatians chapter three, could read: *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after [fleshly attempts to keep the law], but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of [the] life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of [the] sin and [the] death* (Romans 8:1-2).

It is this understanding of equating the works of the flesh with the works of the law which provides the understanding of this verse. So continuing our free translation, Paul wrote: *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God [did] sending his own Son in the*

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likeness of sinful flesh, and for [the] sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us [not by us], who walk not after [fleshly attempts to keep the law], but after the Spirit (Romans 8:3-4).

Paul was not the only one who had had a problem with the law. The book of Hebrews was written to Jews who had made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, but then they had turned again to animal sacrifices and all of the other rites and rituals of Judaism. It is not strange then that the writer to the Hebrews wrote:

Take heed, 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 To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of [the] sin. (Hebrews 3:12-13, emphasis mine)

Here the writer of the book of Hebrews exhorts the Jews, who had made a profession of faith in Christ, not to *be hardened through the deceitfulness of the sin*, because the sin (a way that seemeth right unto a man) obscures the fact that the law has been abrogated:

But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: and not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: but their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it [the heart] shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (II Corinthians 3:7-18)

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Since the law was abrogated it was incumbent upon the writer to the Hebrews to apprise the Jews who had trusted in Christ of their position in Christ. So he compared the ministry of the high priest with the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ:

For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away [the] sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. (Hebrews 9:24-28, emphasis mine)

Thus, through the high priestly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, He has removed forever any attempts on the part of man to establish his own righteousness before God on the basis of his feeble attempts at law-keeping. Even so, the way which seemeth right unto a man will continue to press man (especially the Jew) to attempt to establish his own righteousness:

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against [the] sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. (Hebrews 12:1-8, emphasis mine)

At Bethabara, John the Baptist saw our Lord and proclaimed: *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world* (John 1:29). This was the first use of sin in the singular

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with the definite article found in the gospel of John. It was also one of the two references (John 1:29 and Hebrews 12:1) to the sin in the New Testament that was translated. Later in the Gospel of John, after our Lord had rescued the woman taken in adultery, He said:

... If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth [the] sin is the servant of [the] sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. (John 8:31-36, emphasis mine)

Earlier we spoke of the fact that at times the translators may have selected a definition of a Greek word in a text which may not have been the best definition for the word in its context. This portion of Scripture contains such a word. It is the Greek word *poieo*, translated *committeth*. This word's primary meaning is *to make* with a secondary meaning of *to do*. With regard to the first definition, Herodotus used this word (years before the writing of the New Testament) to speak of something that is made (or taken) to be one's own. For example: when a child is adopted, it is made (or taken) to be one's own; or when a woman is taken to wife, she is made (or taken) to be one's own. Here and in I John chapter three this is the better translation of the Greek word *poieo*. So that our Lord said, *Whosoever taketh as his own the sin is the servant of the sin.* This makes a distinction between the believer who may lapse into a legalistic mode, as Paul did in the seventh chapter of Romans, and the religionist who makes a way which seemeth right unto a man to be a source of life. Such men are indeed servants of the sin.

They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not

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Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh [the] lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. (John 8:39-45, emphasis mine)

Earlier in this confrontation, our Lord had established that the Jews to whom He was speaking were servants of the sin. The failure of the translators, to translate the definite article before sin in the singular in the text about being servants of the sin has caused many a theologian to apply the statement, *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do*, to all unsaved people. This cannot be true because of the parable of the tares and the wheat.

In that parable both the Sower and the enemy of the sower sowed their seed in the same field. Consequently, as the result of that sowing, we have three classes of people in the world. First, we have the field, which represents all of the unsaved of the world. Second, we have the children of the kingdom, which were produced by the good seed planted in the field. Third, we have the children of the wicked one, which were produced by the tares which were also planted in the field.

This takes us to I John chapter three where in verse four, in the Greek text of the New Testament, we read, *Whosoever taketh as his own the sin also taketh as his own the iniquity: for the sin is the iniquity.* The word translated iniquity is the Greek word for lawlessness. Hence all lawlessness has come from the sin. So in keeping with the parable of the tares and the wheat, John wrote: *Little children, let no man deceive you: [he that taketh as his own the] righteousness is*

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righteous, even as He is righteous. He [that taketh as his own the sin] is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil (I John 3:7-8). Then, in verse ten, John wrote: In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever [does not take righteousness as his own] is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. The reference to righteousness in this text is of course the righteousness of Jesus Christ: For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (II Corinthians 5:21).

Returning to the gospel of John, after being reproached for healing the blind man, our Lord said:

... For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore [the sin, which is yours,] remaineth. (John 9:39-41, emphasis mine)

As our Lord began to conclude his message to the disciples in the upper room, He told them that conditions for them were going to change, and that they would be hated by the world's system:

If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for [the sin, which is theirs]. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. (John 15:18-23, emphasis mine)

The hatred of the world system toward the believer in Jesus Christ was manifested in the

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stoning of Stephen. Stephen showed the Jews that Joseph was hated of his brethren at the first, but when he appeared before them the second time, he was received of them; he showed them that Moses, who killed an Egyptian when trying to deliver the Jews from the oppression of the Egyptians, was rejected at the first, but when he appeared before them the second time to deliver them from Egyptian bondage, he was received of them; and Stephen showed the Jews that the Lord Jesus Christ was rejected at the first, but He will be received of the nation at His second coming. After that, while being stoned, Stephen said: ... *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not [the] sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep* (Acts 7:59-60).

We are left with two verses of the forty-five verses that have an untranslated definite article before the noun sin in the singular. The first of these takes us to the first stages of the culmination of the mystery of the iniquity. If you will remember, in our study of *The Origin of Sin*, Lucifer rose up in insurrection against God and attempted to establish himself as God. He convinced one-third of the angels that he could be God. Since that prideful day, God has allowed the devil to control the hearts and minds of the inhabitants of the earth. In this regard, the Scriptures declare that our Lord came to destroy the work of the devil. Thus his work is destroyed for each individual believer in Jesus Christ at the moment of his salvation. Despite this, God is going to allow the devil one last attempt to establish his kingdom. This will occur during a time in the Scriptures that is known as the time of Jacob's trouble. This period of time is also known as the great tribulation period. It is the seventieth week of Daniel's seventy weeks, and it will begin when the eighth ruler (Revelation 17:11) over the fourth world kingdom (Rome) makes a covenant

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with Israel for one week (Daniel 9:27), which are the seven years of the great tribulation.

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians about two events that are left to be fulfilled in God's prophetic plan. They are the coming of our Lord and the gathering of believers into the presence of the Lord in the first resurrection. These events are mentioned by Paul in reverse order. Our gathering together unto the Lord will take place before the seventieth week of Daniel and our Lord will come again to the earth at the end of the seventieth week:

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and [the] man of [the] sin be revealed, the son of [the] perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. (II Thessalonians 2:1-4, emphasis mine)

At the time of our gathering together unto the Lord, there will appear upon this earth a counterfeit Christ. He is the man of the sin, the son of the perdition. By his signs and lying wonders he is going to convince the unsaved world that he is the Christ. Much of the so-called Christian world will still be on this earth to embrace and worship him as well. These are represented in the parable of the tares and the wheat as the tares. The tares are not wheat, they are bastard wheat. Thus these counterfeit Christians will have been operating in a way which seemeth right unto a man, rather than operating in the saving grace of Jesus Christ:

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a [the] lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness [i.e., a way which seemeth right unto a man]. (II Thessalonians 2:11-12)

It is fitting for us to end the consideration of the forty-five references to sin in the singular

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with an untranslated definite article with James 1:15. In the context of this verse, we have the nation of Israel, like so many others in the world, trying to lay the blame for their sins upon the Lord. Most casual readers of Scripture believe God placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Eden as a source of temptation to Adam and Eve, but this cannot be true because James wrote:

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and [the] sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. (James 1:13-20, emphasis mine)

Chapter III

THE PROMISE

In the New Testament there are a number of times when various historical incidents, conditions, and blessings inherent in and fulfilled by the promise of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ are referred to as *the promise*. This is a translation of the Greek word *epangellia*. In the twenty-six references listed below, all are singular and all are preceded by the definite article in the Greek text. Sometimes the article has been translated and sometimes it has not; but because of these articles it is evident to me that these references are to historical incidents, conditions, and blessings which are associated with and find their fulfillment in the singular promise of the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

As we examine these references it should also become evident to the reader that each promise has a direct connection with Jesus Christ and is therefore a part of a singular promise, even though on the surface it may appear to be one of many promises. For example, there are references to the Holy Spirit as the promise, but the gift of the Holy Spirit could not be given until Christ was glorified in His crucifixion, burial, and resurrection from the dead. Likewise there are

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references to eternal life as the promise, but this too finds its source in Jesus Christ. So whether it is the promise of the resurrection, or the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, or the promise of the birth of Isaac, or the promise that all of the families of the earth will be blessed through the seed of Abraham, each finds its fulfillment in or for the purpose of bringing the Christ into the world to fulfill the promise of God.

Someone may possibly protest that the Holy Spirit was not given to the Old Testament saints to permanently indwell them, so how could the gift of the Holy Spirit be equated with salvation in Jesus Christ with Old Testament saints? It is true that the Holy Spirit was not given to them to permanently indwell them in their lifetimes, but we will see that He was given to them after Christ was glorified in fulfillment of the promise of God. The fact that few in this age are aware of the transaction which gave the promise of the Holy Spirit to them does not alter the fact of its New Testament authority. Thus the gift of the Holy Spirit is an essential part of the promise.

Paul wrote of the promise in his letter to the Ephesians when he described their relationship with God, both before and after their salvation:

Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of [the] promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

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Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:11-22, emphasis mine)

We will not attempt an explanation of this portion of the Word of God at this time other than to point out that the many covenants of the Old Testament were all *covenants of the promise*. Therefore each of them had, or will have, their ultimate fulfillment in the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the promise of *the seed of the woman*, given to Adam in the judgment of the serpent, finds its end in Jesus Christ; and the preservation of Noah and his family from the flood preserved the lineage for *the seed of the woman*, as well as preserving a redeemable people through the lineage of each of Adam's sons; and the calling of Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees and God's covenant with him confirmed the promise that had been previously made to Adam and Noah, that there would be a seed through whom all of the families of the earth would be blessed. And so it is with each successive covenant, whether it is the Abrahamic covenant confirmed to Isaac and Jacob, or the Mosaic covenant, or the Davidic, though individually given, all are inner-linked through the ultimate fulfillment of each in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This provides a common ground between Old and New Testament saints in the fact that through the Lord Jesus Christ we *both have access by one Spirit unto the Father*. *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God* [this statement describes the redeemed of all ages]; *and are built upon the foundation of the apostles* [New Testament] *and prophets* [Old Testament], *Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the*

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Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:18-22, emphasis mine).

The following is a list of references to the promise: Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:33; 2:39 and Galatians 3:14 refer to the Holy Spirit as the promise; Acts 7:17 refers to the exodus as the promise; Acts 26:6 refers to the hope of the resurrection as the promise; Romans 4:13; 4:14; and 4:16 refer to the inheritance in Christ as the promise; Romans 4:20; Galatians 3:17 and 4:23 refer to the birth of Isaac as the promise; Romans 9:8 refers to those who are the children of the promise; Ephesians 1:13 calls the Spirit of God, *the Holy Spirit of the promise*; Ephesians 2:12 speaks of the covenants of the promise; Ephesians 3:6 speaks of the Gentiles as being *fellowheirs, and of the same body, as partakers of [the] promise*; Hebrews 6:15 and 6:17 refer to the Abrahamic covenant as the promise; Hebrews 9:15 refers to the eternal inheritance of the believer as the promise; Hebrews 10:36 refers to our salvation as the promise; Hebrews 11:9 refers to Israel as the land of the promise; Hebrews 11:39 refers to the results of the first advent of Christ as the promise; I John 2:25 refers to eternal life as the promise; and II Peter 3:4 and 3:9 refer to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ as the promise.

These last two references do not present a problem respecting the use of this construction, because the return of our Lord Jesus Christ provides the culmination of the promise, even our salvation, when we shall receive the redemption of our bodies. So, as we are about to consider many of these references to the promise and what it entails, we must consider a statement by the apostle Paul to the Romans: *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

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But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you (Romans 8:9-11).

These statements by Paul enable us to understand that the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is essential to salvation, because *if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*. His presence is also essential to the resurrection from the dead. Therefore it was necessary at some point in time for the Old Testament saints to be given the Holy Spirit in order for God to fulfill His promise to them. We must never forget that *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*; God cannot lie; He is Immutable; therefore when the Scriptures say *There is ... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all*, this must be true of Old and New Testament saints alike. This can be seen in our Lord's proof of the resurrection to the Sadducees: *But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living*.

Further, from the seventh chapter of the gospel of John, we know that the Holy Spirit could not be given permanently to them in the ages in which they lived because Christ was not yet glorified. So while the permanent presence of the Spirit of God was not a present-tense reality to the saints of the Old Testament, the promise of the Spirit was, nevertheless, their hope. Abraham looked for a city whose builder and maker was God, and Job knew that *though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God* (Job 19:26). Abraham and Job had the hope of the resurrection even though the truth of the indwelling Spirit and His quickening power

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for resurrection may have been hidden to them. Therefore: *these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made [complete]* (Hebrews 11:39-40, emphasis mine).

This statement does not mean that they were not saved. That would be a mockery of all that was written in the previous thirty-eight verses in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. It means that they were not privileged to see the fulfillment of *the promise* in their lifetimes. Thus they died not having received *the promise*, because *they without us should not be made perfect* (Hebrews 11:40). This means that they could not receive the Holy Spirit until we (in this age following the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection of the Lord) received the Holy Spirit, because this is the age in which *the promise* was to be fulfilled. This is the age in which our Lord came to fulfill all that was written in the law, the prophets, and the Psalms concerning His first advent.

Now with respect to the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit, John the Baptist said that Christ would baptize the Jews with the Holy Spirit, and our Lord promised the Jews, during the age of the law: *If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet* (John 7:37-40).

Thus the promise of the Spirit of God was an essential part of the promise of salvation, but as John explained, *the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified*. Consequently, after the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, Jesus

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told His disciples: *behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high* (Luke 24:49, emphasis mine).

The disciples of our Lord occupied the unique position of being a part of two different ages, the age of the law and what is called the age of grace. They were born as Jews under the covenant of the law, and they were saved as Jews under the covenant of the law. Like those of that dispensation, the Spirit was with them, but He did not permanently indwell them. Then our Lord promised: *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* *I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you* (John 14:16-18, emphasis mine).

At this point it is essential for us to remember that *God is not a respecter of persons*. So the promise to the disciples of the Lord must, of necessity, be a promise to those of similar circumstances (i.e., the Old Testament saints). Thus, following His resurrection from the dead, He told His disciples that they were to tarry in Jerusalem until they received the earnest of the Spirit, that is, God's pledge, in the Person of the Holy Spirit, that He would fulfill all that had been promised to the fathers and to them. Thus Paul wrote:

That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of [the] promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption [resurrection and glorification] of the purchased possession [Old and New Testament saints], unto the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:10-14, emphasis mine)

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Our Lord also commanded them: *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized [i.e., with the Holy Spirit] shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned* (Mark 16:15-16). So Jesus, before His ascension into Heaven: *being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence* (Acts 1:4-5, emphasis mine).

Thus our immutable Lord, having declared that faith and baptism with the Holy Spirit were essential to salvation, commanded that His disciples tarry in Jerusalem until they received this baptism; but this baptism was not just for them and believers of subsequent ages, it was also promised to the Old Testament saints. So when Christ was glorified, the disciples were given the Holy Spirit and so were the Old Testament saints when Christ led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. This made the Old Testament saints to be complete in Him, because: *if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his* (Romans 8:9). Thus Paul wrote:

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism [i.e., with the Holy Spirit], one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things [i.e., fill up a deficiency: by giving those whom He led out of Abraham's bosom into heaven the baptism of the Holy Spirit]). (Ephesians 4:4-10)

There is no conceivable reason why Paul should have related the event of Christ's leading *captivity captive* to the Ephesians (in context with the gifts of the Spirit) unless He was declaring

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that the Old Testament saints had received the gift of the Holy Spirit the same as the Ephesians. In his letter to the Colossians, Paul spoke of this transaction as a mystery that had been hidden, but was now made manifest to the saints (which must be those of both the Old and the New Testaments): *Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from [times] and from [peoples], but now [was manifested] to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man [complete] in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily* (Colossians 1:25-29, emphasis mine).

So, as we have already seen, the writer to the Hebrews told the redeemed Jews of the New Testament era that the Old Testament saints, some of whom were recorded in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, could not be made perfect (i. e., complete) without us. Then to emphasize the fact that the redeemed Jews to whom he wrote were not under the law, but under a new covenant relationship provided by the Lord Jesus Christ, he wrote:

For ye are not come unto the mount [groping in darkness], and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) but ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn [i. e., to a gathering of the redeemed] which are written in heaven [i. e., in the Lamb's book of life], and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect [i. e., those who had been held in Paradise until Jesus led *captivity captive* and were then perfected by the baptism of the Holy Spirit], and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the

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blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. (Hebrews 12:18-24. emphasis mine)

Therefore we must ask, who, at the time of the writing of the book of Hebrews, could *the spirits of just men made perfect* be if they were not Old Testament saints, whom Jesus led out of *captivity captive*? And who, at that same time, could the *general assembly* and residents of the *heavenly Jerusalem* be, if not the redeemed from all ages? While these are rhetorical questions and need not an answer, in order to really grasp the answer we may have to modify our thinking somewhat from former concepts.

Typically almost everyone under the canopy of Christianity refers to the body of Christ as the church. This is because the translators of our English Bible translated the Greek word *ekklesia, church*. However the word actually means *a called-out assembly*. It could be an assembly for the Olympic games, or other sporting event, or an assemblage for any purpose. Our Lord said, *Upon this rock I will build my church*, thus distinguishing His assembly from any other type of assembly.

The fact that the translators used the word *church* for *ekklesia* tends to give us a bias when we read it in the Scriptures. Consequently we do not think of an assembly that our Lord has been calling out from the redemption of the first man, but we think of a building and its grounds, or we think of a New Testament organization. This is unfortunate, because when we think of the body of Christ, we do not include the Old Testament saints in this body. Yet in Paul's argument in the second chapter of his letter to the Ephesians, he included them, and so did the apostle John in the book of the Revelation. If I were to ask, *Who is the body of Christ or who is the bride of Christ?* the answer from most professing Christians would be the church, with no thought of including any

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of the saints from Adam to Christ. Now consider the direct testimony of the apostle John:

And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Revelation 21:9-27, emphasis mine)

Our consideration of the promise has forced us to rethink many of the doctrines which are a part of the doctrine of the church. Certain theologians such as Scofield and Chafer have told us that the church's inheritance is separate and distinct from the inheritance of Israel. Many of them say that Israel's inheritance is strictly earthly and not heavenly, even though they will be a

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redeemed people. Yet, at the same time, they say that the church's inheritance is both earthly and heavenly (because the church will co-reign with Christ in the kingdom), and they speak of superior blessings for the church over Israel, which would make God a respecter of persons.

This concept was formulated in an attempt to establish the fact that the return of Israel to the land of Palestine and her restoration and Kingdom was not fulfilled in a spiritual sense by the church (which was taught in times past by the Roman Church and many Protestant Churches), but is a promise of God to Israel. Even so, in establishing one truth, they have unwittingly shredded the promise for the saints of the Old Testament and have made them a sort of second class spiritual citizenry.

Some of these theories have a degree of truth associated with them and some not, but theological theories aside, we must acknowledge certain truths that have been revealed through our studies of the promise. First, the residents of the heavenly Jerusalem are those written in the Lamb's book of life. Second, the heavenly Jerusalem is the bride, the Lamb's wife. Third, the heavenly Jerusalem has twelve gates with the names of the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel inscribed thereon, which certainly suggests that redeemed Jews are residents of the city. Fourth, the heavenly Jerusalem has a wall with twelve foundations that are named for the twelve apostles of the Lord, which tells us that the redeemed of this age are also residents of that city. Fifth, the apostle John tells us the ultimate state of those who are not residents of the heavenly Jerusalem: *And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire* (Revelation 20:15).

It cannot be any clearer than that. If a person's name is in the Lamb's book of life, he is

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a designated citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, which is called *the bride, the Lamb's wife*. There are no distinctions given for what age he has lived in. If he does not have his name in the Lamb's book of life, he will be cast into the lake of fire following the great white throne judgment. With this distinction, there is no place for the concept of a redeemed people not being a part of the bride of Christ, no matter what age they lived in.

So this brings us to the limited definition of the bride of Christ being solely the New Testament church. Consider this: If we think of the church as only that body of believers who were redeemed from the first advent of Christ to the end of the present age, we have a serious problem. What do we do with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the other Old Testament saints who, according to this definition, are not a part of the bride of Christ? If they are not a part of the bride, this would mean that their names are not written in the Lamb's book of life; and this, according to the twentieth chapter of the Revelation (20: 15), would mean that they will be cast into the lake of fire at the end of the age; and this would make God a liar and the promise of God of none effect, which is an absolute impossibility. If, however, we see the bride as a called out assembly of believers from every age, recognizing that the Old Testament saints could not receive the Holy Spirit until Christ was glorified; and recognizing that *they, without us, could not be made perfect*; and recognizing that they, with us, were made perfect when Jesus led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men; then they, with us, are a part of the body of Christ; and they, with us, are living stones in the temple of God.

Now according to the promise in the fourteenth chapter of the gospel of John, believers are indwelt by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, thus making their bodies a living temple.

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Consequently the temple that the Messiah is to build, according to the prophecy in Zechariah, has been being built with living stones, according to the testimony of Peter and Paul, from the first century until now. Thus we recognize that some of the materials for that temple were being gathered from the time of Adam until the first advent of Christ, but could not be a part of that temple until Jesus Christ, the Chief Cornerstone, was laid as the Foundation of the temple. Then they were made complete, by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, to be stones in that temple. Further, there are other stones that are being gathered in this age; and there are stones yet to be gathered after this age, during the great tribulation period; and the final stones will be gathered at the coming of our Lord, when Israel will look upon Him Whom they pierced and be saved. This will complete the heavenly Jerusalem. Then those who have their names in the Lamb's book of life will be assembled together in one body, the body of Christ, which we call the church, but is really *a called-out assembly* of the saints and household of God.

Despite this evidence there will be those who because of traditional teaching will not want to accept this testimony. They will cling tenaciously to their former way of thinking. Some Baptists and others will insist that their particular denomination is the bride of Christ, offering one reason or another as proof. They will continue to argue against anyone but believers in this age being a part of the body of Christ. They will continue to use a statement made by John the Baptist (when he told the Jews he was not the Christ) as a proof text to show that John was not a part of the bride: *He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease* (John 3:29-30). Consequently the

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limited bride people will say, *See, this proves that John was not a part of the bride, but was the friend of the bridegroom.* Actually all that this proves is that John was not the Christ. As to John's reference to the bride: at that time he was not a part of the bride because he was not permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit, even though the Spirit had been upon him from before his birth. John, like the rest of the Old Testament saints, could not view himself as a member of the body of Christ during his lifetime because the body of Christ, like the temple, was not formed until Christ was glorified. Remember Jesus used the future tense when He said, *Upon this rock I will build my church.*

If those who have difficulties with these truths would read again the testimony of the apostle Paul in his letter to the Ephesians (without the preconceived notion that Paul was only speaking of Jews and Gentiles who make up the church in this present age), they will see that the body of Christ and the temple of the Lord are one and the same and are comprised of both Old and New Testament saints. This, after all, is the promise of God:

Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of [the] promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together

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groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:11-22, emphasis mine)

Chapter IV

TONGUES AND OTHER SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The modern Charismatic Movement has made some bizarre claims regarding *Tongues and Other Spiritual Gifts*. They claim that speaking in tongues is the gift of the Holy Spirit and not just a manifestation of the Spirit. If this were true, then speaking in tongues would be necessary for salvation (Romans 8:9). Additionally, there are many within this movement who claim that they are able to perform all of the miracles that our Lord performed. This is quite a claim since no one within the movement has ever produced substantial evidence that they are raising the dead, walking on water, causing the blind to see, turning water into wine or feeding thousands with a little boy's lunch. Nevertheless, despite the outlandish nature of their claims, we will seek to discover if there is any Scriptural authority for their claims.

We will begin our study with the gift of the Holy Spirit. Our Lord commanded His disciples, before He ascended into heaven, ... *that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which saith, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized [in] water; but ye shall be baptized [in] the Holy [Spirit] not many days hence* (Acts 1:4-5). Several

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years before this, our Lord had spoken of this same promise at one of the feasts of the Jews:

... If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy [Spirit] was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) (John 7:37-39)

In the text we cited from the book of Acts, our Lord made reference to John the Baptist, and in the following text John made reference to our Lord: ... *There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you [in] water: but he shall baptize you [in] the Holy [Spirit]* (Mark 1:7-8). These prophecies and the many references in the fourteenth through sixteenth chapters of the Gospel of John, along with the prophecy of Joel and numerous other Old Testament allusions to the gift of the Spirit of God, were all fulfilled on the day of Pentecost ten days after our Lord's ascension into heaven.

Unleavened Bread, Pentecost and Tabernacles were feasts of the Jews which required the attendance in Jerusalem each year of all of the devout male Jews (Deuteronomy 16:16). These three feasts gave the Jews the opportunity to be present for all seven feasts of the Jews (Leviticus 23). The first three feasts of the Jews were observed in the first month of the year during the week of Unleavened Bread. Pentecost was observed fifty days after the Feast of Firstfruits, which placed it in the middle of the year; and the last three feasts of the Jews were observed from the first to the fifteenth of the seventh month, when the Feast of Tabernacles would begin. Thus the devout Jews were present in Jerusalem for the trial, crucifixion, burial and resurrection of our Lord at the beginning of the week of Unleavened Bread. Even so only redeemed Jews saw Him after His resurrection. The Jews were also present to witness the giving of the Holy Spirit to the

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Lord's newly formed church on the day of Pentecost, and they will probably be present in Jerusalem to witness the coming of our Lord on the day of Atonement, when they shall look on Him Whom they pierced and be saved. Once Israel is saved, they and the redeemed of all ages will reign with Christ and observe the Feast of Tabernacles from year to year during the millennial reign of Christ (Zechariah 14:16).

Nevertheless Isaiah prophesied of Israel's departure from the truth. He spoke of the judgment that would be hers because of her false doctrines and idolatrous practices. He also prophesied of those in Israel who would hear the wonderful works of God in Gentile languages. (This is what is meant by *stammering lips and another tongue* in Isaiah 28.) Some of these would be brought to salvation through the messages that they would hear, but the greater number of the Jews would continue in their apostasy, which is represented by wine, strong drink and drunkenness in the following Scripture:

In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people, and for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate. But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.

Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: for with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear. But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall

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not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not [be ashamed]. (Isaiah 28:5-16, emphasis mine)

Thus Isaiah's prophecy spoke of the continuation of the apostasy of the nation of Israel even unto the first advent of our Lord, after which John wrote: *He came unto His own [nation], and His own [people] received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name* (John 1:11-12). The Jews had indeed made a covenant with death and hell and had made lies their refuge at the coming of our Lord. Even so, as in Isaiah's day, there would be a very small remnant who would receive the proclamations of the truth, precept upon precept and line upon line. It would be these newborn babes (spiritually speaking) who would receive His doctrine. To them He would be the foundation stone which the builders rejected and upon which He would build His temple:

... Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. (Zechariah 6:12,13)

As we journey through the book of Acts, from the day of Pentecost until Paul's imprisonment at Rome, we see the manifestation of the Spirit of God through the gift of tongues as prophesied by Isaiah on numerous occasions. However each of these manifestations of the gift of tongues was not without a specific purpose:

For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. (I Corinthians 1:22-24, emphasis mine)

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Paul also wrote: Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not... (I Corinthians 14:22, emphasis mine). When we bring these two statements into context with one another, we find that tongues were given for a sign to unbelieving Jews. Consequently every time there was a manifestation of tongues in the book of Acts, there were Jews present. Even so, after the writing of the New Testament Scriptures, the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and as those who possessed the gift of tongues began to die, the manifestation of the true gift of tongues eventually disappeared altogether.

Nevertheless we can learn a great deal about the gift of tongues from the first manifestation of tongues in the book of Acts. There we will find information that is important to the proper understanding of every other discussion of tongues in the New Testament:

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy [Spirit], and began to speak with other tongues [languages], as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans [i.e., uneducated]? And how hear we every man in our own tongue [language], wherein we were born? [1] Parthians, and [2] Medes, and [3] Elamites, and the dwellers in [4] Mesopotamia, and in [5] Judaea, and [6] Cappadocia, in [7] Pontus, and [8] Asia, [9] Phrygia, and [10] Pamphylia, in [11] Egypt, and in the parts of [12] Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of [13] Rome, Jews and proselytes, [14] Cretes and [15] Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues [languages] the wonderful works of God.

And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out

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of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: and I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Acts 2:1-21, emphasis and numbering mine)

The context clearly establishes that there were Jews and Jewish proselytes from fifteen different Mediterranean nations of the world in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost. This was according to the law of God (Deuteronomy 16:16); and, by design, God used the Feast of Pentecost to assemble these Jews in Jerusalem to witness the giving of His Holy Spirit to His church.

The foreign Jews were absolutely dumbfounded when they heard these Galilaeans speak to them in the languages in which they were born. Galilaeans were uneducated (Jerusalem was the center of Jewish learning), but these languages had not been learned. The disciples spoke them instantly by the power of the Holy Spirit Who had come to indwell them forever. Unbelief works rapidly. So what the disciples had done by the power of the Holy Spirit was attributed to drunkenness. Thus Peter said: *These are not drunken as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel...* (Acts 2:15-16).

On the night before His crucifixion, our Lord had promised the disciples that the Spirit of God, Who had been with them for salvation and for service, would then be in them. He promised that *He would never leave them nor forsake them*. The indwelling Holy Spirit of God is God's pledge to believers that He will fulfill all that He has promised. So, before His ascension into heaven, our Lord told His disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until they received the promise of the

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Father.

The evidence of the fulfillment of the promise of the Father was very prominently displayed at the Feast of Pentecost by the gift of tongues. This, along with the other sign-gifts, was to convince the nation of Israel of the authority of the New Testament church. Our Lord had also promised His disciples that the miraculous things He had done they would do, but in greater numbers (John 14:12-13). This promise was not for the entire church age (see I Corinthians 13:8-13), but was necessary in the infancy of the church to convince the Jews that the Spirit of God was in the newly formed church of Jesus Christ (because *the Jews require a sign*).

To understand why the Jews required a sign takes little thought. Who were they? They were God's chosen people, and they had been the custodians of the truth of the Word of God for about fifteen hundred years. They were of the lineage of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Jacob's name was changed to Israel, so they were the children of Israel. God used the Jews to give us the Bible. Every word of the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, was written by Jews, because ... *unto them were committed the oracles of God* (Romans 3:1-2). So the Jews had to be convinced that God was breaking off the natural branch and grafting in a wild olive branch to take their place during the church age (Romans 11:13-25).

Consequently, by the sign-gifts, our Lord gave the first century church the ability to do many of the things He had done until the New Testament Scriptures were written. Interestingly, the completion of the New Testament Scriptures and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. occurred at about the same time. Once Israel was destroyed as a nation, there was no longer a reason for the sign-gifts, and with the completion of the New Testament Scriptures the church's

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authority rested in the complete revelation of the Old and New Testament Scriptures. So the disciples were able to explain the Old Testament Scriptures by means of the New Testament revelation that they received from the Spirit of God.

Before we continue with our study of tongues, we need to consider some historical and geographical information about the city of Corinth. This information will aid us in our understanding of the gift of tongues:

A glance at the map of Greece will show that Corinth was made for greatness. The southern part of Greece is very nearly an island. On the west the Saronic Gulf deeply indents the land and on the east the Corinthian Gulf. All that is left to join the two parts of Greece together is a little isthmus only four miles across. On that narrow neck of land Corinth stands. Such a position made it inevitable that Corinth should be one of the greatest trading and commercial centres of the ancient world. It was necessary that all of the north to south traffic of Greece should pass through Corinth; there was no other way for it to go. All traffic from Athens and from the north of Greece to Sparta and the Peloponnese had to be routed through Corinth, because Corinth stood on the little neck of land that connected the two.

But it so happened that not only the north to south traffic of Greece passed through Corinth of necessity, but by far the greater part of the east to west traffic of the Mediterranean passed through her from choice. The extreme southern tip of Greece was known as Cape Malea, or, as it is now called, Cape Matapan. It was a dangerous cape, and to round Cape Malea had in ancient days much the same sound and implications as to round Cape Horn had in later times. The Greeks had two sayings which showed what they thought of the voyage around Malea -- "Let him who sails around Malea forget his home," and "Let him who sails around Malea first make his will." The consequence was that mariners followed one of two courses. They sailed up the Saronic Gulf, and, if their ships were small enough, they dragged them out of the water, and set them on rollers, and hauled them across the isthmus, and re-launched them on the other side. The isthmus was actually called the *Diolkos*, the place of dragging across. The idea is the same as that which is contained in the Scottish place name *Tarbert*, which means a place where the land is so narrow that a boat can be dragged from loch to loch. If that course was not possible because the ship was too large the cargo was disembarked, carried by porters across the isthmus, and re-embarked on another ship at the other side. This four mile journey across the isthmus, where the Corinth Canal now runs, saved a journey of two hundred and two miles round Cape Malea, the most dangerous cape in the Mediterranean. (*The Letters to the Corinthians* by William Barclay, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1956, pg. 1-2.)

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Corinth was a cosmopolitan city. The nations of the Mediterranean world passed through it daily for the reasons seen in William Barclay's description. Therefore every debauchery known to man was practiced in Corinth. On the hill of the Acropolis, which towered over the isthmus, was the temple of Aphrodite, the goddess of love. This temple was home to one thousand prostitute priestesses who plied their trade on the streets of Corinth. Vices and idol worship of every sort were commonplace. Also the languages spoken in Jerusalem at the Feast of Pentecost (when the spiritual gift of tongues was first given) were spoken daily by the flow of traffic that passed through Corinth. This information lends itself to our understanding of Paul's remarks in the twelfth chapter of I Corinthians:

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy [Spirit].

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. (I Corinthians 12:1-11, emphasis mine)

In a city of many languages, such as Corinth, with the spiritual gift of tongues being the ability to speak in a foreign language by the power of God, without having previously learned the language, how was it possible to know whether a man was speaking about the Lord Jesus Christ by his native language, by a learned language or by the Spirit of God? The answer does not lie in the phenomena of speaking about Christ in a foreign language (or what is called, *speaking in*

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tongues) but in the content of what is spoken: *no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed*. This was the point of Paul's argument. The Jews of the *diaspora* on the day of Pentecost heard the truth of the Word of God in the languages in which they were born.

Therefore one speaking by the Spirit of God, of necessity, would have to present the Lord Jesus Christ in agreement with the Word of God. He could not, therefore, deny His Person or His work, because *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*. So Paul drew a comparison; he contrasted the many parts of a human body with the diverse spiritual gifts within a local assembly of the body of Christ:

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?

But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: and those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. (I Corinthians 12:12-28, emphasis mine)

Thus the spiritual gifts were not confined to the outward sign-gifts, but the majority of the

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gifts were for the edification of the body of Christ and continues to this day. Paul listed some of the gifts to show the nature of the gifts. He then made it clear that it was the Spirit of God Who gave the gifts, and it is the Spirit of God Who energizes the gifts. He also made it clear that every believer has a gift, but some believers have more than one.

The spiritual gifts had a distinct purpose. They were given for the edification of the body and not the self-aggrandizement of individuals within the body. They were given by the Spirit of God according to His will and not according to our individual desires. Consequently the apostle asked the Corinthians a series of questions, all requiring a negative answer: *Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?* (I Corinthians 12:29-30)

You need not be able to understand the Greek New Testament to know that Paul's comparison of the church to a human body dictates that there are many parts within the body of Christ, because the spiritual gifts were distributed severally according to the will of the Holy Spirit. Thus the claim that speaking in tongues is the baptism of the Holy Spirit is absolutely false. If it were true, all believers would speak in tongues, but they do not according to Paul's testimony in the twelfth chapter of I Corinthians.

There is one more verse that we need to consider. It is the verse to which all in the charismatic movement cling for authority for what they believe and do: *But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way* (I Corinthians 12:31). This verse as translated contradicts all that has preceded it. This verse as translated gives the charismatic movement hope. This verse as translated gives them the authority to earnestly desire to speak in tongues. This

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verse as translated gives them the authority to earnestly desire the gift of healing or any other gift which might give them status within the body of Christ.

The fault does not lie in the Scriptures. That is an impossibility, because *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and God cannot lie*. The fault lies in the translation of the Scriptures in our English Bible. This is true no matter what English translation you use. In fact I have never been able to find an English translation of the Bible that has translated I Corinthians 12:31 correctly. This statement is not an expression of my ego, but of the fact that translators can become myopic. They can be so concerned with the few verses before them that they lose sight of the context of those verses.

This is apparently what happened with verse thirty-one, because, as we have previously stated, the translation of verse thirty-one contradicts its immediate context. It is impossible for this contradiction to be a part of the original Scriptures because God cannot lie. So what is the solution? It lies in the word translated *covet earnestly*. The Greek word is *zeloute*. Oddly, this word, with this spelling, represents three different moods in the Greek language. It is second person plural present indicative; it is second person plural present imperative, or it is second person plural present subjunctive. This means it could have been translated *you are earnestly coveting, covet earnestly, or you may be earnestly coveting*. The translators of our English Bible simply did not select the correct mood for the word *zeloute* to fit the context. Paul did not command them to covet earnestly the best gifts; nor did he say that they might be coveting earnestly the best gifts, he told them what they were doing and suggested an alternative.

Thus this completes chapter twelve and leads us into chapter thirteen, where with the

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correct mood for *zeloute*, the text should read: *Ye are coveting earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.* This translation agrees with the context of both the twelfth and the thirteenth chapters of I Corinthians; thus it is the correct mood for the word *zeloute* in this context. Interestingly, in chapter fourteen, the translators translated *zeloute* in the indicative mood: *Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church* (I Corinthians 14:12, emphasis mine). This is the correct mood for *zeloute* in this context, and it is also the correct mood for *zeloute* in I Corinthians 12:31, but why the translators did not recognize this is a mystery. Even so it is not a mystery why modern translators continue to translate the same way -- there are millions in the modern charismatic movement, and the translators are interested in selling their translations.

Thus Paul wrote about what they were doing and then he promised to show unto them a *more excellent way*, a way which was superior to what they were doing. The more excellent way that Paul promised is found in chapter thirteen where Paul spoke of *charity*. Again the translators did something peculiar. They translated *agape* as *charity*, when virtually everywhere else in the New Testament *agape* is translated *love*. Again they seemed to lose sight of the context, because the *more excellent way* of chapter thirteen had nothing to do with what English-speaking people call *charity*. Rather, *agape* was a special kind of love which transcended any and all of their gifts. So the *more excellent way* of chapter thirteen suggested to them that whatever gift or gifts they had, the gifts must be exercised within the confines of this special kind of love. We do not learn what that love was by studying Greek; we learn it by studying the Scriptures. Therefore the Biblical definition for *agape* is supplied for us by the apostle John in I John chapter four where

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he wrote:

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. (I John 4:7-11, emphasis mine)

Each use of love in these verses is *agape*. The Greeks used this word to express the highest form of love, but more importantly the Holy Spirit used it throughout the New Testament to express the love Christ manifested in His vicarious sacrifice on the cross of Calvary. Consequently the love that believers are to manifest towards one another and towards a lost world is: ... *how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures* (I Corinthians 15:3-4).

Even so, in the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians, the translators translated *agape* as *charity* nine times. Since the English word *charity* does not come close to expressing the meaning of *agape*, as used by the Holy Spirit, we have taken the liberty to substitute the phrase *the love of Christ* for the nine uses of the word *agape* in this text (translated *charity*):

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not [the love of Christ], I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not [the love of Christ], I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not [the love of Christ], it profiteth me nothing. [The love of Christ] suffereth long, and is kind; [the love of Christ] envieth not; [the love of Christ] vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in [the] iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. [The love of Christ] never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall [be rendered useless]; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall [be rendered useless]. For we know [out of] part, and we prophesy [out of] part.

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But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is [out of] part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know [out of] part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, [the love of Christ], these three; but the greatest of these is [the love of Christ]. (I Corinthians 13:1-13)

We stated earlier that the spiritual gifts, which were given severally as the Spirit of God willed, were not for self-aggrandizement. Each gift was given for the benefit of the body of Christ (of which all believers are members in particular). So the spiritual gifts were given for the proclamation of the gospel to a lost world and for the building up of the saints within the body of Christ. Consequently all of the gifts were to be exercised in the love of Christ manifested in the gospel:

And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out [demons]; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. (Mark 16:17-18, emphasis mine)

It is important to understand that our Lord said: *And these signs shall follow them that believe*. This means that there were certain gifts of the Spirit that were sign-gifts, and the apostle Paul informed us that *the Jews require a sign*. Consequently there is no concrete evidence that this promise (Mark 16:17-18) was for the entire church age, particularly because Israel ceased to exist as a nation very early in the church age (70 A.D.). Thus it behooves us to compare this promise in Mark's Gospel with another promise recorded in the Gospel of John and determine the extent of each promise:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (John 14:12,13)

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This promise of our Lord has two parts. One part, which we learned from I Corinthians chapter thirteen, was that certain gifts were to be exercised until *that which is perfect is come*. The other part of the promise was that the prayers of believers would be answered in accordance with the will of the Father. Thus, according to the mercy and grace of God, this part of the promise still gives the believer access to the power that was manifested in some of the sign-gifts. Consequently, even without the sign-gifts, in every age ... *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much* (James 5:16).

Let us consider, then, the first manifestation of the gift of tongues. Jews of fifteen different countries of the Mediterranean world were able to hear the Word of God in their own language *wherein they were born* when tongues were first manifested on the day of Pentecost. Thus the gift of tongues was the ability to speak in a foreign language without having first learned that language. Because of this, I have thought: If the gift of tongues is still being manifested today, as many claim, then why is it that pastors do not have the gift of tongues in Greek and Hebrew, since these are the languages of the Scriptures? And why do missionaries have to spend their first four or more years on a foreign field learning the language of the country to which they have been called? If such a gift of tongues was still available, this would truly edify the churches, but the gibberish that is spoken in some churches (with the claim that it is the gift of tongues) edifies no one. It does, however, exalt the flesh. This is interesting, since the Scriptures say: *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would* (Galatians 5:17).

The book of Acts gives us the history of the church from the ascension of our Lord from

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the mount of Olives until the imprisonment of the apostle Paul in Rome (or from approximately 29 A.D. to 68 A.D.). In the early chapters of the book of Acts, the apostles performed many miracles like the ones performed by our Lord, but as we near the end of the book of Acts the number and frequency of the miracles diminishes dramatically. There must be a reason.

In I Corinthians chapter thirteen, we have a promise that many have misunderstood. It tells us that there was to be a cessation of certain gifts when *that which is perfect is come*. Many have assumed that this is a reference to the coming of our Lord, but this does not fit the grammar of this passage of Scripture. *That which is perfect* is in the neuter gender in the Greek text. This means that it is a reference to a thing, not a person.

What thing was yet to come when Paul wrote to the Corinthians that would enable believers to know even as they are known? It seems rather obvious to me that it was the completion of the revelation of the New Testament Scriptures. This analogy fits perfectly into the context of the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, especially when it is understood that the word translated *in* in this text is the Greek word *ek*, which in this text is more correctly translated *out of*. Thus the text speaks of preaching out of a partial revelation:

Charity [the love of Christ] never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether their be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in [out of] part, and we prophesy in [out of] part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in [out of] part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in [out of] part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. (I Corinthians 13:8-13, emphasis mine)

Paul's prophecy did not promise a disappearance of the Old Testament Scriptures. It promised an end of the partial revelation provided by the Old Testament Scriptures. So with the

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completion of the New Testament Scriptures, the Old Testament has ceased to be a partial revelation. There are several elements to Paul's promise. First, the love of Christ, as expressed in the gospel, shall never fail. The word translated fail is *ekipto*. It was used by the Greeks to describe someone who fell out of a chariot; or of sailors who were thrown ashore; or of things which suffered shipwreck. Therefore the love of Christ shall never fail to accomplish its assigned purpose. Second, in contrast to the love of Christ, *tongues shall cease*. The Greek word translated cease (*pauo*) means to stop altogether. Third, in contrast to the love of Christ, there will be the time when *prophecies* will be rendered useless, because they will have been fulfilled. Fourth, also in contrast to the love of Christ, *knowledge* shall also be rendered useless, because, like *prophecies*, there will come a time when our present knowledge shall be unnecessary. So, according to the promise, the love of Christ shall continue forever; tongues were to cease entirely; and prophecy and knowledge will (at the end of the age) be rendered useless. All of this is understood with the completion of the New Testament Scriptures. The New Testament, rightly divided, provides clarity for the mysteries of the Old Testament Scriptures. Thus we no longer preach from a partial revelation but from all of the Word of God; and, because of the New Testament Scriptures, it is the Word of God *rightly divided*.

This brings us to Paul's illustration: *When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things*. When we understand what *that which is perfect* is, then Paul's illustration makes sense. As a child Paul did things he no longer did as an adult. So, in the infancy of the church, there were things that were necessary that would no longer be necessary with the passage of time. Consequently there were

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sign-gifts for the Jews when the church was in its infancy. These would no longer be necessary after the destruction of Jerusalem and the completion of the New Testament Scriptures. So the authority of the church does not lie in its abilities to perform signs and wonders. Its authority lies in the Word of God (both Old and New Testament Scriptures). Consequently, with the New Testament to guide us, the shadows and types of the Old Testament are made plain. Thus they are no longer viewed as Paul described them:

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in [out of] part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity [the love of Christ], these three; but the greatest of these is charity [the love of Christ]. (I Corinthians 13:12,13)

Paul's statement, *For now we see through a glass, darkly*, was a perfect rendering of the conditions which existed at the time of his writing of First Corinthians. With only the Old Testament Scriptures, the believer's view of God's revelation of Jesus Christ was like using a piece of polished brass for a looking glass: the details were obscured because of the view. So the word *darkly* is the equivalent of our word *enigmatically*. Thus the view of the Old Testament Scriptures without the New Testament to unveil them is a mysterious view. However, with the New Testament to unlock the Old Testament, the view is *face to face*. This means that the New Testament enables us to *know even as we are known*.

Paul then concluded chapter thirteen with these words, *And now abideth faith, hope, charity [the love of Christ], these three; but the greatest of these is charity [the love of Christ]*. This is the logical conclusion to Paul's argument: without the love of Christ, as expressed in the gospel, there is no basis for faith. Consequently, without the love of Christ, which is the basis of our faith, we have no hope. It is self-evident, then, that the greatest of the three is the love of

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Christ.

As we begin chapter fourteen, we are again confronted in verse one with the rendering of *zeloute* in the imperative mood rather than in the indicative mood. Once again this mood does not fit the context: *Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.* In view of our previous discussion of I Corinthians 12:31, it makes no sense (contextually) for Paul to once again command the Corinthians to earnestly desire something that only the Spirit of God has the power to give. In fact, in the omniscience of God, the gifts were given *severally as He wills* before the foundation of the world. So again *zeloute* should have been translated in the second person plural present indicative mood rather than in the imperative mood. If it had, it would read something like this: *You are earnestly desiring spiritual gifts [i.e. the sign-gifts], but rather pursue charity [the love of Christ] in order that you may prophesy.*

In this context *prophesy* means to proclaim in one's own language the truth of the saving grace of Jesus Christ. So Paul was not writing about the spiritual gift of prophesy (which in that age could have been both foretelling and telling forth), for they could no more pursue, with the hope of obtaining, the spiritual gift of prophesy than they could the sign-gifts. Nevertheless, to bring things into perspective, each believer has the capacity for a personal witness of his relationship with the Lord. Consequently the more the believer knows of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the more complete his witness can be. Thus the believer should seek to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord in order to testify to the truth:

For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the

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church. I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.

There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a [foreigner], and he that speaketh shall be a [foreigner] unto me. Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. (I Corinthians 14:2-12, emphasis mine)

So Paul explained: even if one has the power to speak in a foreign language, if he speaks that language among people who do not understand it -- no matter what he speaks -- what benefit can it bring? In contrast to that, Paul emphasized that one who prophesies (witnesses the truth in his own language and the language of those to whom he speaks) does so unto *edification, and exhortation, and comfort*. This does not produce confusion. This produces growth.

Throughout this fourteenth chapter of I Corinthians, Paul writes about the many languages of this world. There are myriad languages and none of them is without significance to those who understand them, but in the church everything is to be done decently and in order. *God is not the author of confusion*. Consequently foreign languages can be spoken if there is an interpreter, but if there is no interpreter, then those who speak in foreign languages must keep silent: for everything must be unto edification, exhortation and comfort.

We have pointed out that there were sign-gifts and gifts for the daily function of the churches of Jesus Christ. The sign-gifts were for unbelieving Jews, because the Jews require a

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sign. So with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., those gifts disappeared with the deaths of those who possessed them, but the other gifts have been manifested in every age from the first century until now. The use of our spiritual gifts within the body of Christ are well summarized by Paul:

If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy [speak in the language of the people], and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy [speak in the language of the people] one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant. Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order. (I Corinthians 14:23-40, emphasis mine)

Chapter V

THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM

Baptism in water is an important doctrine. It conveys important spiritual truth related to salvation like most of the other God-given rituals in the Scriptures, but it does not produce salvation. This is true despite the fact that the majority of churches under the canopy of Christianity teach that water baptism is essential to salvation. This erroneous idea has come from traditions held by churches which have mixed Scriptural truth related to the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the doctrine of baptism in water.

This has been done rather easily because of a statement that our Lord made that did not differentiate between Spirit baptism and water baptism: *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned* (Mark 16:15-16). It is only by comparing Scripture with Scripture that we know that this is not a reference to baptism in water, but it is a reference to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, in this present church age, an individual must be baptized by the Holy Spirit before he is a candidate for baptism in water (Acts 10:44-48). Thus,

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like the Gentiles in the household of Cornelius, individual unsaved persons hear the Word of God preached and the gospel is quickened to their hearts by the Holy Spirit. This enables them to believe the gospel and be saved. This is necessary because the natural man cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God (I Corinthians 2:14). Therefore it takes the quickening power of the Spirit of God to enable the individual to understand enough of what is preached so that he might believe the gospel and be saved. When the Spirit of God enters the individual to enable him to believe, He remains forever (John 14:16). This quickening power (Ephesians 2:1-9) equates with salvation. It also equates with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Thus, at the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit baptizes the individual sinner into the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord so that by judicial decree God counts the believer to have died with Christ, to have been buried with Christ and to have been raised with Christ. Once this has taken place, the individual is then a candidate for baptism in water. This outward physical act by one who has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation shows outwardly all that has taken place inwardly by the judicial reckoning of God.

The Scriptures are very clear about this. Even so there are many varying opinions about baptism, both as to mode and to purpose. A superficial view of the Scriptures and a misunderstanding of the rules of interpretation will account for the origin of most of these false opinions. Therefore, in the interest of arriving at the truth, it will be necessary to consider some basic rules of interpretation of the Scriptures as well as certain attributes of God. Both of these considerations are necessary tools for the proper interpretation of the Scriptures.

The Scriptures attest to God's Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Immutability,

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the fact that God is not a respecter of persons, the fact that it is impossible for God to lie, to God's Justice, to His Holiness and to His Righteousness, as well as to His Love, His Mercy and His Grace. These attributes are essential elements of interpretation because they reflect the Person of the God with Whom we have to do. A proper understanding of the Scriptures also requires that we consider the immediate context as well as the overall context of any text of the Scriptures we wish to understand. The author and the audience are also two important considerations, so that we know who is speaking and to whom. Further the proper interpretation of the Scriptures allows self-evident truths from the Bible to stand uncontradicted by obscure texts. An obscure text is a portion of Scripture which is not understood because of insufficient information. It can also be a text which has been wrested from its context and made to mean something other than what it means in its context.

It is not uncommon in the academic and scientific realm for an individual to espouse a theory and then to seek data which would tend to support his theory. This is called *deductive reasoning*, and we find it used in many spheres. Even so it is not the best way to approach the interpretation of the Scriptures. The contexts of the Scriptures, the attributes of God and the rules of interpretation are too easily overlooked with this method. Even so this method is quite common. It can be properly used, but its misuse has been responsible for the misapplication and misinterpretation of the Scriptures by the subjective use of Scripture to support false theories.

The better form of reasoning in dealing with the Scriptures is *inductive reasoning*. This form of reasoning does not start with a theory. It starts with a body of evidence which must be properly assembled and evaluated, so that the evidence formulates the opinions of the investigator

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and allows him to arrive at the truth. This form of investigation is an essential tool in the study and proper interpretation of the Scriptures. Nevertheless, like those who hold to deductive reasoning, we who use an inductive approach to the Scriptures also have a bias. Our bias is that we believe the Bible to be the Word of God.

This bias has been formed from an inductive view of the Bible. We believe there is sufficient internal evidence in the Scriptures, as well as corroborative evidence in fulfilled prophecy, archeology, history and science to satisfy our minds that the Bible is indeed the Word of God. Consequently we believe the Bible to be the sole authority for our faith, our hope, our doctrine and our manner of life. Further the Scriptures attests to the fact that *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God* (II Timothy 3:16). This is plenary inspiration. This means that the very words used by the various human writers in the original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek writings of the Old and New Testaments were breathed out by God. This was done within the structure of the personalities, experiences and writing styles of the various writers.

This makes the Bible to be a revelation from God to man. It provides man with the purpose of life and the means to gain eternal life. Any consideration of the Bible that is not tempered by the fact of God's authorship will, most likely, result in either a misapplication or a misunderstanding of the Scriptures. This is commonly manifested in the academic community by individuals who are touted to be *Biblical scholars*. Nevertheless a more accurate description of them would be *Biblical skeptics*. This is true because these so-called scholars give no credence to the prophetic, supernatural and miraculous intervention of God in the affairs of man. Despite the veracity of the Scriptures, these men still give far more credence to any other documents from

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antiquity than they give to the Scriptures.

We have stated that God is Omniscient. This means He knows everything. Consequently everything that can be known, is known, or ever shall be known has always been known to God. He knows the beginning from the ending, and He knows us. In fact God knows us better than we know ourselves (Psalm 139).

God's Immutability is another attribute of God which is important to the proper interpretation of Scripture. This means that God cannot change. His essential character and nature is *the same yesterday, today and forever* (Hebrews 13:8). God spoke through the prophet Malachi and said: *For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed* (Malachi 3:6). God had promised Abraham that through his seed, all of the families of the earth would be blessed. The promise was confirmed to Isaac and Jacob, and it was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Thus God stood true to His promise despite Israel's constant departures from the truth.

The Bible says: *Let God be true, and every man a liar*. Therefore a statement of God in one portion of the Word of God cannot contradict a statement of God in another portion of the Word of God. Nevertheless God has had different covenant relationships with men in different eras. For example, God dealt with the patriarchs in one fashion, the nation of Israel in another and the New Testament church in still another. This is the reason it is so important to know who is speaking and to whom when endeavoring to understand the Scriptures. Despite this, the Bible says that there is *one faith* (Ephesians 4:5). This faith may have been expressed somewhat differently because of the different covenant relationships God has had with man, but all of the covenants of God have ultimately had their fulfillment in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus

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Christ. So in every age and with every man, salvation has always been by God's grace through faith and not by works of righteousness or rituals which anyone might do.

Circumcision and baptism are two prominent rituals, one out of the Old Testament and the other out of the New Testament, but neither can be imposed upon men for salvation. This is incontrovertibly true. To require anything but faith in God's promise of salvation in Jesus Christ would be inconsistent with the attributes and statements of God recorded in the Scriptures. Thus, through God's promises fulfilled in Jesus Christ, God has made provision for man's fallen condition in a manner which satisfies God's Justice and Holiness but allows for the expression of His Love, Mercy and Grace.

The thief on the cross is a good example of the truth of justification by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. There was nothing about the thief that would suggest he was justified by his life. To the contrary, he was a thief. Thus he was clearly a violator of the law. Even so he expressed his faith in Jesus Christ when he said: *Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom*. This indicated that he believed in the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord from the dead (i.e., the gospel). This is evident because, at that moment in time, both the thief and our Lord were being crucified by the Romans. This man was not baptized nor was he involved in organized religion. He was a thief who was *suffering justly* for his deeds, but he appealed to the Lord on the basis of His grace. His request of the Lord established that he clearly had his faith in the Person and the work of Jesus Christ. Consequently our Lord said to him: *Today thou shalt be with me in paradise* (Luke 23:43).

The mercy shown to the thief was not out of respect for him above others. It could not

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have been. God is not a respecter of persons. The acceptance of the thief by the Lord simply illustrates the truth of the gospel: he was accepted by grace through faith apart from the deeds of the law. Further, because God is not a respecter of persons, the thief's acceptance proves that no one is accepted of God on the basis of his works. This aligns perfectly with the truth expressed by Paul: *But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident; for the just shall live by faith[,] and the law is not of faith...* (Galatians 3:11-12).

There is another important principle that must be considered. It is implied in some of the principles which we have already considered, but we have not stated it directly. It is connected to God's covenant relationship with Israel. Israel was delivered from Egyptian bondage by God's grace through faith in the blood of the passover lambs, which blood was to be applied by faith to the door posts and lintels of their homes (on the fourteenth day of the first month) so that God would pass over them. Nevertheless, about sixty days later, God offered the law to Israel because of her transgressions (Galatians 3:19), but she did not consider her transgressions. Therefore she did not consider that she had grumbled in Egypt during the judgments of the Egyptians' gods, or that she had continued to grumble in her unbelief and rebellion all the way to Sinai. Thus, without regard to her failures, Israel rashly entered into the covenant of the law when she said: *All that the LORD hath spoken we will do* (Exodus 19:8). The writer to the Hebrews tell us this was an act of unbelief and a provocation to God (Hebrews 3:8-19).

Thus, for the next fifteen hundred years, God dealt with Israel through the law and the sacrificial system. The tabernacle and the sacrifices were designed to point the Jews to faith in Christ when they failed before the law, and fail they would. During the era of the law, God

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gave the Old Testament Scriptures to the nation of Israel by verbal inspiration through Moses and the prophets. Therefore, if we include the Gospels in the New Testament (which record the ministry of our Lord to the Jews under the law), forty-three of the sixty-six books of the Bible (or 65%) cover the period of time when the law was in effect, before the new covenant was put into effect by the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of our Lord. So even though Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are New Testament books, they record the ministry of our Lord to the Jews under the law, by our Lord's interpretation of the law, and not by the traditions of the elders. Therefore most of our Lord's ministry was to the Jews (Romans 15:8) and not to the church. If we do not understand this, we will have difficulty understanding our Lord's lawful use of the law with the Jews in His public ministry (I Timothy 1:8-10).

Now, respecting baptism, there are a number of errors practiced by professing churches of Jesus Christ. For example, there are churches that teach that baptism is essential to salvation. Most of these churches baptize infants. Then there are those who do not baptize infants, but they still claim that baptism is essential to salvation. Further there are those who teach that a person must be baptized into their particular denomination and join one of their churches, or that person cannot be saved.

Not only has there been a corruption of the purpose of baptism, there has also been a corruption of the mode of baptism. Consequently there is a parallel between these false ideas and the most prominent heresy recorded in the New Testament Scriptures. The apostles constantly battled this heresy. It was perpetrated by a group of Jews who professed to be believers in Jesus Christ. Despite their professed faith, they told the Gentiles: *Except ye be circumcised after the*

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manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved (Acts 15:1). Their insistence upon the performance of the law of circumcision for salvation corrupted the truth of salvation by God's grace through faith. Paul called what they preached *another gospel*. Their *gospel* was not a gospel of the same sort as the gospel Paul and the other apostles of the Lord preached, but it was a gospel of a *different sort*.

This *other gospel* has found expression in our day, just as it found expression throughout the churches of the first century, but with one difference. The ritual the Judaizers claimed to be essential to salvation was circumcision, but in this age it is baptism. The ritual may have changed, but the error is the same. Those who insist upon the necessity of baptism or any other rituals for salvation are under a curse, because Paul wrote: *If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed* (Galatians 1:9).

It is a tragedy that the greater number of people who call themselves Christians do so because a ritual was performed on them when they were infants. They do not claim to be Christians because of their personal faith in the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ (according to the terms of the gospel), but they make this claim because of their baptism. These people have been taught that their baptism saved them from original sin. The next step, after infant baptism for these people, was to be brought into a state of grace when they reached the age of puberty. This state was accomplished, according to the dogma, by attendance in catechism classes where they were instructed in the doctrines and sacraments of their church. A successful completion of these classes was said to bring them into a state of grace which confirmed their faith. This was outwardly manifested by a confirmation ceremony. According to the dogma, their

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confirmation enabled the Holy Spirit to indwell them at a time when temptations would increase because of the maturing of their bodies. Thus, according to the dogma, the Holy Spirit was given to enable them to keep the ten commandments, the sacraments and the ordinances of the church.

A failure in any one of these areas was, or is, constituted sin. This requires the one who has sinned to go to his priest and confess his sins. The priest grants absolution of the individual's sins based upon the performance of certain good works to show penance. The sinner must then go to mass to have (according to the doctrine of transubstantiation) a sacrifice of Jesus Christ made to atone for his sins. Thus the mass is a direct contradiction of the truth that Christ made one sacrifice for sins forever (Hebrews 10:12).

Baptismal regeneration, confirmation and transubstantiation are all doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. These doctrines, with denominational variations, are practiced by many of the churches of the Reformation era. Some hold to one thing and deny another, but almost universally they believe in baptismal regeneration. This mingling of law and ritual as necessities for salvation, as we have seen, constitutes the preaching of *another gospel*.

The preaching of *another gospel* by these churches does not mean that their memberships are void of genuine believers in Christ. We know this is not so. Just as the churches of the first century were subjected to a similar error, yet were possessed of genuine believers, so it is in these churches. There are those individuals in these churches who have placed their faith in the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, despite the errors held by their churches. Even so the ones who proclaim ritual and law-keeping are essential to salvation are false prophets and are condemned for preaching *another gospel*. Likewise the ones who have embraced their

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counterfeit gospel are condemned for having believed a lie. This is a terrible tragedy which has come upon many who *have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.*

Since the practice of requiring ritual and law-keeping for salvation is *another gospel*, it will be helpful to our study of baptism to further consider the gospel preached by Paul and the apostles of the Lord. It was a gospel of grace. The New Testament word for grace is *charis*. *Charis*, practically speaking, is the unmerited favor of God. Thus Paul wrote, *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast* (Ephesians 2:8-9). It is by the unmerited favor of God that men are saved. This is accomplished by faith, which is a gift from God, so that it is impossible for a man to boast in his salvation as though it were something attained by him.

Jesus said, *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me* (John 14:6). Therefore it is only through the gospel of Jesus Christ that man has access to God. This is true without regard to time. Salvation is and always has been by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. In every age, then, those who have come to God for salvation have come by faith in the promise of God which would ultimately be fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Thus God made provision for the salvation of man in Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). When Adam and Eve by transgression fell, the provision of salvation in Jesus Christ was already in place. It was to be fulfilled *in the fullness of time*, through *the seed of the woman*. Adam believed the promise and called his wife's name Eve, *the mother of all living*. Then God made a sacrifice, typical of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and He clothed Adam and Eve with the skin of the victim: which represented the perfect righteousness of Jesus

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Christ (II Corinthians 5:21). Thus the gospel was presented to the patriarchs prophetically and through the shadows and types of the sacrificial system. The gospel was adequately revealed so that their faith was in the promise of Jesus Christ, Who, at that time, was not yet come. This was expressed by the writer to the Hebrews when he wrote, *These all died in faith, not having received the promises [of the Person and the work of Jesus Christ], but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth* (Hebrews 11:13).

From this and other Scripture we can plainly see that the Old Testament saints believed the promises of God in Jesus Christ. Obviously they did not have the clear revelation we have in the New Testament. Nevertheless they had sufficient information to believe God's promise of a Kinsman Redeemer: that He would come in the fullness of time to stand in their stead and bear their judgment. The names of some of these believers are recorded in Hebrews chapter eleven, where it is said of them: *These all died in faith, not having received the promises*. Thus, according to this same chapter in Hebrews, their faith was counted unto them for righteousness and they are the *cloud of witnesses* in the twelfth chapter, which was used by the writer to the Hebrews to encourage believers of subsequent ages in the faith.

Their faith and their salvation are clearly established. It is also clearly established that not one of them was baptized according to the New Testament doctrine of ritual baptism. We know God is not a respecter of persons. We know God cannot lie. We know God is immutable. We know ritual baptism was not essential to their salvation. Therefore it cannot be essential to our salvation:

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Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and rose again the third day according to the scriptures. (I Corinthians 15:1-4)

Paul clearly states that the gospel he preached was the gospel which was contained in the Scriptures. This is the Old Testament Scriptures, because at the time when Paul wrote to the Corinthians the New Testament Scriptures were not yet completed.

As we view the Old Testament Scriptures, we find the gospel portrayed in prophetic promises as well as in shadows and types. We see it portrayed to Adam and Eve in the promise of the *seed of the woman*, and we see it in the sacrifice of the innocent victim through which God provided Adam and Eve with a suitable covering for their nakedness. We see it again in Abel's sacrifice. The Scriptures declare Abel's sacrifice was more excellent than Cain's. This is true because Abel's sacrifice revealed his faith in the Kinsman Redeemer promised to Adam and Eve in the *seed of the woman*. Consequently Abel was declared to be righteous, not because of his life, but because of his faith in the promise of God.

It is evident that if the gospel was portrayed in Abel's *more excellent sacrifice*, its denial was portrayed in Cain's gift to God. Cain's gift to God was made without faith in the promise of God. In fact it was born out of the deception that came upon the human family through the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Thus Cain's offering reflected his belief that he could be accepted of God by the works of his own hands. Even so, after God rejected Cain's human efforts for salvation, God manifested His longsuffering towards sinners when He said to Cain: *If thou doest well, wilt thou not be accepted, and if thou doest not well sin [i.e., a sin offering] lieth at*

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the door. It was not possible for Cain to be accepted of God by doing well: *For there is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not* (Ecclesiastes 7:20). Nevertheless Cain categorically rejected the offer of salvation by faith in the sin offering at the door. He showed his contempt for the gospel and his anger over the rejection of the works of his own hands when he slew his brother. He was then set wandering east of Eden. So it is with all of those who reject salvation by grace in Jesus Christ. Like Cain, they are set wandering outside of the paradise of God with no hope until they change their minds about salvation in Jesus Christ. This was true of Cain, and it has been true of Israel's national rejection and murder of Jesus Christ.

Nevertheless God's grace is extended still. The gospel was portrayed in the ark which provided a refuge (salvation) for Noah and his family in the days of the flood. It was portrayed in the sacrifice of Isaac, and it was portrayed in the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage through the blood of the passover lambs. It was portrayed in the tabernacle in the wilderness, and it was portrayed in the lifted-up serpent. In a word, the gospel was portrayed in shadows and types from the garden of Eden to its fulfillment in the events of Calvary and Christ's subsequent resurrection from the dead, and it continues to be extended through the preaching of present-day churches.

The revelation of how Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures reveals He was offered in our stead, *the Just for the unjust*, thus bearing the penalty for our sins and providing the judicial means through which God is able to be Just and the Justifier of them who believe in Jesus. In the sacrifice of Jesus Christ the sins of mankind were transferred to Christ by the judicial reckoning of God. Similarly, the righteousness of Christ has been transferred by judicial

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reckoning to whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ. It is by the judicial reckoning of God, based on the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ, that Paul was able to write, *He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him* (II Corinthians 5:21). Judicial reckoning (i.e., the doctrine of imputation), then, is an integral part of the gospel. It declares the believer's standing before God.

Baptism portrays, through an outward manifestation in water, some of the things that are judicially reckoned to the believer because of his faith in Jesus Christ. Baptism is a ritual (commanded of the Lord in the great commission) to be observed by those who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. It, like animal sacrifices and circumcision, is a portrayal of salvation, but it is not salvation. Its purpose is an outward manifestation of an inward faith. Thus it declares the believer's faith in certain judicial relationships that are his in salvation.

The gospel declares: ... *Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures* (I Corinthians 15:3-4). Baptism portrays this truth. It does not supplant it. Thus baptism portrays the judicial truth that when Christ died, God counts the believer to have died with Him; when Christ was buried, God counts the believer to have been buried with Him; and when Christ arose from the dead, God counts the believer to have been raised with Him (Romans 6:3-5). A segment of this truth was declared to Peter when Paul rebuked him for his hypocrisy at Antioch in Syria. Peter had been eating and communing with the Gentiles until certain Jews arrived from Jerusalem. Then Peter separated himself from the Gentiles. In Paul's rebuke of Peter he reminded Peter of the fact that he was saved by grace through faith apart from the deeds of the law. Then Paul spoke of the

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judicial reckoning of God :

I [was] crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

Later Paul told the Colossians that the believer is *Buried with [Christ] in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead* (Colossians 2:12). This was, of course, accomplished at the moment of salvation when the Spirit of God baptized us into the family of God: thus declaring our co-death, co-burial and co-resurrection with our Lord. By this act the Spirit of God quickened the Word of God to our hearts that we might believe and be saved. Subsequent to our salvation and in agreement with the great commission, we were baptized in water as an outward manifestation of our judicial relationship with the Lord:

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory. (Colossians 3:1-4)

When the Christians at Rome were being confronted with the *other gospel* of the Judaizers, Paul revealed that no one has the capacity to keep the precepts of the law (excepting, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ). In Paul's letter to the Romans, he revealed the sinful nature of both the Jews and the Gentiles. Then he compared Christians with unsaved Jews and Gentiles: *What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no not one* (Romans 3:9-10). Paul followed this with the revelation of the doctrine of justification by faith apart from the deeds of the law. After that he revealed the concept of imputation to the Romans. Then he illustrated the

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truth of imputation (i.e., judicial reckoning) by describing God's relationship to Abraham with some of the events surrounding the birth of Isaac:

For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things that be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. (Romans 4:13-25, emphasis mine)

This portion of Scripture reveals some very important truths essential to our understanding of justification by faith, imputation and the doctrine of baptism (even though baptism is not directly mentioned in the text). First, Abraham was justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Second, his faith was counted (i.e., imputed) unto him for righteousness. God reckoned certain things to be true, both physically and spiritually in the life of Abraham because of his faith. Third, Abraham, like each of us, was a sinful man. When God declared him to be righteous (because of his faith in Christ), he was given a status which could not have been earned or obtained by natural ability. Fourth, Paul showed the Romans how justification by faith works, when in the lives of Abraham and Sarah, God called those things that are not as though they are. Fifth, this manner of viewing things was shown in the birth of Isaac. Abraham had grown too old

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to father a son, and Sarah (who had been barren throughout her child-bearing years) was also old and had passed through menopause. Thus, from a physical point of view, it was impossible for Abraham and Sarah to produce a son in their old age. Nevertheless God told them they would have a son, because God has the ability to call those things that are as though they are not. Consequently God altered the physical condition of Abraham and Sarah to suit His purpose.

In the judicial reckoning of God all of the attributes of God are satisfied. God is able to call those things that are as though they are not, and the things that are not as though they are. Through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary, God has the judicial right to declare sinners to be saints. He has this right because Jesus Christ was judicially charged with the sins of the sinner, and He bore the judgment of those sins through His sacrifice on the cross of Calvary, after that He was buried and arose again the third day, showing that He had power over sin, death and the grave. Consequently He has the judicial right to give the benefits of this victory over sin, death and the grave to whoever will believe that He did it for them.

After that, in his letter to the Romans, Paul questioned the Romans regarding their relationship to the sin of Adam and its consequences. Paul showed them how they were judicially charged with Adam's sin. Then he showed them that if they could be charged with Adam's sin they could (given the right set of circumstances) also be charged with Christ's righteousness. Paul continued his argument to the Romans in this vein, showing them that after their salvation and through the judicial reckoning of God they were counted dead to Adam's sin and its counterfeit concepts of good and evil, and they were alive unto God through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul showed the Romans: *But where the sin abounded, grace did much more abound.* Since this was

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so, Paul asked them:

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in [the] sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to [the] sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we [were] buried with him by baptism into [His] death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

For if we [were] planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this that our old man [was] crucified with him, that the body of [the] sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve [the] sin. For [the one having died has been justified] from [the] sin. Now if we [died] with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto [the] sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto [the] sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:1-11) (Note: In the above text, some definite articles have been added, and the meaning of words and verb tenses emended to agree with the Greek text of the New Testament.)

The baptism of the Holy Spirit declares the co-death, co-burial and co-resurrection of the believer with the Lord Jesus Christ. Consequently the believer, in obedience to the command of our Lord in the great commission, acts out his judicial relationship with the Lord by being immersed in water. This is done once backwards in the form of a burial as the believer is plunged into the water. Then the believer is lifted up out of the water to signify resurrection. Thus, in a very real sense, the believer has gone into the place of death with our Lord (as Israel did crossing the Red Sea when they were delivered from Egyptian bondage), and he has come alive again from the place of death by being lifted up from the water.

Consider the Ethiopian eunuch. He met Philip as the eunuch returned to Ethiopia from a feast that had been held in Jerusalem. As he traveled, he sat in his chariot and read the book of Isaiah. Specifically he was reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah when Philip met him. Philip asked the eunuch if he understood what he was reading. Whereupon the eunuch stopped the

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chariot and invited Philip to ride with him and explain the Scriptures. Then Philip preached Jesus unto him from the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. There must have come a point in Philip's preaching when baptism was mentioned, because the eunuch inquired:

... See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. (Acts 8:36-38, emphasis mine)

This account gives us some very important information about who should be baptized and how. First, it tells us an individual, such as the eunuch, must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with all of his heart before he can be baptized. Second, *they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch.* This suggests that Philip immersed the eunuch in a portrayal of death, burial and resurrection. (A sprinkling, or a pouring of water on the head of the eunuch would not have required that they both go into the water.) Further, as to the method of baptism, we have those portions of Scripture, already quoted, which indicate baptism is a portrayal of death, burial and resurrection. Even the most biased reader would have to admit that there is nothing about sprinkling or pouring of water on the head of a candidate for baptism that can even remotely portray, with any degree of symbolic reality, burial on the one hand or resurrection on the other. It should also be evident, in the case of immersion, that death would surely occur if the individual were not raised from the water. Thus immersion portrays death, but sprinkling and pouring cannot even vaguely portray death.

Clearly Scriptural baptism portrays death, burial and resurrection. Even so there are those who practice baptism by immersion three times forward, once for each of the names of the

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Godhead. While it might be deemed honorable to immerse for each name in the Godhead, this method also fails to fit the symbolism of death, burial and resurrection. Obviously we shall not die three times, be buried three times and be resurrected three times.

It is interesting to note, apart from the Lord's command to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, there is no reason for baptism. We baptize because our Lord commanded us to baptize. Consequently we baptize for the reason and in the manner that our Lord commanded:

All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy [Spirit]: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matthew 28:18-20)

The purpose of baptism and the mode of baptism must agree with the imagery assigned to baptism in the Scriptures. We are further helped in our understanding of the doctrine of baptism by a consideration of the Greek New Testament. In the Greek New Testament there are several words derived from the word *bapto* (the root word from which we get our word baptism) that must be considered. The translators transliterated these into three words in the English Bible: *baptist*; *baptism*; and *to baptize*. These words are transliterations of Greek words and have no meaning in the English language other than that which has been ascribed to them. Even so the root word *bapto* from which they are transliterated means *to immerse*, *to submerge*, *to dip*. There are a few occasions in the New Testament (associated with Jewish ritual washing) when the translators rendered these words: *wash or washing*. There are just two other occasions in the New Testament when the translators translated, rather than transliterating, the Greek words into English spellings. The first is in the Gospel of John, when *Jesus dipped the sop* and gave it to Judas (John 13:26).

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The second is in the book of the Revelation, when Jesus will come forth from the battle of Armageddon (at His second coming) *in a vesture dipped in blood* (Revelation 19:13).

These occasions enable us to know that the translators knew the meaning of the words derived from *bapto*. Even so, because of their belief in baptismal regeneration and their practice of baptizing infants (the King James Bible translators were Episcopalians), they chose to transliterate the words when they were associated with the doctrine of baptism and to translate them when they were not. If they had consistently translated the words, there would be no question about the significance and the mode of baptism. Even so it has been argued that when *bapto* is used for the baptism of the Holy Spirit it does not suggest a dipping (a *putting in* and a *taking out*) but simply a putting in. Therefore they argue that the meaning of the Greek word *bapto* cannot be used to designate the mode of baptism.

Those who hold this position fail to see that the baptism of the Spirit is not a putting us into the Spirit of God, but the Spirit of God does the baptizing, thus we are put into the death of Christ by the Holy Spirit; and the taking out is not a taking of us out of the Spirit (Who is given to indwell us forever), but it is an identification of the believer with the resurrection of Christ: which is a taking of the believer out of the realm of death. Then the believer, by means of the indwelling Holy Spirit and the Word of God, can walk in newness of life. Remember, our Lord said: *Because I live, ye shall live also.*

It has been further argued, by those who reject immersion as the mode of baptism, that all of the passages of Scripture that refer to baptism as a co-death, co-burial and co-resurrection with Christ are descriptions of a believer's positional relationship with the Lord because of the baptism

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of the Holy Spirit. I have no argument with this position except that they say ritual baptism does not convey these same truths. This is an obvious attempt to placate the masses who do not baptize by immersion, but by sprinkling or pouring at the expense of the truth.

Thus far in our study of the doctrine of baptism we have been looking at various aspects of the doctrine to bring us into a Scriptural understanding of the doctrine and its significance. First, the candidate for baptism must be a believer in Jesus Christ as his Savior. Second, the significance of baptism is a portrayal of death, burial and resurrection. Third, the significance of baptism requires that the mode be total immersion in water, in the form of a burial, to signify death and burial. Fourth, the candidate is raised from below the surface of the water to signify a resurrection from the dead. Fifth, baptism is performed as an outward manifestation of an inward faith. Thus baptism is a declaration of the co-death, co-burial and co-resurrection of the believer with Jesus Christ (which was accomplished by the baptism of the Holy Spirit). Consequently, through the judicial reckoning of God, the believer is counted dead to the law and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Further, in regard to what we have learned about baptism, we know that the person who does the baptizing must also be a believer in Jesus Christ. He must believe in the significance and the mode of baptism that we have seen outlined in the Scriptures. Thus as a representative of the church of the living God, he is to preach, to baptize and to teach by the authority given by the Lord Jesus Christ to the church in the great commission.

As we continue our study of baptism we must be aware that there is more than one kind of baptism in water recorded in the New Testament Scriptures. We must be careful, then, to distinguish between the believer's baptism (which we have been studying); the baptism of

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repentance for the nation of Israel (which was administered by John the Baptist and the disciples of the Lord before the great commission); and the baptism of Jewish converts to Christ recorded in the early chapters of the book of Acts.

The baptism of John, as well as the baptism of Jesus (*though Jesus himself did not baptize, but his disciples*) was a baptism of repentance for the nation of Israel. It was linked directly to the terms of the Palestinian covenant between God and Israel. Thus it was an outward manifestation of a change of mind (i.e., repentance) towards God when Israel realized her departure from God through false worship. This, of course, was the condition of Israel at the first advent of Christ. John was *A voice crying in the wilderness* to call Israel to a national repentance and faith in Him Who was to come. There were many in Israel who believed the message of John. Consequently they repented and received the baptism of John as an outward manifestation of their repentance. Then, by faith, they looked for the fulfillment of God's promise in the One John proclaimed (the Lord Jesus Christ), Who was to come.

The covenant responsibility of Israel to repent nationally is the reason Jesus came to John to be baptized of him. While Jesus himself had no sin, it was requisite upon him as a member of the nation of Israel to be identified with the sins of the nation. At the first, when Jesus came to John to be baptized of him, John refused, saying, *I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?* Nevertheless John baptized Jesus after Jesus said, *Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness...* (Matthew 3:15). The baptism of our Lord by John was not a matter of repentance because of personal sins (for *in him is no sin*), but it was an identification with the nation of Israel in their sins. This identification was incumbent upon each

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member of the nation of Israel according to their covenant relationship with God, and it is seen in the life of Daniel, in the ninth chapter of his prophecy, where he is seen confessing his sins and the sins of his people (Daniel 9:3-11).

The religious leaders in Israel should have known this. They should have been the first to seek the baptism of John, but they did not. Some of them came to John's baptism out of curiosity or some other motivation. Even so they did not come with any intent to change their minds. They were self-righteous, and it never occurred to them that there was any reason for them to repent.

John knew the hearts of these leaders. He knew their sham pretenses and their outward show of righteousness. He knew they trusted in their natural lineage to Abraham. John knew they did not perceive themselves to need a Savior; and he knew they certainly did not perceive the Savior to be Jesus of Nazareth, the singular seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:16), the One through Whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed (Genesis 12:3). In fact, because of their natural lineage, they perceived themselves to be *the seed* promised to Abraham:

... when [John] saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

I indeed baptize you [in] water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you [in] the Holy [Spirit], and [in] fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. (Matthew 3:7-12, emphasis mine)

Thus John made a distinction between the wheat (those baptized in the Spirit) and the chaff

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(those who will be baptized in fire). The baptism of the Spirit, as we have seen, takes place at the moment of salvation, and the baptism in fire will take place after the great white throne judgment, when all unbelievers shall be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15).

We stated in the beginning of this consideration of the doctrine of baptism that part of the confusion that reigns, reigns because the baptism of the Holy Spirit has been confused by some with ritual baptism in water. In order to alleviate this confusion, certain portions of Scripture need to be considered. First, we need to look at a statement of John the Baptist: *There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you [in] water: but he shall baptize you [in] the Holy [Spirit]* (Mark 1:7-8). Then we need to consider a direct statement of our Lord in the great commission recorded in the book of Mark, which is commonly quoted by baptismal regenerationist: *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned* (Mark 16:15-16). Now we need to put these two portions of Scripture together with the teaching of the apostle Paul in the eighth chapter of the book of Romans: *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you* (Romans 8:8-11). The truths contained in these portions of Scripture must now be acknowledged in the light of an important statement of our Lord to the Jews:

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In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy [Spirit] was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) (John 7:37-39, emphasis mine)

A proper consideration of these texts enables us to see that all believers of all ages must be baptized with the Spirit of God in order to be saved. If we will lay aside our preconceived notions concerning the baptism of the Spirit and consider the Scriptures without bias, we will arrive at the truth. First, we know that the Old Testament saints were not baptized with the Holy Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified. Second, we may not have previously considered this, but this was the only reason they were not baptized with the Holy Spirit. Third, the specific promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was to all who believe without respect to time. Fourth, because God is not a respecter of persons, and it is impossible for Him to lie, it was necessary at some point in time for the Old Testament saints to receive this baptism. Fifth, in the fourth chapter of the book of Ephesians, Paul makes it clear: *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are 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* (Ephesians 4:4-6). Sixth, the immutability of God demands, whether you are in the Old Testament or the New Testament, there is one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith and one baptism, because God is one God. Obviously the one baptism cannot be ritual baptism in water, because there are many types of baptisms in water in the Scriptures. Seventh, as Paul continues his argument in the fourth chapter of the book of Ephesians, in context with the giving of spiritual gifts to the church, he wrote: *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he*

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ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Why did Paul speak of our Lord taking the souls of the Old Testament saints into heaven in context with the giving of spiritual gifts to the church? It should be evident. The gifts of the Spirit were given with the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Thus, by implication, the Holy Spirit baptized the Old Testament saints into the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord when the Lord... *led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men* (Ephesians 4:8). Paul also told the Romans: *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His* (Romans 8:9b). Since they could not be baptized with the Spirit until Christ was glorified (John 7:39), they had to be baptized with the Spirit when our Lord *led captivity captive*. So in addition to this information, we must take note of the new covenant:

Whereof the Holy [Spirit] also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, this is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. (Hebrews 10:15-17, emphasis mine)

This covenant was applied to the saints of the Old Testament when Christ was crucified, buried and rose again from the dead. Thus there is not a single sin of an Old Testament saint recorded in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews or anywhere else in the New Testament. This verifies that even though they did not live their lives under the precepts of the new covenant, with the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of our Lord, the new covenant was put into effect for them as well as for us. For this to be true, they had to have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord. Thus we also read:

And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the

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promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. (Hebrews 11:39-40)

This text indicates that the Old Testament saints died in faith before our Lord came in His first advent. Then it tells us something better was provided for the believers of the first century, because Christ came in their lifetime. It also tells us, *that they without us should not be made perfect*. Thus, without us they could not be made perfect, but with us they could be. This is confirmed to us by another portion of the book of Hebrews: *But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect* (Hebrews 12:22- 23, emphasis mine). *The spirits of just men made perfect* can be none other than the souls of the Old Testament saints whom our Lord led *captivity captive* into the presence of God in heaven.

John's baptism was for Jews in a covenant relationship with God. It was a baptism of hope in Him Who was to come. Yet it was without the immediate realization of His coming and His baptism with the Holy Spirit. This, then, is the reason the disciples of John, who met Paul at Ephesus, were re-baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Paul inquired of them if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed, but they had not. Paul asked them, *Unto what then were ye baptized?* Luke gives us the details of this meeting in the nineteenth chapter of the book of Acts, where we read:

And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coast came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy [Spirit] since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy [Spirit]. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John

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verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy [Spirit] came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve. (Acts 19:1-7)

Thus by their baptism in the name of the Lord and their reception of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of the hands of the apostle Paul, these, who had initially believed through the ministry of John the Baptist, were brought into the fullness of their faith in Christ by the apostle Paul. Paul did not bring them to faith in Christ, he simply brought them into a greater understanding of their faith, and he was the vessel through whom they received the Holy Spirit during this time of transition from the old covenant to the new covenant.

Thus their previous lack of the Holy Spirit was simply a reflection of their Old Testament status. The Holy Spirit could not be permanently given to indwell Old Testament believers, because the Lord Jesus Christ had not yet fulfilled the promise of the Father to be the Redeemer. Once Christ had been crucified, buried and had risen from the dead, the Holy Spirit could be permanently given. Their baptism in the name of Jesus reflected their faith in the *One Who was to come*, the Lord Jesus Christ. This incident, as noted in the above reference, is recorded in the book of Acts.

It is important for us to understand that the book of Acts is a book of transition. It begins with the ascension of Christ into heaven and continues to the time of Paul's imprisonment in Rome, a few years before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The events recorded in the book of Acts span approximately thirty-eight years. During these years Christianity and Judaism operated side by side, because, at different times, both Israel and the church had been made

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custodians of the truth of the Word of God. Nevertheless, at the time of the events in the book of Acts, Israel's authority was being taken from her because of her apostasy and national rejection of Jesus Christ, and the authority that she had possessed was given to the church. The book of Acts records the transition from one to the other. So, at the present time, Israel's *house [has been] left unto her desolate*.

God established the church's authority with the Jews (who would receive it) by the performance of the sign-gifts, because *The Jews require a sign*. Our Lord had established His authority with the nation of Israel by the performance of many signs and wonders, even though most of the nation rejected His authority. Then, with His departure into heaven, He employed the same method to convince the Jews that the church spoke with the authority of God by empowering His church with signs and wonders and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Consequently the Jews (who made up the newly formed church) proclaimed the truth of the Word of God to the Jews who remained in Judaism, and God punctuated their authority with the sign-gifts of the Spirit (Hebrews 2:3-4). This is the reason the early church healed the sick, raised the dead, spoke with other tongues, interpreted those tongues, prophesied and performed miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit of God.

However, once the New Testament canon of Scripture was completed, the expression of the sign-gifts began to wane until they disappeared altogether. This is observable in the book of Acts by comparing the number of miracles in the early chapters with the number of miracles in the latter chapters. Consequently Paul testified that the sign-gifts (that were necessary in the infancy of the church) would be rendered unnecessary *when that which is perfect is come* (I

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Corinthians 13:10). *That which is perfect* is not a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ (as is assumed by many) since it is in the neuter gender in the Greek text of the New Testament. This means it does not refer to a person, it refers to a thing; and the thing it refers to is the completion of the revelation of the New Testament Scriptures.

The disciples of John the Baptist showed their submission to the authority of the church of Jesus Christ by obeying Paul's instructions to them. Consequently they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and received the gift of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of the apostle Paul. Then God enabled these disciples of John to speak the truth of the Word of God with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Through an outward manifestation of speaking in tongues and prophesying, the Spirit of God showed the Jewish believers that these disciples, as well as they, were *all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise* (Galatians 3:26-29).

The manner in which the Spirit of God was given to the several groups in the early church established unity. If they had received the Spirit of God independent of one another, it would have been very easy for the early church to have been divided five ways: Jews, Jews of the *diaspora*, Samaritans, Gentiles and the disciples of John the Baptist. Nevertheless God's wisdom prevailed. The church *continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers* (Acts 2:42). It also gave forth a unified effort against the world, the flesh

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and the devil; but as churches were established throughout the world, it did not take long before they would face attacks from the devil through false prophets (II Peter 2:1).

This brings us, then, to the final baptism in our study. It is the baptism of Jews who were converted on the day of Pentecost and in the early days of the church. We have seen that the Jews had a covenant relationship with God. Consequently there were some strictly Jewish requirements imposed upon the first believers in the church to make the transition from the old covenant to the new covenant:

Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in [the grave], neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in [the grave], neither his flesh did see corruption.

This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy [Spirit], he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent [Change your minds], and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus

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Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy [Spirit]. (Acts 2:22-38)

Peter's message to the Jews on that particular Pentecost is important to our understanding of the doctrine of baptism, especially when we compare the baptism of the Gentiles (in the tenth chapter of Acts) with the baptism of the Jews who were saved on the day of Pentecost and in the early days of the church. We need to take note of several points in Peter's message. We must also keep the rules of interpretation in mind to aid us with the difficulties we shall encounter when we compare the differences between these two baptisms.

First, Peter addressed his message to Jews and Jewish proselytes. Second, he testified to them of the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, that He was a man *approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you*. Third, he testified that Jesus was delivered into the *wicked hands* of the Jewish leaders, *by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*, to be crucified and slain. Fourth, despite their wicked intentions, we know God meant the death of Christ for good. Peter testified that God raised Jesus from the dead, because death could not hold Him. Fifth, Peter testified that David spoke of the resurrection to the nation of Israel. Even so David's use of personal pronouns in the sixteenth Psalm was not an indication that David was speaking of himself when he spoke of the resurrection. Thus Peter explained to the Jews that David had not spoken of himself, because David had died and his tomb had remained with the Jews even to the time of Peter's message (on the day of Pentecost). Nevertheless David was a prophet, who knew that God *had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne.... This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses*. Sixth, Peter testified further that this

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same Jesus had been exalted to the right hand of the Father and had been given the gift of the Holy Spirit, which He had given to His disciples. The manifestation of the Spirit, through speaking in tongues, was the fulfillment of that which had been spoken by the prophet Joel. Consequently the disciples were not drunk as the Jews had supposed, but they were speaking the truth of the Word of God (in the fifteen different languages of the countries from which Peter's audience had come) so that they might be saved. Seventh, Peter said, *Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.* Eighth, when the Jews heard that they had crucified their Lord (the Messiah) they were deeply convicted, and cried, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* It was then that Peter answered, *Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy [Spirit].* Peter called the Jews to repentance. The Greek word from which we get our English word *repentance* means to change the mind. Thus Peter directed these Jews to change their minds about Jesus of Nazareth so that they might believe and be saved. That change of mind was rather monumental when we consider all that had happened within the previous two months.

Therefore we must think about all that had transpired prior to the Passover in context with these events on the day of Pentecost. So in our mind's eye we are taken back to the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and the apparent acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah by the nation of Israel. Despite this, in the days following His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus was examined of the Pharisees, the Herodians, the Sadducees, the chief priests and scribes and finally (on the preparation day of the Passover) He was examined by Pontius Pilate and Herod. Each of these sought to find fault with Jesus, but they could not. The conclusion of all of their examinations was

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stated by Pilate when he said: *I find no fault in this just man.*

Despite Pilate's pronouncement and the Jews earlier elation at the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and their shouts of *Hosannah in the highest*, they were convinced by their leaders that Jesus of Nazareth was a blasphemer. They were convinced of this despite the evidence. They were incited to religious rage by the deceitful practices of their leaders. They blindly followed their leaders, and when given the opportunity to have Jesus released they chose rather to release Barabbas and turned on Jesus, shouting: *Crucify him! Crucify him!* They allowed the insidious lies of their leaders to incite them to ignore the evidence that had been presented to them in Christ's ministry.

Since these same Jews (who cried, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?*) had been incited to publicly reject Jesus as the Messiah and had called for His crucifixion, Peter would not let them forget it. Peter charged them with the death of Christ. Then in response to their question: *What shall we do?* Peter told them to change their mind about Jesus of Nazareth and show their change of mind by being publicly baptized in His name. They had publicly denounced Jesus of Nazareth as being the Christ. To become His disciples, they had to publicly announce Him to be their Lord and Savior through a public display of baptism in His name. After that, in fulfillment of God's promise, they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, God's earnest pledge that they were indeed the children of God.

Thus Peter's instructions were not three steps to salvation as some have erroneously assumed, but they are simply the carry-over of covenant responsibilities of a people who were passing from one covenant relationship with God to another. They had publicly crucified the

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Christ because of their desire to worship after the works of their own hands. Therefore they had to publicly denounce their false worship and identify themselves with Jesus in His crucifixion, His burial and His resurrection by baptism in His name: thus declaring that they were dead to the law and alive unto God through Jesus Christ. This outward manifestation of their inward change of heart allowed them to leave the old covenant of law and enter into the new covenant of grace in their relationship with God. Thus their baptism differs from ours in that it contained elements from John's baptism and Christian baptism to effect the transition.

These requirements continued during the early days of the church. However, after the gospel was taken to the Gentiles and the counsel in Jerusalem had been held, there is evidence that these requirements were no longer necessary. Thus at the counsel Peter testified:

... Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy [Spirit], even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. (Acts 15:7-11, emphasis mine)

Thus Peter testified that God put no difference between the Gentiles and the Jews; that God gave the same gift to them that He had given to the Jews; that God had accomplished this without the yoke of the law, which they and their fathers had been unable to bear. Then he testified: ... *we [Jews] shall be saved, even as they [Gentiles]*. This meant that the method that God had used in the household of Cornelius was to become the method that God would use with the Jews, once the transition was complete.

Let us go with Peter to the household of Cornelius and view the events that led to the

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salvation of the first Gentiles in the church age. As we do this we must understand, Peter did not one day decide to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. He, like all of the Jews of that era, was naturally biased against them. He had to be convinced to preach to them. Consequently God gave Peter a vision of a great sheet containing all sorts of unclean animals. It was pulled together at the corners and let down from heaven before Peter. Then God said: *Rise Peter, kill and eat.* God repeated this command three times, and three times Peter answered: *Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.* Therefore three times God said: *What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common:*

While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them. Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends. And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.

And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me? And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before thee, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no

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respector of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) that word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy [Spirit] and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy [Spirit] fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy [Spirit]. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy [Spirit] as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days. (Acts 10:19-48, emphasis mine)

These events obviously agree with what we have learned from the Scriptures thus far, and they agree with our experiences in this present age. The Scripture says, *Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.* It also says, *By the foolishness of preaching God hath chosen to save them that believe.* Further, when writing to the church at Ephesus, Paul said, *And you hath he [the Holy Spirit] quickened who were dead in trespasses and sin.* Thus in the present age, we preach to those who are dead in trespasses and sin the truth of the gospel. The Spirit of God quickens the truth of the gospel to the minds of those who are dead in trespasses and sin by giving them the gift of faith to believe the gospel and be saved. When the Spirit of God enters the unbeliever to quicken the truth to him, He remains according to the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ: *He will never leave thee nor forsake thee.*

Salvation takes place by the preaching of the Word of God and the quickening power of

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the Spirit of God, so that the new believer receives the Spirit of God to abide in him forever. This is what took place in the house of Cornelius. In fact Peter's question to the Jews who accompanied him was: *Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy [Spirit] as well as we?* (Acts 10:47) No unsaved man is indwelt by the Spirit of God. The reception of the Spirit of God through the baptism of the Spirit is proof of the salvation of these Gentiles. Thus, after they were already saved, they were baptized in water in the name of the Lord, showing outwardly what had taken place inwardly, so that their baptism in water was a public declaration that they had died with Christ; that they had been buried with Christ; and that they had been raised from the dead with Christ to walk in newness of life.

When the Jews were saved on the day of Pentecost, Peter's instructions to them were different than his instructions to these Gentiles. We have seen the reason for the difference in the instructions to the Jews because of their covenant relationship with God. Remember, the same Jews who shouted *Hosannah in the highest* when Jesus entered into Jerusalem, less than two months later shouted: *Crucify Him! Crucify Him!* By the terms of the Palestinian covenant, they had overtly rejected their God, so they must overtly declare their repentance and faith in Him. Thus their repentance was shown by an overt act. However, once the authority of the church was fully established and it was clear that the house of Israel had been left unto them desolate, the order for the salvation of the Jews was the same as the order for the Gentiles, because *God is not a respecter of persons*, and in the church: *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus* (Galatians 3:28).

We also repent; otherwise we would not be saved. But our repentance is less conspicuous.

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Each of us as members of the human race has thought, from the time we were old enough to consider these things, our relationship with God was based upon whether we were good or bad. In order to be saved we have to change our minds to agree with God, Who through the apostle Paul said: *[It is] not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to God's mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy [Spirit]* (Titus 3:5). Thus, once the realization of salvation has been accomplished by the preaching of the Word of God and the quickening power of the Spirit of God, the new believer testifies to his relationship with the Lord by being baptized in water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is an outward manifestation of the believer's belief in his co-death, co-burial and co-resurrection with Jesus Christ. It does not produce his salvation, but it does publicly declare it. Thus, at the beginning of this study, we stated that baptism in water is an important doctrine. It, like all other rituals in Scripture, is not salvation, but it is a portrayal of salvation, as the Scriptures clearly attest.

Chapter VI

MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?

Many people have been puzzled by the words spoken by our Lord from the cross of Calvary: *My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me?* If they have been puzzled by these words, they have probably been puzzled by our Lord's prayer in Gethsemane and the fact that He sweat great drops of blood. These two events are closely associated with the curse of sin that was imputed to our Lord to effect our redemption:

And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. (Luke 22:41-44, emphasis mine)

If we are to understand the circumstances that evoked these words, it is imperative that we consider our Lord's words in the light of Who He is. The Scriptures reveal that He is God; they reveal that God is Omniscient; they reveal that He was incarnated, by means of the virgin birth, to fulfill every jot and tittle of the law, to fulfill all righteousness and to offer Himself as a ransom for sin. Thus the Scriptures reveal that He entered this world as a body prepared for sacrifice

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(Hebrews 10:5), because, in the foreknowledge of God, He was slain from before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). Therefore it is impossible that His words in the garden and from the cross were spoken out of fear, confusion, doubt or any other strictly human trait. They were not spoken for His sake, but for the sakes of all who shall be redeemed, that we might understand all of the costs involved in our redemption: that not one aspect of our heavenly inheritance is because of works of righteousness that we have done. It takes the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ to make sinners fit for heaven, and this righteousness can only be obtained by God's grace through faith in the Person and the work of the Lord.

The Scriptures reveal that *in him is no sin*. Yet His crucifixion declares that he bore the curse of sin: ... *for he that is hanged is accursed of God...* (Deuteronomy 21:23). In order for God to redeem the world, the sins of the world were charged to the Lord Jesus Christ by the judicial reckoning of God. This was necessary in order for the Lord to bear the judgment due the world for its sins. Since He was without sin, yet charged with the world's sins, God has the right to impute the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ to those who believe the gospel, because ... *Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures* (I Corinthians 15:3-4). Even so the imputation of our sins to Christ could not be done without affecting the relationship between the Father and the Son, because sin (even imputed sin) produces separation from God.

This means that the agony our Lord suffered in Gethsemane came upon Him because the communion He and the Father had enjoyed from all eternity was going to be interrupted by the imputation of our sins. This agony was so intense that it caused Him to sweat great drops of blood

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(diapedesis: a condition that could have caused His death but for the intervention of the angels) and to pray: ... *if thou be willing, remove this cup from me*. Nevertheless He knew the answer to His prayer before He uttered it, but it had to be uttered so that the world could understand that the only way into the presence of God is by faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as a ransom for sin. God could not remove the curse of sin that was to be imputed to our Lord Jesus Christ (i. e., the removal of the cup for which He prayed) and still save man; neither could Christ be hanged on a tree, bearing the curse of the sins of the whole world, and remain in the constant fellowship with the Father that They had enjoyed from all eternity.

This means that when God finally charged Christ with the sins of the whole world, it was as though Christ had actually committed all of the sins that were charged to Him, even though: ... *in him is no sin*. Likewise the imputation of Christ's righteousness to those who believe is as though they are without a sin nature (as our Lord is without a sin nature), and it is as though they have stood in the perfect righteousness of Christ from all eternity (the position that Christ has stood in). Imputed sin and imputed righteousness are judicial facts, not fiction. Therefore the judgment that our Lord bore in our behalf is fact, not fiction, and the eternal inheritance that we shall enjoy when raised, glorified and adopted is fact, not fiction. This means that the Lord's relationship with us and our relationship with Him by grace through faith is not an approval of a fiction, as some claim, for God cannot lie.

Since the Lord Jesus Christ is God, He fully understood the mission of His first advent upon this earth. This is the reason He told His disciples: ... *Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit* (John 12:24), and the

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apostle Paul wrote:

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new [creation]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us [changed us completely] to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation [changing completely]; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling [changing completely] the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation [changing completely]. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled [changed completely] to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (II Corinthians 5:17-21, emphasis mine)

Paul has given us the essence of how sinners can be declared to be saints in this portion of Scripture. It is by imputation. This is the same means by which the sinless, spotless Son of God could be charged with the sins of the whole world and thus bear the world's judgment. This all hinges upon the fact that when Adam sinned (as our federal head) we were counted (by God's judicial decree) to have sinned with him. If all men could be charged with the sin of one man, then One Man could act as a Federal Head to fulfill all righteousness and bear the judgment of the sins of the world, so that the redeemed could be charged with Christ's perfect righteousness.

This takes us back in time to the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Eve was deceived by the serpent into eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, despite the fact that God had forewarned Adam and Eve about that tree: *And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof [dying thou shalt die]* (Genesis 2:16-17). This means that Eve's deception and Adam's wilful sin introduced two kinds of death into this world, spiritual and physical. There is no human solution for either of these conditions. Nevertheless God's solution in Christ provides for the regeneration of our spirits

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(Titus 3:5) and the resurrection of our physical bodies (I Corinthians 15:52). Thus, *Salvation is of the Lord* (Jonah 2:9).

God judged Adam, Eve and the serpent immediately after they sinned. In the judgment of the serpent, God said: *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel* (Genesis 3:15). The seed of the woman is the Lord Jesus Christ. We know this by progressive revelation. We also know that Adam believed the promise, because he called his wife Eve, *the mother of all living*. While this shows us that Adam believed the promise, it also shows us that God did not reveal to Adam how He would fulfill the promise of the seed of the woman, because it was not to be fulfilled in Eve. Nevertheless God acknowledged Adam's faith in the promise and clothed both of them in the skin of an innocent victim (probably a lamb). This signified: *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him* (II Corinthians 5:21). It also signified: *... and without shedding of blood is no remission* (Hebrews 9:22). Therefore the skin provided by the sacrifice to clothe Adam and Eve represented the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ; whereas the fig leaves, with which Adam and Eve had clothed themselves, represented the totally inadequate efforts of man to make himself fit for the presence of God by human effort.

One of the consequences of their sin was that they were expelled from the garden of Eden. This prevented them from eating of the tree of life and living forever in their fallen condition. Consequently it was an act of God's grace. After their expulsion, Adam and Eve began to produce the human family, and as can be seen in Cain and Abel, some believed the promise of God and

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some did not. Even so Adam's sin was the only sin that was charged to the human family for the next twenty-five hundred years and the giving of the law; because the Scripture says: ... *where there is no law there is no transgression* (Romans 4:15). This does not mean that man did not sin during this period of history, it means he was not charged with any of his sins but Adam's sin, despite the fact that: *God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually* (Genesis 6:5).

The entire human family is intrinsically related to Adam and his sin: *For the wages of [the] sin [Adam's sin] is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord* (Romans 6:23). Consequently the sentence of death that was imposed upon Adam was also imposed upon his posterity. Therefore all men are born dead in trespasses and in sin (Ephesians 2:5), and all of Adam's race also suffers physical death (Hebrews 9:27). The fact of spiritual and physical death in the human family is proof of Adam's federal headship, which lends itself to the Federal Headship of Christ: *For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive* (I Corinthians 15:21-22).

This brings us to the law of Moses. About sixty days after Israel was delivered from Egyptian bondage by the blood of the passover lambs, God offered the law to Israel, and Israel said: ... *All that the LORD hath spoken we will do...* (Exodus 19:8). Interestingly God did not give the law to Israel as a source of life. It could not be, because the Jews, like all of the human family, were infected with the sin of Adam through his federal headship. Thus Paul tells us the law was added because of transgressions, till the seed [the Lord Jesus Christ] should come... (Galatians 3:19). He also tells us the law is a ministry of condemnation and death (II Corinthians

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3:7,9). After God gave the law to Moses on tablets of stone on Mount Sinai, He also gave him the pattern for the tabernacle in the wilderness and its associated sacrificial system to reveal the solution (in the typology of Scripture) to Israel's inability to keep the law.

Thus the law was given to establish without doubt the sinful nature of man (received by the fall of its federal head), and the tabernacle in the wilderness and the sacrificial system were given to convey in shadows and types the promise of the seed of the woman: *Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons* (Galatians 4:1-5).

In the same letter to the Galatians (cited above), Paul made it absolutely clear that Christ was cursed with our sins, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him: *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.*

But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith[,] And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ

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hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (Galatians 3:6-14, emphasis mine).

Beloved brethren, do not misunderstand our Lord's prayer in the garden nor His cry from the cross: He willingly bore our curse and offered Himself as a ransom for our sins for the great love wherewith He loved us. There is no greater love! Selah (think of that).

Chapter VII

THE AUTHORITY OF THE MAN OF GOD

When we Baptists consider the position of the Roman church and its doctrines regarding the authority of its priesthood (especially the authority of the pope speaking *ex cathedra*), we are forced to ask certain questions: What is the authority of a pastor in a local church? Does he have greater authority than the other members of the body of Christ? What is the final authority for faith and practice within the local church?

We will answer the last question first. The final authority for faith and practice is the Word of God, *rightly divided*. When the apostle Paul was providing Timothy with some warnings and words of encouragement, he wrote:

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect [complete], throughly furnished unto all good works.

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in

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season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. (II Timothy 3:13-4:4)

The Word of God is indeed the final authority in all spiritual matters, because it bears the authority of its Author, the Holy Spirit of God, even though it was penned by men. Peter tells us that *holy men of old wrote as they were moved [borne along] by the Holy Spirit*. The fact of God's authorship is evident throughout all of Scripture and is especially evident in the prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures that were fulfilled by Christ in His first advent. Man does not have the capacity to know the future in the minute details of prophetic Scripture. Such detail is known only to God. Man knows these things only by the revelation of God. Even then man does not know them perfectly. In this regard, Daniel tells us that many of the things the Lord prophesied through him, he did not understand. So in a manner similar to the apostle John in the Revelation, the Lord told him: *Go thy way Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end* (Daniel 12:9)

We stated that the final authority in spiritual matters is the Word of God, *rightly divided*. This brings us to the authority of the pastor as compared to the authority of the congregation. We are instructed of the apostle Paul in the matter of spiritual gifts. Paul makes it very clear in the twelfth chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians that we believers are all members of the body of Christ, but, like the members of a body, we do not all have the same function. Then as he concluded the twelfth chapter of his letter to the Corinthians, Paul asked a series of rhetorical questions, which in their structure in the Greek text all required a negative answer:

And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly

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teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way. (I Corinthians 12:28-31)

This chapter and particularly this text reveals that everybody in the local body of Christ is not capable of performing the functions of a pastor for one very important reason: the spiritual gifts necessary to function as a pastor were not given to everybody in the body, but each one was given a gift or gifts to be used for the overall good of the local body of Christ.

Incidentally the command to *covet earnestly the best gifts* in this text is a contradiction to Paul's entire argument in this chapter. The word covet is *zeloute* in the Greek text. *Zeloute* is a form of the word *zeloo* and can denote three different moods in the Greek language: indicative, imperative, or subjunctive. Because the spelling is the same for each of these moods, the only way that one can determine which mood is correct is by its context. Considering the context of this twelfth chapter, it should be obvious that you would not command someone to do something and then tell them that there was a better way of doing what you had commanded them to do; and then follow that with an elaborate discussion of the better way as Paul did in chapter thirteen of his letter to the Corinthians.

If this text were translated according to the context, then we would not have a command to desire the outward sign gifts, but an indicative statement that this was what they were doing, and because of that, Paul was showing them a better way. The better way, of course, was that whatever a man's spiritual gift or gifts are, they are to be exercised in the love of Christ, not in self-interest and self-aggrandizement.

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The word *pastor* is an interesting word. A pastor is a shepherd. Jesus used sheep as an analogy of believers. He said, ... *the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name...* (John 10:3). Following the same Scriptural analogy, the apostle Paul spoke to the Ephesian pastors (elders) and said:

For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed [Greek: *poimaino*: shepherd] the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. (Acts 20:27-32)

In the natural world of shepherds and sheep, the shepherd has authority over the sheep. He sees that they are fed, watered, protected and led. Since the Lord and the apostle both used the natural analogy of a shepherd with his sheep to describe the relationship between the pastor and the congregation, we must learn from the natural relationship if we are to understand the spiritual relationship it was chosen to convey. In Paul's discussion of spiritual gifts in his letter to the Ephesians he said:

But unto every one of us is given grace [i.e., a gift of grace] according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastor ... teachers; for the perfecting [equipping] of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect [i.e., complete; of a full age] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight

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of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:7-16)

This text, along with Paul's text in the twelfth chapter of first Corinthians, reveals that Christ not only gave each individual in His church a spiritual gift or gifts, He gave His church gifted men for the equipping of the church for the work of the ministry and for their spiritual maturity, so that they would no longer be babes in Christ; that they would no longer be subject to the deception of the Devil and his ministers; that together with the manifestation of the gifts of all the body, the body would be strengthened and built up.

The ministry of a pastor not only requires the gifts of discernment, leadership, faithfulness, diligence, etc., it requires that the man of God be a student of the Word of God. In this regard the apostles testified to the church at Jerusalem (when they had the problem with the Hebrew and the Grecian widows): ... *It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables* (Acts 6:2).

The primary ministry of the man of God is preaching and teaching the Word of God. Along with this, he has the responsibility of governing the local church. From the outset, in the church at Jerusalem, it can be seen that the apostles regarded their responsibility to the Word of God above the disposition of food to widows. That was a task that could be done by others in the church. Even so the task of serving widows was not taken lightly, and high spiritual qualifications were required of those who would become servants (i. e., deacons) in the church. It must be here noted that the Greek word translated *deacon* is a servant in the church, not a ruler of the church.

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The apostle Paul, along with various companions, did pioneering work in establishing the gospel ministry around the world. They did the true *work of an evangelist*. They preached the gospel; won souls to Christ; baptized those who were saved; organized those saved into local churches; and instructed those individuals in the churches who manifested the gifts of the ministry with the fundamentals of the faith, that they might remain in the churches serving as pastors. Timothy and Paul had labored together in this ministry until Paul was imprisoned at Rome. So from Rome, Paul wrote to Timothy to encourage him in this ministry, saying:

Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. (II Timothy 2:1-4)

Everyone assumes that salvation is accompanied with spirituality and understanding, but this is not true. The believer has the capacity for these things, but they require growth. Paul told the Corinthians that he *could not speak unto [them] as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ*, and Peter told the Jewish believers to whom he wrote: *But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...* (II Peter 3:18).

We have stated that each believer has a gift or gifts of the Spirit of God. Even so spiritual gifts, like natural gifts, must be developed. The believer must hear sound preaching and teaching from the Word of God so that he might grow in grace. This alone is at the basis of a genuine understanding of the believer's relationship with his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Growth in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ will produce a proper manner of thinking for the believer. He will learn to think in terms of the judicial reckoning of God, Who *calleth those*

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things that are not as though they are. Growth in grace will teach the believer he is in a battle between the flesh and the Spirit. Growth in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ will teach the believer his frailties; that it is possible for a believer to lose his spiritual perspective and think in the flesh. So, with growth, the believer will recognize *that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

Apparently Timothy had become slack in his own spiritual growth and gave less attention to the study of the Word of God than he previously had. Paul intimated, in his letters to Timothy, that Timothy had gotten himself involved in things which did not profit his ministry. Perhaps it was because of his Jewish heritage that he had become involved with Jewish mysticism; the pursuit of genealogical records (so important to the Jews); and other things which had sidetracked him from his study and proper interpretation of the Scriptures. These outside pursuits had precipitated a sense of shame in Timothy towards Paul and towards the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that Paul told him:

Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. (II Timothy 1:8-9)

Timothy's misdirected pursuits had not disqualified him for the ministry to which he had been called, because *the gifts and callings of God are without repentance.* Nevertheless Timothy had allowed himself to be diverted from the ministry to which he had been called by neglecting the study of the Word of God. Timothy's possession of the spiritual gifts of the ministry did not preclude his need to fuel his gifts with a diligent study of the Word of God. Like Timothy, if we

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in the ministry are to speak with the authority of God, we must give ourselves to the study of the Word so that we do not speak by hearsay, but by the Word of God. So Paul simply directed Timothy to: *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth* (II Timothy 2:15).

So, with regard to authority, the man of God does not have authority simply because he is the man of God, but his authority comes by exercising his spiritual gifts in complete accordance with the Word of God. This is seen in Paul's instructions to Timothy and also in his rebuke of Peter. This came at Antioch in Syria, after the conclusion of Paul's first missionary journey into Asia. Peter came to Antioch and played the hypocrite in his relationship with the Gentile believers in Antioch, but he did not do this until certain ones came from James (Galatians 2:11-12). So when he acted contrary to the truth of the Word of God, Paul rebuked him before the entire congregation, saying:

... If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 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.

But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I [was] crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. (Galatians 2:14-21)

Paul was not given greater authority than Peter when he was saved and called of God. They both functioned as apostles in the church by the authority of Jesus Christ. However, when

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Peter acted contrary to the truth of the gospel as he did in this instance, Paul acted according to the truth of the Word of God and rebuked Peter.

This illustrates a very important principle: the man of God, speaking according to the truth of the Word of God, speaks with the authority of Jesus Christ. This authority was given in the great commission when Jesus said, *All power [authority] is given me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations....* While this commission was given to the church to be performed in every age until our Lord returns, the specific task of teaching and preaching falls to those who are given the gift of pastor-teacher. It is they who preach, baptize, and teach according to the authority of this commission. Thus, in every age, it is the pastor-teacher who has provided the congregation the things in the spiritual realm that a shepherd provides his sheep in the physical realm.

The flock might cry out, as Israel did, for flesh to eat because they are tired of the daily ministration of manna, but the manna is representative of the true bread that came down from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the living Word of God, and He is revealed in the written Word of God. Thus it is through the written Word, faithfully studied and preached, that the people of God are provided with all that they need. In the following collage of bits of Scripture an interesting picture is formed, a picture which reveals the true ministry of the man of God: *I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ ... Preach the Word; For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables; Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth; nevertheless, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of*

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the mouth of God; Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might; For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe; because, The just shall live by faith[,] And law is not of faith; So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God; But without faith it is impossible to please [God]; [F]or whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

This brings us then to the authority of the church. The church is the body of Christ, left to minister to a lost world, until the Lord comes to receive it unto Himself. It is to maintain its separation from the corrupt religious systems of this world (many of whom claim to be believers in Jesus Christ, but are not), while, like our Lord, reaching out to the publicans, harlots, and sinners of this world. On the one hand, the pastor is to study and to know the Word of God so that he can faithfully preach and equip the church for the work of the ministry; on the other hand, the church, with its many members with spiritual gifts from God, does the work of the ministry. It is from the church that the resources for fulfilling the great commission are drawn. Thus the church and the pastor are interdependent to the work of God. One cannot exist without the other. They are like a good marriage: in harmony and love towards one another and the Lord Jesus Christ and dependent upon God (Who alone can give the increase), they are to bring forth children into the family of God.

Baptists have historically believed in congregational rule. This is too bad because this is one Baptist doctrine that will not stand the test of a *rightly divided* Word of God. In fact the apostle John, writing under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, revealed in the Revelation that this is a doctrine God hates. In the letter to the church at Pergamos, Jesus said: *So hast thou also them*

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that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate (Revelation 2:15). The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes is (by interpretation) the doctrine of congregational rule. We know this because the word *Nicolaitanes* is a compound in the Greek of two words. The first means to conquer and the second means laity. Thus it speaks of the laity conquering or ruling the church in lieu of the man of God.

One almost has to be against motherhood (in Baptist circles) to be against congregational rule. Nevertheless a careful examination of the Word of God will show that congregational rule is not Scriptural. A portion of Scripture, like Acts 1:15-26, viewed without regard to the context of the book of Acts and the call of the apostle Paul, provides the primary basis for the idea of congregational rule (through elections). Even so these same verses, in context, show the presumptuousness of the election of Matthias, who, after his election, is never mentioned again in the book of Acts.

Congregational rule subjugates a faithful pastor (who studies and knows the Word of God better than anyone in the congregation) to the whims of a congregation, which many times is like the Corinthian church to whom Paul wrote: *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ* (I Corinthians 3:1). We can see God's view of the usurpation of the authority of the man of God throughout the Scriptures, but it is overtly seen in the matter of Korah, Dathan and Abiram:

... Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: and they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them:

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wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord? And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face: and he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even tomorrow the Lord will show who are his, and who is holy, and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. (Numbers 16:1-5, emphasis mine)

If we were to continue reading the account in the book of Numbers, we would see that God opened the ground and swallowed the leaders of this band against Moses and Aaron. Then He sent down fire from heaven to destroy the two hundred and fifty princes of renown. Even these acts did not dissuade the people. The congregation cried out against Moses and Aaron that they had destroyed the people of the Lord. God then sent a plague amongst the people that killed fourteen thousand and seven hundred of the people until Aaron was able to make an atonement to stop the plague. After that the Lord commanded Moses to take a rod from each of the princes of Israel to show whom the Lord had chosen. Aaron's rod *brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds* overnight. Aaron's rod was then placed in the Ark of the Covenant *to be kept for a token against the rebels*. Aaron's rod, along with the other items in the Ark of the Covenant, stood as testimony against Israel. They stood as testimony to their need of the atoning blood of Jesus Christ to blot out their transgressions against the Lord. (See Numbers chapters 16 and 17 for all of the details of this confrontation.)

I am sure that every congregation in the church age that believes in congregational rule would not want God to deal with them as He dealt with Korah, Dathan and Abiram, or with the two hundred and fifty famous princes in the congregation. The fire from heaven and the earth opening and swallowing the anarchist would not be a welcomed event in your average Baptist church, to say the least.

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Later in the history of Israel, Israel rejected the authority of Samuel the prophet. God told him that they had not rejected him, but they had rejected Me (I Samuel 8:7). Then God told Samuel to give them the king they desired but protest solemnly. Similarly, as we have seen, the election Peter instigated in the first chapter of Acts also proved to be folly. As we have also seen, after Acts chapter one, Matthias is never spoken of again in the book of Acts or as an apostle anywhere in Scripture, but we do hear of God's replacement for the fallen Judas, Saul of Tarsus (who became the apostle Paul). In fact Paul alluded to the election in Jerusalem when he began his letter to the Galatians to reestablish his authority with the Galatians: *Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the father, who raised him from the dead)* (Galatians 1:1). The Scriptures refer to twelve apostles both before and after the death of Judas. The twelve after the death of Judas obviously included the apostle Paul, not Matthias.

In conclusion, in the church the pastor stands in the place of authority as long as he speaks according to a rightly divided Word of God. With authority comes responsibility. So in the seven letters to the seven churches in the second and third chapters of the Revelation, it is the pastor who is addressed for that which is right in the church and for that which is wrong. Each letter begins with: *Unto the angel of the church...* The meaning of the word *angel* in this context is *messenger*. The pastor is the messenger of the church, for it is he who brings forth the message of God to the church. This is borne out in the book of Hebrews, where we read: *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you* (Hebrews 13:17, emphasis mine).

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As we close this abbreviated discussion, we will do so with Paul's instructions concerning a church's proper attitude towards its pastor in his first letter to the Thessalonians: *And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour 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. And be at peace among yourselves* (I Thessalonians 5:12-13, emphasis mine). It appears then that the congregation is in subjection to the pastor and not the other way around, as in congregational rule.